

do it (australia)

Learning resources
Activity 1

Kaldor Public Art Projects

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Activity 1

Do...what? Instructions as artwork

We explore the history of *do it* and the use of instructions as an artistic medium. Looking closely at instructions by Lauren Brincat, Dale Harding and Amrita Hepi, we reflect on the role of the audience in interpreting the artist's work.

Watch

Watch *do it (short)*, a short animated video on the history of *do it*, courtesy of Independent Curators International, New York (Duration: 5:03 mins).

Conceived by curator Hans Ulrich Obrist, *do it* is an exhibition of artists' instructions that began in Paris in 1993 with a discussion between Obrist and artists Christian Boltanski and Bertrand Lavier, who were curious to see how an exhibition may never stop. Since then, *do it* has become the longest-running artist-led project in the world.

React

After watching the video, write down your immediate response to this question, in 5 words or less: **Where is the artwork?**



Still from *do it (short)* (2013), courtesy of Independent Curators International (ICI), New York.

Written and directed by Can Misirlioglu and Michelle Snow; Produced by Sarah Ko and Laure Lim; Narrated by Reggie Watts.

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Do it

1. View the instructions created especially for young people by artists from *do it (australia)*:
Lauren Brincat
Dale Harding
Amrita Hepi
2. Read each instruction carefully, and think through the steps required for each one. Can you imagine what it might be like to enact the instruction?
3. Choose **at least** one instruction, and enact it as precisely and thoughtfully as you are able.
4. Document your interpretation of the instruction, using whatever medium you like – it might be through photos, video, sketching or writing.
5. Ask your friends and/or family to enact and document the same instruction. Hint: don't give them too much guidance. Let them interpret the instruction in their own way. There's no right or wrong!
6. Ask your friend/s or family member/s to share their documentation with you, and ask their permission to share with other people.
7. Collate all the documentation, using your preferred method. Choose a format that makes it easy for you to view and compare all the different responses – it might be a slideshow, digital photo album or video clip.
8. Try repeating the process with a different instruction.

Reflect

- Why did you choose that specific instruction? Where did you enact it, and at what time? Were there specific reasons for your choices of time and place?
- Think back to when you first read the instruction, and imagined acting it out. How did this compare to physically enacting it? What changed in the process? What was unexpected?
- Look carefully at all the different responses that you have gathered. Compare your version to your friends or family's version/s. What do you notice?

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Do it (optional)

For this activity, you will need to work in pairs – either in class or online.

1. Take a photo of the front of your home. It could be the home of a friend or family member, or another place which is familiar to you (but don't forget to ask permission). Do not share these images yet.
2. Write a paragraph which describes the visual appearance of the home in detail, including the scale, position, colours and textures of walls, windows and so on.
3. Exchange written descriptions with your partner.
4. Sketch an image of your partner's house, based only on their written text.
5. Share your drawing with your partner. Discuss the qualities of these drawings, before finally showing each other the photos of your homes. How accurate are the drawings? What aspects are missing or incorrect?
6. Discuss the challenges involved in the process. What is it like to describe, visualise and interpret a space that is very familiar to another person?

Further research

- Research the work of Marcel Duchamp. Looking closely at his 'readymades', write a list of questions that these works might pose to our understanding of art. How and why are these questions still relevant today? Why is Duchamp considered a key figure in the development of conceptual art? How does his work challenge conventional understandings of art and the role of the artist?
- *do it is less concerned with copies, images, or reproductions of artwork, than with human interpretation... Meaning is multiplied as the various interpretations of the texts accumulate in venue after venue. No two interpretations of the same instructions are ever identical.* – Hans Ulrich Obrist

Research the background of *do it*. What were the inspirations and aims behind the idea? Look closely at some past presentations of *do it* from around the world – including exhibitions, publications and websites. What is the role of the audience in *do it*? How does this challenge conventional roles of the audience and the artist? Focusing on two presentations of *do it*, discuss Hans Ulrich Obrist's quote and the idea of "interpretation" in art projects.

Further reading

Independent Curators International [website](#)
Kaldor Public Art Project 6: Sol LeWitt, 1977
Kaldor Public Art Project 11: Sol LeWitt, 1998, [Education Kit](#)
Kaldor Public Art Project 28: Roman Ondak, 2014, [Education Kit](#)