



Ikeda Manabu (Japanese, b. 1973), [Meltdown](#), 2013, acrylic ink on paper mounted on board, Colonel Rex W. and Maxine Schuster Radsch Endowment fund purchase, 2013.24

Ikeda Manabu, *Meltdown*

Key Idea

An important part of sustainability is thinking about what the future could look like.

Objectives

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Closely examine *Meltdown* by Ikeda Manabu to make personal connections
2. Consider the future of their environment as it relates to sustainability
3. Work individually and in groups to create a collaborative art project

Lesson

1. Choose a close-looking prompt (from the introduction page) to encourage students to study the artwork.
2. Next, provide the class with background information using the “About the Artist” and “About the Artwork” sections below.
3. Engage the class in conversation using the discussion questions.
4. Follow up the class discussion with a recommended learning activity.

LEARN

About the Artist

Ikeda Manabu is a Japanese artist who primarily works with pens and acrylic inks to create highly detailed works of art. Due to the level of detail and large scale of his artworks, he often takes over a year to create a single piece of art. For his monumental works, Ikeda does not plan the composition ahead of time, rather he imagines a theme and allows the image to develop organically over time. Manabu’s work typically shows the relationship, and often struggle, between nature and humans.

About the Artwork

Ikeda Manabu created *Meltdown* in 2012, inspired by the 2011 earthquake in Japan, which caused an enormous tsunami that struck and destroyed a nuclear power plant in Fukushima, Japan. Tens of thousands of people evacuated from their homes when a massive amount of radiation contaminated the soil and water in the region. *Meltdown* shows a massive industrial site, filled with factories and machines, built on a block of rock and ice slipping down a mountain toward the sea below. *Meltdown* shows Manabu’s dream-like vision for the future of the environment as it relates to the relationship between humans and nature. The artist has stated that his works are open ended, and that ultimately the viewers of his drawings create their own stories about the subjects he depicts.

DISCUSS

1. How does *Meltdown* relate to sustainability? What do you see that makes you say that?
2. The humans and animals in *Meltdown* are white figures that are often hidden in the landscape. Why do think the artist chose to draw them this way?
3. How are animals and nature interacting in this artwork? How would you describe their relationship? What do you see that makes you say that?
4. *Meltdown* shows Ikeda Manabu’s vision for the future. What do you think the future of your environment will look like in 50 years? 100 years? 1000 years?
5. If you stood in this space, what might you hear? What might you smell? How might you feel?

CONNECT IDEAS

Write It!

Viewpoints—To build upon observations and link ideas, ask students to select a viewpoint—or perspective—from which to view the artwork, such as one of the individuals or objects depicted in the image or the artist. Then ask them to write a letter from this person or thing’s perspective describing the artwork to someone seeing it for the first time. The letter should address details that individual or object might care about, believe in, or wonder about. Examples of alternate perspectives include the viewpoint of a person such as a scientist, naturalist, artist, child, adult or from the perspective of an inanimate object contained in the artwork.

Draw It!

Post-it Note Future—To encourage students to think like an artist, ask students to choose an environmental issue and design a series of post-it notes to show how this issue will impact the future. This activity can be done individually or in teams. Each post-it can represent a year in the future (five years, 50 years, 100 years). Encourage students to connect the idea of thinking about the future to the meaning of sustainability.

GO FURTHER

Videos

Video showing Ikeda Manabu’s process https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TI_8WMUNDhk

Video about Japanese children photographing recovery after the 2011 earthquake
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2THmgK9go-U>

Book

Kenta and the Big Wave by Ruth Ohi

Teaching Resources and Lesson Plans

Green Education: [Energy Activity Book](http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/institute/lesson-clearinghouse/540-energy_activity_book.html) http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/institute/lesson-clearinghouse/540-energy_activity_book.html

STANDARDS

Art and Design

A.A.R.6.i: Describe: Describe details, subject matter, and the context of an artwork.

A.A.R.9.i: Inquire: Determine an artist’s intent by identifying the details, subject matter, and context of an artwork.

Environmental Literacy and Sustainability

ELS.EN6.A.i Identify cause and effect relationships and examine how a system's structure or behavior needs to change to achieve intended outcomes.

ELS.EN7.C.i Reflect on the immediate and potential future outcomes of a stewardship experience and strategize options that would minimize risks while maximizing outcomes for sustainability of natural and cultural systems.