INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask an adult to walk with you around your neighborhood to look for words. Do you see street signs or buildings with words on them? Take photos of the words you see.

2. Look for the unexpected, like posters on walls or lamp posts. Are there any words in spray paint, street art, or murals? How about neon signs in a store window?

3. When you are satisfied with the number of words you found, write a poem—as long or as short as you like—using only the words and phrases in your photos. What happens when you change the order of your words, or if you use only some of the words you found?

4. Read your poem out loud. What story does it tell about your environment? Are there any feelings or sounds from your walk that come to mind?

You are now exploring the relationship between words, sound, and meaning, just like artist Bruce Nauman!

MATERIALS

Camera (or cell phone camera), pencil/pen, paper

Bruce Nauman uses a variety of mediums to create sculpture, printmaking, photography, video, and performance art. For Violins, Violence, Silence, Nauman was inspired by neon signs in storefront windows. He used glass tubes with moving neon lights to create a glowing artwork that explores the relationship between words, sounds, and feelings. This work invites you to explore in person: look up and walk around the Museum’s exterior, following the flashing words at the top corner of the building. The words “violins,” “violence,” and “silence” move backwards and forwards in quick flashes of lights that change colors.

When you read each word, what sounds come to mind? What stories do you think of when you put these words together?

For this week’s activity, let’s take a walk and find some words in your neighborhood. Explore the relationship between words, sights, and sounds by using the words around you by making a poem.

Learn more about Violins, Violence, Silence
artbma.org/nauman


We'd love to see your work! Snap a picture of your final creation and share with us on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter using the hashtag #ArtBMAFromHome for a chance to be featured.

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