

Clothing and Marketing

Grades 7/8 Activity Guide

Inspired by artworks from the RMG's Permanent Collection



Gathie Falk, *Agnes*, 2000-2002, varnish and acrylic on papier-mâché. Purchased with the assistance of a Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance Grant, 2002



Tom Hodgson, *Portrait of a Shirt*, 1957, oil on canvas. Purchase 1971.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Gathie Falk

Gathie Falk's parents immigrated to Canada from Russia to escape religious and ethnic persecution for being German-speaking Russian Mennonites. She was born in Saskatchewan, unfortunately, her father died shortly after her birth. Her family moved around a lot, she found music as a comfort and eventually took up drawing. At 16 years old, she left school (completing her diploma via correspondence) to help support the family by doing factory work. Falk eventually became an elementary teacher. During that time, she also studied painting, drawing and design. By the 1960s, Falk was interested in ideas of what was meaningful and beautiful. These themes were being revolutionized by Pop and Funk art movements. Gathie Falk created artworks inspired by and celebrates the ordinary, everyday objects.

She chose to make objects look beyond ordinary but as precious artifacts or icons. She encased them in cabinets or displayed them on tall pedestals. Her artworks also often deal with opposites; life and death, light and shadow, beauty and ugliness, growth and decay.

Tom Hodgson

Tom Hodgson was one of the eleven members of the Painters Eleven. He was born in 1924 and grew up on Center Island, Toronto and had a cottage in Peterborough. He was an active child, taking part in sports and Saturday morning art classes with Group of Seven member, Arthur Lismer. Hodgson's early art work was of realistic watercolour depictions of nature, painted from memory and from life. Hodgson would later turn to semi-abstract and then pure abstracts during his work with the Painters Eleven.

Painters Eleven formed in 1954 and included; Jack Bush, Oscar Cahen, Hortense Gordon, Tom Hodgson, Alexandra Luke, Jock Macdonald, Ray Mead, Kazuo Nakamura, William Ronald, Harold Town, and Walter Yarwood.

ABOUT THE ARTWORKS

Although Gathie Falk's sculptures were often made out of clay, this dress (as part of a series of dresses called *Traces*) is made out of paper mache. She would paint and glaze the surface to transform the "ordinary" material into something ornate looking. She created a story about each of the dresses. She imagined them as objects found in various closets across the country, each standing up on the floor. The owner had either passed away or moved away, leaving the clothes behind.

This painting, *Portrait of a Shirt* by Tom Hodgson was apparently inspired by an event. Hodgson found himself in a bathroom somewhere that had a bright pink wall. As he looked at his reflection in the mirror he thought the colour combination of that bright background with his yellow, red and black striped shirt created a terrible composition. After returning home he thought some more about the image created in the mirror and decided to work out the composition on canvas and came up with this final artwork. What do you think?

DISCUSSION PROMPTS/ACTIVITY

- Why do you think Gathie Falk chose a dress to represent a person?
- Why has Hodgson not included himself wearing the shirt?
- What object would you use to represent yourself?
- Do you have any item of clothing that holds special meaning to you?
- Discuss wants vs needs - what are some considerations that need to be made when purchasing items such as clothing/accessories?
- What are some marketing ploys used to influence our decisions to purchase certain items of clothing?
- Discuss brand logos.

What is a logo?

A logo is a graphic mark, emblem, or symbol used to promote public recognition of an object/place.

- Encourage students to take a brand logo quiz, how many brands can they identify just by the logo? Here are some friendly websites;
<https://www.beano.com/categories/logo-quizzes>
<https://www.jetpunk.com/tags/logo>
- Compare and contrast old logo styles with modern images.

Did you know?

- In the field of sportswear, logos began to be more prominent in the 1940s.
- The old Apple logo shows Sir Issac Newton sitting under an apple tree?

DRAWING CHALLENGE

Let's be fashion designers!

Encourage students to draw an item of clothing that would complement either *Agnes* or *Portrait of a Shirt*? Is it another shirt? Another dress? Accessories?

Encourage students to design their own logo.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Paper
2. Pencils
3. Markers/ Pencil crayons or other colouring materials

EXTENDED LEARNING IDEAS

Create artworks based on the opposite themes that Gathie Falk also explored, life and death, light and shadow, beauty and ugliness, growth and decay.

Write Agnes' profile for their Instagram account and create some posts about their life.

Encourage students to research ethical and sustainable clothing brands.



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