

JULIAN SCHNABEL: Symbols of Actual Life

“It’s like paddling out in big surf. There’s a wall there, and you are a certain size and the sea is a certain size and these paintings are a certain size. It happens so quickly, you just want to relive that and be in that sensation again. Painting for me is like that. The joy of just doing it and being lost in the experience of that is compelling to me.” —JULIAN SCHNABEL



Welcome to our latest contemporary art installation! These projects offer a chance to help you see the Museums' collections, buildings, and locations in new ways. This exhibition of artist and filmmaker Julian Schnabel's work includes new paintings created for the Legion's Court of Honor as well as selections from past series. Below are some questions to discuss and reflect on as a family.

General Discussion Questions

- What surprises you about these paintings?
- What are the ingredients of a painting?
- How do you think Schnabel's paintings outside will be affected by the weather? How will they change?
- What makes one of Schnabel's paintings the same or different from another artwork in the museum?

Deeper Engagement

Below are themes to consider when looking at Schnabel's paintings as well as questions to prompt family discussions.

Scale

Schnabel's artwork asks us to think about size. Schnabel had to use his outdoor studio to work on the large-scale paintings.

- What do you notice when you look at the paintings up close versus from far away?
- What tools do you think Schnabel used to make his paintings? What do you see that makes you say that?
- What is the biggest painting you ever created?

Materials

Schnabel often paints on found materials. Here are some of the materials he used:

- Tarp that was being used at a fruit market in southern Mexico
- Sailcloth he discovered on traditional felucca boats in Egypt
- Linen also found in Mexico
- Reprints of nineteenth-century wallpaper
- Traditional art materials: Gesso, Oil paint and Plaster

What could be challenging about working with found materials? What could be exciting?

Wander through Galleries 8, 10, and 12. Look at the art made by other artists in this gallery. What materials did those artists use?

Shape

Schnabel uses a lot of different shapes in his paintings and sculptures. Many of the painted forms look random, but some of them are repeated across his work. The Jane Birkin paintings take the shapes of the Egyptian felucca sails they were painted on.

- Look at the shapes you find in the paintings. What kind of movements do you see in the lines and shapes?
- Make the shape in the air with an imagined paintbrush. How many moves would you make to “paint” those marks?