



ENKI  
AND THE  
GALLERY  
OF  
MYSTERIES

Pedagogical Guide

 **MOMENTRA**  
BIENNALE DE L'IMAGE

# About the Educational Video Game

## Description

*Enki and the Gallery of Mysteries* is an educational video game the objective of which is to introduce children 6 to 8 years old to portraits created by Québec artists.

The game is a remarkable tool for developing students' appreciation of artworks while offering them a stimulating digital experience. Pedagogically, this interactive experience is interesting because it involves the children not in winning by giving the right answers to the questions, but in taking the time to look at the photographs and video works and express themselves about what they are seeing and feeling.

Developed by MOMENTA | Biennale de l'image in collaboration with the interactive experience studio Dpt., this game follows The Gallery of Mysteries (2018), a tool intended for children 9 to 12 years old.

## Synopsis

Many stories are told about the Gallery of Mysteries. Some people say that it whispers, and others claim that it moves around in the forest when night falls. In reality, you are about to discover one of its greatest secrets...

As you pass by, you wake up Enki! This strange spirit watches over a collection of portraits, but one of the artworks has disappeared.

Enki needs you to help complete the collection. Explore the gallery, solve Enki's challenges, and maybe you'll be able to lay your hands on the missing artwork!



Here's Enki!  
This very likeable spirit is the gallery's guardian. In the game, Enki will offer the students a mission to complete. Will they be able to solve the challenge?

“

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”

# About the Pedagogical Guide



Intended for first-cycle elementary teachers, this guide is designed to help you encourage students to reflect on the **artworks** shown in the game, which are on the theme of the **portrait**. It offers directions for carrying out a classroom activity and tools to print out or project to facilitate conducting the activity, such as factsheets on the **portraits** that include avenues for thought to stimulate a more profound discussion with students.

We encourage you to use this resource as a teaching tool that acts as a bridge between art and children.

Words highlighted in colour are included in the glossary.

## Objectives of the game

- To develop a sense of observation
- To introduce children to analyzing images
- To introduce children to reading
- To stimulate the imagination through digital creation

## Areas of learning concerned

- Arts Education
- Languages
- Social Sciences
- Personal Development



# Conducting the Activity

The students play the game *Enki and the Gallery of Mysteries*, available online, free of charge, at [enki.momentabiennale.com/eng](http://enki.momentabiennale.com/eng). They study the **artworks**, figure out the connections among them, and share their appreciation experience.

The activity is designed to be conducted in a large group.

How the activity is run can be easily adapted to a context of play by an individual or small groups. The use of an interactive screen is suggested, but tablets or computers can be used if there is a sufficient number of devices available.

## A. Preparation

The students get ready to play *Enki and the Gallery of Mysteries*. During their quest, they will be invited to solve three short challenges that will lead them to discover **artworks** by Québec artists.

The game has no winner! The idea is for the children to take the time to observe the **artworks** and express themselves about them.

## B. Introduction

Project the game and turn on the sound; the narration can be muted from the game menu.

If the narration has been muted, ask the students to read the text aloud in turns. Click on “Start the adventure” to enter the Gallery of Mysteries.

### NOTE ON THE LANGUAGE

Although fascinated by the human species, Enki has not completely mastered their language. Certain slips may appear in Enki's expressions. Point these out to the students!

- “You have to know the gallery like the back of your brain” instead of “You have to know the gallery like the back of your hand”
- “My bean-brain tells me” instead of “My pea-brain tells me”
- “OK, let's roll up our socks” instead of “OK, let's roll up our sleeves”

→ **LEVEL**  
Elementary, Cycle One

**AGE GROUP**  
6 to 8 years

**TIME REQUIRED**  
30 to 45 minutes

**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**  
– Speaker  
– Interactive screen

→ **PROVIDING CONTEXT**  
The synopsis of the game is accessible from the game menu. It's a good way to introduce the students to the world of *Enki and the Gallery of Mysteries*.

→ **STORY** The students have woken Enki from a deep sleep. This eccentric character introduces themselves as the guardian spirit of an art gallery with a collection that seems incomplete... Enki asks for the students' help with finding the **artwork** that has disappeared.

# Conducting (continued)

## C. Challenge 1: OBSERVING

Select an **artwork** and read the following instruction:

- “Look closely at the **portrait**. Then, describe it to Enki by choosing three words.”
- Ask the students to say their words and explain their choices out loud. Drag the three words most often mentioned by the students onto the **artwork**.

Repeat these steps with a second **artwork**.

## D. Challenge 2: FEELING

Select an **artwork** and read the following instruction:

- “From among Enki’s faces, choose the one that represents the emotion you feel when you look at this **artwork**.”
- Ask the students to say their emotion and explain their choice out loud. Drag the emotion most often mentioned by the students onto the **artwork**.

Repeat these steps with two more **artworks**.

## E. Challenge 3: CREATING

Start a discussion about what the students would like to portray in this **portrait**, which they will create as a group: an imaginary character, their teacher, or one of them?

Scroll through the customization options and highlight the connections between them and the **artworks** observed. Ask the students to suggest customization options.

Take the time to observe the final result and make the connection with the first step: Does the **portrait** created resemble the initial project?

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Before they begin to create the final **artwork**, ask the students to draw on a piece of paper the portrait that each would like to make. This sketch will enable them to better communicate their ideas when they take on the challenge.

## F. Conclusion: DISCOVERING

Moving through the gallery to learn more about the **artworks**.

→ **STORY** Enki would like to remember the **artworks** in the gallery through the students’ eyes. Once the challenge is over, Enki invites them to the attic, where another **photograph** is hidden.

→ **STORY** Enki gives the students a mysterious **codex** that can create stickers inspired by the **artworks**. The spirit would like to understand human emotions better and asks the students for their help. Once the challenge is completed, Enki makes an admission: the missing portrait never really existed because Enki couldn’t make a decision. Enki asks the students to help complete the collection by creating an **artwork**.

→ **STORY** To complete the portrait collection, Enki proposes that the students themselves create the last **artwork** using the **codex**. The spirit of the gallery then bestows a stunning power upon the students: the Vision of Spirits. Now, they can see the world as Enki does.

→ **STORY** With access to the Vision of Spirits, the students now discover the gallery as spirits see it. Before leaving to take a nap, Enki invites them to listen to the comments left near the works (short explanation of each one).

# Marisa Portolese



## *Belle de jour III: Dialogues with Notman's Portraits of Women – Hélène* 2014

Work inspired by: William Notman & Son  
*Missie Isabel Marian Barclay, Montréal, QC, 1913*  
 1913, 20th century  
 II-200418 © McCord Museum, Montréal

Artist Marisa Portolese works mainly within the **genre** of portraiture. She is particularly interested in the **traditions** surrounding the portrayal of women and children. In the series *Belle de jour III: Dialogues with Notman's Portraits of Women*, from which this work is taken, she draws inspiration from **portraits** by famous Montreal photographer William Notman to represent women of today. The **photo-graph** on the right, which shows a girl with her dog, was produced more than a hundred years before the one on the left. By bringing these images together, the artist creates a link between past and present.

### AVENUES FOR THOUGHT

- Which image do you think is more joyful? Can the fact that a **photograph** is in colour or in black and white change our **perception** of a person or a situation?
- For many people, companion animals are full members of the family. That is why they are often portrayed alongside people in **portraits**, both in the past and today. What responsibilities do we have toward the animals that share our home?

# Patrick Bernatchez

## *Lost In Time* (excerpt) 2014

In his **multidisciplinary** practice, Patrick Bernatchez combines a variety of **media**, such as **photography**, film, painting, and music. The passage of time is a constant theme in his work. This video features an enigmatic helmeted horseman and his mount in a snowstorm. Slowly, the horse turns to face us. The music created by composer Murcof adds a mysterious atmosphere to the work. The sequence seems to be outside of time: it is impossible to figure out whether it is taking place in the past or the future.

### AVENUES FOR THOUGHT

- We often recognize people by their face, which is what defines each of us as a unique person. We could say that our face is the basis of our **identity**. Have you seen **portraits** in which the person's face isn't visible?
- Like movies, **video art** can allow for the creation of fantastic or unexpected worlds. If you had to show time passing in a video, what elements would you choose?



# Adad Hannah



## *Social Distancing Portrait 19 (excerpt)* 2020

Artist Adad Hannah is renowned for his *tableaux vivants*, compositions in which people usually recreate famous works, usually by posing without moving. This video portrait shows a boy on a soccer field. Holding his ball with an upraised arm, he is trying to keep his pose for the camera, as if time were standing still. This work was created at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, when people were first asked to observe social distancing. It echoes this period of uncertainty that shook up daily life.

### AVENUES FOR THOUGHT

- The video was recorded in a vertical frame, in portrait format. Why would you use this format (instead of horizontal format) if you had to film a person?
- Can you name a new activity that you practised during the confinement due to COVID-19? How did everyday life change during that time?

# JJ Levine

## *Harry, Joah and JJ* 2018 2018

The approach of photographer JJ Levine is based mainly on practising portraiture as a mirror of **identity**, whether it relates to sexual orientation or to **gender**. His subjects often adopt natural poses and are portrayed in their own homes. This work is both a **self-portrait** and a **family portrait**. We can see the artist, on the right, with his child, Joah, and the other dad, Harry. The three of them are sitting comfortably in their living room, barefoot.

### AVENUES FOR THOUGHT

- Is a family necessarily composed of a father, a mother, and a child? Do you know of other types of families?
- A **self-portrait** can be a way for artists to share aspects of their work or their personal life, or to reveal their interests and personality. Like the selfies that we send to friends or publish on the Internet, they are a result of putting ourselves on stage. Do you think that **self-portraits** are always faithful to reality?



# Claudie Gagnon



## *Papillons, soucis et allergies* *[Butterflies, Marigolds, and Allergies]* 2018

Digital image printed with inkjet, acrylic, gold powder, and collage, 91.5 x 54 cm (artwork); 94.2 x 56.7 cm (with frame)  
Collection of Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec  
Purchase for the collection Prêt d'œuvres d'art du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec  
(CP.2019.1016)  
© Claudie Gagnon  
Photographer: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie

Claudie Gagnon often uses unusual materials in her playful yet poetic works. This **portrait** features an eccentric royal family formed of three characters dreamt up in the artist's imagination. The man on top, holding a potato-tipped wand, seems to be the king of butterflies. The woman holds an enormous bouquet of marigolds (yellow-orangey flowers), and the man in the pointy hat is about to sneeze—he is obviously allergic to pollen.

### AVENUES FOR THOUGHT

- Could you imagine a story about these three extraordinary characters?
- The artist chose a black background to highlight the three subjects of this **portrait**. What effect does it produce? Do you think it gives the **portrait** a particular atmosphere?

# Hua Jin

## *My Big Family – The Young Performer* 2011

Hua Jin is a multidisciplinary artist who focuses on nature and human relations in her work. To create the *My Big Family* series, she went to China, the country where she was born, to make portraits of most members of her extended family in various contexts: daily life, work, festivities. She documents, among other things, the consequences of the one-child policy, in effect in China from the 1970s to 2015. The child and the adult portrayed in this work, both wearing stage costumes, are about to perform an opera for a country celebration.

### AVENUES FOR THOUGHT

- The people portrayed are wearing very elegant clothing. Do you find that the setting matches how they are dressed?
- Like the girl in the photograph, do you take part in extracurricular activities? What do these activities bring you (friends, pleasure, a sense of achievement, or something else)?



# Skawennati

## *Dancing with Myself* 2015

Skawennati is an **Indigenous** artist of Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) origin who often uses cyberspace to imagine and create the future. In her new-media projects, she often stages real historical figures as well as fictional characters. This work is a double **self-portrait** of the artist: she appears beside her avatar—a character that we create to represent ourselves on the Internet or in a video game, for instance.

### AVENUES FOR THOUGHT

- If you could create a **self-portrait** of yourself in the future, what would you look like? What clothes and accessories would you wear?
- Do you play games on the Internet? Have you ever created a character for yourself to be able to participate in a game?



# Moridja Kitenge Banza

*Authentique n° 1*  
 [Authentic No. 1]  
 2017

*Authentique n° 2*  
 [Authentic No. 2]  
 2019

In his practice, Moridja Kitenge Banza, a Canadian artist born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Africa, explores the history and memory of places he has lived. He made these two self-portraits in his backyard in Montréal. On the left we see him in summertime, and on the right he appears in wintertime. The patterned fabric behind him refers to the textiles used in his home country to make clothing. To create these works, the artist mixed elements related to his birthplace with elements typical of Québec.

## AVENUES FOR THOUGHT

- Québec is composed of many different cultural communities, either Indigenous or the result of immigration. Can you name three of them? What aspects are typical of these communities (language, traditions, clothing, or other things)?
- Which object do you think best represents your country of birth? How would you include it in a self-portrait?



# Annie Baillargeon

## *Le cycle des affamées 4* [The Cycle of the Famished 4] 2019

Artist Annie Baillargeon, who integrates painting, performance, and **photography** into her works, explores the body and how it is portrayed. Her colourful **compositions** often bring together several figures in elaborate environments. Here, three women in party dresses are covered with confetti and playing with balloons. The artist applied paint to the **photograph** in a few places, a technique that gives the work a supernatural effect, as if the scene were taking place between dream and reality.

### AVENUES FOR THOUGHT

- In art, a **medium** is a technique or the materials used to create a work, such as drawing, painting or **photography**. How many **media** do you see in this **artwork**?
- If you had to create your own scene and anything was possible, what fantasy elements would you add to a photograph of you? Why these elements?



# Jonas St. Michael

## *Homer Pigeon* 2014

Photographer Jonas St. Michael stages mysterious situations in his works and invites us to imagine our own story around the complex scenes that he has thought up. He is interested in homing pigeons and their relationship with human beings, and he has focused on them in this work. Here, the action unfolds in a warehouse in Mumbai, India: three schoolgirls are standing next to small cages containing homing pigeons. The positions of the girls might suggest different stories: it's up to us to figure it out.

### AVENUES FOR THOUGHT

- Look carefully at the characters and the objects in the setting. What elements in the scene do you think are contradictory?
- The pigeons can be both domestic animals and wild animals. Do we have to make sure to protect these animals the same way we protect cats and dogs?



# How to Analyze an Artwork

Many questions can encourage appreciation and understanding of an artwork. Here you will find some avenues for guiding exchanges with your students, divided according to considerations linked to form, meaning, and effects.

By going beyond simple description, these avenues for discussion mobilize both observation and thought to foster an engagement among children that goes beyond the “I like it/I don’t like it” reaction to which our relationship with images is so often, unfortunately, reduced.

## FORM (what you see)

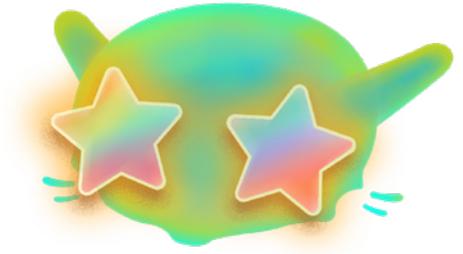
- Is the artwork two-dimensional or three-dimensional (or a combination of the two)?
- What medium did the artist use (photograph, video, sculpture, painting)?
- What did you look at first? Why?
- Is the artwork in colour or black and white? How do the colours or their absence influence our perception of the artwork?
- What kinds of textures are used?
- What elements is the artwork composed of?
- What elements can you identify in the composition? Is the work divided into more than one part?
- Do you find the artwork visually pleasing? Why?

## MEANING (what you understand)

- What do you think the artist is trying to express?
- What is the subject of the artwork? How is it represented?
- What is the title of the artwork? Is it possible to make a connection between the title and what you see?
- Can the work still be interesting even if you find it less visually pleasing? Explain why.

## EFFECTS (what you feel)

- What was your first impression when you saw the artwork?
- Was your perception different after a few minutes or after learning some information about the artwork?
- What emotions do you feel when you are with the artwork (joy, amazement, curiosity, sadness, anger, or something else)?
- What is it that makes you feel this way?



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”

# Glossary

**Artefact:** Object made by human beings. By extension, the term may also designate a magical and powerful object.

**Art gallery:** Venue intended to highlight and show artworks to a public. Galleries host temporary or permanent exhibitions.

**Artwork:** A creation, produced in different media (for example, painting, sculpture, photography, art video, digital). It is an original expression conveying an artist's thoughts and emotions. It is also a means of communication that transmits ideas, such as social concerns or messages aiming to deconstruct stereotypes. An artwork is an experience that the artist offers to the public. The objective is to have viewers experience emotions (amazement, surprise, etc.) and to think (by making them reassess their values or convictions, for example).

**Codex:** Notebook formed of handwritten pages bound together to form a book. It is the ancestor of the book as we know it today.

**Composition:** Organization of the different parts of an artwork. Composition concerns how the formal elements (treatment of the subject, of space, of colour, of light, of movement, of figures; distribution of shadows and light; choice of points of view, proportions, and so on) are placed.

**COVID-19:** This acronym refers to the disease caused by the novel coronavirus discovered in 2019. Propagation of the virus throughout the world in early 2020 has forced populations to adopt new behaviours to protect themselves from it, including wearing face masks and physical distancing, a practice that consists of separating oneself from other people by a few metres.

**Cultural communities:** Social groups issuing from various nationalities (Italian, Vietnamese, etc.), from immigration, and from Indigenous nations, and constituting the cultural diversity that forms Québec society.

**Gender:** A term referring to characteristics regarding masculinity and femininity—characteristics that vary depending on the era and the society. A person's gender identity may be male, female, non-binary, or another gender.

**Genre:** In art, genre refers to the type of subject portrayed in an artwork. Examples of genres are landscape, portrait, and historical scene.

**Indigenous:** Internationally, the term "Indigenous" designates the original populations of countries that were colonized. In Canada, three Indigenous groups are recognized: the First Nations, the Inuit, and the Métis. During the period of European colonization, which began in 1492, their land was stolen and their cultural practices were banned. Today, Indigenous culture in Canada is being revitalized and its value rediscovered, including in the visual arts.



# Glossary

**Identity:** The different aspects that make up an individual, including age, gender, sexual orientation, origins, interests, and membership in a group (ethnic, social, etc.).

**Medium (plural: media):** Artistic discipline chosen by the artist (painting, sculpture, photography, video, drawing, etc.). It also refers to the materials that an artist uses (paint, stone, pencil, etc.).

**Multidisciplinary:** Artists are said to be multidisciplinary when they use several means of expression in their work, such as photography, film, and sculpture.

**One-child policy:** In force in China from the 1970s to 2015 to counter overpopulation in that country, this law forbade households from having more than one child.

**Perception:** The act of feeling through one of the five senses (seeing, hearing, touch, smell, and taste) or through the mind.

**Photography:** Originally, this was a technique that made it possible to fix the image of objects through the action of light on a sensitive surface, film (analogue photography). In digital photography, the most widespread form of photography today, an electronic sensor produces the image.

**Portrait:** Representation, using painting, drawing, photography, video, sculpture, or any other form of expression, of one or more people with the aim of describing their personality and/or their physical appearance. In art, the portrait may represent a situation or a personality, real or fictional, tell a personal story, or simply preserve a memory. There are various types of portraits, including self-portraits, family portraits, digital portraits, and equestrian portraits.

**Self-portrait:** Category of portraits designating works in which artists portray themselves.

**Traditions:** Group of cultural habits specific to a group, transmitted over time, notably through writings or spoken word.

**Video art:** Art form that developed in the 1960s through the use of technological means that involve recordings of moving images and sounds.

# About MOMENTA

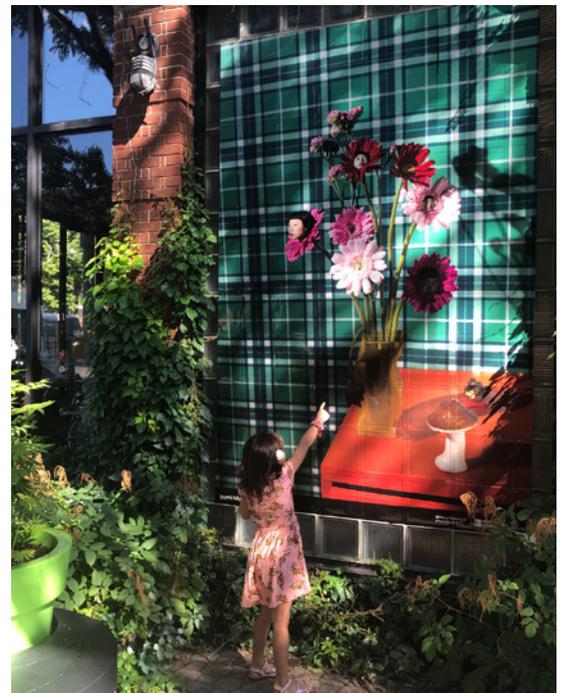
MOMENTA | Biennale de l'image is an international contemporary art event devoted to the image. Based in Tiohtiá:ke — Mooniyang — Montreal, the biennale has taken place every two years since 1989. Its activities include exhibitions, public events, educational programs, artistic and social collaborations, and more.

## MOMENTA Creative

The MOMENTA Creative cultural mediation program offers a series of educational activities, creative workshops, and guided tours developed in response to the biennale's theme. Designed with inclusion and representativeness in mind, MOMENTA Creative offers sensitive and sensible experiences to a diversity of publics, for families, groups, and individuals.



*Objects as Reflections of Self*, workshop offered in partnership with Brila, Galerie de l'UQAM, MOMENTA 2019. Photo credit: Jean-Michael Seminaro



Work by Izumi Miyazaki, #TrouvezIzumi Tour, Mile End, MOMENTA 2019. Photo credit: Jean-Michael Seminaro

 [momentabiennale](https://www.instagram.com/momentabiennale)

 [MOMENTA Biennale de l'image](https://www.facebook.com/MOMENTA.Biennale.de.l.image)

# The Gallery of Mysteries

Did you enjoy the experience? Try our other educational video game with your students!

## The Adventure

The Gallery of Mysteries has always existed. No one knows when this [art gallery](#), deep in the woods, was built or who it belongs to. Many legends surround this strange and fascinating place. Out of friendship for Nour, whose camera was lost upon daring to venture into the Gallery of Mysteries, you go to look for the misplaced object. To get it back, you will have to conquer the challenges of the Gallery of Mysteries.

[Try the game now](#)

## → LEVEL

Elementary cycles 2 and 3

## AGE GROUP

9 to 12 years



# Credits

**Publication director**

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Béatrice and Victoria Jarrin

We would like to thank the children who responded to our questionnaire.  
Without their support, this game would not have come into being.

MOMENTA is an effervescence  
of encounters that transform, one work  
at a time, our understanding of the world.