

Pablo

Castañeda

Border Autofictions

Print this activity or find a blank sheet of paper and a pencil.

Kunstinstituut Melly

Pablo Castañeda



Ficción y desierto en la frontera (Fiction and dessert at the border), 2022.

If you come to Kunstinstituut Melly, and climb up to the second floor, you will see a large gallery filled with over forty paintings. These paintings are made by artist Pablo Castañeda. The artist lives in Mexico, in a city named Mexicali. This city is a “border city”, meaning that the city is right next to the border between the United States and Mexico. The artist creates his artworks in this city and transforms what he sees around him into paintings. Moreover, the landscape around the city, the people and his friends are often portrayed in his paintings. For Castañeda, painting is the most powerful way to express and show to the world who he is.

Border Autofictions

The title of this exhibition *Border Autofictions* means the paintings the artist makes are often about his own life, but also about the world around him. What is it like to live so close to the border? For example, imagine your house is located in Mexico, but your school is in the United States so that each day you go to school, you have to cross the border and have to show your passport.

In the exhibition there are more than forty paintings and a wall mural. The paintings are categorised in themes. For example, you can find a group of paintings that are all painted in the theme of the desert or the border. Symbols of traveling, night landscapes and political powers are some of the other themes explored in the exhibition.



El departamento (The Apartment), 2018.



Alegoría de la fe (Allegory of Faith), 2020.



A la manifestación 3: La caída (To the demonstration 3: The Fall), 2014.



Frontera 4 (Border 4), 2019.

Have a close look at the four paintings on this page: in the circles you will find different themes that are present in the exhibition.

1a.
Draw lines between these different themes and the paintings that you think match together. If you don't know the meaning of the words you can use your phone and look up the meaning on internet.

1b.
Fill the empty circles with words you think fit the paintings best.

tragedy

demonstration

portrait

or

apartment

borders

desert

or

Image as language



Ficción y desierto en la frontera (Fiction and desert at the border), 2022.

The artist Pablo Castañeda was born deaf. He is not able to hear, and because of this he is unable to speak as well. Therefore images are particularly important for him. By painting Castañeda found his own language to communicate. A lot of his paintings are painted in black, white and shades of grey. Sometimes the paintings look a lot like photographs and it's hard to see if it's painted or photographed. For the exhibition at Kunstinstituut Melly, next to the forty paintings he has made throughout his life, the artist made a mural. At the top of this page you can see an image of this mural.

Look thoroughly at the image of the mural. The landscape you see is the desert surrounding the city where the artist lives.

2.

Now imagine the first three sentences of a story that could take place in this landscape. Write these down in the open space next to this text.



Your environment as an art piece

The city in which the artist Pablo Castañeda lives attracts to a lot of people who want to cross the border between Mexico and the United States. The United States used to be called “the land of opportunities”. The city is also popular because of the high production of cotton that is made in this city. The artist incorporates the events he sees and experiences in his paintings. Now we are going to look at our own environment and turn it into an art piece that describes and re-imagines our surroundings.



Paisaje montañoso 3: Red Beetle (Mountainous Landscape 3: Red Beetle), 2014.



Simulacro 14: Sin luz (Simulacrum 14: No light), 2009.



Simulacro 15: Carretera imposible (Simulacrum 15: Impossible Highway), 2009.

3d. **jouw herinnering:**



Simulacro 21: Locura en la ciudad (Simulacrum 21: Madness in the city), 2010.

3a.
In which country, city or village do you live in? Write down your answer in the space on the next page.

3b.
What do you find the most extraordinary about the environment where you live in? You can think of the people, the buildings, the landscape or nature. Write down two of these characteristics of your environment on the next page.

3c.
Now you can choose a colour that fits with your environment and write down this colour in the space on the next page.

3d.
Do you have a memory that took place in your environment? That can be a happy, sad or difficult memory. Describe this memory in the space on the next page.

3e.
We are now going to make a drawing in the big open space on the next page of the memory you have written down in the colour you have chosen earlier. For this drawing you can also use pictures of magazines or different materials you can find.

3f.
Make a picture of your drawing with your phone and email the picture to activiteiten@kunstinstituutmelly.nl. We will place your art piece on the website.

Tip! In need of some inspiration? Click on [this link](#).

3a. your country and village or city:

Your environment as an art piece

3b. the two most extraordinary
details from your environment

3d. your drawing, painting
or collage:

3c. the colour that suits your
environment:

Kunstinstituut Melly

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