

Take Action!

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This project is made possible in part by the
Institute of Museum and Library Services.



Take Action!

Artists can teach us new ways to express what is important to us and inspire us to share our ideas and emotions with others. Artist Gary Simmons uses objects and words to encourage viewers to reflect on the world around them and take action to make positive change. You can do this too! Take action by sharing a change that you and your family want to see in the world using words and movement!

This project will take about 15 minutes to complete.

Project Set up

Find a space where you and your family will have enough room to move around freely. If it's a nice day, you may want to go outside! Make sure you are wearing something comfy that allows you to wiggle and move.

Materials

- o Paper
- o Something to write with

Connect with Art at the Walker

Gary Simmons is a Los Angeles-based artist originally from New York whose parents immigrated to the U.S. from the West Indies. Simmons is known for work that explores race, culture, and memory through painting, drawing, and sculpture. In his work *Everforward*, Simmons used a pair of white boxing gloves embroidered with the words “EverForward” and “NeverBack” to ask us to consider the violence and injustice towards Black people that continues today.



Gary Simmons, *Everforward*, 1993, Anonymous Gift, 2001; Courtesy Walker Art Center

Talk it out:

- o What do you notice about this artwork?
- o What are boxing gloves used for? Why do you think the artist wanted to use boxing gloves in this artwork?
- o What do you think the phrases “EverForward” and “NeverBack” mean?
- o “Forward ever, backward never” is a phrase that Simmons remembers his family and West Indian community using often growing up. Does your family have any phrases that you use often? What do they mean?

Project Instructions

Now it's your turn to create a movement-based artwork that celebrates and expresses what is unique and important to your family!

1 Start by choosing an issue that is important to your family. What change do you want to see in the world?

2 With your family, think together about what makes your chosen issue so important. What can you do to help bring about the change you want to see? What can other people do?

3 Based on your family's conversation, make a list of at least five words that relate to the issue that you chose. Write them down!

4 Create a movement or a gesture to go along with each word on your list.

5 Once you have a movement for each word, perform those movements one after another. What does it feel like? What do these movements communicate about the change you want to bring about in the world?

Keep Exploring

Now that you've created your own movement sequence, try experimenting with changing it a little.

- o If you put the words in a different order and perform the actions again, does the story change?
- o Try having each person in your family pick the word they feel is most important, and then each person repeats only that movement over and over. How does this change your work?

Share your ideas with us by using @walkerartcenter and #walkerartcenter. Check out #walkerartcenter to see the change that other families would like to see in the world!