

FAMILY GUIDE: AUTUMN (...NOTHING PERSONAL), Teresita Fernández

Thank you for coming to experience *Autumn (...Nothing Personal)*!

Read this guide together to learn more about artist Teresita Fernández and her artwork. Here you will find discussion questions followed by suggestions for art activities and further thinking.

About the work

Autumn (...Nothing Personal) is a sculpture that the artist Teresita Fernández created specifically for Harvard Yard. The sculpture is a series of circles, made of wooden benches and tall, thin rods of yellow-pinstriped plastic.

Where can you find these materials in the sculpture? What else do you notice about this sculpture? How would you describe it?

Normally, there is no sculpture in this part of Harvard Yard. The artwork creates something new and different, and changes what people see when they walk through the Yard every day.

Is anything happening in the sculpture right now? Take some time to notice how the people in Harvard Yard are interacting with this sculpture. What do you think people might do differently if the sculpture weren't here?

It also changes what you hear! A lot of performances, conversation, and other events happen inside and around this sculpture. The artist wants people to have a space to perform, make noise, and be seen.

If you could do anything you wanted inside this sculpture, what would you do and why?

Part of this work's title is "Autumn," because the artist also wanted this artwork to be about change—just like the leaves change in the fall. When Teresita Fernández created this artwork, she was thinking about that kind of change, but she was also thinking about the way that other things change—the way people, places, and histories change over time.

What changes in the fall? Imagine this piece during different seasons? What would it look like in the winter, or in the spring? Can you name some other things that change over time?

One specific kind of change she was thinking about is the way that people can change things around them when they protest or take political action. She thought about the things that Harvard students have protested here in Harvard Yard, and she created a sculpture that includes benches so that it would become a place where people could sit and meet and talk about important issues.

If you had a meeting here, what would you talk about? If you protested for or against something, what would it be? What is something that is important to you?

About the artist

Teresita Fernández is an American artist who creates large, public sculptures. Many of these sculptures are inspired by nature or by the spaces around them. Her work is meant to be experienced by the public—many of her sculptures invite you in to touch them, sit on them, or use them in other ways.

How can you use this artwork? What can you do in, with, or on it? What do you see other people using it for?

Fernández thinks carefully about the materials she uses to create her sculptures, sometimes using materials in new or unexpected ways. In the past, she has used materials like gold, graphite (the same thing that's in pencils) and other minerals in her work.

What materials can you find in this artwork? Try touching the sculpture: what do the materials feel like?

All of Fernández's work, from her large sculptural installations to her small graphite drawings, is connected to her interest in how people look at things. A lot of her artwork is designed to make things look different or to make the viewer see things differently by changing something about the light in a space.

What do you see when you look at this work? Do things look different when you look at them through the artwork? What does sunlight look like when it hits the sculpture?

If you'd like to learn more about Teresita Fernández, you can read more about her at her website:

Activity suggestions

- Draw this sculpture. Now, draw what you can see *through* the sculpture. Now, sit inside the sculpture and draw what you can see outside of it!
- This sculpture is **site-specific**, which means that Teresita Fernández came here to Harvard Yard and looked at it and thought about this place before she planned the artwork she would build here. Think of a place that's important to you and plan a site-specific sculpture for it. Here are some questions to consider:
 - o What does the place you chose look like?
 - o Who usually uses this place? What do they do there?
 - o Do you want your sculpture to change the way that people use your place?
 - o What do you want people to think, feel, see, or do when they use your sculpture?
 - o Draw your site-specific sculpture! Make sure to draw what's around it so that people can tell where it is.
- Teresita Fernández wants people to use this sculpture in order to do things like perform, talk, and protest. Take her up on it! If no one is using the work right now, can you plan a performance or a protest? Sing a song, or make a speech, or perform a dance!

Contact information

- If you're interested in knowing more about this sculpture, or if you're a teacher or group leader and would like to plan a visit to *Autumn (...Nothing Personal)*, please contact correna_cohen@harvard.edu.