

# Post-visit Project 1: Sign Language

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## **Objective:**

To explore ways of making students' own visual lexicon or vocabulary of signs.

**“I am intrigued with the shapes people choose as their symbols to create a language... There is within all forms a basic structure, an indication of the entire object with a minimum of lines that becomes a symbol. This is common to all languages, all people, all times.”**

-Keith Haring, journal entry, 1979

**“The way it began, was to draw my tag—tag, meaning signature or what graffiti artists called their name. So my tag was an animal, which started to look more and more like a dog. Then I drew a little person crawling on all fours, and the more I drew it, the more it became The Baby. So on the streets I'd do various configurations of the dog and the baby. Sometimes, it would be a row of babies, and the dog behind them. I was using these images, always bearing in mind the Burroughs/Gysin cut-up ideas. And I juxtaposed these different tags or signatures or image, which would convey a different meaning depending on how you combined them.”**

-Keith Haring, John Gruen, *Keith Haring, The Authorized Biography*, p. 65 (see Bibliography)

## **Suggested Project:**

### **Your Own Sign Language in Pictures**

Use your imagination to invent your own sign language in pictures.

Use the picture you chose for your name tag as part of your sign language.

Think about three or more things that are important to you—figures, animals, or objects.

Think of the simplest way you can draw them just with lines, and practice them until you can draw them quickly and easily.

On a fresh piece of paper draw 4 squares like a cartoon or comic strip.

Create a story using your sign language and your imagination.

How will you suggest movement?

Ask your students to show their sign language stories to the class, and have the class use their imagination to tell what happens in the stories.

**Supplies:** pencils, paper, markers.

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### **Found Object/Sign Language Sculpture**

Find a used object or container, such as: an empty chalk box, shoe box, cereal box, an empty soda can, plastic bottle, a used envelope, subway map, magazine, newspaper, or candy wrapper.

Use your sign language to make drawings on your found object.  
Use your imagination to tell a story.

**Supplies:** Found object, Sharpies or permanent markers.

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