MEDIATION FORM

NATURE THROUGH
THE WORK OF ART
By definition, art is creation, as opposed to nature, which reflects all the elements that make up our original environment. This tour explores the different phases of artistic creation through nature: from representation to the interpretation of reality, through imagination and dreamed nature. Nature has never ceased to feed the artistic creation of the 20th century.

Duration of the tour

- Primary School 1H
- Middle School 1H
- High School / College 1H

Objectives

- Explore the different inspirations of nature
- Explore the artistic possibilities offered by nature
- Learn to read a work of art
- Familiarization with the vocabulary specific to art

Steps of the Visit

Based on this information, the teacher will have to make a choice of artists or stages according to the level of the class and the availability of the works present in the room. The steps can be adjusted at the discretion of the teachers. The arrival preparation form must be completed as a visit support.

Step 1: The strength of the elements

Step 2: The dreamed nature

Step 3: The artificial and the natural

Related Knowledge
**STEP 1: THE STRENGTH OF THE ELEMENTS**

Nature and especially elements such as water, air and fire are a strong source of inspiration for modern artists. It is a way for artists to question themselves on cosmogony and to give nature a creative role in the realization of the work.

❖ **FIRE, WATER, AIR AND EARTH**

**YVES KLEIN**

*Feu (F 55) (F 55)*
1961
Papier brûlé marouflé sur toile
158 x 220 cm
Achat à Rotraut Moquay Klein et Daniel Moquay en 1999
Inv.: 999.1.1
Ancien numéro dans l’organisme : D 990.1.3
© Yves Klein / Adagp, Paris
Crédit photographique : Muriel Anssens/Ville de Nice

*F71*
Peinture de feu sans titre
1962
Carton brûlé
130 * 97 cm
Collection particulière en dépôt au Mamac

Yves Klein is a visual artist born on April 28, 1928 in Nice and died on June 6, 1962 in Paris. His parents, Fred Klein and Marie Raymond, are also artists. It was in 1957 that Yves Klein created his first fire painting in the garden of the Colette Allendy Gallery: he lit sixteen fires fixed on a blue monochrome. Elements such as water and fire are used as plastic media in their own right. Equipped with suitable instruments to produce a large flame, he created a series of Fire Paintings, made on canvases previously covered with asbestos (in order to slow down combustion). Thus, Yves Klein no longer uses paint but "paints" with fire: he literally burns the canvas to create an image, while a third projects water on it, creating these patterns and drips. The artist calls upon the elements of nature to express their creative power. "...immediately I could see the immense possibilities of this Ultra Vivant element. If everything that changes slowly is explained by life, everything that changes quickly is explained by fire... "Gaston Bachelard, The Psychoanalysis of Fire (1937)
Yves KLEIN also puts his body to the test through a series of photographic shots, intended to document the attitudes, performances and provocations of emerging artists in the 1960s. Example with Jump into the void, 1960, a photomontage in which Klein experiences the void. "To paint space, I have to go into space, without trickery or deception..., the space painter must go there by himself. "Yves Klein

To produce his monochromes, Yves Klein uses pigment from his blue "IKB" (International Klein Blue). This pigment creation is of chemical origin because Klein blue was created from a collaboration with a scientist. The origin of this pigment nevertheless remains natural. It is the basis for the creation of colour.

Pigment is a molecule that creates a color by adding a binder. Pigments can come from different resources: mineral, animal, vegetable or synthetic.

Organic pigments come from extracts of animal or vegetable origin. Pigments of mineral origin (mainly from the earth) have been around since time immemorial. Prehistoric man used earth pigments by adding water to create a color, thus being able to reproduce the imprint of their hands. By using nature as a resource for colour, artists have been able to vary the nuances of their works to create new ones through chemistry and science.

Yves Klein, using the imprint and pigment, refers to prehistoric painting techniques but also to the importance of the human body in nature.
Arman is an artist from Nice born in 1928 and died in 2005 in New York. He is one of the emblematic artists of New Realism. In 1963, Charles Paul Wilp, a German photographer in the midst of a divorce, asked Arman to dynamite his personal car. Arman created his first Automotive Anger at that time. During the artist's exhibition "Passage à l'acte" at MAMAC in 2001, he repeated this gesture by creating an explosion of a Triumph Spitfire that gave birth to this work called La Tulipe. Les Angères d'Arman illustrate the accidents of life but also creation through destruction. The car being burned, broken, it reveals a new beauty close to still life.
**STEP 2: THE DREAMED NATURE**

Artists have never stopped representing nature. However, modern artists do not focus on a representation close to reality but rather on nature as a place of escape and conducive to the imagination and dream.

**NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE**

Niki DE SAINT PHALLE, born in Paris in October 1930, spent her entire youth in New York. She died in May 2002 in San Diego, California. Settled in Paris from 1950, she made her first assemblies and paintings from 1952 to 1956, including various heterogeneous elements. Nature manifests itself through a representation of elements imagined and dreamed straight from the childlike world. The bride under the tree, 1963-1964, is an assemblage of various objects (plastic flowers, toys) and coloured materials (wool, fabric, paper, fence). Here she opposes a fragile and unhappy woman forced by social conventions that require her to marry a tree representing the imagination, the dream, childhood and embodying a certain nostalgia for this lost freedom.

*La mariée sous l’arbre*
1963-1964  
Objets divers, étoffe sur construction en fil de fer  
228 x 200 x 240 cm  
© Niki Charitable Art Foundation / Adagp, Paris

It is with the Nanas that Niki de Saint Phalle is most popular. A great traveller and curious by nature, Niki de Saint-Phalle spends most of her time reading and visiting museums, which allows her to gather a vocabulary of forms and images drawn from an imagined nature. Inspired by Paleolithic female figurines, the chicks represent women with generous shapes, far from the canons of the time and today. They adopt festive, dynamic postures, they are eternal images of triumphant motherhood and femininity. By invading the public space, these Nanas raise the question of the place of women in 20th century society and in the history of art.

*Vénus*
1964  
Laine, objets sur grillage  
Hauteur: 170 cm  
Donation de l’artiste en 2001  
© Niki Charitable Art Foundation / Adagp, Paris
Alongside the Nanas, animals and the world of tales and myths occupy a prominent place in Niki de Saint Phalle’s work. Thus, the artist creates monumental sculptures where snakes, birds, and imaginary creatures coexist, as here with the monster of the Loch Ness, included in Niki’s donation to MAMAC in 2001.

The Loch Ness Monster is part of a series of works entitled “Wounded Animals.”

**Monstre du Loch Ness**

1993
Miroirs et céramique sur structure en polyester
330 x 520 x 300 cm
Donation de l’artiste en 2001

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**CLAUDE GILLI**

*Souvenir Bonne Année*

1963
Assemblage Bois, peinture, objets
66,5 x 81 x 13,3 cm
Achat à l’artiste Acquis avec l’aide du FRAM et de la Société des Amis des Musées de Nice en 1999
Collection MAMAC, Nice
© Adagg, Paris
Crédit photographique : Muriel Anssens/Ville de Nice

Claude GILLI is an artist from Nice born in 1938 and died in 2015. He entered the Nice School of Decorative Arts in 1955. Pierre Restany, art historian and founding member of the New Realism, will say of Gilli: “Gilli treats Nice folklore as a living material, in constant evolution. […] the beach, the kitsch, the fake tropical nature for tourists, the evolution of the market stalls and the advertising window, the evolution of popular belief and the subtle morphological alterations of its rites. Between the beach, the grocery store and the kindergarten, Gilli’s ironic world offers us the "Nice-Paid Leave" version of a Latin Disneyland with a quiet debauchery.” Pierre Restany

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Modern artists integrate nature into their works and raise the question of respect for it. Indeed, the latter is hampered by the drifts of industry and overproduction, artists are thus part of a recycling and reuse perspective. That is why they also use artificial objects in their works.

JEAN TINGUELY

Jean TINGUELY, born in 1925 in Fribourg, died in 1991 in Berne (Switzerland). Jean Tinguely was born into a farming family, which is why we find certain references in his works. It was soon after his arrival in Paris in 1953 that he created his first meta-mechanical sculptures, combining kinetic art and assembly art. In the production of its machines, Tinguely combines movement, image and sound. Throughout the 1960s, he would manufacture ever more important and disconcerting machines. These sculptures are composite, made of various objects and materials, sometimes found in landfills or in nature. Thus Boris-le-Bouc de Jo, with the general appearance of a strange animal, is made of a skull, wires, peacock feathers, metal parts and an engine.

Blue relief is a machine whose internal mechanism is visible, producing only movement and sound, and not an industrial object as a productive machine should. Jean Tinguely denounces the overproduction of machines creating other means of production. Here, the artist recovers what is produced by Man, sometimes from a natural material such as wood. Jean Tinguely was born into a family of farmers, which is why there are many references in his works.
ALAIN JACQUET

Alain Jacquet, born in 1939 in Neuilly-sur-Seine, died in 2008 in New York. Jacquet updates here the famous Déjeuner sur l’herbe by Édouard Manet, created in 1863, itself inspired by the Concert champêtre du Titien of 1509. The initial image of the Déjeuner sur l’herbe is a scandal for its style and workmanship as much as its subject. Alain Jacquet uses the mechanical technique of Trames, a silkscreen reproduction of black and the three primary colours. It takes up a key theme of the painting: the campaign part. During the exhibition “Alain Jacquet Camouflages et trames” in 2005 at MAMAC, the idea of commissioning him to enlarge a detail of “Le déjeuner sur l’herbe” was born. This project was considered by the artist to decorate the gable of a Manhattan building and was then reactivated for the museum on one of its interior facades.

CHRISTO

Christo, born Christo Vladimiroff Javacheff in 1935 in Bulgaria, works in duet with his wife Jeanne-Claude. As systematic as Arman in his gesture of accumulation, Christo, from 1958 onwards, began to pack in series: cans and bottles from everyday life, magazines, portraits, sometimes human bodies and then places, buildings, monuments and parks. Monumental work carried out on the scale of a landscape or monument is always self-financed by selling preparatory sketches and project models. By hiding the object, Christo summons the desire to unravel its mystery. Example here with Packed Coast (Project for Little Bay, New South Wales, Australia), 1969, one of the many preparatory sketches of one of Christo’s monumental and ephemeral installations.
Since his first monochromes in the 1950s, Yves Klein has demonstrated an approach to colour as a universe of sensitivity. In 1947, on a beach in Nice, Yves Klein, Arman and Claude Pascal shared the world: the blue sky for Yves Klein, the earth and its riches for Arman and the air for the poet Claude Pascal. Yves Klein gives a new meaning to elements from nature. By covering these elements with his IKB blue, he appropriates nature. The IKB (International Klein Blue) colour, created in 1960 by Yves Klein with the help of chemists, allows the artist to give a new dimension to the natural: that of the artificial.

"Thanks to the sponges, a living wild material, I was going to be able to make portraits of the readers of my monochrome paintings who, after having seen, after having travelled in the blue of my paintings, come back totally imbued with sensitivity like sponges". 1958, Yves Klein
Yves Klein’s Garden of Eden is located on the terraces of the MAMAC. The artist’s works are hidden behind the branches of surrounding trees. The title of the work obviously refers to the Garden of Eden of Mythology, this wonderful place filled with temptation. In the Garden of Eden, hidden behind the palm trees, is Architecture de l’air (ANT 102) dating from 1961. Yves Klein wrote: "It is a kind of return to the Eden of legend (1951)"; "The Free Man is so free that he can even levitate! "Body care by new methods such as the air bed". This work refers to the importance and omnipresence of air and our feelings towards this natural phenomenon, particularly by throwing ourselves into the void. 

Architecture de l’air (ANT 102)  
1961  
Pigment pur et résine, synthétique sur papier marouflé sur toile  
261x213 cm  
© Oeuvre : Succession Yves Klein / ADAGP Paris, 2019

The Wall of Fire is also an emblematic work of the artist located on the terraces of the MAMAC. Yves Klein painted his first Fire Painting in 1957 in the garden of the Colette Allendy Gallery in Paris on the evening of the opening of his exhibition "Propositions monochromes". Yves Klein lights sixteen Bengal lights fixed on a blue monochrome. He continued his research on fire as a plastic element a few years later for a monographic exhibition at the Krefled Museum in 1961 in Germany. It has a structure of fifty double benzen spouts and a fire fountain. Then he records on paper the traces of these different burns. The Wall of Fire was installed at MAMAC in 1990 when the museum opened. It is therefore a posthumous installation made according to the artist’s protocols. The flaming is done during night events and allows us to see small flaming daisies in gold and blue.

Yves Klein derrière le “Mur de Feu”  
lors de l’exposition “Yves Klein Monochrome und Feuer”, Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Allemagne,  
1961  
© Oeuvre : Succession Yves Klein / ADAGP Paris, 2019  
© Photo : Pierre Boulat

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http://www.yvesklein.com/fr/selection-d-oeuvres/view/893/architecture-de-l-air/
RELATED KNOWLEDGE

❖ KEY WORDS

NATURAL: Directly from nature, from the physical world, which is not the work of man, made only from raw products, without mixing with something artificial, synthetic.

ARTIFICIAL: Directly coming from nature, from the physical world, which is not the work of man, made only from produced by man’s work and not by nature. Which results from social life and is not essential. Raw units, without mixing with something artificial, synthetic.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Development method that respects the environment through the prudent use of natural resources in order to make them sustainable in the long term.

RECYCLING: All techniques aimed at recovering waste and reintroducing it into the production cycle from which it originates.

MASS CONSUMPTION SOCIETY: a society in a developed country oriented towards soliciting consumption (through advertising) and consumers from producers, by launching new products or services and constantly creating needs.

NATURAL ELEMENTS: The notion of natural elements refers to different issues depending on the context. In antiquity, he referred to four elements related to the possible states of matter: fire (plasma), water (liquid), air (gas) and earth (solid).

❖ WORKS IDEAS

➔ Reproduction / imitation / creation
➔ Natural / artificial
➔ Create with the elements
➔ Organizing the living
➔ Land Art
➔ Work in progress
➔ The landscape (from nature to the city)

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE


BRUN Michèle, DECREUX Anne, GOETZMANN Isabelle, PEGLION Jacqueline, PERLEIN Gilbert, Musée d’Art Moderne et d’Art Contemporain, Nice, édition Régie autonome des comptoirs de vente de la ville de Nice, 2008

GARRAUD Colette, L’Idée de nature dans l’art contemporain, Paris, Flammarion, 1993


TIBERGHIEN Gilles A., Land art, Carré, 1993 ; Carré, 2012 (réédition augmentée)

SITOGRAPHY

➔ http://www.mamac-nice.org