

# EDUCATOR GUIDE

MATT KISH & ROBERT DEL TREDICI: CHASING THE WHALE

## MATT KISH

- Librarian and former high school English teacher. Lives in Dayton, Ohio.
- Kish is self taught and considers himself to be an outsider artist. He does not make a living from his art.
- Matt Kish's childhood influenced his love for images. He was surrounded by 1970's album covers, science fiction/fantasy novels, comics and children's literature about monsters.

## ROBERT DEL TREDICI

- Teacher, photographer and artist. Currently living in Montreal.
- Del Tredici took part in 8 years of a 12 year seminary program before suffering a loss of faith. Studied philosophy and literature at the University of California Berkley.
- Atomic photographer who has been documenting the nuclear age since 1979.

## THEMES

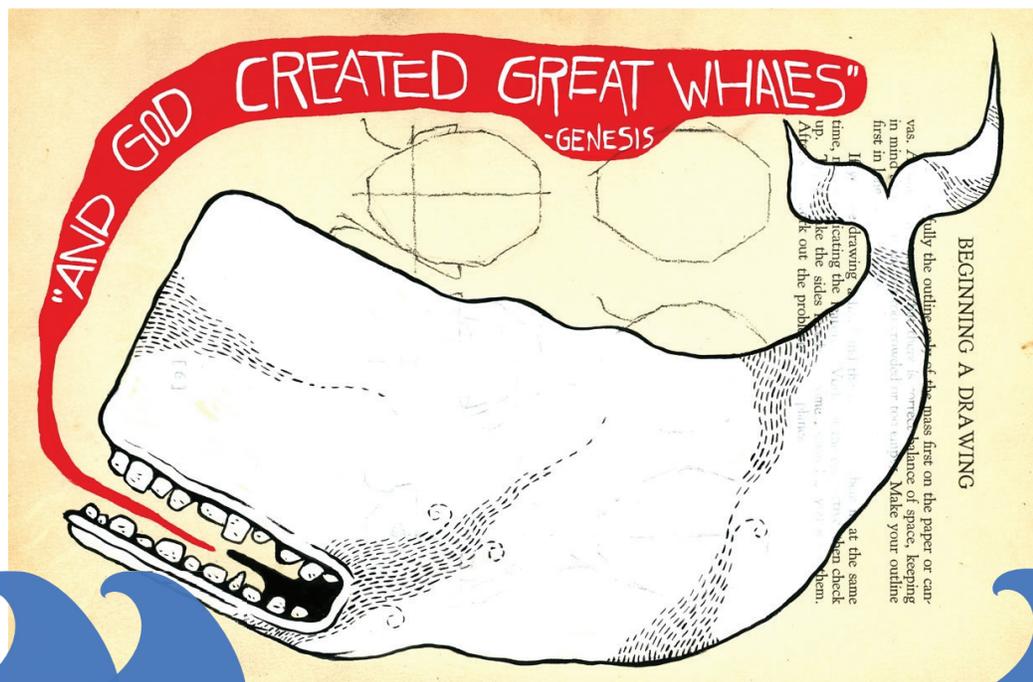
- Man vs. Nature
- Illustration
- Journey
- Monsters

## EXHIBITION/WORK

- This exhibition brings together two artists who were both inspired by Herman Melville's iconic 1851 novel, Moby Dick.
- Matt Kish illustrated a page a day from Moby Dick. It took him 543 days. He began the project on August 5, 2009 and ended January 29, 2011. During the second half of the process Kish compared himself to Ahab and felt consumed with finishing his task and finally slaying the project/monster.
- Kish posted finished illustrations on his blog and was offered a book deal during the middle of the project. Each of his illustrations is based on a line or passage from a page in the book.
- Moby Dick's narrator, Ishmael, resonated with Del Tredici because this character was a man on a journey to avoid self-destruction as well as gain understanding and knowledge.
- Robert Del Tredici has an interest in the dynamic between image and text. As a teacher he would have his students illustrate passages from assigned readings and he began to do the same.

## MATERIALS

- Photography
- Mixed media
- Paint, ink, oil pastel
- Silkscreen prints



## ACTIVITIES

- Multiple Lessons can be found at: [www.contemporaryartscenter.org/learn](http://www.contemporaryartscenter.org/learn)

## RESOURCES

- [www.pbs.org/newshour/art/in-pursuit-of-the-great-white-whale](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/in-pursuit-of-the-great-white-whale)
- <http://logger.believermag.com/post/65727134131/an-interview-with-illustrator-matt-kish>
- <http://aeqai.com/main/2013/11/letter-from-highland-heights-moby-dick-art-by-matt-kish-and-robert-del-tredici/>
- Kish, Matt Moby Dick in Pictures, One Drawing For Every Page

## DISCUSSION/BEFORE

- Introduce the artists Matt Kish and Robert DelTredici. Talk about the work they've created and how it's inspired by Moby Dick. Ask the class if you can tell a story using only images.
- What are other examples of drawings and words coming together? (comics, cartoons)
- What makes you want to read a book? The cover? The Title?
- Matt Kish made a work of art each day for 543 days. How did this process add to the artwork?
- Can you imagine spending that much time on a project? How would it make you feel? Have you ever set a goal and completed it?

## DISCUSSION/AFTER

- The title of this exhibition is Chasing the Whale, what is the chase?
- How are Matt and Robert's work similar? How are they different?
- Did you see Robert DelTredici's series Phone Faces? DelTredici draws portraits of people he's never seen after talking to them on the phone. How might a person's voice or manner of speaking effect how we view them? How is this similar to creating art work for the text in Moby Dick?
- In A Bestiary Matt Kish drew a different monster for each letter of the alphabet, and then has the author Robert Kloss react to each drawing with a short story or poem. Why do you think Kish is so interested in monsters? What are some real life monsters? How is this similar to his process of drawing Moby Dick? How is it different?

## QUOTES

"Near the end, portraits of Ahab are self portraits. That sense of isolation and anger really colored the last few pieces." –Matt Kish

"Doing this project, though, was really the most personally intimate I had ever been with the novel and near the end it began to be really more of a mirror of myself and some of the things I had experienced, and what my life had been like so far, and how the book had been a companion to me throughout my life." –Matt Kish

"Melville was no conventional teller of tales: he has crafted here a crinkly, sprawling blueprint for surviving any journey I might imagine, especially the one I felt in my bones I was on." –Robert DelTredici

