

Open Studio A Collection of Art-Making Ideas by Artists

Adam Pendleton “Reading in no Particular Order”

Aspen Art Museum
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About Open Studio

Open Studio makes contemporary art education accessible to educators and students around the world by offering a collection of classroom activities created by noted international artists. The activities cover a wide range of materials, media, and subject matter, and can be tailored to students of all ages.

This project was originally conceived by Los Angeles-based artist Mark Bradford for the J. Paul Getty Museum and has since expanded to the Aspen Art Museum and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.



Photo: Peter Ross

About the Artist

Adam Pendleton was born in 1984 in Richmond, Virginia. He is a conceptual artist known for his multidisciplinary practice. His work often uses language as a material and reframes history in unexpected ways. The artist's work has been exhibited in institutions internationally, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, MoMA PS1, the New Museum, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Whitechapel Gallery, London; and Kunstverein, Amsterdam. Pendleton was educated at the Artspace Independent Study Program in Pietrasanta, Italy, and lives and works in New York.

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Activity

The following activity is a means of exploring the potential of language as material.

When you read, you typically read from the beginning to the end of a text. This allows you to understand the logical or intended progression of any given narrative. We have all had the experience, though, of flipping to a random page of a book to quickly get a sense of the story. And I'm sure, more than once, you have rushed to the last paragraph of an article to "get the gist." In short, there are many ways we interact with the body of a text.

If we think of language not simply as a means to make a specific point or tell a specific story, it frees up the way we use it. Forget the beginning. Forget the middle. Forget the end. Forget the logical conclusion. Dive in.

Step 1

Find three books that interest you (any kind of book).

Step 2

Open each book to any page.

Step 3

Quickly run your finger down the page that you have turned to. Notice where it lands and go to the beginning of that sentence.

Step 4

Write that sentence down.

Step 5

Repeat the process with the two remaining books.

Step 6

Now read each sentence in any order, and then arrange them until you are happy with how they relate to each other. It doesn't have to make any kind of sense. You can simply like the way they look or sound in relationship to each other.

Step 7

You can repeat this process until you collect numerous sentences from each book. Use the collected sentences to write a new text. It can follow any logic. Language is your material. Use it in as many ways as you can imagine.



Adam Pendleton, *Notes on Black Dada Nihilismus (proper nouns)*, 2009. Paint on wall, dimensions variable.
Courtesy the artist