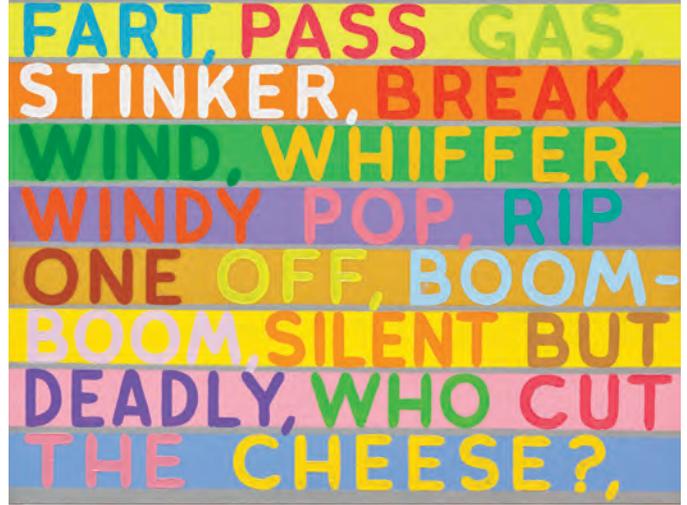




Mel Bochner
Strong Language

Family Guide



1.

Begin by looking at the first work of art in the exhibition, entitled *Self/Portrait*, 2013. A self-portrait is a work of art about a person created by that person.

Is this what you would expect a self-portrait to look like? Why or why not?

What might this self-portrait tell you about the artist?

In this exhibition, Mel Bochner explores the use of language through art. Do you think words can become works of art? Why or why not?

The words we use and hear every day often have multiple meanings. The paintings in this exhibition play with words and present them to us in unexpected ways. Use this Family Guide to investigate the power of words in *Mel Bochner: Strong Language*.

For the adults: This guide focuses on material for families to explore together. Please note that certain works of art in this exhibition contain adult content.

2.

Continue moving through the exhibition and stop at the next wall to your right. Look at the painting entitled *(Small) Fart*, 2003. It's okay to giggle together about this painting :)

The thesaurus groups together words that have the same or similar meanings. For many of his paintings, Bochner uses the thesaurus to find words that have a similar meaning to the original word he chooses. Mel Bochner's daughter came up with the idea for *(Small) Fart* and helped him select the words included in this painting.

Some of the words in this painting may be used to mean something else. How so?

Bochner paints each word a different color. What effect does this have?

Point out where you see similar or opposite colors next to one another. How do the artist's color choices make certain words stand out?

5. At Home

As a family, create your own text-based work of art.

Begin by cutting one word out of a magazine or newspaper. Paste it onto a piece of paper. Think of other words that relate to this word and use them to surround the original word by writing them out in different colors and in interesting ways on your paper. Think about the placement of colors in relation to other colors on the paper. Also think about the composition—where the words are positioned in relation to one another.

Are all of your words in straight lines?

Do they form a shape?

How would you describe the image you have created?

Congratulations on completing the *Mel Bochner: Strong Language* Family Guide. We hope you enjoyed the exhibition!

For more information on Family Programs, please visit TheJewishMuseum.org/Families.

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Images

Cover: Artwork © Mel Bochner.

#1: *Self/Portrait*, 2013, oil on canvas, 72 × 58 in. (190.5 × 147.3 cm). Collection of the artist.

#2: *(Small) Fart*, 2003, oil and acrylic on canvas, 18 × 24 in. (45.7 × 60.9 cm). Collection of Piera Bochner.

#3: *Wrap: Portrait of Eva Hesse*, 2001, charcoal and pencil on paper, 25 ½ in. (64.8 cm) dia. Akira Ikeda Gallery.

#4: *Colon Open Parenthesis*, 2011, oil and charcoal on canvas, 45 × 60 in. (114.3 × 152.4 cm). Courtesy of Peter Freeman.

All artworks © Mel Bochner.

Donors

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