

Self in the City Teaching Resource

Ages 8–11 (Grades 3–5)

Materials needed:

- Markers, colored pencils, and/or crayons
- Paper or cardboard
- Optional: mixed-media paper and recyclables, like fabric scraps, empty boxes, old magazines, old newspapers, and anything you find around the house
- Optional: glue or tape

1 hour (includes two 20- to 30-minute activities)

Essential Questions:

- What is a landscape? What is a cityscape? How are they related?
- How do different environments affect what you do and how you feel?
- What is your personal relationship to the city or place in which you live?
- Where do you blend in? Where do you stand out?
- What makes you feel at home?



Part 1: Introducing *Self in the City*

We all live in a community, and these communities take many different forms. Some communities are in **rural** settings, some are **suburban**, and some are **urban**. This year at the Hudson River Museum, we have been thinking a lot about **urban** communities, or cities, and what it's like for us as individuals to live in or visit one of these environments. We are thinking about what it is like for all of us during a period when we need to stay home, and how we can remember and celebrate our favorite parts of being in our environments. We want to share our observations, our feelings, and our artworks with one another.

The HRM has partnered with the Art Bridges to borrow works of art from their collection about cities. We have paired them with artworks about cities and the people in them that are in our own collection. We call this exhibition *Self in the City*, and it helps us look more closely at familiar works of art and discover new messages when they're in conversation with the Art Bridges paintings. Explore some of these works through our activities, and let's observe, remember, share, and connect ourselves with the city and each other!

Look at the artworks on the next page and at hrm.org/self-in-the-city.

- What is going on in each painting?
- What more can you find?
- What questions do you have about the works?
- Of the works, is there a painting that you are particularly drawn to?
- What is it about the work that makes you connect?



Jacob Lawrence. *The Studio*, 1996. Lithograph. Museum Purchase, 2018 (2018.05). © 2018 The Jacob and Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence Foundation, Seattle / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Reproduction, including downloading of Jacob Lawrence works is prohibited by copyright laws and international conventions without the express written permission of Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Part 2: Discuss

- Do you live in a city/**urban** area, a **suburb**, or in a **rural** area?
- Are there any parts of where you live that stand out in the **landscape**? These **landmarks** could be buildings that are special, bodies of water, mountains, roads, or other things that make where you live different from other places.
- Have you ever been to, or live in, a city? What are some things that you hear, see, smell?
- Have you ever been to, or live in, a rural area? What are some things that you hear, see, smell?
- What are some activities that someone who lives in a city does that a person living in a suburb or a rural area may not do? Think about how people get from one place to another, what kind of homes people live in, what kind of jobs grown-ups may have, where kids may go to play or have fun when they are not inside.
- Right now, we are staying inside for a large part of our days. What can you see from a window in your home? How is your view right now different from what you saw before?
- Do you observe different things happening outside your window at different times of the day? What happens in the morning? What about lunchtime? What about dinnertime or the evening? How about your view in the summertime versus the wintertime?
- Are there places that you are excited to visit or go to again in the future? Where are those places? What memories do you have about them and what details can you describe about how they look and feel?



Part 3: Outside My Window (Activity 1)

Inspiration: Jacob Lawrence's *The Studio*, 1977

Duration: 20–30 minutes

Materials needed:

- Markers, colored pencils, and/or crayons
- Paper or cardboard
- Optional: mixed-media paper and recyclables, like fabric scraps, empty boxes, old magazines, old newspapers, and anything you find around the house
- Optional: glue or tape

Procedure:

1. In his work *The Studio*, Jacob Lawrence paints both an interior scene (the inside of his art studio) and an exterior scene (the cityscape that is outside the window).
2. Look outside your window. What do you see?
3. Think about how the view outside your window represents what makes the place you live special. Maybe you have your own landmarks or favorite buildings that are specific to your location or parts of the natural landscape that you can see.
4. Using the materials, create a cityscape based on what you see outside of your window. This can be made using just paper and a pencil, or with colors.
5. You can create an image like Jacob Lawrence's, adding details of the interior you're in.
6. You can create your exterior window scene only. Where would you place yourself if you were outside?
7. Optional: If you would like to create a collage, use recycled cardboard for the supporting surface, or base (cutting up an old cereal box works well!). Cut up scrap paper and fabric and glue or tape the pieces to the cardboard and use markers and crayons to make your own landscape.

Share your work:

Take a photo of your work and post it to Instagram using the hashtags #MuseumFromHome and #SelfInTheCity, and tag the Hudson River Museum.



Part 4: Imagining My City (Activity 2)

Inspiration: Jacob Lawrence's *The Studio*, 1977 and Susan Hall's *Moving Home*, 1978

Duration: 20–30 minutes

Materials:

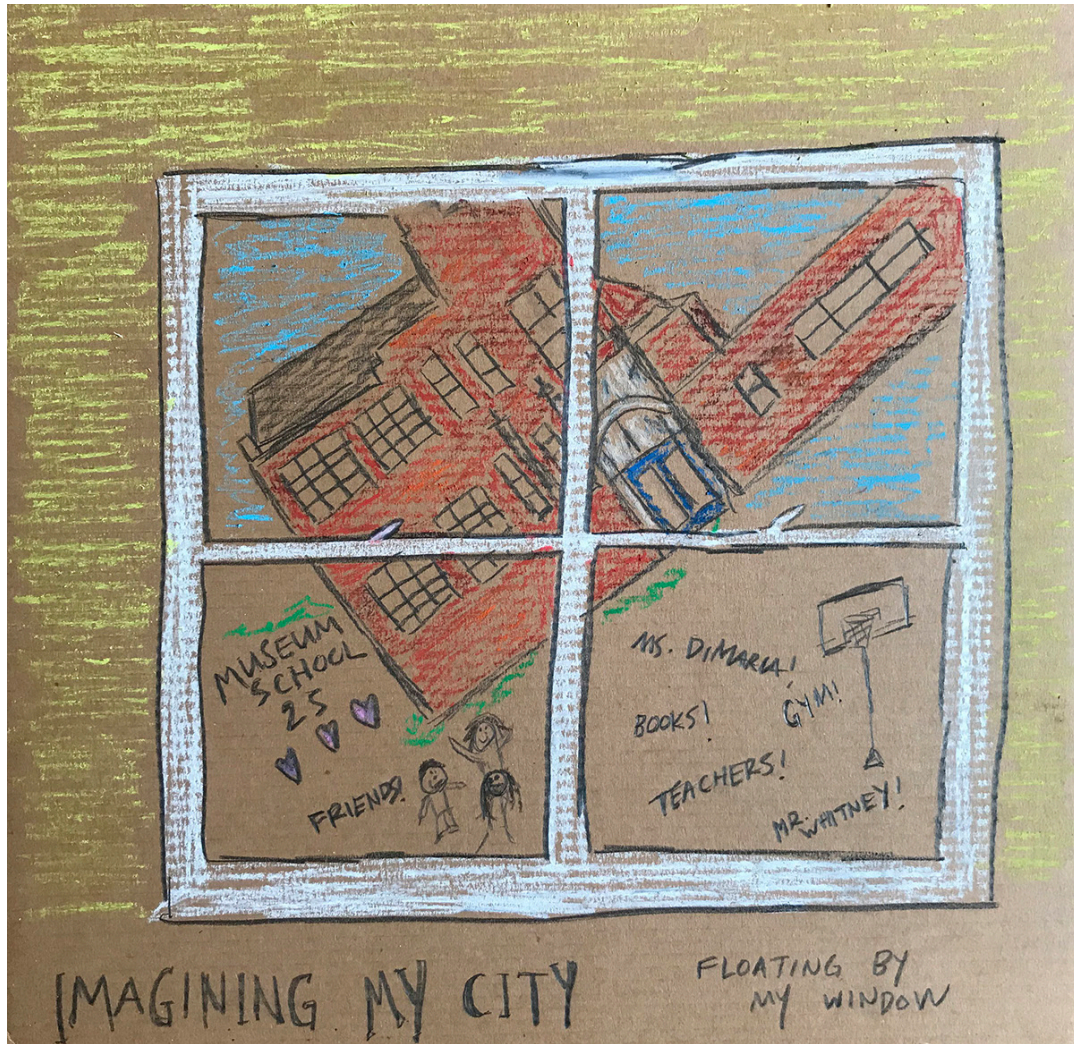
- Markers, colored pencils, and/or crayons
- Paper or cardboard
- Optional: mixed-media paper and recyclables, like fabric scraps, empty boxes, old magazines, old newspapers, and anything you find around the house
- Optional: glue or tape

Procedure:

1. Jacob Lawrence created *The Studio* when he was living in Seattle, Washington. The scene outside the window, however, looks like the building and streets of his home neighborhood of Harlem in New York City. Why do you think he may have included a memory of a place in the window instead of what he was actually seeing when he looked outside?
2. Susan Hall lived in Greenwich Village, New York City, when she created *Moving Home*. She moved to NYC from California. She had a lot of close friends and a community in New York City, but still wanted to make artwork that helped her think about what “home” really meant to her.
3. Sometimes, home is an emotion and not necessarily the physical place where we spend our time, sleep, and eat. Sometimes, we have to travel using our memories and imaginations to feel at home.
4. Where do you feel happy, relaxed, and joyful when you are not at home?
5. Think about this place that you are excited to visit again in the future. Where is this place? What landmarks and features can you include in the scene? What can you add to this place to make it even more like your feeling of home? Are you there alone, or are other people with you? What do you do in this place?
6. Imagine this place floating by your window. Using pencil and paper or colors, draw your scene.

Share your work:

Take a photo of your work and post it to Instagram using the hashtags #MuseumFromHome, #SelfInTheCity, or #OutsideMyWindow and tag the Hudson River Museum.



Part 6: Glossary & Further Reading

Cityscape: An image with urban scenery as its primary focus; an urban environment.

Exterior: The outer surface or structure of something, someplace, or someone.

Interior: Situated or related to the inside of something, someplace, or someone.

Landmark: A building or place that is easily recognized, especially one that you can use to identify where you are.

Landscape: The natural landforms of a region; also, an image that has natural scenery such as mountains, valleys, rivers, trees, and forests as its primary focus. Landscape artwork primarily focuses on this natural scenery.

Rural: Describes an area that is in, related to, or similar in detail to the countryside instead of a town or city. Rural areas have fewer people in them than suburban or urban areas, and residences are usually very far apart.

Suburban: Describes an area that is smaller and located outside of an urban area, with more homes, buildings, and a larger population of people than a rural area.

Urban: Describes an area that is connected with a town or city, where there are many buildings and structures close together and a large population of people.

HRM's Self in the City

<https://www.hrm.org/exhibitions/self-in-the-city/>

Art Bridges Foundation

<https://artbridgesfoundation.org/>

Illustrations

Page 1: Daniel Putnam Brinley (American, 1879–1963). *Hudson River View (Sugar Factory at Yonkers)*, ca. 1915. Oil on canvas. Museum Purchase, 1995 (95.3.1).

Page 4: William Hahn (German, 1829–1887). *Union Square, New York City*, 1878. Oil on canvas. Gift of Miss Mary Colgate, 1925 (25.947).