

I Am an Artist

Educator Guide

By Amy Jurskis



About this Book

I Am an Artist offers young readers exciting insights into the many ways artists work and the reasons why they make art. Geared to children ages 4 to 8, but with appeal for all ages, this colorful and playful book asks: Who are artists? Why do they make art? What materials do they use? What tools do they work with? What forms do their artworks take?

“I spend every day thinking about the paintings and sculptures I will be creating, which fills my life with great joy. Art is an important means of identifying human existence and can send a wonderful message to the world. I believe that artists will create a new world and hope that everyone will share their own messages with the world.”

—Yayoi Kusama, artist

“Warm, engaging, accessible, and frankly an excellent book for children and adults alike. The studio complex is a creative home to a myriad of artists who succinctly describe their practice, while also telling us about themselves, making them feel real. By opening their studios, the characters help open children's minds to how and why artists work.”

—Sharna Jackson, author of *Black Artists Shaping the World*

Author Bios

Doro Globus is a writer, editor, and publisher specializing in creative culture, with a focus on arts publishing. Her first book, *Making a Great Exhibition*, is a fun insideloook at the life of an artwork, from studio to exhibition. A passionate advocate for sharing creativity, Globus has dedicated her career to telling stories of artists and writers. She is Associate Publisher of David Zwirner Books and has worked in arts publishing for nearly twenty years. She has written about artists and art historians including Dawn Ades, Michael Bracewell, Fred Wilson, and Bridget Riley.

Rose Blake is an illustrator and artist working in London. Her book *A History of Pictures for Children: From Cave Paintings to Computer Drawings* (2018), written by David Hockney and Martin Gayford, won the New Horizons award at the 2019 Bologna Children's Book Fair. She has worked with a wide range of clients, including *The New Yorker*, *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Times*, *BBC*, *Google*, *Soho House*, *The Telegraph*, *The Sunday Times*, *Transport for London*, and *Disney*.

Types of Artists:

portrait painter, illustrator, photographer, sculptor, video artist, activist artist, woodworker, glassblower, textile artist, ceramicist, environmental artist, street or graffiti artist, text artist, landscape painter, mosaicist, pop artist, performance artist, abstract painter, light artist, jeweler



Artist Tools:

paintbrush, easel, table easel, charcoal, pastels, backdrop, darkroom, print tongs, print tray, safelight, enlarger, film, spotlight, green screen, action camera, placard, table saw, clamp, chisel, measuring squares, yokes, furnace, jacks, blowpipe, safety glasses, vents, fabric, needle, thread, pottery wheel, glazes, clay, kiln, spray paint, mask



A Note to Parents and Educators:

Many of the questions and activities in the guide to *I Am an Artist* can be used during a trip to an art museum or gallery. Your local art museum may offer family art activities that include hands-on time in an educational studio, so be sure to look up your local museum's schedule of events.

As additional resources, Google Arts and Culture offers virtual tours of museums from around the world. David Zwirner's

website features work from artists working in a variety of mediums. These sites will offer families and students a way to explore a range of collections as they discover the art and artists that inspire them.

Google Arts and Culture:

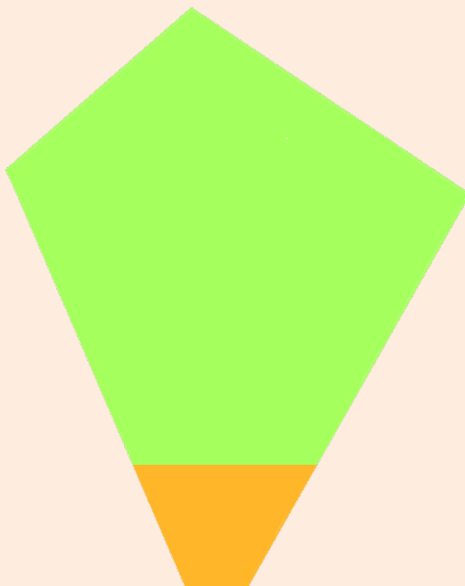
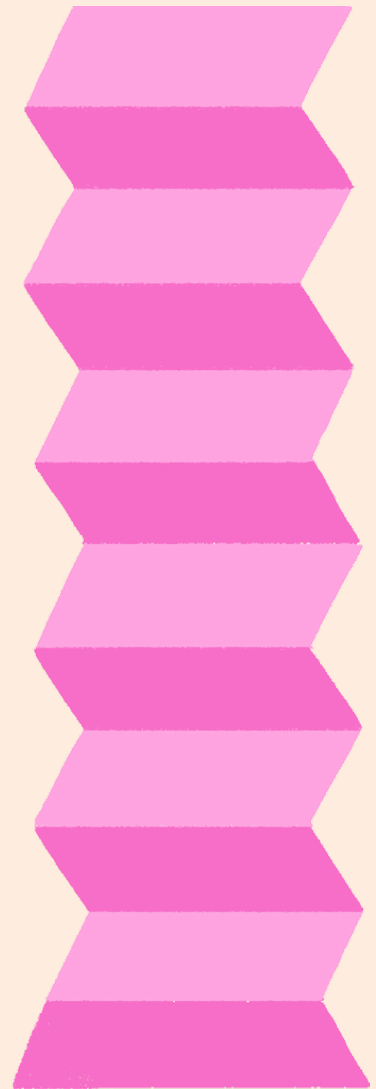
<https://artsandculture.google.com/>

David Zwirner:

<https://www.davidzwirner.com/>

Guided Reading Questions:

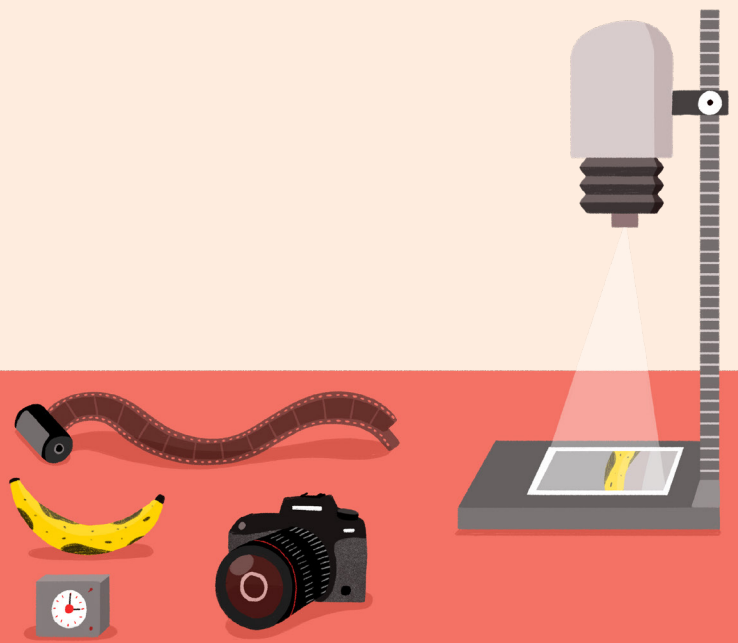
1. *I Am an Artist* opens with three questions: What is an artist and how do they work? Why do they make things? Can I be an artist? Before you read the book, how would you answer these questions? How does the author answer the questions? After reading the book, how have your answers changed?
2. The material used to create art is called a medium. When people think about art, they often think about drawing, painting, and sculpture. Were you surprised to learn that there are so many other types of artists? Why do you think we associate some mediums with art more than others?
3. Artists share what they make with other people. Why is it important to appreciate different types of art?
4. Why do you think artists need a special place, called a studio, to work in? The artists featured in this book work in a building with a lot of different studios, but some artists work in a studio at their house, away from other artists. What benefits could an artist get from working near other artists? Would you prefer to work in a studio next to other artists, or would you prefer to work alone?
5. How many types of art have you created? What techniques or mediums would you like to use the next time you create a work of art?
6. Visiting the artist studios inspires Kit and Viola to create their own art, and to combine materials and techniques. If you were to combine two types of art, what would you combine?
7. Some people believe artists should use their art to make a political, social, or moral statement. Other people believe that art only needs to be beautiful (this is called Aestheticism). What do you think?



8. The woodworker that Kit meets tells him that he “hated math in school, but now I use it for every piece I make.” How many of the artists do you think use math to help create their art? How many of them use science (like chemistry)? How do math and science help artists create art?
9. We usually think about seeing art by visiting a museum, but where are other places that you can encounter art? What kinds of art are you most likely to find outside of a museum?
10. Some of the types of art require special training or education, while others can be self-taught. What are the benefits of studying how to create art? What are the benefits of being self-taught? Why is it important for us to appreciate different types of art and artists?



11. If you were to design your own studio to create art, what would it look like? What artist tools would you need?
12. On the last page of the book, several artists give advice to Kit and Viola. What advice do you have for someone who wants to be an artist?



Extension Activities:

Note: If you are not able to visit a museum or gallery for these activities, you can use a virtual museum tour.

1. Choose one of the types of art described in *I Am an Artist* and learn more about it. Find an artist that worked in the medium and look at images of some of their work. What materials and tools do they use to create their art? Where is their art displayed?
2. Visit a museum (in person or virtually) and complete a scavenger hunt looking for works of art that fit these descriptions. Can you find a work of art that . . .
 - is two-dimensional (ex. painting, photography, illustration, film)
 - is three-dimensional (ex. sculpture, ceramics, textile, wood, glass)
 - combines more than one medium
 - makes you feel happy
 - makes you feel sad
 - makes you feel confused
 - inspires you to make your own art
 - you would like to have in your own house so that you could see it every day
3. The studios of many famous artists have been preserved and are available to visit in person or virtually. Choose one of the following artists and their studios to explore. How did their studio help them create their art? How was their studio like the art that they created? What objects or landscapes do you think inspired them to make art?
 - Claude Monet's home & studio: <http://tinyurl.com/yt8xc22p>
 - Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner's house and studio: <http://tinyurl.com/y8nebtcc>
 - Andrew and N.C. Wyeth's studios: <http://tinyurl.com/37we7pw7>
 - Norman Rockwell's house and studio: <http://tinyurl.com/2k8mw9wy>
 - Frida Kahlo's house and studio: <http://tinyurl.com/27722my2>



4. Work with your parent or teacher to create an art studio space in a corner of your house or classroom. You will need a place to work, materials that you can use to create art, and some basic tools, like paint, brushes, glue, and scissors. Recycled materials like old fabric, boxes, or found items like shells, leaves, and rocks can all be used as materials for art, and empty ice cream pints or cans can hold brushes and other tools.
5. The illustrators in *I Am an Artist* explain: “We all have our own way of seeing—it is amazing how different our drawings are even though we are looking at the same set up of objects, which is sometimes called a still life.” Work with your family or classmates to set up a still life that everyone can draw. Afterwards, share your art with each other by hanging everyone’s art on a gallery wall. Take turns explaining the techniques you used when you created your illustration of the still life. (This just means explaining how you created your art. How did you start your drawing? What tools did you use? Why did you pick the colors that you used?)
6. The activist artist uses art to “draw people’s attention to the things [they] want to change, like the way we care for the environment and how we treat each other.” Think about something you care about and create a poster or sign that encourages other people to help make a change. A gallery of youth-made climate protest signs can be viewed here: <http://tinyurl.com/4m7uw52w>

