



THE SOUND OF ART

Family Guide

ENSEMBLE

chris kallmyer

WHAT IS ENSEMBLE?

Chris Kallmyer is an artist, musician, performer, thinker, and dreamer. He constructed this piece, *Ensemble*, with the help of others and is relying on a community of people—us—to activate it. He deliberately left it empty so that we could fill it with our conversation, our imaginings, our wishes, and our observations. We are part of his *Ensemble*.

Definition of **Ensemble**: *a group of musicians, actors, or dancers who perform together*
a group of items viewed as a whole rather than individual

LOOK

Look carefully at the piece and at the drawings and other materials in the space. You are seeing it (and perhaps hearing it) in a Museum gallery. Where else might you put it? At the beach? In a crowded street, in your own backyard? How would location change the way you experience it? Imagine where you might locate it and, if you like, draw a picture of it in the space below.



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LISTEN

As a musician, Chris reads and writes music scores (written representations of a piece of music). Here in *Ensemble*, he has created scores for every day using shape notes. He takes three different geometric shapes to indicate three different bells, each with a different sound. He uses:



By varying the order of the shapes ● ▲ ▱ ● he changes the sound or music of the piece. Listen to the sounds in the gallery and Museum as you walk around (or go outside to listen). Write down three sounds that you hear (like footsteps, a cough, or a conversation nearby). Attach a shape to each sound and write it below. You have created a score!

DO

With a companion, create three sounds on your own (like a hand clap, a whistle, or a squeaking shoe). You can even use this guide to create sounds (roll it up like a horn and blow, crumple it, or tear it). Attach shape symbols to each sound and design a score together. Now you are collaborating as an ensemble. You can even record the sounds and play them back. Try varying the order and see how it changes.

Chris experimented with different materials and shapes before deciding on the final shape and material for his musical instrument. He drew sketches, took notes, doodled connections, and created what he called a "mind map" before completing *Ensemble*. Imagine an instrument you might create using everyday objects. Use the space to the right to "mind map" your ideas.