

At Home Drawing Activity



Choose **ONE** of your **FAVORITE OBJECTS** and *place* it on a table or on the floor.

SKETCH your **OBJECT**.

You can use color if you like as well.

Is there a **FUNNY STORY** associated with this object?

Once you have finished, come up with **FIVE WORDS** inspired by the object and **PLAYFULLY** include these words in a **SENTENCE** within your image.

THANK YOU
for exploring the world of
Maira Kalman!

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www.thejewishmuseum.org/families

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Maira Kalman: Various Illuminations (of a Crazy World) A Gallery Guide for Families

WELCOME TO THE JEWISH MUSEUM! COME TO THE SECOND FLOOR AND EXPERIENCE MAIRA KALMAN'S WONDERFUL WORLD OF UNIQUE PEOPLE, OBJECTS, AND PLACES. ON YOUR WAY UP THE STAIRS NOTICE A VERY TASTY FAMILIAR MAP.

→ Begin your adventure in the room with the big fireplace. Move to your left and find the portrait of a woman sitting at her desk.

What can you guess about this woman



What stands out to you?

from the objects that surround her?

Maira Kalman, *Self-Portrait (With Pete)*, 2004-5, Gouache on paper. Courtesy of the artist.

This is a self-portrait of the illustrator Maira Kalman.

A self-portrait is a picture that an artist makes of himself or herself.

WHAT WOULD YOU INCLUDE IN YOUR SELF-PORTRAIT?

→ Continue looking through the row of artwork and stop when you find a painting called *Newyorkistan*.

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

With fellow illustrator Rick Meyerowitz, Maira Kalman made her own drawing of the New York that she knows.

What other kinds of maps have you seen of New York City? How is *Newyorkistan* similar to or different than those maps?




With your grown-up, read the names of the places on the map. Maira made-up some funny sounding names for different neighborhoods in New York City.

These names are inspired by her experiences in the CITY.

If you could rename your NEIGHBORHOOD what name would you give it? Why?

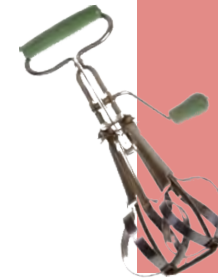
Where are the **WORDS** placed on the pages? Are they in one place or all over the page? Do you think the words are typed or **HANDWRITTEN**?

The pictures in Maira's books started off as paintings and drawings like the ones you saw hanging on the walls. Do you think the words are supposed to be a part of the painting? Why do you think Maira adds words to her pictures?

 Move towards the case of objects by the window and look through Maira Kalman's *Many Tables of Many Things*.

Just like a **PAINTING** or a **DRAWING**, Maira uses **COLLECTIONS** of objects as a way to describe her **WORLD**. The **EVERYDAY OBJECTS** displayed are all items Maira has collected throughout her life. They come from many places around the world.

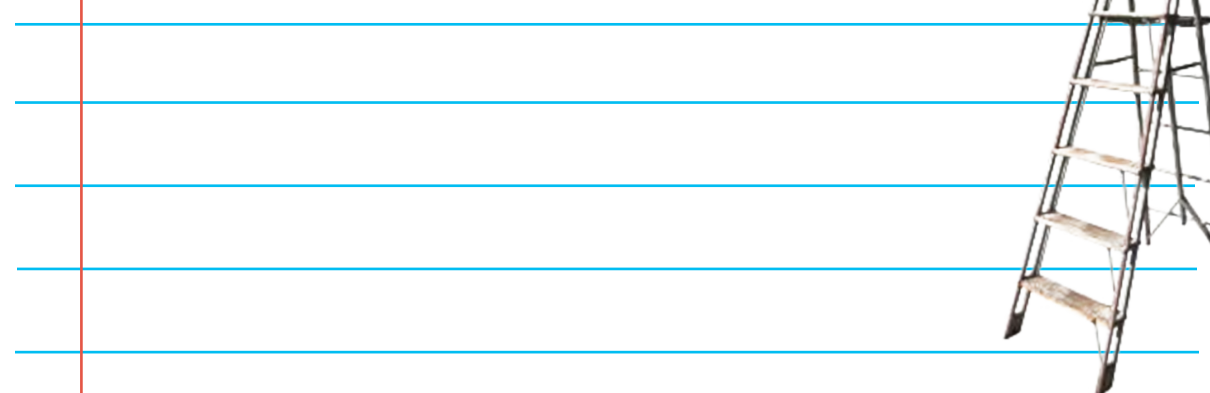
Can you find some of the items you read about in "What Pete Ate from A-Z"?



Find a hat called a **FEZ**, an **OLD KEY**, the black box (**MOOKIE'S SECRET BOX**), and an **EGG BEATER**.

Maira Kalman likes to make **LISTS** of items that are important or fascinating to her.

Make a list of some of the objects you saw in this exhibition.



What are some **WORDS** that **DESCRIBE** what you like to do?

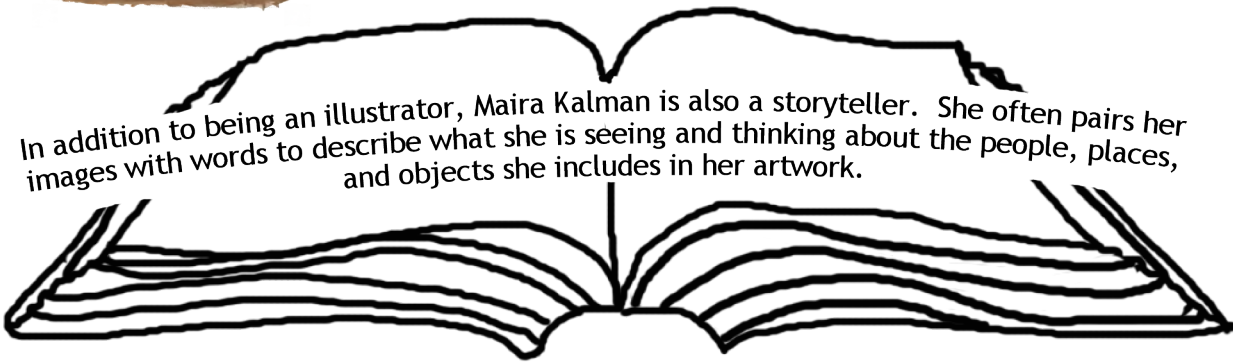
What **ANIMAL** do you think would best represent these **QUALITIES**?



Maira Kalman, *Dog Reads Book*, 1999, gouache on paper. Courtesy of the artist.

Are you **INDEPENDENT** like a lion, loud like a **MONKEY**, or friendly like an **OTTER**?

→ Move into the next room. Sit down at the table filled with books.



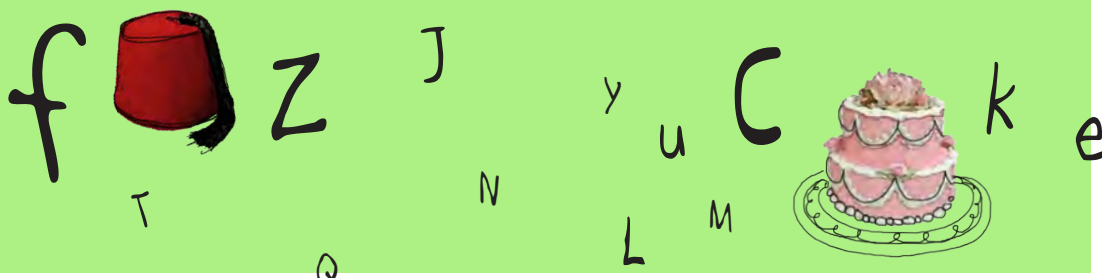
In addition to being an illustrator, Maira Kalman is also a storyteller. She often pairs her images with words to describe what she is seeing and thinking about the people, places, and objects she includes in her artwork.

With your grown-up, read the book called *What Pete Ate from A-Z*.




After you finish reading, take another look at how the words appear in this book.

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?



→ Find the painting near the entrance to the next gallery with many faces called *Crosstown Boogie Woogie*.

 Look closely at the many people in this painting...

SCARSDALE RD

FOCUS on the **DETAILS** of each **PERSON**.

125th

What kinds of **HATS**, **SUNGLASSES**, or **JEWELRY** are people wearing?

57th

Take turns describing one of the characters while your companion is turned away. Turn back around and guess which character was just described. Keep going until, together, you have found every face that you find fascinating.

42nd



14th

→ Find the woman at the very bottom of the right-hand corner. What do you notice about this person?

CANAL

This is another **SELF-PORTRAIT** of Maira Kalman. As she moves through the different neighborhoods of the **CITY**, Kalman uses her camera to **RECORD** what she **OBSERVES** in the **WORLD** around her.


Each row illustrates a street in New York City.

HAVE YOU BEEN TO ANY OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS REPRESENTED HERE?

Can you think of other interesting locations in NYC that you have visited?



→ Move into the next room.

 Look closely at the third painting on the wall to the left called *Sunny Day at the Park*.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THIS SCENE?

WHAT KIND OF A PLACE IS THIS?

This painting was made after a photograph taken by the famous French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson. He took a similar picture of a park in France.

Maira Kalman often uses photography to capture life around her and sometimes paints directly from photographs.




Maira Kalman, *Sunny Day at the Park*, 2004, gouache on paper. Courtesy of Julie Saul.

Is this a **PLACE** where you would like to spend time? Why or why not?

IMAGINE you could **STEP** into this painting...

What would you **HEAR**, **SMELL**, and **FEEL**? Do you think it would be **WARM** or **COLD**? **QUIET** or **NOISY**?

→ In the next gallery find the painting titled *My Cousin Ervin*.

 What do you notice about the characters in this painting? What features stand out? Why?

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THE WAY MAIRA KALMAN USES **COLORS** IN "MY COUSIN ERVIN"?

With your grown-up, read the words surrounding the image.

Find the events about Cousin Ervin's life in the background of the painting.

Do you see Cousin Ervin **UPSIDE DOWN** in his car or **PEOPLE FLOATING**?

Which **CHARACTER** do you think is his **WIFE**?

 **Investigate** the many portraits on this wall and find your favorite character.

WHAT ABOUT THIS PERSON CATCHES YOUR EYE?

HOW ARE THE **COLORS** IN THIS PORTRAIT SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT TO THOSE USED IN *My Cousin Ervin*?



→ After exploring this room, find the painting called *Dog Reads Book* in this same gallery.

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

In her illustrations, Maira Kalman often features animals doing things that seem human.

HOW IS THE ANIMAL IN THIS PAINTING BEHAVING LIKE A PERSON?

Maira Kalman, *Edith Sitwell*, 2006, gouache on paper. Private Collection.