

# Woodson Art Museum

## *in your classroom*

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Walter Wick: *Games, Gizmos, and Toys in the Attic*  
Spring 2016

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Above: Walter Wick, *Levers, Ramps, and Pulleys* from *I SPY School Days*, 1995, photograph  
Below: Walter Wick, *Arrival* from *I SPY Treasure Hunt*, 1999, photograph

## Introduction

This spring the Woodson Art Museum's galleries will be filled with the colorful, clever, and captivating photographic illustrations of Walter Wick, whose work includes the popular series *I SPY* and *Can You See What I See?* and, his latest book, *Hey, Seymour!*



Walter Wick, *All Aboard* from *Can You See What I See?* *Toyland Express*, 2011, photograph

*Walter Wick: Games, Gizmos, and Toys in the Attic* brings the beloved illustrator's books to life through fifty-seven photographs and five three-dimensional models alongside their corresponding illustrations, encouraging viewers to consider how studio photographers master light and perspective to transform objects.

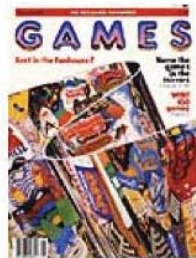
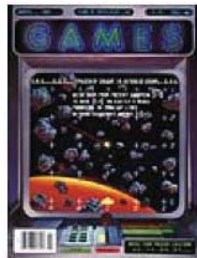
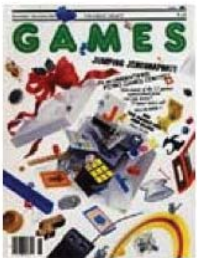
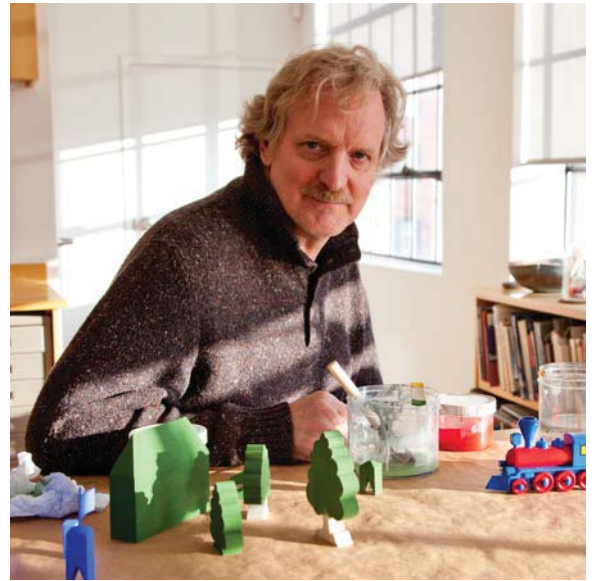
Walter Wick's oversized photographs are filled with fairytale landscapes, re-imagined everyday objects, optical illusions, and endless layers of colorful toys tucked into every nook and cranny. The enticing aesthetics of Wick's photographs are the result of several detailed processes working together to create a single image. As students will learn during their visit to the Art Museum, Wick's illustrations are a labor of love and involve the efforts and talents of multiple people working together in a studio to develop and photograph Wick's intricate scenes, encompassing small-scale models resembling movie sets.

[\*Walter Wick: Games, Gizmos, and Toys in the Attic\*](#) is a retrospective exhibition featuring forty years of the artist's work, beginning with the earliest landscape photographs he created as an art student to his latest work for the 2015 book *Hey, Seymour!* The exhibition is organized by the New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, Connecticut, and is on view at the Woodson Art Museum from Saturday, February 27 through Sunday, May 29.

### *About the Artist*

Walter Wick's interests in art, the outdoors, objects, and building began during his childhood in Hartford, Connecticut, where he grew up with three older brothers and a younger sister. Wick's interests in drawing and painting continued throughout high school, while his brother Robert, who worked at a camera store, nurtured his interest in photography. Walter went on to study landscape photography and photojournalism at the Pair College of Art, pursuing work in commercial photography and gaining professional experience in a studio and working with more technical equipment.

Working out of a New York City studio, Wick produced work for magazines, including *Psychology Today*, *Discover*, and *Newsweek*, and for ten years (1980-1990) he designed and created photographic puzzles for *Games* magazine, his love for puzzles, games, and illusion found a niche. Wick worked on hundreds of assignments and designed covers (samples below) for *Games* magazine, a publication devoted to "creative minds at play."



While at *Games* magazine, Wick worked with fellow-puzzle enthusiast Will Shortz who eventually became the magazine's editor and said this about Wick's work and this exhibition:

"In the world of puzzles, only a few people have the ability to create an original, elegant, well-designed challenge and present it with great artistic sense. And when that artistic sense is photographic . . . well, I can think of only one living 'puzzle person' who has it – Walter Wick," said Shortz, who now is the *New York Times* crossword editor, director of the American Crossword Puzzle Tournament, and National Public Radio's puzzlemaster. " . . . Now, with this exhibition, Walter is getting overdue recognition for his ingenious, beautiful sort of play – art that makes you use your brain."

Wick went on to build a career creating mind-boggling photo illustrations featured in dozens of books, with over forty-five million copies in print worldwide.

## Before Your Visit

### *Telling a Story: Illustration in 2D and 3D*

*Games, Gizmos, and Toys in the Attic* showcases a range of Wick's aesthetic and narrative styles, including original stories, re-imagined fairytale classics, and single-image scenes that capture the imagination.

### *Visualizing a Story*

When developing an original story, Wick begins by creating a storyboard, which helps the artist determine what parts of the story he'll create photographic illustrations for and what other parts of the story can be communicated through written words, or our imaginations. Below is an example of Wick's storyboard for his book *Can You See What I See? On a Scary Scary Night*.



On a Scary, Scary Night



Beneath a Scary, Scary Moon



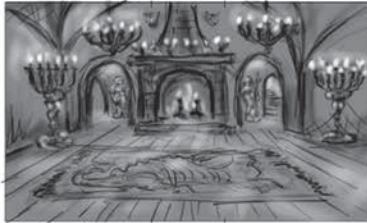
In a Scary, Scary Town



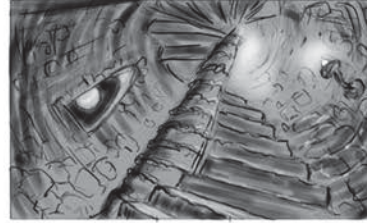
On a Scary, Scary Street



Atop a Scary, Scary Hill



In a Scary, Scary Castle



Up a Scary, Scary Stair



In a Scary, Scary Tower



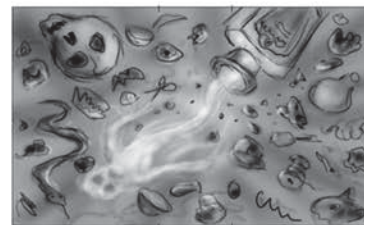
In a Scary, Scary Cupboard



On a Scary, Scary Shelf



In a Scary, Scary Bottle...



...was a Ghost!

Tell students to think about a storyboard as a visual outline, which breaks down a narrative into key illustrations. Invite students to develop a storyboard for an original story or a familiar one, asking them to consider how plot points can unfold visually and how they can create a unified style through their sketches to link the images in their hypothetical, illustrated book.

### *Single Image Narratives*

In his book *Can You See What I See? Once Upon a Time*, Wick depicts familiar stories – *Puss in Boots*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *The Three Little Pigs* – in a single, immersive image. Focusing on main characters, key plot points, and iconic settings, Wick captures a story in a single shot using clever layers of objects and actions to communicate a precise moment in the narrative.



Walter Wick, *Puss in Boots* from *Can You See What I See? Once Upon a Time*, 2006, photograph

Challenge students to design an illustration from a familiar story in a single image, asking them to consider the following:



- When you visualize this story, what scenes, characters, or places first come to mind?
- Is there a particular action or event in the story that feels most significant to the narrative?
- How would you try to match the style of the story, setting, and characters to a particular art medium?
- Invite students to create a two-dimensional drawing depicting an iconic fairytale scene and then ask them to translate that drawing into a three-dimensional model or diorama.

Learn more about how Walter Wick uses a similar process when developing his own single illustration fairytales by watching this video about *Hansel and Gretel*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atyGP4Uj4kU>

### *Illusion and Perception*

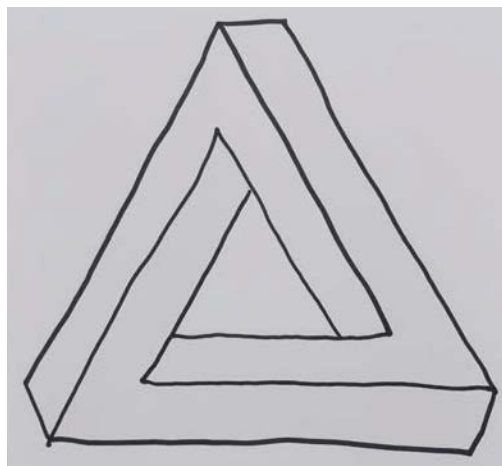
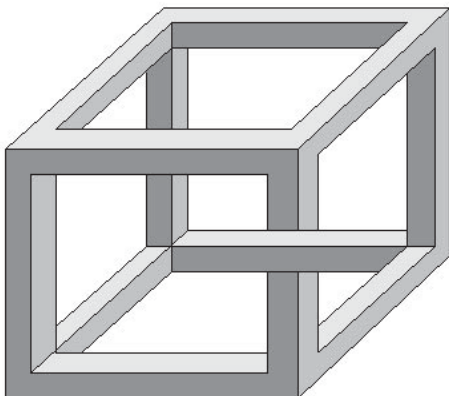
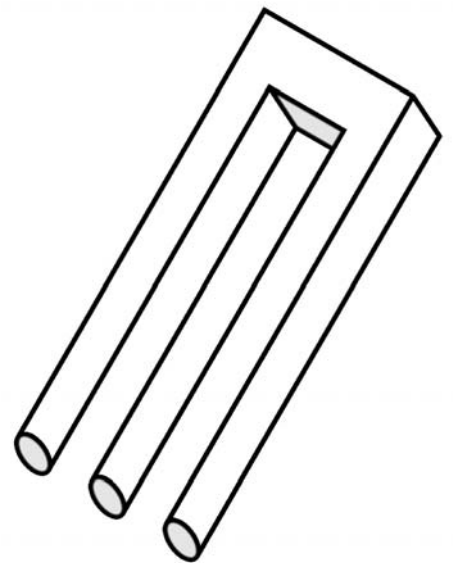
Visual acuity and careful observation are required in order to appreciate the clever visual illusions achieved by Wick in works like *Crazy Columns* (pictured below).



Walter Wick, *Crazy Columns* from *Walter Wick's Optical Tricks*, 1998, photograph

Wick's *Crazy Columns* photograph is inspired by a popular impossible object illusion the artist first encountered as a child on the cover of *Mad* magazine (check out this video to learn how Wick achieved this illusion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcyhjH8HKw4>). Known as the "Impossible Trident Illusion" or "blivet," the object depicted appears to have three cylindrical columns at its base, but as the eye moves up, we identify two square pillars.

Students can recreate the "Impossible Trident Illusion" with pencil, paper, and practice, along with other creative visual tricks like the impossible cube and impossible triangle below.



### *Capture a Snowflake*



Walter Wick's *A Drop of Water* examines the wondrous qualities and principles of water through photographs and experimentation.

The only single object photograph in the exhibition features a snowflake, captured and photographed by the artist using a microscope, camera, black cardboard, and a feather. Read about Wick's process here:

<http://www.walterwick.com/behind-the-scenes/snowflake>

Invite students to capture and examine a snowflake using this method courtesy of the Bruce Museum in Greenwich, Connecticut:

Materials needed: Aerosol hairspray and a piece of glass

*Snowflake from A Drop of Water: A Book of Science and Wonder*, 1997, photograph

#### Instructions:

1. Freeze the piece of glass and the hairspray can overnight.
2. Spray the glass with hairspray.
3. Go outside and let some snowflakes settle on the glass.
4. When you have enough flakes, bring the glass indoors and allow it to thaw at room temperature for about 15 minutes.

You have a permanent record of your snowflakes and you can examine them using a magnifying glass to get a closer look.

#### *DIY Seymour*

Invite students to create their own "bead boy," inspired by Seymour (pictured at right).

A variety of materials can work for a DIY Seymour, such as large wooden craft beads, plastic beads or buttons, and glue, or, articulate the character by using wire or chenille stems to "string" the components of the figure together.

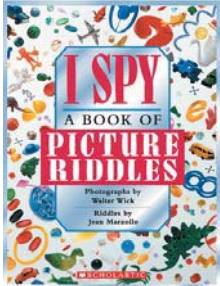
Take this hands-on learning to the next level by crafting a story or scene around the character using the previously described storyboard and model making exercises.



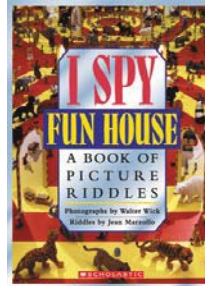
## Resources

### *What's On View?*

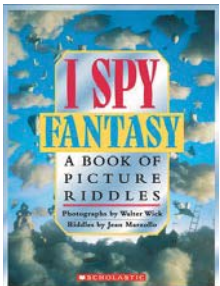
Below is a list of books from which artwork is featured in the *Walter Wick: Games, Gizmos, and Toys in the Attic* exhibition:



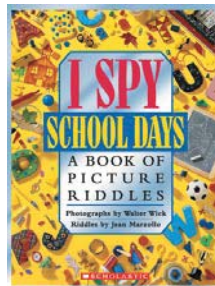
*I Spy: A Book of Picture Riddles*  
Photographs by Walter Wick  
Riddles by Jean Marzollo  
Scholastic, Spring 1992



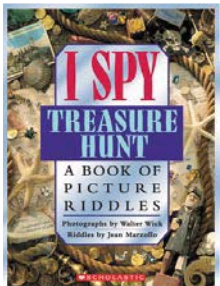
*I Spy Fun House*  
Photographs by Walter Wick  
Riddles by Jean Marzollo  
Scholastic, Spring 1993



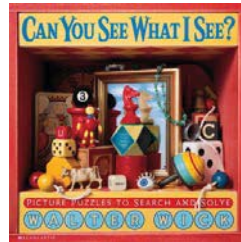
*I Spy Fantasy*  
Photographs by Walter Wick  
Riddles by Jean Marzollo  
Scholastic, Fall 1994



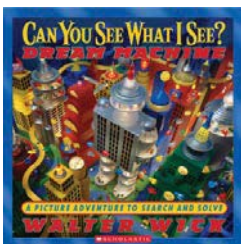
*I Spy School Days*  
Photographs by Walter Wick  
Riddles by Jean Marzollo  
Scholastic, Fall 1995



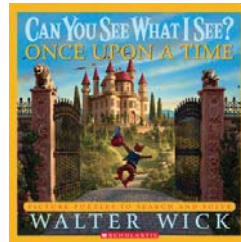
*I Spy Treasure Hunt*  
Photographs by Walter Wick  
Riddles by Jean Marzollo  
Scholastic, Fall 1999



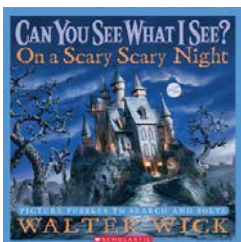
*Can You See What I See?*  
Written and Photographed  
by Walter Wick  
Scholastic, Spring 2002



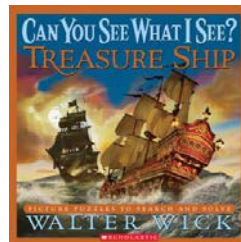
*Can You See What I See?*  
*Dream Machine*  
Written and Photographed  
by Walter Wick  
Scholastic, Fall 2003



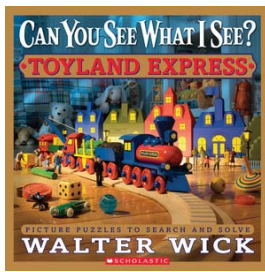
*Can You See What I See?*  
*Once Upon a Time*  
Written and Photographed  
by Walter Wick  
Scholastic, Fall 2006



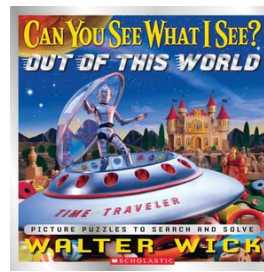
*Can You See What I See?*  
*On a Scary Scary Night*  
Written and Photographed  
by Walter Wick  
Scholastic, Fall 2008



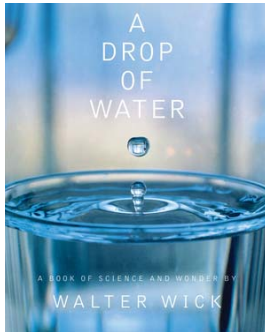
*Can You See What I See?*  
*Treasure Ship*  
Written and Photographed  
by Walter Wick  
Scholastic, Spring 2010



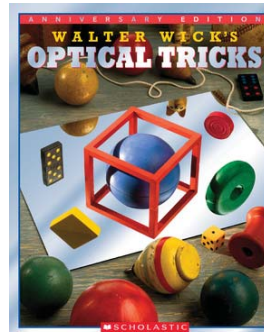
*Can You See What I See?*  
*Toyland Express*  
 Written and Photographed  
 by Walter Wick  
 Scholastic, Fall 2011



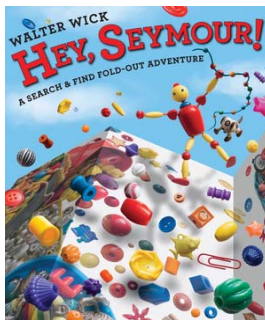
*Can You See What I See?*  
*Out of This World*  
 Written and Photographed  
 by Walter Wick  
 Scholastic, Fall 2013



*A Drop of Water*  
 Written and Photographed  
 by Walter Wick  
 Scholastic, Fall 1997



*Walter Wick's Optical Tricks*  
 Written and Photographed  
 by Walter Wick  
 Scholastic, Fall 1998



*Hey, Seymour!*  
 Written and Photographed  
 by Walter Wick  
 Scholastic, Fall 2015

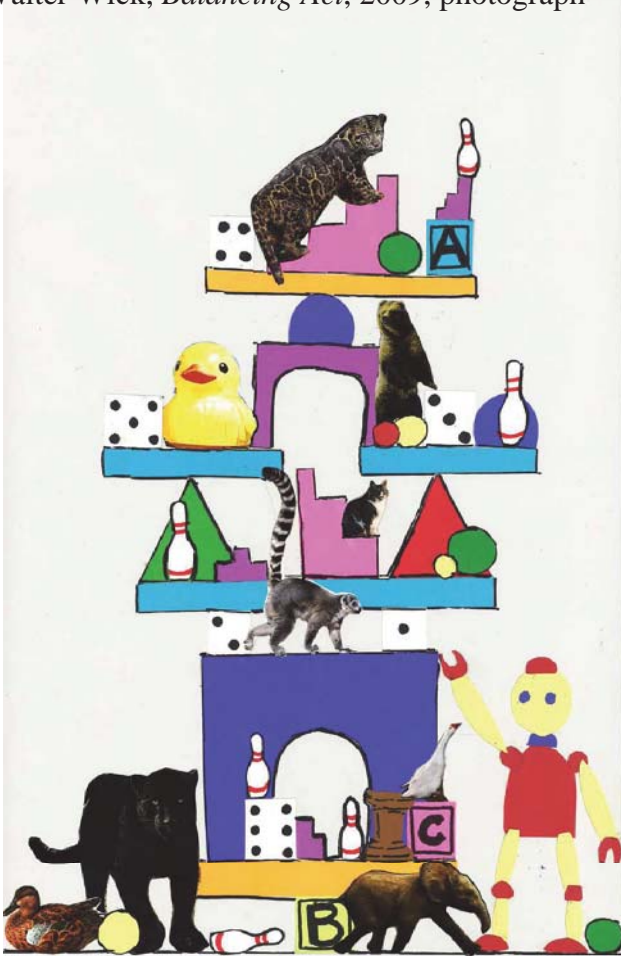
For more information about Walter Wick's books, online resources, and interactive games inspired by the *I SPY* and *Can You See What I See?* series, check out these websites:

- Walter Wick's website:  
<http://www.walterwick.com/>
- Scholastic's *I SPY* page: <http://www.scholastic.com/ispy/books/index.htm>
- Scholastic's *Can You See What I See?* page:  
<https://www.scholastic.com/canyouseewhatisee/other-books.htm>
- Walter Wick's YouTube Channel, Blog, and Facebook pages:
  - [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaur4i4\\_1VRtJ64j311vN2g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaur4i4_1VRtJ64j311vN2g)
  - <http://www.walterwick.com/blog/>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/walterwick?ref=s>

The Woodson Art Museum's free [audio tour app](#) includes nineteen videos, which dive deeper into the behind-the-scenes processes and inspiration for artwork featured in the *Walter Wick* exhibition.



Walter Wick, *Balancing Act*, 2009, photograph



#### @ the Woodson

Following their docent-led experience in the *Walter Wick* galleries, students will spend approximately 20 minutes working on a collage inspired by Wick's photographic illustrations featuring carefully balanced objects and playful landscapes constructed from toys, everyday objects, and colorful wooden blocks.

Working on 11"x17" paper, students will use colorful geometric paper shapes, magazine cutouts of animals, scissors, and glue to create their own visual scavenger hunt filled with carefully layered objects, shapes, and scenes that capture the imagination. See samples below for an idea of the types of materials your students will use at the Art Museum and consider ways you can continue this project in the classroom.



## Woodson Art Museum Information

Please encourage your students to return to the Museum again. Admission is ALWAYS free

### Hours

Tuesday – Friday 9 am – 4 pm

First Thursday of each month 9 am – 7:30 pm

Saturday – Sunday Noon – 5 pm

Closed Monday and holidays, including Easter

On the first Thursday of every month – Night Out @ the Woodson – the Museum remains open until 7:30 pm and offers hands-on art for all ages from 5:30 – 7 pm.

### Activity Guides

Each participant on a docent-led experience receives an Activity Guide to extend learning and enrichment beyond the Museum and as a way to share the visit with friends and family.



### Visit Logistics

- Notes for educators and chaperones can be found here: <http://www.lywam.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Educator-Chaperone-Visit-Guidelines1.pdf>
- Planning a self-guided visit? Here are some suggestions to enhance your visit: <http://www.lywam.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Self-Guided-Tours.pdf>



### Contact

Call the Woodson Art Museum or visit our website for more information:

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Wausau, WI 54403  
[lywam.org](http://lywam.org)  
715.845.7010