Robert Gober, *Untitled*, 1992-2007



Robert Gober, *Untitled,* 1992-2007.

1 Close Looking and Principles of Design

- What do you see as you approach and walk around the artwork?
- What do you think is happening? What details make you say that?
- What questions do you have about the artist's choices, materials, scale, or the meaning of the work? What are you curious to learn more about?

*Consider using terms like **line, form, scale, balance,** and **negative space.***

2 Learn More About the Artist:

- Robert Gober was born in 1954 in Wallingford, Connecticut. Gober grew up in a Catholic family. His experiences growing up in a conservative community, as well as living through the AIDS epidemic, have strongly influenced his art.
- He is known for turning everyday objects into sculptures that help people to think in new ways. Sinks are common objects in his work. *Untitled, 1992* is the first time his sinks have flowing water.
- His work explores themes such as identity, religion, family life, gender, and belonging.
- He likes to combine different materials to create installations that make familiar objects feel unusual or unexpected.
- A major moment in his career came in 2001 when he represented the United States at the Venice Biennale, an important international art exhibition.

About the Artwork:

- *Untitled (1992)* is a large installation. The work includes sculptures and a large hand-painted forest mural, which took 14 weeks to complete using a paint-by-numbers process.
- Gober combines familiar objects—such as sinks, newspapers, prison bars, drains, and faucets—to explore ideas about nature, truth, home life, and society.
- During the time this was made, some news coverage spread fear and negative stereotypes about LGBTQ+ people and HIV/AIDS. The art reflects his experience as a gay man during the AIDS crisis.
- Through unexpected combinations of images and objects, Gober encourages visitors to think about what they believe, how people are represented, and how personal and shared histories are remembered.

Glenstone Connection:

- Glenstone worked closely with Robert Gober to create Room 4 as the long-term home this work.
- It begins at the entrance, where an unfinished-looking door and carefully selected materials make the room feel like an active construction site.
- To preserve this effect, Glenstone staff found plywood and other materials without modern logos or brand names that could distract from the artwork.
- Building the installation required collaboration across many Glenstone departments.

- Engineer Rene Sandoval designed a special plumbing system that keeps water flowing continuously through the sink, an important part of the artwork function.
- The water is cleaned and reused with ultraviolet (UV) light, allowing the installation to operate sustainably while staying true to Gober's original vision.



Robert Gober



Bride Contact Sheet from Robert Gober Collection



Behind the scenes photo of water tank with pipes and gauges, indicating water levels and pump status.

3 Reflect

Worldview and Social Impact

- What themes or ideas do you think this installation explores?
- How might the artist's background or cultural context shape the work?
- Why do you think Gober combines everyday objects with images of nature and public spaces?
- Look carefully at the headlines on the newspapers around the room to get a clue about what the artists was thinking.

This invites discussion of empathy, interpretation, and perception.

Details and Material

Examine a section of the room closely.

- Which object, image, or part of the room catches your attention first? Why?
- How does the hand-painted forest mural affect the mood of the room?
- Why do you think he chose real materials such as water, sinks, and newspapers instead of only using paint?

*Introduce words like **immersive, surface, cyclical,** and **story telling**.*

Personal Reflection

After moving through the sculpture, reflect:

- **I feel... (emotion or reaction)**
- **I think... (insight or idea sparked)**
- **I am... (state of being or identity)**

Connect art to personal meaning, mindfulness, and self.

Robert Gober, Untitled, 1992-2007
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Photo: Ron Amstutz

Accessibility Note:
Low lighting and loud continuous sound of water rushing.