

# Walden as Performance Art?

"The line between art and life should be kept as fluid,  
and perhaps indistinct, as possible."

– Allen Kaprow

"His two years, two months and two days living at Walden Pond became  
and would forever remain an iconic work of performance art."

– Laura Dassow Walls, *Thoreau: A Life*

## Overview:

The Kennedy Center's definition of Arts Integration is "an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both."

The following lessons seek to integrate Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* with the genre of performance art and will result in the students' generating plans for and executing a collaborative work of performance art that enhances/empowers their lives (making them more "awake," "aware," and "alive") and attempts to effect social change on a scale that students/teacher will collectively determine.

These lessons are intended to fit into a teacher's larger unit on Thoreau and *Walden*, though they do not require the reading of the entire book. (For my part, I am focusing in this unit on the first two chapters, "Economy" and "Where I Lived and What I Lived For.") Whether one wants to position the lessons before the reading of *Walden* or afterward is up to the individual teacher. I can see value in both sequences. Looking at performance art before reading *Walden* could energize students into tackling the sometimes difficult, dense text, particularly in "Economy." Looking at performance art after having read *Walden* would be an exciting re-framing of Thoreau's project in hindsight. (I will probably opt for the latter as our reading of *Walden* will take place in small portions parceled out over the entire year.)

In these lessons, through looking at a range of performance exemplars, students will develop a working definition of/set of concerns or categories of the genre (which notoriously eludes definition), then will contextualize Thoreau in light of the characteristics they have assembled. Students will consider some of the ways in which framing Thoreau's work as performance art collapses some of the common arguments made against him (e.g. his return visits to town).

Students will demonstrate understanding through formative assessments such as journals, small group discussion, and informal group presentations. The three part summative assessment includes:

- 1) a group manifesto
- 2) participation in a work of performance art
- 3) a reflection essay

## Essential Questions:

When does life approach performance?

How does performance make one more "aware," "awake," and "alive"?

What is performance art?

Can one be said to make art when there isn't a product or object?

Can the artist *be* the artwork? If so, how?

What difference does the presence of an audience make?

What is an audience's responsibility to the artist, and vice versa?

In what ways can Thoreau's project at Walden be considered performance art?

Questions from Common Core Standards (applied to project at the end of the unit):

What conditions, attitudes, and behaviors support creativity and innovative thinking?

What factors prevent or encourage people to take creative risks?

How does collaboration expand the creative process?

How does knowing the contexts histories, and traditions of art forms help us create works of art and design?

Why do artists follow or break from established traditions?

How do artists determine what resources and criteria are needed to formulate artistic investigations?

## Anchor Texts:

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, particularly "Economy" and "Where I Lived and What I Lived For"

## Related Texts, including Informational and Nonprint Texts (e.g., Media, Website, Video, Film, Music, Art, Graphics):

Warning: some of these sources have nudity, language, and potentially controversial images in them. Please preview before you share with your classes so that you can curate which sections are most appropriate given your class levels.

### Performance Art:

Video: An Introduction to Performance Art | TateShots

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Z-YZ3A4mdk>

Video: The Case for Performance Art, The Art Assignment, PBS

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

Article: The Irish Museum of Modern Art's "What is Performance Art?"

<https://imma.ie/what-is-art/series-1-1970-now/performance-art/>

\*One can print this text out as a booklet. I would probably omit the latter article in the booklet for high school students.

Article: “Why Are Pop Stars Trying to Be Performance Artists?” Amanda Petrusich, *The New Yorker*  
<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/why-are-pop-stars-trying-to-be-performance-artists>

Marina Abramovic:

Video: Marina Abramovic on What Is Performance Art?:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FcyYynulogY>

Video: Marina Abramovic on Performing *The Artist Is Present*:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6Qj\\_\\_s8mNU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6Qj__s8mNU)

Mierle Laderman Ukeles:

Video: Mierle Laderman Ukeles Talks about Maintenance Art  
<https://www.artforum.com/video/mierle-laderman-ukeles-talks-about-maintenance-art-63533>

Website: Manifesto for Maintenance Art  
[https://www.queensmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Ukeles\\_MANIFESTO.pdf](https://www.queensmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Ukeles_MANIFESTO.pdf)

Article: Jillian Steinhauer, “How Mierle Laderman Ukeles Turned Maintenance Work into Art” in *Hyperallergic*  
<https://hyperallergic.com/355255/how-mierle-laderman-ukeles-turned-maintenance-work-into-art/>

Article: Ben Davis, “What Mierle Laderman Ukeles’s ‘Maintenance Art’ Can Still Teach Us Today” in *ArtNet*  
<https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/mierle-ukeles-laderman-manifesto-655478>

Wilmer Wilson IV:

Video: Wilmer Wilson IV, *Henry "Box" Brown: FOREVER*  
[http://films4peace.com/artist/wilmer\\_wilson.html](http://films4peace.com/artist/wilmer_wilson.html)

Video: Wilmer Wilson IV, Black Mask  
<https://vimeo.com/112304506>

Article: “Pew Fellow of the Week: An Interview with Visual Artist Wilmer Wilson IV”  
<https://www.pewcenterarts.org/post/pew-fellow-week-interview-visual-artist-wilmer-wilson-iv>

Lenka Clayton:

Artist’s Website (includes her portfolio and press links): <http://www.lenkaclayton.com/>

Autumn Knight:

Artist's Website (includes her portfolio and press links): <http://autumnjoiknight.com/>

Vanessa German:

Video: Why I Believe in the Healing Power of Art, Connection Pittsburgh 2017  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8U6KkT6MioQ>

Video: Love Front Porch, TedxPittsburghStatePrison  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMTqKQPd7Yk>

Alberto Aguilar:

Artist's Website: <http://albertoaguilar.org/category/work/projects-uncertainties/>

Day One (90 minute class period):

1. Have students divide into pairs. Ask all of the pairs sit in mutual gaze for one minute in total silence. Encourage them not to laugh or turn their gazes into a “staring contest.”
2. Ask students to reflect on the experience: what they expected before engaging in the activity, what happened, how long the minute felt, how they dealt with any discomforts, etc.
3. Then have the same pairs do the same activity again, sitting in mutual gaze this time for two to three minutes.
4. Ask for any further reflections. Did anything shift during the second iteration?
5. Finally, request a serious volunteer pair to sit in mutual gaze in front of the entire class for five minutes (or however long they wish to remain absorbed in the activity).
6. Ask that pair to reflect on the difference of doing the same activity in front of an audience. Ask the class to reflect on the process of watching the pair engaged in that activity, of having an indeterminate time-frame, etc.
7. Show them a short video on Marina Abramovic’s *The Artist is Present*.
8. Ask students to journal on where, exactly, (if anywhere) is the work of art in Abramovic’s *The Artist is Present*. Can we consider *The Artist is Present* a work of art at all, and if so, how? If not, why not? Ask them to write down questions that they have.
9. The students form groups of three to discuss their answers to this question. After about five minutes or so, they report out to the larger class, and we have a discussion about features of *The Artist is Present* that read to us as art: the presence of an audience, the demarcation of space and time, her attention to her body and clothing, the constraints she has placed on the situation and what kind of experience that prompts, etc.

Day Two (90 minute class period):

1. We begin by watching an introductory video to performance art, such as the Art Assignment's "The Case for Performance Art" or the Tate Modern's "Introduction to Performance Art," and/or reading IMMA's "What is Performance Art?" booklet (omitting Amanda Coogan's article).

2. In discussion, we establish the four principle components of Performance Art: Body, Space, Time, and Audience. From IMMA's definition: "Performance Art is a form of arts practice that involves a person or persons undertaking an action or actions within a particular timeframe in a particular space or location for an audience. Central to the process and execution of Performance Art is the live presence of the artist and the real actions of his/her body, to create and present an ephemeral art experience to an audience. A defining characteristic of Performance Art is the body, considered the primary Medium and conceptual material on which Performance Art is based. Other key components are time, space and the relationship between performer and audience."

3. Through the sources mentioned in the above section, I demonstrate a case study of a performance artist: Mierle Laderman Ukeles. We'll read her manifesto, watch some video of her work, and look at some reviews of her 2016 retrospective at the Queens Museum.

3. I break up the class into groups of 5 and give them the name of a young, contemporary performance artist (or artist whose works have decidedly performative aspects) and some resources concerning that artist. These artists will include Wilmer Wilson IV, Vanessa German, Lenka Clayton, Alberto Aguilar and Autumn Knight, all of whom I know through their participation in Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's *State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now* exhibit in 2014 – 2015. There is a plentitude of other possible examples. I will ask the students to read/view and discuss the resources and note how each artist employs the four components of Performance Art: Body, Space, Time and Audience, and some concept of the "energy dialogue" or effect that takes place as a result of the interaction of these elements.

4. Each group gives a short presentation on their artist, perhaps with each person in the group speaking to one of the components.

5. In discussion, we take what we've learned and try to expand on some of the more intangible aspects of performance art, including:

Trust/Vulnerability/Risk

Invitation to participate

Ambiguity/Uncertainty

Disruption of places of prescribed behavior/thought

Connection to Audience

Framing

Economy (or positioning oneself outside or pointedly in contrast to the economy)

Making the Invisible Visible

Transcendence (of discomfort or pain, of isolation, etc.)

Reclaiming Power

Self-consciousness

But especially: Awareness/Awake-ness/Aliveness

Day Three (90 minute class period):

1. First, I'll ask plainly: was Henry David Thoreau a performance artist?
2. Instruct the students to assemble in groups of three, and state that what they've learned in the last two periods they will now apply as a critical lens on Henry David Thoreau and the first two chapters of *Walden* to see whether it is a generative comparison. What are the main components of performance art and their complements in Thoreau's Walden project? How can they apply performance art's theoretical vocabulary or logic to instances in *Walden*? Are there instances where the arguments don't or can't apply? Why is this?
3. Students should work together to assemble passages from "Economy" and "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" to support their connections. Then return to the large group and amass these passages onto the board. (I've included sample passages are attached at the end of this document and some of the key terms discussed in the previous class that the passages engage.) It should become apparent that the connection is a generative one indeed.
4. If time, I would include a close reading/consideration of "The Pond in Winter" next to Laura Dassow Walls's description of Thoreau's survey from *Thoreau: A Life*.
4. Finally, how does it change our experience of Thoreau and his work to think of the writer as an early performance artist? Does applying this lens shift our understanding of the text and/or its author? What comes into focus? What recedes?

Day 4 (90 Minute Class Period):

1. Begin class by watching Art Assignment with Maria Gaspar as guest for “Body In Place”:

<http://www.theartassignment.com/assignments/body-in-place>

2. Hand out the passage from Walden’s “Economy” which begins with “If I should attempt to tell how I have desired to spend my life in years past” and ends with “It is said that a flood tide, with a westerly wind, and ice in the Neva, would sweep St. Petersburg from the face of the earth.” Read this section closely as a manifesto of Thoreau’s (or one of many manifesto moments in *Walden*, including, of course, “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately”). Bring back Ukeles’ “Manifesto” and read it against this passage. What are the similarities between the two documents?

3. Instruct that we as a class will, using Thoreau’s “manifesto” as our instigation, and in the language of the “Body In Place” Art Assignment, “choose [something] that is visible to [us] but seemingly invisible to others and use [our bodies] to create an intervention that creates a new story of that [place/phenomenon, etc].

4. A final case study, directly related to Walden, is Gina Siepel’s “Re-Surveying Walden” from de Cordova Museum’s 2014 *Walden, revisited* exhibition.

The exhibition’s webpage: <https://decordova.org/art/exhibition/walden>

Gina Siepel’s project for this exhibit: <https://www.ginasiepel.com/projects-/re-surveying-walden>



Day 5 (and Beyond!):

The rest of this unit and its timeframe are difficult to prescribe as they will take shape in co-creative collaboration with the students: how they want to proceed with the above instructions, what they want to create, and for what community. What do they feel is over-looked and undervalued? Something in our school, our local community, in the natural world that surrounds it?

It will also be a collaboration with Thoreau's text. For my class, I envision playfully involving Thoreau's text in our project, creating a "self-appointed" department of inspectors and interventionists that will aid in increasing the visibility of the place/phenomenon to both others and ourselves. Components of this department will include having students write their manifesto, define their "self-appointed" roles, design their own badges (which I'll have made at an embroidery shop), strategize methods of surveying and documentation that will then be collected and exhibited in a visually inviting way.

Artistic Connections for a Department: Marcel Broodthaers' *Department of Eagles* in the Museum of Modern Art; Marcel Duchamp's *Museum in a Box*; the Mass-Observation Project and its May 12th day surveys

Other imaginative possibilities include using Thoreau's language of business in this passage, and creating a "business" dealing similarly in the ethereal or ephemeral, that which "manna-wise, would dissolve again in the sun" (15). There are, for example, many instances of artist's stores, wherein artists play with the notions of business, commerce, and commodification.

Artistic Connections for a Business: Claes Oldenburg's *The Store*; Randy Regier's *NuPenny's Last Stand*

The final component will be a reflective personal essay in which the writer describes the project, their role within it, and the effects they have seen in both themselves and in the community, e.g. whether they find themselves more "awake, aware, and alive" as a result of the project. It will also ask the writer to reflect on Thoreau's project at Walden and the re-framing we've done with it.

**Common Core Standards:**

VA:Cr1.1.IIIa: Visualize and hypothesize to generate plans for ideas and directions for creating art and design that can affect social change.

VA:Cr1.2.IIIa: Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices, following or breaking established conventions, to plan the making of multiple works of art and design based on a theme, idea, or concept.

VA:Cr2.3.IIIa: Demonstrate in works of art or design how visual and material culture defines, shapes, enhances, inhibits, and/or empowers people's lives.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.9

Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.B**

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.C**

Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.D**

Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

**Sample Passages for Day 3**

\*page numbers reference the 2004 Beacon Press edition with Bill McKibben's introduction

The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. From the desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, for this comes after work. But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things.

When we consider what, to use the words of the catechism, is the chief end of man, and what are the true necessities and means of life, it appears as if men had deliberately chosen the common mode of living because they preferred it to any other. Yet they honestly think there is no choice left. But alert and healthy natures remember that the sun rose clear. It is never too late to give up our prejudices. No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof. What everybody echoes or in silence passes by as true to-day may turn out to be falsehood to-morrow, mere smoke of opinion, which some had trusted for a cloud that would sprinkle fertilizing rain on their fields.

# Making the Invisible Visible

# Disruption of trends or places of prescribed behavior/thought

# Reclaiming Power

#Awareness/Awake-ness/Aliveness

But man's capacities have never been measured; nor are we to judge of what he can do by any precedents, so little has been tried. Whatever have been thy failures hitherto, "be not afflicted, my child, for who shall assign to thee what thou hast left undone?"

We might try our lives by a thousand simple tests; as, for instance, that the same sun which ripens my beans illumines at once a system of earths like ours. If I had remembered this it would have prevented some mistakes. This was not the light in which I hoed them. The stars are the apexes of what wonderful triangles! What distant and different beings in the various mansions of the universe are contemplating the same one at the same moment! Nature and human life are as various as our several constitutions. Who shall say what prospect life offers to another? Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant? We should live in all the ages of the world in an hour; ay, in all the worlds of the ages. History, Poetry, Mythology!—I know of no reading of another's experience so startling and informing as this would be.

The greater part of what my neighbors call good I believe in my soul to be bad, and if I repent of anything, it is very likely to be my good behavior. What demon possessed me that I behaved so well? You may say the wisest thing you can, old man,—you who have lived seventy years, not without honor of a kind,—I hear an irresistible voice which invites me away from all that. One generation abandons the enterprises of another like stranded vessels.

I think that we may safely trust a good deal more than we do. We may waive just so much care of ourselves as we honestly bestow elsewhere. Nature is as well adapted to our weakness as to our strength. The incessant anxiety and strain of some is a well nigh incurable form of disease. We are made to exaggerate the importance of what work we do; and yet how much is not done by us! or, what if we had been taken sick? How vigilant we are! determined not to live by faith if we can avoid it; all the day long on the alert, at night we unwillingly say our prayers and commit ourselves to uncertainties. So thoroughly and sincerely are we compelled to live, reverencing our life, and denying the possibility of change. This is the only way, we say; but there are as many ways as there can be

drawn radii from one centre. All change is a miracle to contemplate; but it is a miracle which is taking place every instant. Confucius said, “To know that we know what we know, and that we do not know what we do not know, that is true knowledge.” When one man has reduced a fact of the imagination to be a fact to his understanding, I foresee that all men at length establish their lives on that basis.

# Trust/Vulnerability/Risk

# Making the Invisible Visible

# Disruption of trends or places of prescribed behavior/thought

# Reclaiming Power

# Awareness/Awake-ness/Aliveness

“So many autumn, ay, and winter days, spent outside the town, trying to hear what was in the wind, to hear and carry it express! I well-nigh sunk all my capital in it, and lost my own breath into the bargain, running in the face of it. If it had concerned either of the political parties, depend upon it, it would have appeared in the Gazette with the earliest intelligence. At other times watching from the observatory of some cliff or tree, to telegraph any new arrival; or waiting at evening on the hill-tops for the sky to fall, that I might catch something, though I never caught much, and that, manna-wise, would dissolve again in the sun.

For a long time I was reporter to a journal, of no very wide circulation, whose editor has never yet seen fit to print the bulk of my contributions, and, as is too common with writers, I got only my labor for my pains. However, in this case my pains were their own reward.

For many years I was self-appointed inspector of snow storms and rain storms, and did my duty faithfully; surveyor, if not of highways, then of forest paths and all across-lot routes, keeping them open, and ravines bridged and passable at all seasons, where the public heel had testified to their utility.

I have looked after the wild stock of the town, which give a faithful herdsman a good deal of trouble by leaping fences; and I have had an eye to the unfrequented nooks and corners of the farm; though I did not always know whether Jonas or Solomon worked in a particular field to-day; that was none of my business. I have watered the red huckleberry, the sand cherry and the nettle tree, the red pine and the black ash, the white grape and the yellow violet, which might have withered else in dry seasons” (Economy, 15 – 16).

# Making the Invisible Visible

# Economy (or positioning oneself outside or pointedly in contrast to the economy)

# Self-consciousness

“In short, I went on thus for a long time, I may say it without boasting, faithfully minding my business, till it became more and more evident that my townsmen would not after all admit me into the list of town officers, nor make my place a sinecure with a moderate allowance. My accounts, which I can swear to have kept faithfully, I have, indeed, never got audited, still less accepted, still less paid and settled. However, I have not set my heart on that” (Economy, ).

# Economy (or positioning oneself outside or pointedly in contrast to the economy)

# Self-consciousness

“I too had woven a kind of basket of a delicate texture, but I had not made it worth any one’s while to buy them. Yet not the less, in my case, did I think it worth my while to weave them, and instead of studying how to make it worth men’s while to buy my baskets, I studied rather how to avoid the necessity of selling them. The life which men praise and regard as successful is but one kind. Why should we exaggerate any one kind at the expense of the others?” (Economy, 17)

# Trust/Vulnerability/Risk

#Ambiguity/Uncertainty

# Making the Invisible Visible

# Economy (or positioning oneself outside or pointedly in contrast to the economy)

# Self-consciousness

“Finding that my fellow-citizens were not likely to offer me any room in the court house, or any curacy or living any where else, but I must shift for myself, I turned my face more exclusively than ever to the woods, where I was better known. I determined to go into business at once, and not wait to acquire the usual capital, using such slender means as I had already got. My purpose in going to Walden Pond was not to live cheaply nor to live dearly there, but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles; to be hindered from accomplishing which for want of a little common sense, a little enterprise and business talent, appeared not so sad as foolish” (Economy, 17).

# Trust/Vulnerability/Risk

# Making the Invisible Visible

# Economy (or positioning oneself outside or pointedly in contrast to the economy)

# Self-consciousness

“As I have said, I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up” (Where I Lived, 79).

# Disruption of trends or places of prescribed behavior/thought

# Reclaiming Power

#Awareness/Awake-ness/Aliveness

“We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worth of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour” (Where I Lived, 85)

#Framing

#Transcendance

# Awareness/Awake-ness/Aliveness

“I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion” (Where I Lived, 85).

#Awareness/Awake-ness/Aliveness

#Trust/Vulnerability/Risk

#Ambiguity/Uncertainty

# Making the Invisible Visible

# Reclaiming Power

“I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society” (Visitors, 132).

#Connection/Audience

Too numerous to copy here are all the passages where Thoreau has meticulously notes his materials (down to the half cent), including his groceries, and the planning and construction of the house. This, to me, shows Thoreau’s self-consciousness as an artist intentionally shaping the framing devices through which he will experience life in the woods.