

FAMILY KIT

By Amanda Beattie,
Tanha Gomes,
Marie-Hélène Lemaire
and Pohanna Pyne Feinberg

Texts by Marie-Hélène
Lemaire, Head of Education
English translation by
Amanda Beattie, Educator
and Project Manager

Education Department of
the PHI Foundation

LEE BAE UNION

PHI FOUNDATION



Hello! We're excited to present the *Lee Bae: UNION* Family Kit.

You'll learn about paintings, drawings, sculptures and installations* by contemporary* artist Lee Bae. Lee Bae was born in South Korea and has lived in Paris for 30 years.

Lee Bae uses charcoal to create his work. Charcoal is the grey and black matter left behind after wood has been burnt.

Through his artwork, Lee Bae explores five main ideas: gesture, transformation, the five senses, the colour black and contemplation.

This kit includes reproductions of Lee Bae's artwork for you to look at, along with art activities you can do at home. There are a lot of suggested activities, but feel free to choose two, three, or four, depending on your interests and what you enjoy most!

After you've had fun with the kit, we hope you'll want to visit our *Lee Bae: UNION* exhibition with your family or friends! But before you come, please check our website to find out about the public health measures you'll need to follow during your visit.

* *What does the word "installation" mean?*

When a contemporary artist creates an installation, they are creating a large work of art – kind of like a sculpture – with many different components. Installations take up a lot of space, and you can often go inside them.

* *What does the word "contemporary" mean?*

The word "contemporary" means "now" or "in our time." Contemporary art is created by artists living now or who were alive in the very recent past. They might be the same age as your parents or grandparents. Lee Bae is 65 years old and is still creating art!

CHARCOAL

Lee Bae was born in Cheongdo, a rural county in South Korea, and emigrated to Paris when he was 33 years old. It was in Paris that he discovered the main material for his art: charcoal. He often felt homesick, and working with charcoal provided comfort because it reminded him of his childhood.

Charcoal is made by burning wood until it gradually transforms into a carbonized black matter, which can then be used as a combustible.*

PINE CHARCOAL

How does Lee Bae make pine charcoal, and how does he use it?

Lee Bae creates his own charcoal from pine trees that he carefully selects from the countryside around Cheongdo, where he lived as a child and which he still often visits. He lets the pine trees burn for two weeks in a big, specially-made oven called a kiln, which turns them into charcoal.

Then he uses the charcoal in his artwork in lots of different ways. For example, he draws with large pieces of charcoal and he creates sculptures with the carbonized tree trunks.

**What does the word "combustible" mean?*

A combustible is a material that is used to fuel a fire. For example, a briquette is a compressed block of coal that is used to create fire in some barbecues.



Lee Bae installs one of his artworks

Guimet National Museum of Asian Arts, Paris

CHARCOAL (continued)

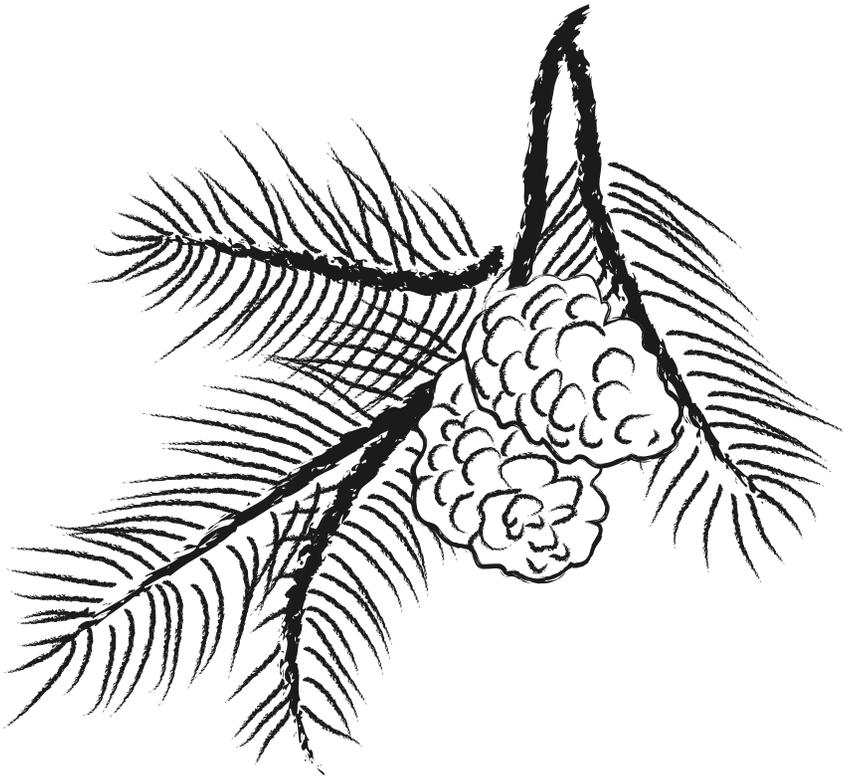
How is charcoal linked to childhood memories?

In Korean culture, charcoal is used in many different ways and also has a number of symbolic meanings.

Charcoal reminds Lee Bae of Chinese ink made with soot that is used in Korean calligraphy.* According to Korean tradition, it is also used in construction. When the foundation of a house is dug out, charcoal is placed inside to protect against humidity and insects. And when a baby is born, a piece of charcoal is tied to the door of the house to announce the birth.

* *What does the word "calligraphy" mean?*

Calligraphy is the art of decorative handwriting. The word comes from the ancient Greek words *kállos* (beautiful) and *graphein* (writing). In the Korean tradition, calligraphy is known as *soeye*.



ACTIVITY 1: GESTURE

*Drawing with gestures:
Making and erasing marks*

In his *Untitled* series, Lee Bae explores gestures and the traces they leave behind. These two drawings are very big—about as tall as the distance between the floor and the ceiling of your house, and almost as wide, too! These large formats allow Lee Bae to use the momentum of his whole arm when drawing with charcoal.

The drawings are so vibrant, you might think Lee Bae created them quickly, without much thought. But the gestures he makes and the marks he leaves on the paper are actually repeated over and over again. He repeats them in the same way a dancer would practice their steps until their body memorizes a choreography for a performance.

When we repeat a gesture or make a mark many times, we get to be so comfortable with the motion that our bodies take over when creating the final work, which ends up being very vibrant indeed!

What do the shapes in these two drawings by Lee Bae make you think of?
Now it's your turn to create your own drawings!



Lee Bae
Untitled Series, 2019
Charcoal on mulberry paper
260 x 194 cm
Photos: Guillaume Ziccarelli

Lee Bae in his Parisian studio
© Manolo Mylonas

In these activities, you'll get to explore the same gesture with different formats.

Activity 1A

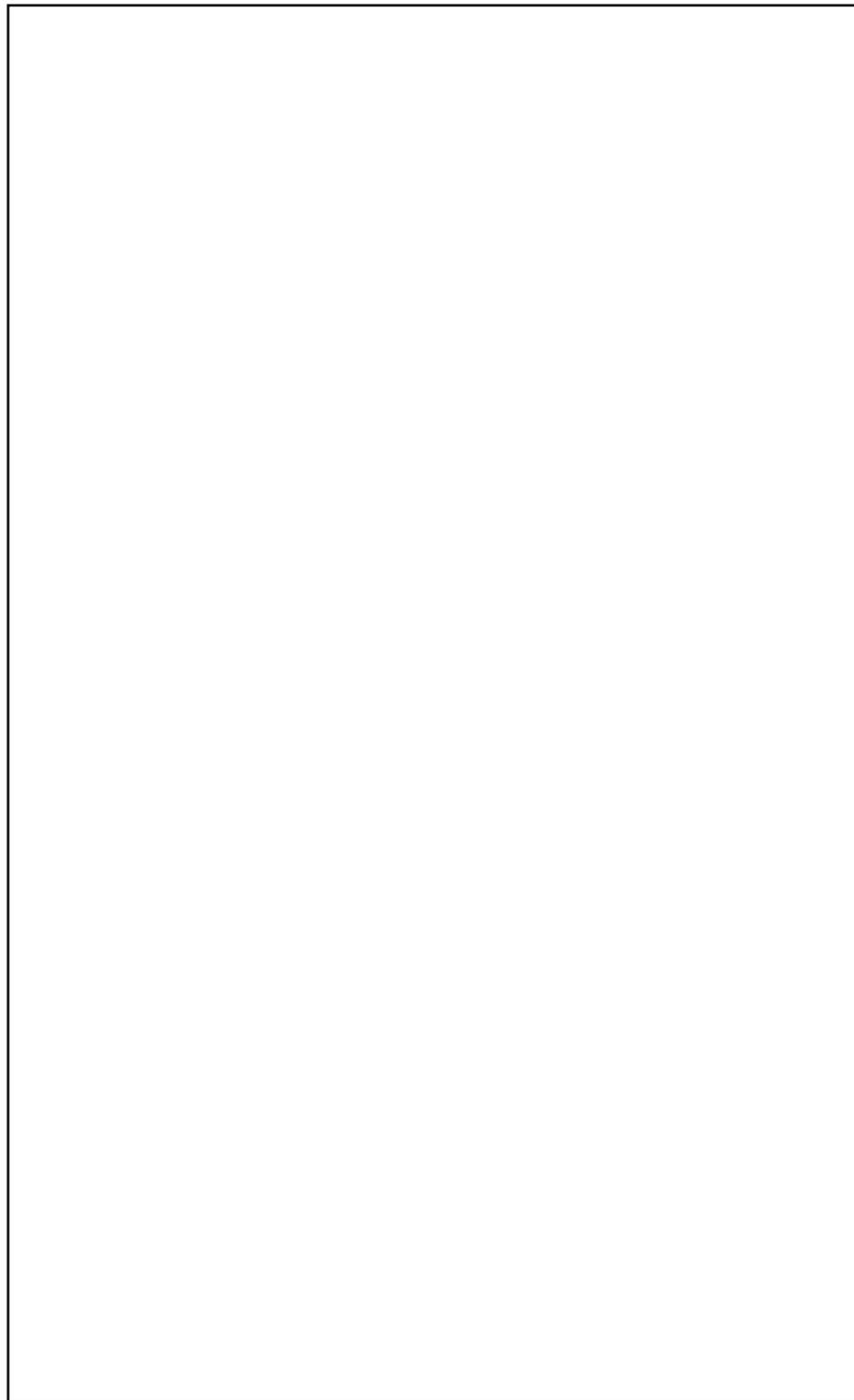
Take a large sheet of paper. You can also tape four sheets of 8.5" x 11" paper together to create a larger sheet. Next, place the paper on the ground. Make a gesture that uses your whole arm and repeat it five times without making any marks on the paper. Next, take a piece of charcoal (or a pencil) and repeat the same gesture five times, marking the paper each time. Look at your drawing. What sensations did you feel in your body while you were repeating the movement? Are all five marks the same?

Activity 1B

Now let's create something on a smaller piece of paper. Use the following blank page in the kit for this activity. Scribble over the entire page with a piece of charcoal (or a pencil). Then, take an eraser and repeat the same gesture that you did in Activity 1A five times. Each time, you'll erase a part of the scribbled background.

Compare your two works of art: the one you made with a big gesture and charcoal and the one you made with a smaller gesture and an eraser. How did it feel to make big and small versions of the same movement?

Draw on the following blank page →



ACTIVITY 2: TRANSFORMATION

*Wrap and plant a wish
inspired by the moon house!*

Lee Bae's video work, *Burning a house of moon*, represents a traditional Korean ceremony that takes place on the night of the first full moon of the lunar calendar. It involves creating a "Moon House" by gathering lots of pine needles, branches and pine wood and piling them up in a stack that looks like a big tent. Villagers then write their wishes on pieces of paper and hang them on the pine branches. When the moon rises, the house is set on fire, and the wishes rise up toward the sky.

The ritual shown in *Burning a house of moon* is about transformation. The wishes on the pieces of paper catch fire and burn up in smoke that rises toward the sky. It is through this process that the wishes are believed to come true.

In *Burning a house of moon*, Lee Bae explores the natural elements of fire and air. But there are two other natural elements—water and earth — that also have the power of transformation. In Activity 2, we'll talk more about them!



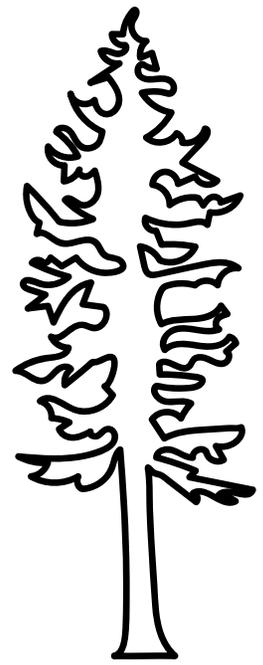
Lee Bae
Burning a house of moon, 2014
Video projection, 4 min 20 sec
Production still

Activity 2

Write a wish in the centre of the circle on the next page. The design of this paper was created by rubbing charcoal on the paper while it was placed over red pine needles to reveal their texture. This art technique is called "rubbing." Once you've finished writing your wish, fold the paper any way you like: roll it, twist it, or crumple it up. Then, wrap your little package using different colours of sewing thread.

Once your gift is ready to be transformed into a wish that will come true, take it outside and find a special spot near a tree. Dig down in the snow or the ground and bury it. Your wish may disintegrate as the snow melts, or become entwined in the roots of the tree. While fire can transport wishes to the sky, the earth can help them grow roots and blossom.

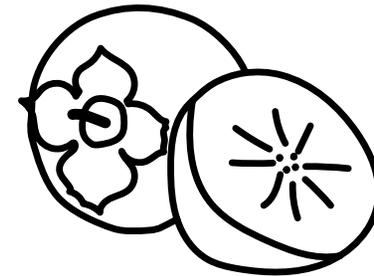




ACTIVITY 3: EXPLORING OUR SENSES

Aromas and memory

The artwork *Dessin* is made up of 24 small, framed works that represent persimmons. These fruits are found in abundance in the village where Lee Bae grew up. Each individual frame contains a drawing of a persimmon at a different stage in its lifecycle: ripe, dried, dented or deformed, and so on.



Lee Bae is very much in tune with the memories that are rooted in his body. Certain aromas stimulate recollections. For example, he remembers chewing pine gum as a child, and the smell of pine triggers that memory. He also remembers the smell of the persimmons he used to pick and eat when he was young.

Activity 3

We invite you to make your own homemade potpourri! You can explore the textures and aromas of spices, the peels and skins of dried fruit, and more. You'll see how the ingredients you use are linked to the various life stages of Lee Bae's persimmons. We've suggested a recipe, but you can also take inspiration from the fruits you have at home and the ingredients in your pantry to create your very own recipe!



Lee Bae
Dessin (detail),
2000
Graphite on paper
51 x 54 cm each

Homemade Potpourri with Apples, Oranges and Cinnamon

- Red apples
- Oranges
- Cinnamon sticks
- Pine needles and pine cones
- Cinnamon essential oil (optional)
- Cloves (optional)

Instructions

Ask an adult to help you with this recipe!

1. Thinly slice apples and oranges.
2. Use paper towels to pat off any excess moisture.
3. Set the sliced fruit on an oven-safe rack.
4. Heat in the oven at 200 degrees Celsius for 2 to 4 hours or until dry, flipping occasionally.
5. Toss dried fruit slices with cinnamon sticks, pine needles, and pine cones.
6. You can add cinnamon essential oil and/or cloves if you like.

Wrap your potpourri in a *BOJAGI*!

In Korea, a *bojagi* is a piece of cloth used to wrap objects. They can be used in ceremonies, to wrap gifts, or to transport food and keep it warm. Traditionally, bojagis were made by women.

Why not try the Lotus wrap for your potpourri? Look around the house to find a spare piece of fabric and transform it into something beautiful and useful!

Here's how to create your own Lotus wrap *bojagi*:



ACTIVITY 4: THE COLOUR BLACK

Black and white



Lee Bae
Brushstroke-226
Charcoal ink on
paper
162 x 130 cm
Photo: Claire Dorn

In his work *Brushstroke*, Lee Bae examines the colour black in relation to white. He encourages us to explore the relationships between black and white space, between obscurity and brightness and between negative and positive space.

The patches of colour in various shades of black and grey in *Brushstroke* make it look like a quilt. That's the inspiration for Activity 4!

Activity 4

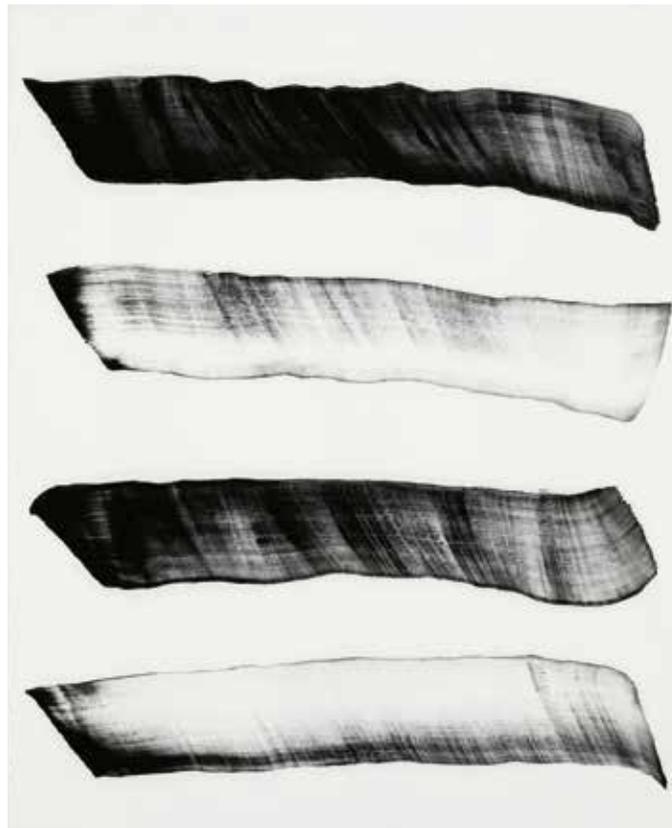
Turn to the black and white paper on the next page.

- Think of a shape that inspires you (triangle, square, circle, whatever you like) and use the black paper to cut out that shape a bunch of times.
- Next, play around with placing the shapes on the white paper. Think about rhythms and sequences, and the relationships between the shapes.
- When you're happy with how it looks, glue the black shapes onto the white paper.
- Now you're ready to make a group quilt! Ask your family or friends to arrange black shapes on a white background, just like you did, and put everyone's work together.
- Send us a photograph of your quilt at education@fondation-phi.org! We'd love to see your creation!



Photo: Pohanna
Pyne Feinberg





Lee Bae
Brushstroke-213,
2020
Charcoal ink on
paper
162 x 130 cm

ACTIVITY 5: CONTEMPLATION

*Take a stroll through
a charcoal forest!*



Installation view,
Lee Bae, *Issu du feu*,
2018 © Courtesy
of the artist and
Galerie Perrotin.
Photo: Guillaume
Ziccarelli

Lee Bae creates huge installations entitled *Issu du feu*, which means “born of fire.” The works are made of burnt pine tree trunks. When Lee Bae burns pine trees in his special kiln, he makes sure they burn long enough to become charred and cracked, but not so much that they crumble into ash. He wraps rubber bands around the tree trunks to help them keep their shape. Then he arranges the charred pine tree trunks to create a forest you can wander through in the exhibition space.

Activity 5

For this activity, we invite you to take two “contemplative” walks as you explore Lee Bae’s charcoal forest. The first is an imaginary walk, while the second is an outdoor walk where you’ll use your senses. A contemplative walk means that you move slowly so you can carefully observe everything around you. When you are contemplative, your whole body and all five of your senses are awake and alert to the surrounding environment.

1. Imaginary walk through a forest of carbonized tree trunks

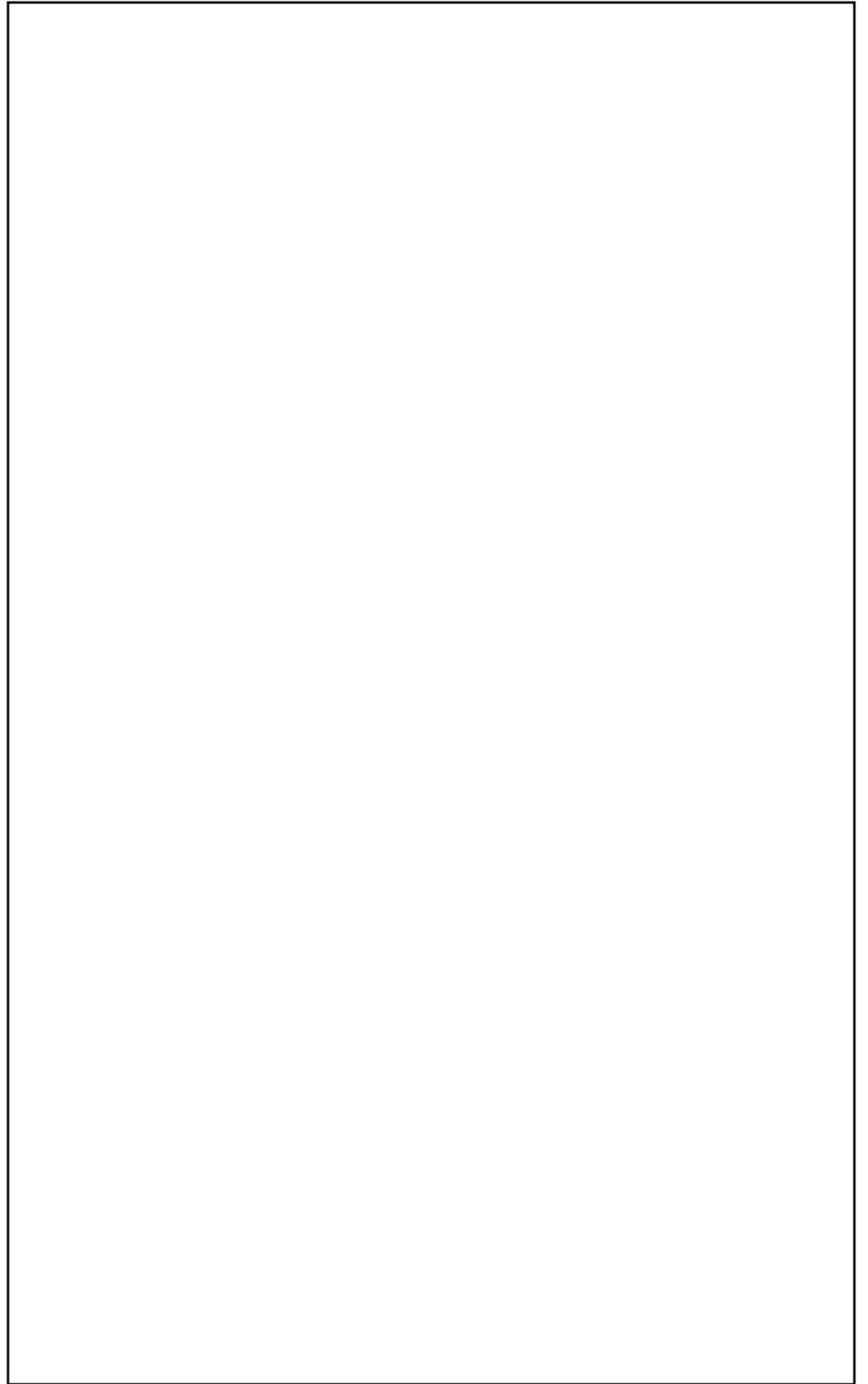
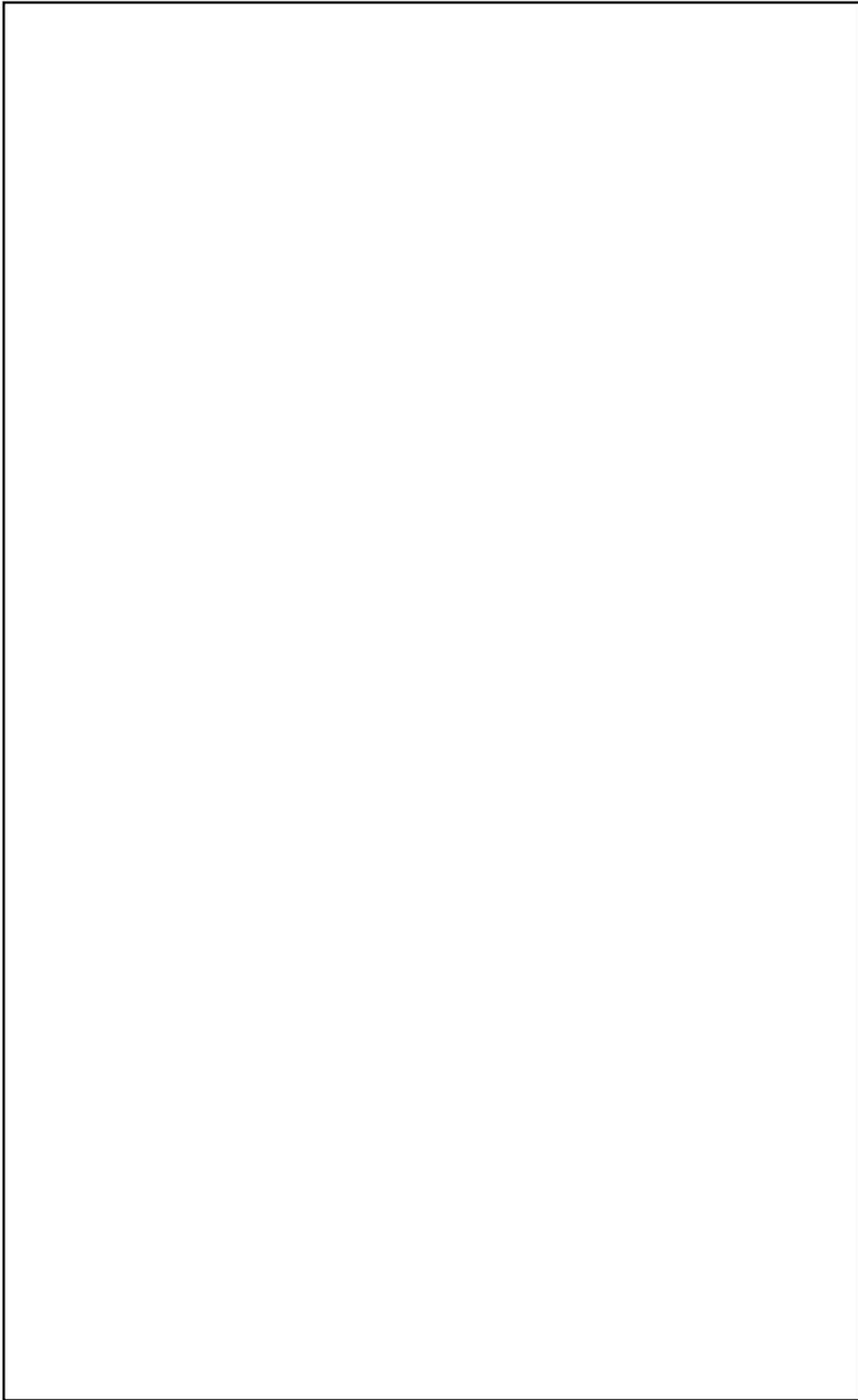
Look carefully at the picture of the charcoal forest Lee Bae has created: the detail of the bark, the spaces between the trunks, and so on. Then, close your eyes. Imagine the sounds this forest would make, the smells, the temperature, and what it would feel like to touch the bark. Breathe in deeply and fully immerse yourself in this imaginary forest. Can you think of a story that might take place here? Draw a picture on the next page to tell your story.

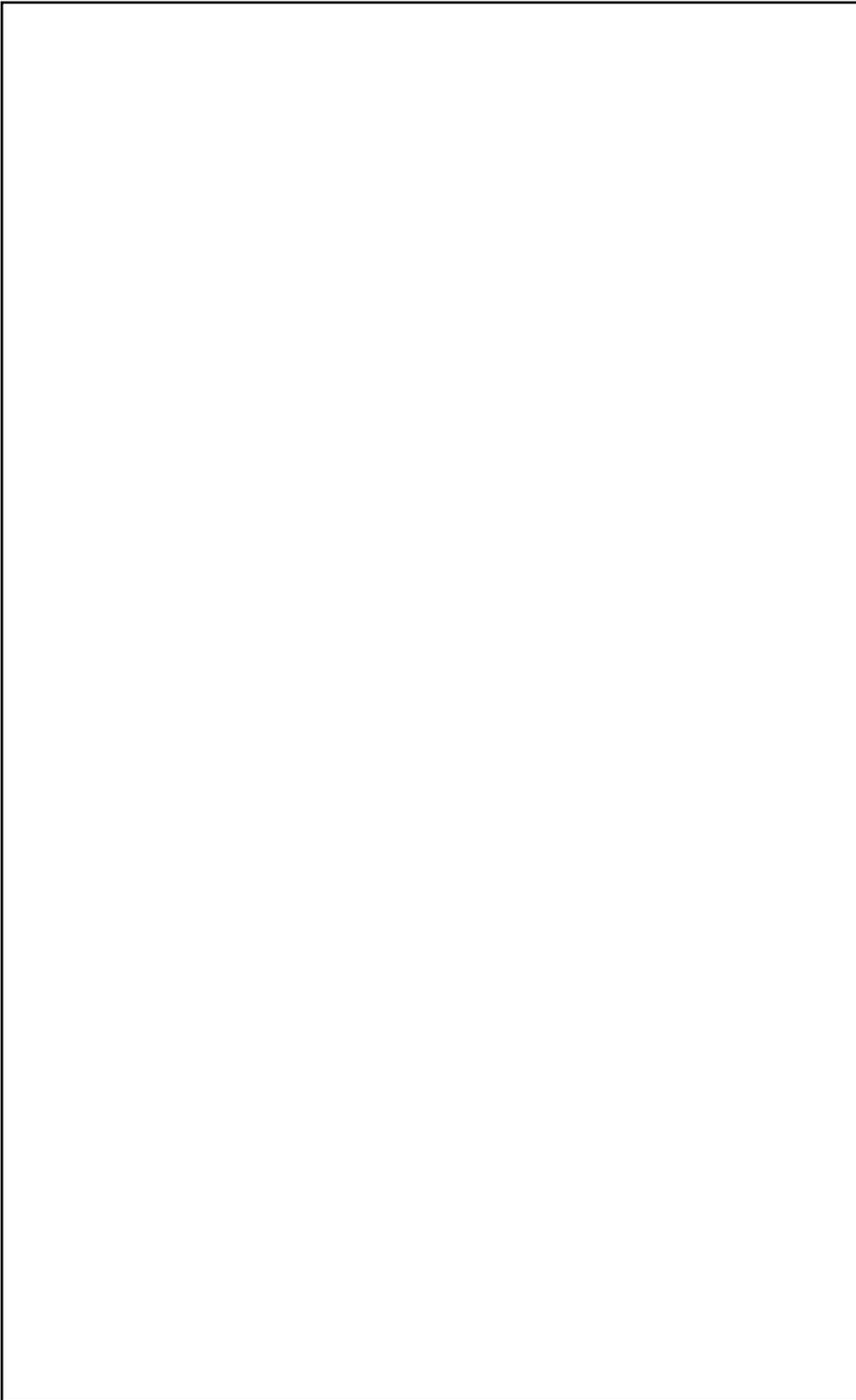
2. Sensory walk

In the company of an adult, take a walk through your neighbourhood. Walk along the streets or through open spaces, perhaps in a park. Allow all of your five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch) to be alert and open to your surroundings. What do you see? What do you smell? What does the air taste like when you breathe in? How does it feel on your cheeks? Pay attention to the sounds: those near you, as well as those further away, loud sounds and soft sounds.

How does paying attention to sound make you see your neighbourhood differently? Do the sounds help you discover something new? Draw what you discovered through sound on your walk.

Next, explore the textures that surround you. Do your own rubbing of the bark of a tree, or of pebbles on the ground. You can use the blank sheet of paper on the following page for your rub drawing.





**We hope you enjoyed
the activities in this
Family Kit!**

**Thank you for your
participation!**

PHI FOUNDATION



451 and 465 Saint-Jean Street
Montreal (Quebec)
H2Y 2R5 Canada