

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

- » Mark Flood lives and works in Houston, Texas. He attended Rice University (1976–1981) and his artwork has been exhibited internationally.
- » Flood began his artistic career in the rock band Culturcide. The punk culture of the 1980s was known for being critical of compromise.
- » Through his work Flood calls into question who is making decisions about how great art is defined and whether our current systems for determining great art are helpful or harmful.
- » Flood is very critical of the art world, especially when it gets in the middle of art and the public. Often through his work he questions the institutions created in the art world (i.e. galleries, museums, celebrity artists, etc.) He prefers to not have his artwork explained, leaving viewers to create their own interpretations and conclusions.
- » In his work, Flood often remixes pop culture to show viewers a darker side of our society.
- » Supporting emerging artists to have exhibitions and gain new audiences for their artwork is important to Flood. He believes in the power of art and surrounds himself with a community of artists.
- » While Flood is a successful artist, he has referred to himself as one of the “least important artists of the 20th century,” a sentiment reflected in the misspelling of “Gratest” in the exhibition’s title.
- » Flood has a reputation for being reclusive, changing his name, not wanting to be photographed or written about, not attending his own openings or sending imposters in his place.

MARK FLOOD: GRATEST HITS

ON VIEW APRIL 30–AUGUST 7
BROWN FOUNDATION GALLERY

NOTE: *Mark Flood: Gratest Hits* is an exhibition that explores complex issues. This exhibition may not resonate with students younger than middle school. We always recommend that teachers read our Family Review and visit the exhibition in advance of a museum visit.

KEY QUESTIONS

- » What role do artists play in our society?
- » If you do not agree with how a system works, how do you change it?
- » How can humor and irreverence be used to destabilize power systems? What are some current examples of this?
- » What is great art?
- » Who is qualified to decide what art should be in a museum or how much a piece of artwork should be sold for?
- » Can you conduct institutional critique while also being a part of the institutional system?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

LANGUAGE ARTS Satire, irony, embodying aliases and personas. Exploring language and text in artwork. Flood is also a writer and musician. How does his message come across in each medium?

ECONOMICS What are the economics of the art world? How do artists support themselves? How does Flood envision artists should support themselves? Who has the power in the art world economy? How is the cost of art determined? Who determines how much art should cost?

VISUAL CULTURE Examine the language of advertising and magazine images. Compare this to Flood’s work. How do Flood’s celebrity collages impact your thoughts about those celebrities?