



BkM Art Hangouts  
**Process**

# Goals

In Art Hangouts, learners will:

- Look closely at a work from the collection
- Explore new artistic processes through close looking, conversation, and art-making
- Reflect on their own art-making processes

In this lesson, learners will:

- Observe Yuji Agematsu's *Zip* series
- Use nontraditional, overlooked, or unexpected materials to make a work of art
- Consider how artists can be inspired by materials in their own environments

# Materials

- Glue (e.g., tacky glue or hot-glue gun)
- Trash and/or debris (see the Explore section for further information)

BkM Art Hangouts are adapted from a series of virtual classes that took place in spring 2021. These thirty-minute lesson plans are designed for teachers and caregivers to engage learners with works from our collection and to explore hands-on, artistic processes. Lessons are created for ages 9–14, but can be adapted for any age group. In each lesson, participants will look closely at a work of art, consider how an artist finds inspiration, and create their own artworks inspired by these approaches. Art Hangouts are open ended, and students are invited to continue working on their projects even after the lesson ends.

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## Yuji Agematsu

Japanese, born 1956

Yuji Agematsu has been transforming the raw material of life into art for nearly thirty years. In the *Zip* series, an array of objects—collected during the artist's daily walks through New York City—are displayed on shelves, with each unit of shelves representing a month's collecting. The pieces are both a record of his wanderings and a repository for the residue of our collective consumption. Collector, curator, and archivist, Agematsu states: "I walk around the city during the night, too. The empty streets have a feeling akin to a beach when the tide is low. The objects are left where both big and small waves of the consumerist society have ebbed; people call them rubbish, waste, trash, and so on, which nevertheless talk to me, even eloquently at times."



Yuji Agematsu (Japanese, born 1956). *Zip*; 03-01-12...03-31-12, 2012. Mixed media (wood, latex paint, drywall screws, cigarette cellophane wrapper, gum, metal, plastic, glass shards, eraser, acrylic fingernail, thread, metal screw, dust, penny, seed pod, hair, dried grass, razor blade, rubber fitting, tar, aquarium pebbles, rocks, plastic doll part, soil), shelf dimensions: 11 × 2 1/2 × 30 in. (27.9 × 6.4 × 76.2 cm). Brooklyn Museum; Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Gallerist Award, 2012.30.3a-c. © Yuji Agematsu. (Photo: Brooklyn Museum)

## ● Part 1: Look!

Invite students to look at [Yuji Agematsu's Zip series](#). Each “zip” is made up of an arrangement of objects inside a plastic sleeve. Look at the works individually and also as a group. You might ask:

- What do you notice?
- Can you make a list of the materials you see in the artwork?
- Where might you find materials like this?

Agematsu uses debris he collects off the ground to make his sculptures. He says, “I walk around the city during the night, too. The empty streets have a feeling akin to a beach when the tide is low. The objects are left where both big and small waves of the consumerist society have ebbed; people call them rubbish, waste, trash, and so on, which nevertheless talk to me, even eloquently at times.”

- Have you ever noticed objects in your home or community that you felt others have overlooked? What about them captured your attention?
- Now that you know Agematsu's sculptures are made from discarded items, take a look at his work again. Can you identify any of the materials?

Agematsu's “zips” are arranged on shelving units, each unit representing one month of collecting.

- How has Agematsu displayed his findings?

## ● Part 2: Explore!

Yuji Agematsu meticulously arranges found items inside plastic packages called “zips.”

- How can you create a work of art out of found items? How will you reconsider objects others might call trash?

**Step 1: Look for items.** Yuji Agematsu collects found objects by walking around his neighborhood. Choose an area to explore; it can be inside your home or in a public space. Collect items you think may be overlooked and use them in your artwork.

Example: On the floor of my apartment, I found all sorts of things (that probably shouldn't be there!) like a bit of a leaf, a piece of dried pasta, a nail, a piece of streamer, a broken paperclip, and a candy wrapper.

**Step 2: Arrange your items.** You might choose to make a sculpture, or to arrange your items on a piece of paper. Will you create something representational (e.g., a person, place, or thing) with your items? Think about how the colors and textures work together.

**Step 3: Attach your items.** Glue your items together. Use a strong glue like tacky glue or a hot-glue gun. This will help heavier things stick.

Project in Progress ↓



## ● Part 3: Reflect!

What do the items you collected remind you of?

Did you reassess the value of any of the items you repurposed in your artwork?  
Does calling something “art” change its value?

What choices did you make in arranging your items?

A Finished Project! ↓



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This resource was written by Sarah Dinkelacker, Curriculum Consultant and Teaching Artist, with assistance from Stacey Kahn, School Partnerships Coordinator and coordinator of the Art Hangouts initiative. Additional assistance provided by Michael Reback, School Programs Manager.