Inspiration to Act: Building Community
Thomas Glassford’s sculptures, large-scale installations, and public projects explore the intersections of art, design, architecture, community, and the natural world. First installed at the University Museum El Chopo, part of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, *Siphonophora* is inspired by the giant ocean creatures of the same name that appear to be single organisms, but are instead interdependent communities of different animals, each with different functions that allow the organism to flourish.

For this work, individual concrete and plaster sculptures based on forms found in nature have been painted white and strung together, merging into one enormous floating colony. The work, like the ocean organism, serves as a metaphor for our interdependence with the natural world and, by extension, our ecological survival.
After engaging your students in discussions about the artwork and the theme of community the next step will be the Action Projects! Explore ideas with your class about ways they can raise awareness about their diverse communities and their importance.

To get you started, here are some ideas:

1. Have your class create art posters that show the diversity in our communities and invite the wider school to view their gallery.

2. Ask your students to create a research project that explores diversity in their schools.

3. Create a heritage map and invite all students to add pins to the display that represent them.

4. Invite community members to share in an assembly where your students honor them.

5. Create a short drama piece that shows why community is important. These could be presented in assembly or filmed and screened.

6. Create a community newspaper/blog that is shared through the school and homes.

Take pictures of your completed projects and send them to education@blantonmuseum.org and austin@adl.org.
TALK

*Show your students Siphonophora by Thomas Glassford.*

Encourage your students to just look for a full minute
Ask your students to turn to a friend and discuss what they see. Collect some one-word responses, phrases or ideas on chart paper.

LOOK

*Engage your students in some guided looking with these discussion questions:*

- What's going on in this picture?
- What colors do you see?
- What could it be? A plant, a creature?
- What might be its habitat? Are there any clues in the picture?
- What are some things that are similar, different?
- How are the different parts connected?
- Could this be a single creature or many? What do you see that makes you think that?
- This work is called *Siphonophora* and is inspired by an ocean sea creature. It is made up of many organisms functioning together. Who lives in your house? How do you function together? What about your school, or community?
- What different community groups do we belong to?
- Why is community important?
- How do we contribute to our communities?
- What does it mean to belong?
- What does it feel like to not belong?
- What is an ally?
- Why are allies important in communities?
- How can we work to build a community where everyone feels included?
TALK

Ask your students to turn to a friend and talk about the different ways that people contribute to our communities. Collect ideas on chart paper.

MAKE

Guide students to draw or make the imagined habitat for this *Siphonophora*.

Encourage students to consider the many different parts of this creature in their designs.
ADL's No Place for Hate®, the Blanton Museum of Art, AISD, and The CREATE Lab have teamed up to bring anti-bias education and object based learning to our schools. This resource is one in a series featuring a work of art from the Blanton selected to foster important conversations and inspire students to act! The theme for this series is **Community**, and this work of art should be used to foster curiosity about our many communities and raise awareness of our sense of belonging.

This guide has everything you need to create successful discussions and a No Place for Hate Action Project.

**Here you will find:**

- No Place for Hate guidelines for Action Projects
- Information about the artist and artwork
- Guiding questions for initial discussion and making
- Suggested community action projects

As this guide reaches multiple schools, we hope it will inspire students to work together to create action projects that can be shared and celebrated.

Please share your projects to austin@adl.org, education@blantonmuseum.org and Cultural. Proficiency@austinisd.org

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No Place for Hate® is a self-directed framework helping educators and students take the lead on improving and maintaining a school climate where all students thrive. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) offers resources to ensure that anti-bias and diversity education are an integral part of the school curriculum. No Place for Hate® also helps create and sustain inclusive school environments where all students feel valued and have the opportunity to succeed by promoting respect for individual difference while challenging bigotry and prejudice. Launched in Austin schools in the fall of 2004, the popular campaign has been embraced by hundreds of campuses throughout the Central Texas region. Austin ISD is the largest No Place for Hate® school district in the United States.

The Need for Discussion

The success of No Place for Hate® relies on the assurance that all members of school communities have a central voice in creating a plan that will lead to lasting change. The foundation for creating that change is a strong coalition of school leaders — students, educators, and family members — who have a stake in the outcomes of that plan.

There is no more obvious stakeholder than a student. Too often, adults assume they know what is needed to support youth, but without engaging students in the process, change can be elusive. No Place for Hate® Committees create activities that amplify students’ voices and give them opportunities be active participants.

All qualifying activities must be consistent with the No Place for Hate® mission by challenging bigotry, bias and bullying; exposing young people to diverse identity groups, backgrounds and points of view; promoting respect for individual and group differences; and providing opportunities for community-building within the school. Projects should challenge students to think critically, instill a sense of empathy, and empower students to become allies for one another.

No Place For Hate® Activities Should:

- Involve all students in active learning
- Involve all students in discussion and debriefing of activities
- Address school-based issues
- Have a school-wide impact
- Take place throughout the school year, with three or more activities spread out over time
- Focus on inclusivity and community

For more information visit austin.adl.org/noplaceforhate.