

Kids @ CAM – At Home Family Projects

Spotlight on CAM's Collection

PHILIP FREELON

About the Artist:

“I derive a tremendous amount of pride in developing places that everyday people can experience. I like to create beauty in everyday lives.”

Philip Goodwin Freelon (1953 – 2019) was an American architect. He was best known for leading the design team of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture. Some of his other projects include the Center for Civil & Human Rights, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture and the Museum of the African Diaspora. In 2012, President Barack Obama appointed Freelon to the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. Freelon was married to six-time Grammy nominated jazz vocalist Nnenna Freelon.

Freelon studied architecture at North Carolina State University and earned an M.Arch. from M.I.T. He was the youngest architect to pass the registration exam in North Carolina, at age 25. Freelon founded his practice, The Freelon Group, in Durham, North Carolina, in 1990, and went on to design civic and cultural projects throughout the United States—libraries, schools, museums, parks, and academic buildings, notably for a number of historically African American colleges. Freelon was a highly influential leader in the profession, where barely two percent of registered architects are African American, and hugely encouraging to younger minority practitioners. He was a fierce proponent for equity and pluralism and brought a deep humanism to the communities with whom he worked and to his architecture. Throughout his prodigious career, award-winning architect Phil Freelon found photography essential to his design vision and creative process.

“Photography is one of the vehicles that I use to share my view of the world. As an architect the expression of structure is central to my design process, bringing a sense of order to the final composition. Behind the lens, I seek to capture those fragments of space and time that invite closer examination.”



ART AT HOME – Neighborhood Exploration Photography

What You Will Need:

- Phone, camera or anything that can take photographs and is easily portable
- 8 X 11 Paper
- Scissors

Philip Freelon’s love of architecture and photography were intertwined. He believed photography was essential to his architecture and he believed that you may find beauty in everyday places.

- Step 1 – Fold your piece of paper in half.
- Step 2 – Following the sides of your paper, cut out a rectangle, creating a “viewfinder”.
- Step 3 – Walk around your home, yard or neighborhood (be sure to have your parents’ permission or ask them to join you!)
- Step 4 – Using your viewfinder, look for beautiful images in your surroundings.
- Step 5 – Take pictures of the views you find the most interesting and pleasing to the eye.

Tips:

- Try to see your surroundings differently by taking your time, paying more attention to the details and finding something in them to appreciate.
- Use different perspectives – look at things both close-up and far away.
- Experiment with how objects look in relation to one another. Have more than one subject.

Questions for Discussion:

- How many new things did you notice during your walk?
- Did looking for scenes to photograph change the way you saw your surroundings?
- What did you notice you were most drawn to while taking pictures? Do you notice a theme in your photographs?

Follow Up Project Idea:

- Incorporate sketching into your next Neighborhood Exploration Photography session. Bring along paper or sketch pad and pencils or other drawing utensils and draw the scenes that you will photograph. Compare the two. If you can print your photograph, display them side by side.



