

CreativeConnections

Art Themes + Works

SYMMETRY + FAKE

VIEW



Let us begin with careful looking. Using our eyes, let's spend one whole minute silently seeing what we notice. Scan the image. What stands out? What are you drawn to? Look for colors, shapes, and lines. What is in the background? The foreground? What objects can you identify? What appears mysterious? Is there anything you notice after looking for one minute that you did not see at first glance?

Edie Fake (American, born 1980)

The Keep, 2018

Gouache and ink on panel

28 x 28 in.

Des Moines Art Center

Permanent Collections;

Purchased with funds from the

Keith W. Shaver Trust, 2018.40

Photo Credit: Rich Sanders, Des Moines

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DIG

Let's go back to the painting on page one and try another slow looking practice. You will spend one whole minute looking and writing a list of ten things that you notice. These can be any words: nouns, adjectives, or verbs that you see, feel, or sense from the painting. When the one minute is up, and you have listed everything you can, do it again! Spend just one more minute looking at the artwork and really dig to find ten more words inspired by your looking.

First Minute – Ten Words

Second Minute – Ten Words

Was listing these words easy or challenging?

Did anything surprise you after your second time looking?

Did you see anything you had not noticed before?

What happens when you spend more time looking at one piece of artwork?

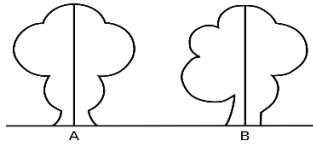
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DISCUSS

What do you notice when you look at this painting? Imagine dividing the painting in half vertically. What do you notice now?

Something is symmetrical when it is the same on both sides. A shape has symmetry if a central dividing line (a mirror line) can be drawn on it, to show that both sides of the shape are exactly the same. (Example A) Asymmetry is when one half does not result in a mirror reflection of the other. (Example B)



Which elements of the painting are symmetrical? Which are asymmetrical? Why do you think the artist painted designs that were mostly symmetrical? What does this do to the painting?

In what ways does this painting remind you of a building or structure? How is making a painting like building a structure? How is it different?

What kinds of things does this painting remind you of? How might the title *The Keep*, give us clues about what we see? The word “keep” has multiple meanings:

Verb - to hold or retain in one's possession; hold as one's own. “If you like it, keep it. You can keep it for the summer.”

Verb - to continue in an action, course, position, state. “Keep in sight. Or, Keep going.”

Noun - the innermost and strongest structure or central tower of a medieval castle.

Now that we have considered definitions of “keep”, think about what Edie Fake may have been thinking when he named this work *The Keep*. Share your thinking.

The artist Edie Fake is interested in fortresses. What words would you use to describe a fortress? Would you use any of those same words to describe this painting?

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MATERIALS

Paper
Pencil
Crayons, Markers,
or Colored Pencils

CREATE

ASSIGNMENT #1

Gateway Zine | Visual Arts

Make your own mini-zine of structures you design and the wonders they contain inside.

INSTRUCTIONS

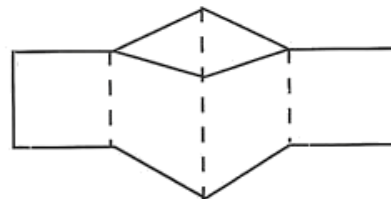
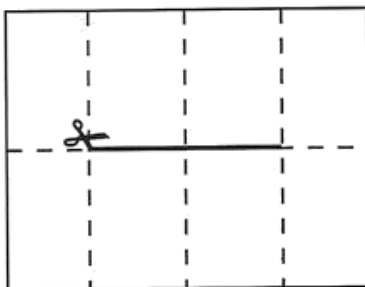
Zines hold a special place in DIY (Do-it-Yourself) and alternative cultures. Short for magazine, a zine is a small paper booklet that can be filled with drawings, writing, or collage — the possibilities are only limited by the small space. Artist Edie Fake is a zine maker as well as a painter.

To make a zine, fold your paper in half down the middle, then fold it again twice, bringing both edges into the center crease. Open the paper up and you will have three folded creases across the width of your paper. Now fold it in half again lengthwise and open it back up. You should have eight equal sized boxes on your paper. You will now cut a slit in the paper, along the middle fold, in between the four center boxes.

Fold your zine in half again lengthwise and pinching both ends, push them together to open up the paper slit that you cut. Push and crease them so that they fit together like pages and you are able to close it like a book.

When filling your zine, think about gateways and doorways, symbols important to Edie Fake. Consider making your own fancy or designed gateway on a page and then drawing what may be inside the gateway on the next, so that turning pages is like opening doors. Fake thinks that gateways are symbols of limitation and validation. He said, "It's like you have this severe filter of who gets to see this fabulous interior of you."

What do you think it means to have a filter? What do you think it means to be authentic? Are there people in your life that you trust to know you better than others? Why is it important to feel seen and accepted for who you are inside? How might art and writing help someone express their true self?



ASSIGNMENT #2

My Building Now | Language Arts

Use your imagination to envision your own future spaces!

MATERIALS

Images of Buildings
Paper
Pen

INSTRUCTIONS

Have you ever seen a building you would like to repurpose for a home or dream business? Fake thinks about these things as he makes his artwork and images reflective of a more inclusive future.

Start with an image of a building or a structure. It can be a building that is already being used for something or it can be empty and for sale. Think about the questions below and write responses to create your building profile. You can add drawings, signs, anything that helps you explain the presence of your building.

If you could own this building, what would it be used for? Would it be a home, a business, a creative, or community space? What would you call it? In what city would it be located? Is that important?

Who would be welcome inside? Would anyone not be welcome inside your space? How would you change the exterior of the building? What would you change about the inside? How is this building decorated? What kinds of objects are inside?

How would this building affect the community? Would the building have a theme? Would the building help others? Would the building make money? Does your building have rules that people must follow? If so, what are they?

How do you think having this space would change your life? What do you think makes spaces so important?

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RELATE

Artist Edie Fake is inspired by buildings and architecture in his artwork. Look up [images of buildings](#) and architecture. Symmetry means the same on both sides. Can you see symmetry in their designs? What elements of architecture are symmetrical? Can you also find asymmetrical architecture, meaning different on both sides? How does this change the way a building looks?

Fake also thinks about the idea that buildings are like bodies. Looking at the human body, divided down the middle, is it also symmetrical? Because Fake paints his designs by hand, they will never be perfectly symmetrical, which is the same as the human body. Watch [this video](#) that shows that the human body is not as mirrored as we might think.

Edie Fake talks about the idea that buildings are a good symbol for the human body because they occupy people, but do not have a gender, race, class, or other human characteristics. What are some other things that people can occupy with their bodies that might conceal the person's identity? Watch [this video](#) about the soundsuits created by artist Nick Cave. In what ways do they relate to the ideas that Fake has about buildings?

Learn more about symmetry in this [brief video](#) that defines Reflection Symmetry and offers multiple examples using simple shapes, photographs of nature, and familiar objects .

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WONDER

Now that you have spent time viewing and thinking about Edie Fake's painting *The Keep*, what do you still wonder about this work? If you could ask the artist or the painting anything, what would you want to know most? Use the question starters below to write three questions.

Why is...	I am curious about...	What part....	Are we...
Who is...	How did you...	What if...	Is she...
Where...	Did you know...	Suppose that...	Do you...

My questions about Edie Fake's *The Keep*:

1.

2.

3.