

Art in Context

Final Project Form

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School: Hyde Park Academy

Grade: 10th

Subjects: Visual Arts, Social Studies, Language Arts

Other teachers who might be involved: Interdisciplinary Team Members

Time required: 1 one-week unit (Introduction), 6 two-week units (Photography) and
1 two-week unit (Album/Bookmaking) over the course of 2 semesters

Approximate dates for implementation: October 2003 through April 2004

Resources:

Primary Reference Artists

The City by Walt Kuhn, 1919 (Smart Museum Collection)

Wright Dining Table and Chairs by Frank Lloyd Wright, 1907-10

Untitled #137 by Cindy Sherman, 1984

Untitled #152 by Cindy Sherman, 1985

Untitled Film Still #9 by Cindy Sherman, 1978

Additional Reference Artists

All in Black by Malick Sidibe, 1965

Birth of a Star, by Mariko Mori, 1995

Souvenir I by Kerry James Marshall, 1997

Untitled (Altgeld Gardens) by Kerry James Marshall, 1995

Selected photographs in Smart Museum Collection (Evans, Hine, Lyon, Shahn)

Field Trips

Smart Museum to view Kuhn painting and Wright table and chairs.

School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Library Dept., to view handmade art books.

Return to Smart Museum to view selected pieces from the Contemporary Art Collection.

Related Documents

Assessment Rubric (one for staged photos, one for bookmaking)

Peer Evaluation/Critique and Small Group Evaluation/Critique Forms

Student Project Evaluation

Survey Form for Culminating Activity

Guidelines (overall project, staged photo-taking, album/bookmaking, journal entries, research project)

Worksheets (inquiry, artwork analysis)

Student Release Form (for reproduction purposes)

Letter to Parents/Guardian (introducing project)

Audio Visual Materials

Photography slides from various periods in America History (Smart)

Slides of period paintings (Art Institute of Chicago)

Cindy Sherman, Malick Sidibe, Mariko Mori, Kerry James Marshall slides (MCA)

equipment: slide projector, screen, digital cameras, camcorder, disposable cameras

Internet Access

Internet lab for research
Computer(s) with Photoshop
scanner, printer

Visiting Artists

Photographer
Performance Artist

Text

Mittler, Gene A. *Art in Focus*. New York: Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 2000.

Powell, Richard J. *Black History and Culture in the 20th Century*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1996.

Project Overview:

In this project, students explore how modern and contemporary photographers, painters and other artists use the poses and gestures of figures, and how they layer images, objects and words to convey ideas and to persuade viewers. As a point of departure, students are acquainted with one of Walt Kuhn's early 20th Century metaphoric portraits of a showgirl and with several of Cindy Sherman's latter 20th Century identity self-portrait photos. Using digital or disposable cameras and image manipulating software, students create a series of staged self-portraits to retell or reconstruct American History. Using the tools and methods of contemporary artists, students are encouraged to relate stories past down within their families from generation to generation or to juxtapose contemporary images with traditional historical accounts. Students also explore alternative bookmaking techniques to construct non-traditional albums/books of their photos to counter their history text.

Learning Objectives:

Students will

- ♣ Question the validity of conventional historical accounts and pictorial documentation as seen in history texts, magazines like Life and National Geographic and in period paintings.
- ♣ Shake the idea of what recorded history should be by creating a series of staged self-portrait photographs that inform or persuade the viewer toward a more personal, non-conventional perception of American History.
- ♣ Illustrate art-making and technology-based skills by applying basic staged photograph-taking methods and acquired proficiency in using image-manipulating software.
- ♣ Design and construct a non-traditional album or book to display their photo images in.
- ♣ Expand critical thinking skills, word knowledge, comprehension, fluency and writing abilities.
- ♣ Participate as responsible members of a community of artists in class and in small group activities.

Standards Addressed, CPS Reading Initiative connections:

State Goals for Visual Arts - #25, 26, 27

State Goal for Social Studies - #16 CAS D.

State Goal for Language Arts - # 5 CAS A.

Curriculum:

Unit Plan Overview

Unit 1 – Native American History (Pre-European Settlers)

Unit 2 – Pre-Colonial & Colonial American History

Unit 3 – Pre-Civil War & Civil War American History

Unit 4 – Reconstruction (Post Civil War) American History

Unit 5 – World War I & II American History

Unit 6 – The Last Fifty Years (Contemporary) of American History

Overall Introduction of Project

Day 1 Slide show of the works of Cindy Sherman and other reference artists. Students begin worksheets and complete as homework. Worksheet addresses such question as: What do you know about American History? How do you know it? Where did you learn it? What images do you associate with American History? Students are also given journal format guidelines. Journal entry: Ask same questions that are on student worksheet of an older family member, neighbor or teacher. Analyze how that person's responses are similar or different from your own.

Day 2 Visit to Smart Museum to view Walt Kuhn painting entitled *The City*. Discussion centers on Kuhn painting using John Shuh's, "Teaching yourself to teach with objects," as model. Emphasis is placed on Kuhn's use of metaphor, pose, gesture and objects to portray the city of New York in 1919. Students compare Kuhn's painting to Cindy Sherman's photography. While at Smart Museum, students also view the Frank Lloyd Wright table and chairs and discuss its significance as an object of historical value and possible meanings it might have as a metaphor (Extension #1). Journal entry: Respond to the pieces viewed at Smart Museum using art analysis worksheet (Kuhn and Wright).

Day 3 Students are given guidelines of the overall project including a timeline for implementation. Introduction of final presentation format – staged photos in a student produced album/book. Discussion centers on possible thematic approaches. For example, a student might decide to create his or her series of staged self-portraits by being pictured as a laborer during each historical period. Another student might portray history through the eyes of a mother. War, social injustice, economic conditions and entertainment are all possible themes. Journal entry: List message or possible messages that might be addressed in a series of photos using an album/book format.

Day 4 Visiting photographer orientates students to various approaches and methods for taking effective photos. Emphasis placed on how to create drama in a staged photo. Journal entry: Find a photograph that tells about an historical event, person or place and analyze it according to the criteria on the art analysis form.

Day 5 Each student chooses a theme for his or her series. Students are also given guidelines for research project (Extension #2). Journal entry: Write about the theme that you have selected for your album/book. Why it is interesting? Why it is important? What initial ideas come to mind as a way of implement it?

Photography Unit Model

Day 1 Slide show and discussion of conventional and non-conventional images associated with time period (per unit plan). Students complete worksheets that focus on what they know about the period, what images they associate with it and what images they think have been excluded or are seldom seen, but should be associated with the period. Students are given project guidelines. Journal entry: Ask same questions that are on student worksheet of an older family member, neighbor or teacher. Analyze how that person's responses are similar or different from your own.

Day 2 Students visit Internet lab and begin collecting images and search for objects to use in their photographs (for individual or community use). Homework: Collection of more images and objects. Journal entry: Write and sketch proposal(s) for photo images.

Day 3 Class is divided into small groups (5 - 6 students) and they share their research and ideas. Each group brainstorms for ideas to assist each other in formulating their visual stories (how each photo will be setup, possible poses, images, objects, words).

Day 4 Visiting performance artist instructs students in methods for conveying an idea through gesture, objects, words, images. Groups schedule photo shoots (students will assist each other in groups). Journal entry: Sketch possible layouts for photo setups and list items needed for shoot. Homework: Collect all items.

Day 5 – 7 Photo shoots (approximately 2 photo shoots each day per group). Visiting performance artist assists students in setups.

Day 8 – 10 Students scan photos and related images into Photoshop. Students manipulate images and finish photos. Peer critiques. Journal entry: Evaluate your own work and resulting image.

Album/Bookmaking Model

Day 1 Visit to School of the Art Institute, Library Dept., to view handmade art books that are non-traditional in format. Journal entry: Write about your reaction to the books seen in the library. Which ones did you especially like? Why?

Day 2 In small groups, students discuss books viewed at the library and brainstorm for ideas and materials to use in making their own albums/books. Students are given album/bookmaking guidelines. Journal entry: Write and sketch proposal(s) for your album/book.

Day 3 Demonstration of bookmaking techniques and various format options. Journal entry: Write about the feeling that you want your album/book to convey through scale, how images are revealed, placement of photos, colors, etc.

Day 4 Student make maquettes to illustrate their album/book plans.

Day 5 – 10 Album/book construction using an alternative bookmaking technique. Journal entry: Evaluate the overall presentation of your series, how album/book format extends your concept and is relevant to your theme.

Culminating Activity

School-wide exhibition of albums/books and a display of selected photos enlarged to create a collaborative visual history of America. By displaying classroom textbooks and related materials and through discussion, students create for their viewers (parents, classmates, teachers and community members) a contrast between conventional pictures and images found in textbooks and the way that they have told history in their albums/books.

Follow-Up Activity

Return visit to Smart Museum. Students view a variety of Contemporary Art pieces (photographs, sculptures, paintings and drawings), including images in the collection that were used in slide shows throughout the project. While at the museum, students participate in an analysis of selected artworks. Using the knowledge that they have gained through their research and art making experiences, students interpret and evaluate the significance each piece to contemporary life experiences.

Assessment:

1. Performance-based evaluation of individual student progress using rubrics.
2. Oral presentations of peer evaluations based on responses to written prompts.
3. Student project evaluations.
4. Survey of students, teachers, parents and guests for effectiveness of the albums/books produced by students. Surveying will take place during a school-wide exhibition.

Documentation:

- ♣ Samples of student worksheets.
- ♣ Samples of student journal entries.
- ♣ Photos of student albums.
- ♣ Samples of staged photos.
- ♣ Photos and video tape that show students working on project and illustrates various stages of project.
- ♣ Photos and video tape of culminating activity, including interviews with parents, students and other guests.
- ♣ Samples of promotional materials for exhibit (invitation, flyer, etc.).
- ♣ Samples of assessment rubrics.
- ♣ Samples of student project evaluations.
- ♣ Results and samples of survey.

Extensions:

1. In a parallel assignment, students will be working with other classes to create a performance that uses a table as a metaphor to convey an alternate view of a historical event. A visit of all participants to Smart Museum to view the Frank Lloyd Wright table and chairs, and to the Robie House to view the interior as well as exterior of one of Wright's architectural designs, will serve as a departure point for this assignment. Students who have participated in the self-portrait photo project will document the table performances by photo and they will also serve as leaders for other classroom students in performance art activities.

2. Students at this school are required to complete an individual research project for each class. For the art research project, each student will select an art piece from the 20th Century American Art Collection at Smart Museum (using CD-Rom) and the student will research and analyze the piece in context to the visual culture of the time/place it was produced in. Students will include information about the artist and his or her vision/purposes. Students will be required to hand in a two-page paper with a bibliography and a full sketch and a detail of the piece.

Sources:

Adams, Phillip. *Walt Kuhn, Painter: His Life and Work*. Columbia: Ohio State University Press, 1978.

Britton, Crystal A. *African American Art, The Long Struggle*. New York: Todtri, 1996.

Erickson, H. Lynn. *Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction, Teaching Beyond the Facts*. California: Corwin Press, Inc., 2002.

Fehr, Dennis; Fehr, Kris; and Keifer-Boyd, Karen, eds. *Real-World Readings in Art Education: Things Your Professor Never Told You*. "Investigating the Culture of Curriculum," by Olivia Gude. New York: Falmer Press, 2000.

Hooper-Greenhill, Eileen, ed. *The Educational Role of the Museum*. "Teaching yourself to teach with objects," by John Hennigar Shuh. London: Routledge, 1994.

Kohler, Michael, ed. *Constructed Realities the Art of Staged Photography*. Zurich, Switzerland: Edition Stemmler, 1995.

Morris, Catherine. *Essential Cindy Sherman*. Harry M. Abrams, 2000.

Website

From Revolution to Reconstruction and What Happened Afterwards:
<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/usa.htm>