

## Educator Resource Guide:

# TR Ericsson: I Was Born to Bring You Into This World

September 15 – December 31, 2017

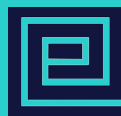
**Compiled by the  
Education Department**

**Image:**

**TR Ericsson**

**Jeanne, 2016**

**Graphite, resin, and funerary ash on muslin,  
84x60 inches**



## AN INTRODUCTION

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TR Ericsson uses the story of his mother to present a searing, soft, and complex portrait of post-industrial life in America. Ericsson constructs his work using traditional art materials such as canvas, bronze, photography, and clay as well as video, found objects, and heirlooms taken from his family archives. This exhibition is a specific reinterpretation of *Crackle & Drag*, Ericsson's ongoing project started during the years following his mother's suicide in 2003. *I Was Born To Bring You Into This World* begins as an intimate encounter with an artist's family archive and becomes a potent opportunity to reflect and scrutinize the trials and tribulations of our own lives.

A major narrative of this exhibition is time and influence. Ericsson calls into question how the past influences the present and directs the future. The voice of his mother is also a significant aspect of this work. Her voice comes through in her words, letters, and recordings of her speaking. Through the use of personal family ephemera, the artist creates what he calls "a portrait of love."

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

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This educator resource guide was designed by the education department for use in conjunction with field trips to *I Was Born to Bring You Into This World*, or for use as a stand alone classroom resource. The materials included here contain curriculum connections and can be adapted for use at any grade level.

## EDUCATION

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Curator of Education

Kimberly A. Griffiths



EVERSON MUSEUM OF ART

# Artist Biography

## TR Ericsson

Working across mediums—including photobased works, sculptural objects, audio and video works—artist TR Ericsson, born in 1972, frequently uses his own biography as a point of departure to explore universal themes of identity, grief, and loss. The artist creates haunting images through elaborate silkscreen and photographic processes.

TR Ericsson's work is in many collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Indianapolis Museum of Art, among others. The work of TR Ericsson was the subject of a 2015 solo exhibition at the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA), accompanied by the monograph, *TR Ericsson: Crackle & Drag*, published by CMA and Yale University Press.

Since 2002, he has shown throughout the United States and participated in many group exhibitions in the United States, England, Nova Scotia, Mexico, and Canada.

Ericsson has been featured in numerous press and museum articles. He has self-published five books entitled, *Crackle & Drag* zines, *Gabriel*, *Forestay*, *Étant donnés 2°*, and *Adderall*.

He currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY and Concord Township, OH.



Image of TR Ericsson, courtesy the artist.

## Themes

**Family**  
**Love and Loss**  
**Memory**  
**Identity**



# Methods & Materials

Ericsson uses materials and processes that are familiar, yet he often alters the practice or outcome in some way.

*Susie c. 1967* is a “c-print.” The “c” stands for chromogenic, or color, and a print is the transfer of an image onto a surface like paper. Ericsson creates this c-print using a photograph he found in the family’s archives. In some cases, Ericsson takes the process further. *Tom c. 1987*, another c-print, was created from a torn family photograph. Then, the artist placed lit cigarettes beneath the image. The cigarettes burn the paper, leave a residue, warp the final image, and ultimately serve as a reminder of the artist’s mother.

Ericsson also uses the silkscreen technique; however, instead of using ink to produce his prints, he pats the surface of the silkscreen with graphite, creating a final image that has an ethereal quality. *Jeanne* was made using this process. “Resin,” a naturally forming, sticky material, binds the loose graphite to the paper.

**Note to Educators:** Ericsson often combines his mother’s funerary ashes with graphite to create his prints.

## Other unique mediums used by Ericsson

**Film-poem:** an avant-garde (or “ahead of its time”) film created for the purposes of art, rather than popular appeal

**Found objects:** items that are used to create artwork but would not normally be considered an art material

**Installation:** a piece of art designed to transform a space, sometimes incorporating film and sound

**Mixed media:** an art object made up of multiple materials

**Photographic object:** an artwork that is not a photograph, but is created using a photograph as its basis



TR Ericsson  
*Susie c. 1967, 2017*  
C-print, detail



TR Ericsson  
*Tom c. 1987, 2015*  
C-print, 50x40 inches

# Art Historical References

Ericsson frequently makes references to the history of art in his work. He credits this practice to a lifelong exposure to artwork and art institutions. Ericsson cites artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Edvard Munch, and Jasper Johns as being major influences.

Ericsson studied painting at The Art Students League of New York and the National Academy of Design. While a student in these programs, the artist made countless visits to museums to draw and study the technique of old and modern masters. He continues to look to art history today, inspired by particular genres, the thought behind various art movements, and the emotions that art can evoke. Ericsson considers the portraits of Hans Holbein, Diego Velázquez, John Singer Sargent, Thomas Eakins, Abbott Handerson Thayer, and Alberto Giacometti; the belief that art is an idea and is subject to chance, championed by Marcel Duchamp and other Dada artists; and finally, the depiction of American life by artists such as Edward Hopper, Edwin Dickinson, Milton Avery, and Andrew Wyeth.



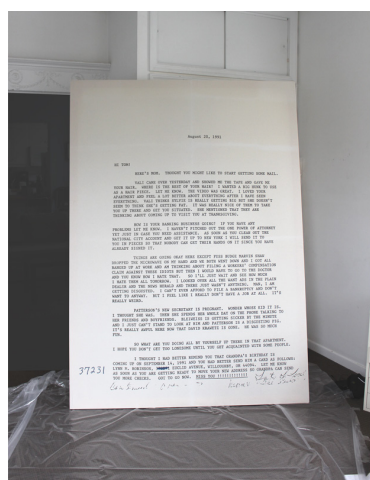
TR Ericsson  
*Jeanne, 2016*  
Graphite, resin, and funerary ash on muslin, 84x60 inches

# TR Ericsson's Thoughts

-About his mother: "She often said things like she gave me this life I'm living."

-About loss: "Pain, loss, grief, for me are not passive things or things that put you out or down, [they are] active things that bring forth new possibilities."

-About love: "I would simply say it's the world viewed through the lens of a single woman, an unremarkable woman to some extent, from a worldly prospect. Her story becomes, to me, an almost socio-political point; we need to stop neglecting what is so sacred and local to us and not move past it all the time. I found most people would say that the work was about death or the work was about addiction and loss and all this, and someone finally said, 'Really, it's about love.'"



TR Ericsson  
August 20, 1991, 2016  
Graphite, resin and funeral  
ash on muslin, 84x60 inches



TR Ericsson  
Susie, 2017  
Photogram, 20x14 inches



TR Ericsson  
Coney Island, 2016  
C-print, 26x40 inches

## Lesson Ideas

**Note to Educators:** Ericsson's work is a response to the loss of his mother; however, these lessons have been written about the idea of memory.

### Before your visit, get students thinking:

#### Family and Memory

Family can mean different things to all of us! Ask students to think about their family and the memories they share. Everyday, we see objects that remind us of our family. Sometimes these objects are direct reminders, such as photographs or personal belongings; sometimes they are more abstract, like flowers or candy bar wrappers. In this exhibition, artist TR Ericsson re-examines objects that remind him of his mother. He takes a closer look at items that we would not think of as being art materials and uses them to create artwork that "commemorates," or reminds him of his mother.

## During your visit, have students consider these concepts:

**Personal:** What does it mean for something to be personal? When something private becomes public, what is the response? When do we typically share personal items or memories with other people? In this exhibition, how does the personal nature of Ericsson's artwork change a viewer's response to the work and the artist?

**Scale:** In Ericsson's work, ordinary objects are made significantly larger. What effect is created when an item such as a typed letter is viewed on a monumental scale?

**Identity:** In what ways does Ericsson's artwork explore his mother's identity and his own identity? What qualities of his mother does the artist choose to portray? What kinds of experiences or relationships form one's identity?

**Accumulation:** In one interview, Ericsson states, "[my artwork is] not one...image or moment but the long accumulation of images and moments, which pretty much is what our lives are right? Accumulations." What aspects of life are accumulated or gathered?

**Found objects:** Look for found objects in Ericsson's work. Remember, found objects are items used to create artwork that would not normally be considered art material.

## After your visit, ask students to discuss the following:

**Representation:** What does it mean to "represent" another person?

**Memory and Material:** What evokes memory? How is memory embedded in the materials that surround us? Ericsson employs materials such as typed letters, photographs, voicemail recordings, ashes, and even cigarette smoke to elicit the memory of his mother.

**Re-examination:** In Ericsson's process of creating artwork, he revisits and examines objects that may have seemed commonplace before his mother's death. After viewing Ericsson's work, how might a viewer experience his or her own possessions differently?

## Art Making Activities

Objective: Using found objects, students will explore the memory they have of a family member or individual close to them.

### Step 1: Find objects!

Students should gather materials that remind them of a particular person. These materials should not be objects of monetary value, and can be gathered at home or places the students frequent. Encourage students to be creative! Wrappers, photographs, pens, buttons, etc. can all be reminders of people.

### Step 2: Create!

**Note to Educators:** This section provides four options for creative exploration.

#### 1. Collage

- Create a collage by assembling two-dimensional objects that capture the memory of a person.
- Play with shape: Could the collage be shaped to look like something that represents the person? For instance, if the person smiles a lot, could the collage be shaped like a smiling mouth?

## 2. Memory Box

- a. Using some sort of container, assemble two-dimensional and three-dimensional found objects so that they form a memory box.
- b. Play with containers: It may be best for younger students to use shoeboxes; however, older students may be asked to use a container that is related to the memory they are evoking.

## 3. Curate a Gallery

- a. Ask students to curate a miniature "exhibition" of found objects that evoke their memory of a person. Students can build a space using cardboard, or use shoeboxes. They can paint the walls and create frames.
- b. Play with the experience of the space: What is the scale of the objects in the room? Are there links between the pieces that tell a story? For older students, is sound involved? Does a song or recording play?

## 4. Memory and Material: Altered

- a. Using one found object as a focal point, have students alter the material in such a way that it enhances the memory of the person.
- b. Play with senses: How does smell, sound, and action evoke memory?

## Step 3: Title!

When titling his series, Ericsson found inspiration in a poem by Sylvia Plath. Students can connect their own work with poetry by finding a passage that reminds them of the person they have represented, or, they can write a poem about that person and use their own words. Note: For younger students, teacher may want to have a selection of poems printed; older students can find their own with guidance. Option: A poetry reading could correspond with the presentation of work.

## Step 4: Reflect!

How did it feel to represent another person using objects instead of, for instance, painting a portrait? What were the challenges in being asked to re-examine objects you see everyday? What were the successes?

Did your own identity come forward in the creation this project? How is your identity shaped by people around you?

How did the inclusion of poetry alter or enhance your project?

## New York State Standards

### Visual Arts

Standard 1: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts

Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

### English Language Arts

Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding

Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression

## Additional Resources

<http://www.trericsson.com/>

<http://www.americansuburbx.com/2015/05/tr-ericsson-interview-crackle-and-drag.html>

<http://autre.love/interviewsmain/2016/4/22/crackle-and-drag-an-interview-with-artist-tr-ericsson>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8rp3YulJVC>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsB8C1Igd9k>



# Related Programs

## SCHOOL TOURS

Hour-long docent-led tours are available Tuesday through Friday, 10:00am–Noon for K-12 schools for \$50 per classroom as of September 1st. Please schedule at least three weeks in advance. For more information on scheduling a group tour with an Everson docent, please contact Qiana Williams, [qwilliams@everson.org](mailto:qwilliams@everson.org) or (315) 474-6064 x303.

## EVERSON OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Everson Outreach program strengthens the presence of the Everson in the community and increases access to the visual arts for those that may otherwise be unable to visit the Museum. To find out more or to schedule an Outreach program at your facility, please contact us at (315) 474 6064 or [eversonoutreach@everson.org](mailto:eversonoutreach@everson.org).

## EVERSON TEEN ARTS COUNCIL

The Everson is looking for enthusiastic, creative, and thoughtful juniors and seniors to serve on the Everson Teen Arts Council (ETAC). ETAC will meet throughout the school year to plan and execute programs for area teens. Tasks will include curating exhibitions, developing and overseeing large-scale teen events, and assisting with Everson community events. Funded in part by the Syracuse City School District. To find out more or apply contact the Education Department (315) 474 6064 or [education@everson.org](mailto:education@everson.org).

## EVENING FOR EDUCATORS

October 5, 6:00–8:00pm

\$10 Members

\$15 Non-Members

Join the Education Department in a private viewing and tour of fall exhibitions TR Ericsson: *I Was Born to Bring You into This World* and Suné Woods: *When a Heart Scatter, Scatter, Scatter*. These contemporary artists explore themes of family, loss, love and desire through multi-media installations. An educator resource guide will offer many ways to engage your students in pre- and post-tour activities. Meet colleagues, share ideas, and enjoy light refreshments including a complimentary glass of wine or beer. Please contact Kimberly Griffiths at [kgriffiths@everson.org](mailto:kgriffiths@everson.org) or 474-6064 x308 to register.

## YOUTH ART CLASSES

### (AGES 4–12)

4-week Sessions, Saturdays

10:30am–12:30pm

1 Session: \$65 Members / \$85 Non-Members

2 Sessions: \$105 Members / \$135 Non-Members

Explore your creativity with different materials and themes each session. Classes are taught by dedicated artists and educators. Space is limited, all materials provided. *To pre-register, contact Qiana Williams, [qwilliams@everson.org](mailto:qwilliams@everson.org) or (315) 474-6064 x303, or visit [everson.org/learn](http://everson.org/learn).*

## PLAYFUL SCULPTURE

September 30, October 7, 14, 21

Combine different techniques and materials to build sculptures inspired by our Monumental exhibition.

## CLAY CREATION

October 28, November 4, 11, 18

Have fun exploring the Everson's ceramics collection. Dig into clay to build, pinch, and coil creative creatures, vessels, and more!

*Need Financial Help?*

*Scholarships available on a limited basis. For details and application contact Qiana Williams.*

## ADULT CLASSES AND PROGRAMS

### PAINT AND POUR

(AGE 21+)

September 7, 6:00–8:00pm

\$20 Members

\$25 Non-Members

Join us in recreating a work of art with the guidance of an experienced artist, Cookie Falcone. You will end the evening with your own unique artwork. Enjoy light refreshments and two complimentary drinks. All materials provided. Class size limited to first 30 registrants.

### POTTERY AND POUR

(AGE 21+)

November 9, 6:00–8:00pm

\$24 Members

\$30 Non-Members

Experience the joy of clay in this evening of creativity and fun led by ceramic artist Sookie Kayne. Learn the basics of molds and hand-building to create your very own ceramic bowl. Add color, texture and decoration using stamps, lace, hand tools and glaze. You will end the evening with your own unique bowl. Your bowl will be fired for you and will be available for pick up at a later date. Enjoy light refreshments and two complimentary drinks. All materials provided. Class size limited to first 15 registrants.



**OPEN FIGURE DRAWING**  
**November 16, 6:00–8:00pm**  
**FREE**

Enjoy an evening of figure drawing through the study of a nude model. Bring your own sketchbooks and pencils. Some easels will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis. If you don't want to draw, stop by to see artists at work and enjoy live music. In collaboration with Open Figure Drawing.

**TALKS AND TOURS**

**OPENING NIGHT CONVERSATION WITH THE ARTISTS**  
**September 15, 6:00pm**  
**Free with Opening Night Admission**  
**Hosmer Auditorium**

Join Everson Curator of Art and Programs DJ Hellerman and artists Suné Woods and TR Ericsson in conversation about their exhibitions.

**EXHIBITION TALK: MONUMENTAL**  
September 28, 6:30pm  
Led by scholar Dr. Mary Ann Calo  
FREE with Museum Admission  
Hosmer Auditorium

**GALLERY WALK: SUNÉ WOODS**  
October 26, 6:30pm  
FREE with Museum Admission

**FREE THIRD THURSDAY DOCENT-LED TOURS**  
FREE admission every third Thursday from 5:00–8:00pm

**September 21, 6:00pm – TR Ericsson & Suné Woods**  
**October 19, 6:00pm – Monumental**  
**November 16, 6:00pm – Ceramics collection**  
**January 18, 6:00pm – Architecture**

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**LADIES NIGHT OUT**  
PRESENTED BY CROUSE SPIRIT OF WOMEN AND THE  
EVERSON MUSEUM OF ART  
October 12, 6:00–9:00pm  
Tickets \$25  
Reservation only, tickets are limited. On sale  
September 11.

Pamper yourself and enjoy a fun night out with friends. Enjoy an evening of delicious food, drinks, health, beauty, shopping, DIY stations, art and so much more.

Visit [everson.org/](http://everson.org/) for updates on vendors and event details.

# Related Programs

**FREE FAMILY DAY! HALLOWEEN HAPPENINGS**  
October 21, 12:00pm–5:00pm

**Art Making**  
Noon–3:00pm  
Join in art making activities inspired by Halloween and current exhibitions. Make your own memory box to fill with cherished photos, drawings and keepsakes. Get ready for Halloween and create your own colorful spooky Halloween mask, grab a brush and join in painting a monumental collaborative mural.

**Wheel Throwing Demonstration**  
12:30pm–1:30pm  
Watch art come to life in a wheel throwing demonstration by artist Sookie Kayne.

**Family Film: Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory,**  
1971, Rated G, 98 min.  
3:00pm, Hosmer Auditorium  
Five children from around the world win golden tickets to tour the mysterious candy factory where they meet the manufacturer and learn life lessons about honesty, punishment and reward.

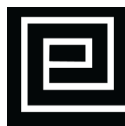
**EVERSON FOOD TRUCK + MUSIC FRIDAYS**  
September 1–October 20  
11:00am–2:00pm  
Live Music Schedule (12:30–1:30pm) Musical performances end September 29  
Stop by the Everson Community Plaza each Friday to enjoy food truck fare, live music and art! In partnership with the Syracuse Food Truck Association.

**Lunch and Learn**  
12:15–1:00pm, Pay-What-You-Wish Wednesdays  
Bring your own lunch and meet staff members from the Everson to learn about our fantastic collection and special exhibitions.

**September 27:** TR Ericsson with Curator of Art and Programs DJ Hellerman

**October 25:** Suné Woods with Curatorial Assistant Steffi Chappell

**November 29:** Ceramics collection with Museum Director Elizabeth Dunbar



# EVERSON MUSEUM OF ART

## TOUR REQUEST FORM

REQUESTOR'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TODAY'S DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE OF GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER IN GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_ *(60 VISITORS MAXIMUM PER TOUR)*

Will your group require ramp or elevator access? \_\_\_\_\_

**Cost:** School Tours are \$50.00 per classroom. Pre-payment is required prior to your tour date. An Invoice will be attached to your tour confirmation letter after your request is processed. Non-school tours are subject to regular admission price.

**ADMISSION:**

\$8.00 for adults

\$6.00 for students with ID and seniors

Free: Members, Active military and children 12 and under

Group Rate: \$6.00 per person for 12 or more guests.

We do offer limited scholarships to schools and organizations that service youth and demonstrate financial hardship or need.

Would you like to be considered for a scholarship, please check: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Please explain why you would like to be considered for a scholarship:

OVER PLEASE

Please note the Everson Museum is open for docent led tours from Tuesday to Friday, 10:00am—5:00pm, and *limited* tours are available Saturday & Sunday, from noon—5:00pm. Tours are one hour in length.

**\*\*SCHOOL GROUP TOUR POLICY:** *There should be a chaperone to student ratio of 1:10, (excluding staff who accompany special needs students).*

TENTATIVE DAY & DATE OF TOUR: \_\_\_\_\_ PREFERRED TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

ALTERNATE DAY & DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ PREFERRED TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

**TYPE OF TOUR:**

We offer many types of tours. Please select a tour type by checking the choices below:

☐ Visual Thinking Strategies ☐ Architecture ☐ Art History ☐ Ceramics

☐ iPad Pals (Presentations) ☐ K—12 ☐ College-level ☐ Seniors ☐ General  
☐ Featured Exhibition ☐ French Speaking (*limited basis*)

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**OFFICE USE ONLY:**

DATE RECEIVED: \_\_\_\_\_ INFORMATION TAKEN BY: \_\_\_\_\_ CALENDAR ENTRY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATISTIC DATA ENTRY DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
CONFIRMATION PACKET SENT ON: \_\_\_\_\_ CONFIRMATION SENT TO DOCENTS ON: \_\_\_\_\_

DOCENTS CONFIRMED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE SUBMIT FORM TO:** [everson@everson.org](mailto:everson@everson.org)

401 Harrison Street • Syracuse NY 13202 • 315-474-6064 x 303 • [eversonmuseum.org](http://eversonmuseum.org)