

WRITEGIRL PLANET

ISSUE 12

EKPHRASTIC EDITION: WRITEGIRL & LACMA

WRITING ACTIVITY #1:

WRITE A POEM TO
CELEBRATE A PALM TREE

WRITING ACTIVITY #2:

REFLECT ON THE
OUTDOOR INSTALLATION,
LEVITATED MASS, BY
MICHAEL HEIZER

WRITING ACTIVITY #3:

DESCRIBE THE JOURNEY
OF AN ARTWORK OF
YOUR CHOICE

WRITING ACTIVITY #4:

WRITE A POEM ABOUT
YOUR CITY, INSPIRED BY
CHRIS BURDEN'S
METROPOLIS II





Ekphrastic Writing: WriteGirl & LACMA

Welcome to The WriteGirl Planet Ekphrastic Edition, featuring art from the LACMA Permanent Collection!

There are four individual writing activities in this guide, each of them designed to guide you to write with art as your inspiration. You can do the experiments here in any order. You could also read through this guide and then write something completely different than what these activities offer! Freedom!

In ancient Greece, the term “ekphrasis” meant to describe something with vivid detail. In creative writing we use the term ekphrastic whenever art becomes inspiration for a poem, story, or other writing form. The WriteGirl Planet: Ekphrastic Edition invites you to let the paintings, photographs, sculptures and installations at LACMA inspire your creative writing.

WRITING ACTIVITY #1: PALM TREES ARE ART

All around the grounds of LACMA are a variety of palm tree groves. They have been planted specifically as art installations, as a living, natural outdoor art show. Imagine you are walking through a grove of palm trees, and you come to a stop in the shade of one of these trees.

Feel the towering presence of the tree and imagine any sound the tree might make if wind passes through it, or the silence it embodies in the stillness of the summer air. Imagine the root system below your feet. Envision the creatures who seek refuge in its leaves or trunk. Write a poem to celebrate this palm tree, or write a short story that features this imaginary tree where you're standing as an essential location in the story.

Next level: For an additional challenge, incorporate a word in your writing that you can see from where you are right now.



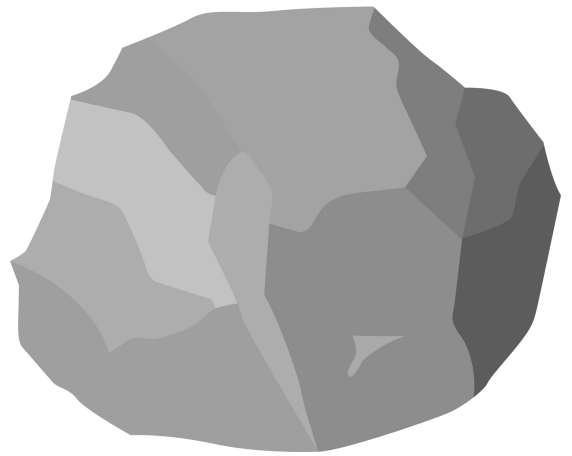
Primal Palm Garden, Robert Irwin
© Museum Associates/LACMA

WRITING ACTIVITY #2: LIKE A ROCK

The outdoor installation, *Levitated Mass*, by Michael Heizer, gives a rare opportunity to enjoy the majesty and power of one individual boulder. Imagine you walk along a long ramp where you can gradually find yourself beneath an enormous rock, and experience the shadow and the shade it creates.

Consider these questions: How do you feel as you approach the rock? How do you feel beneath it? How do you feel when you begin to move away from the rock?

Write about a time when your emotions shifted — not just today as you moved beneath and around this boulder — but any time when you experienced a change in your mood or feelings. Write the story about a time when your feelings evolved, and include all the details so we can experience that shift along with you.



Next level: Read about the installation here: <https://www.lacma.org/press/levitated-mass> Incorporate some of the numbers and words on this page in your writing today, somehow!

WRITING ACTIVITY #3: I AM THE ARTIST

Imagine yourself in front of **any painting or photograph at LACMA**. Scroll through some of their current exhibits here:

<https://www.lacma.org/nah/art/exhibitions/current>

Imagine you are the artist of the work you chose. Based on your imagination, write your answer to any or all of the following questions: Who are you? Where is your artist studio and what does it look like? What materials did you use to create this piece of art? Why did you create this piece of art? What is the story behind this artwork? How did this piece of art make it here into this exhibition? Describe the journey of the artwork.

Next level: Write the story of the art collector who might purchase this artwork for their own collection. Why did they purchase it? Where will they be displaying it? Who are they?

WRITING ACTIVITY #4: THE ENERGY OF A CITY

View the kinetic sculpture by Chris Burden called *Metropolis II* online here:
<https://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/metropolis-ii>

It occupies an entire room!

Think about what defines a city. Use all of your senses to make a list of city sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures you can think of, and examine the sculpture for ideas and inspiration. Use all of these details to write a poem about your city.

BONUS: Look for one of the many videos of Chris Burden's Metropolis II on YouTube!



SUBMIT YOUR WRITING

WriteGirl Members and Alums: We want to read your creative writing! Submit your writing to WriteGirl, and we will get back to you if we might be able to publish it:

<https://www.writegirl.org/writegirl-club-house>



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