

ART AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Ohio Standards

Connections:

Visual Art

STANDARD: VISUAL ARTS: CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION

BENCHMARK B: Create expressive artworks that demonstrate a sense of purpose and understanding of the relationships among form, materials and techniques and subject matter.

INDICATOR 11.3: *Create artworks that demonstrate a range of individual ideas, subject matter and themes with at least one idea explored in depth.*

STANDARD: VISUAL ARTS: ANALYZING AND RESPONDING

BENCHMARK C: Critique their own works, the works of peers and other artists on the basis of the formal, technical and expressive aspects in the works.

INDICATOR 9.5: *Analyze and describe the visual aspects of their own artworks and the work of others*

STANDARD: VISUAL ARTS: VALUING THE ARTS/AESTHETIC REFLECTION

BENCHMARK B: Identify and analyze a variety of viewpoints on aesthetic issues and themes in visual

Lesson Summary:

In this lesson, students will identify the valuable role that artists play in directing public attention on important public issues. The focus of the lesson will also help students gain an understanding of the process of screen-printing or etching and to produce a work utilizing the benefits of one of these mediums. Students will become familiar with artists and artwork that concentrated on provocative social issues. Younger students will create their own screens using a Thermofax machine. Older students will create an etched plate using a copper plate immersed in a plastic shoebox with an air stone, an air pump and a half-gallon of corrosive chemical. Directions are attached.

Estimated Duration:

Three to Five 55 minute sessions.

Commentary:

The Columbus Museum of Art's recent acquisition of a major collection of art dealing with issues of social commentary from the 1930s to the 1970s provides a unique opportunity to explore the role of art and artists in the social issues of their community. (Go to <http://schiller.cmaohio.org>) The paintings and prints in this collection are concerned with issues of war, violence, isolation, prejudice and gender bias. In particular, they address economic, political and social issues of the World War II and Cold War eras and the experiences of African Americans, women and Eastern European immigrants. Works reviewed in this lesson are by well-known artists such as Jacob Lawrence, Romare Bearden, Ben Shahn, George Grosz, and Rockwell Kent. Many lesser-known artists are also represented. These works of art can serve as a springboard for confronting similar issues of diversity and tolerance that face communities today: the influx of immigrant populations, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and the plight of homeless people.

Art and artists have the ability to focus community, even world attention on an issue such as racism, genocide, war, and pollution. Over time artists have used every medium at their disposal to communicate and provoke. However, the invention of the printing press along with many innovations in terms of mechanical

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art and develop a personal point of view.

INDICATOR 11. 4 :
Compare and contrast responses to works of visual art on the basis of how well the works communicate intent and purpose.

STANDARD:
PEOPLE IN SOCIETIES
STUDENTS USE
KNOWLEDGE OF
PERSPECTIVES,
PRACTICES AND
PRODUCTS OF
CULTURAL, ETHNIC
AND SOCIAL GROUPS
TO ANALYZE THE
IMPACT OF THEIR
COMMONALITY AND
DIVERSITY WITHIN
LOCAL, NATIONAL,
REGIONAL AND
GLOBAL SETTINGS
BENCHMARK:

Diffusion
Indicator 12 4: Evaluate the role of institutions in guiding, transmitting, preserving and changing culture.

reproduction of an image have permitted provocative works of art to be generally available to a wide spectrum of the public. In the history of art we look to figures such as Honoré Daumier and Francisco Goya. Certainly political cartoonists such as Thomas Nast or any number of others that regularly appear on newspapers editorial pages or magazines such as The New Yorker intend to provoke an audience to reflect on some issue of current importance.

Traditional methods artists used to create multiple images such as etching, engraving and woodcuts have been joined by lithography, photography and computers today. We will be exploring two methods that can be used in the classroom to produce multiple images of significant ideas.

Pre-Assessment:

Teacher should have a number of editorial cartoon images to share with the students. **Discuss:** Have you seen an editorial cartoon? What do you think the purpose of an editorial cartoon might be? Looking at the cartoons, what do you see? What does the image suggest? What do the words say? What is the meaning? Do all viewers agree on the meaning?

Post-Assessment:

A. Hang prints for a critique. Ask students to describe what they see, analyze the elements of art, interpret the mood, emotion and idea and judge if they like it and why.

B. Hang the prints in the hallway with paper below asking viewers to place a caption that they think is appropriate for the prints. Do the captions fit the artists' intent? Note the varied responses.

Instructional Procedures:

Introduction:

Show students examples of prints from the Columbus Museum of Art Schiller Collection. Discuss different kinds of printmaking including etching, engraving, screen printing/serigraphy, wood cut, and linoleum block lithography. Books of prints by artists such as Daumier, Goya,

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or more contemporary work by artists Barbara Kruger or cartoonists who specialize in social commentary such as Gary Trudeau or Non Sequitar should be at hand. Discuss the issues, artist's point of view and possible viewer response to the work.

Questions:

- Do artists have a role in reflecting and commenting on the society in which they live?
- Should artists provoke divergent (differing) points of view about political, moral or other social issues?
- What are some issues that our community/school/nations/world is currently confronting?
- How might an artist depict one of these current issues in order to promote constructive discussion?

Have a supply of news magazines such as the New Yorker, Time or Newsweek available. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Ask each group to review the materials and determine an issue that develops in their discussion. They can find one in a magazine if necessary. Plan aloud or sketch an idea for a print that will address that issue. The print will be limited by the size of the Thermofax sheets or copper plates so it is important to think of big ideas that can be depicted in a small format.

SHOEBOX ETCHING METHOD:

1. Clean metal to be etched. Should be grease free with no scratches. An ideal finish is achieved by rubbing with wet 600 Wet and Dry (emery or corundum). ☞ Surface must be very clean and grease free.
2. Draw on the copper plate with indelible ink pens. The ink will resist the etching action of the chemical. Areas that are left free of ink will etch. The inked areas will remain in relief. As with all printmaking, the design will be reversed when printed. This is important to remember if you are using letters or numbers. Hold the design up to a mirror to check that the image and letters are correct.
3. Masking tape will resist Etchant and last longer than the ink. Tape is good for sharp edge geometric shapes.

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4. Protect the back and edges of metal from being etched by applying masking tape to the back and edges of metal.
5. Put Etchant in plastic container. Read the label for safety precautions. Submerge the plate into the Etchant with the design facing down (to allow particles of copper to fall away and not interfere with the etching process). It is best to suspend the piece in the solution, so it is clear of the air stones. Taping the metal to the back of the extension of the shoe box lid using masking tape works well or it may be taped to hard white packing Styrofoam and floated. The sodium persulfate is agitated by the air pump and the metal plates should be checked after 20 minutes. The etching time depends on how much the solution has been used previously.
6. Never add or dilute the solution. It simply stops working.
7. Etchant has an advantage over acids in that it does not undercut, but cuts straight down from the resist. The surface that has been etched away has an attractive texture showing grain growth or the metal.
8. IMPORTANT: When the piece is etched to the desired depth, remove the piece and wash immediately with water to stop the etching action.
9. Ink the plate using a brayer.
10. Lay paper on the plate that has been placed on the bed of an etching press. Print your image for a relief print.

The directions for ShoeBox Etching are adapted from a presentation by Howard Hoffman, Lexington Junior and Senior High, 90 Frederick Street, Lexington, Ohio 44904 E-mail: Hoffman.Howard@Lexingtonk12.oh.us

THERMOFAX SCREEN METHOD:

1. Students will draw their images in one of the following manners:
 - A. Carbon markers on sheets of white paper in a size that will fit within the screen frame.
 - B. They might also choose to draw their images on sheets of paper

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using ink that can then be copied on a Xerox machine and the Xerox copy can then be used. You can also use the images from a Laser Printer. **Your image must be CARBON based.**

2. Demonstrate how to tape up the screen. Explain that students will first need to trace around the template to mark on their paper where each print will go. While students are preparing their paper, have them come up individually to run their screens and images through the Thermofax machine.

3. To transfer images, place the screen on top of your image with THE SHINY SIDE AGAINST THE IMAGE. Place screen and image in a Mylar carrier and run through the Thermofax.

4. Place double sided tape along inside edge of the frame and adhere the screen to the frame so the screen stretches tightly.

5. To print, place ink or paint at the top of the screen and spread it the width of the screen, squeegee downward while holding the frame securely. Hold the paper down as you peel the image off.

6. Wash out your screen after 2 or 3 prints to prevent paint from drying in the screen. Dry your screen before printing again.

Differentiated Instructional Support

Students might wish to work in pairs if they need help printing. Aides can use the hand over hand method to assist those who need help drawing and/or printing.

Extension

1. Experiment with alternate forms of printmaking such as wood block, EZ Cut block printing, silk screening or Styrofoam sheet prints.

2. Look for photos in magazines that provoke/explain current social issues.

3. Collect editorial cartoons in a journal for a week or more. Attach to a page in a journal and write a brief statement about the cartoon meaning. Do you agree with the commentary in the cartoon? In many countries the public may not belittle the government or large corporations in any way. What gives us the right to print what we

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would like? Why did our forefathers feel this was an important concept to include in our Bill of Rights? Draw another image that might provoke thought about the same topic as one of your cartoons.

Homework Options and Home Connections

Bring in magazines such as the New Yorker, Time or Newsweek from home. Look in newspapers or magazines or online for editorial cartoons.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Language Arts:

A. Research the lives of Daumier, Goya, Trudeau or Non Sequitar and write a biography with examples of their work.

B. Create an editorial cartoon related to an issue or concern in your town. Write a letter to the editor to accompany your image and submit to your local paper.

Music:

Lyricists have written about social issues and concerns for years. Identify an artist from the 1900s (Woody Guthrie, Billie Holliday, and others) or earlier who wrote songs about social issues. Listen to the music. Are these the same social issues musicians write about today? Find an example of a contemporary song about social change. Compare and contrast. Write your own song about social change today.

Materials and Resources:

For teachers

Images from Schiller Collection

Current copies of news magazines (e.g. Time, Newsweek, The New Yorker)

Books containing reprints of work by such noted figures as Honoré Daumier, Thomas Nast and more

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Newsprint for sketching and planning

Pencils

Fine, Medium and Broad Nib permanent markers such as Sharpies for drawing the final image

Good paper for final printing

Additional materials for Thermofax printing:

Silkscreen stretched on frames

Thermofax machine

Acrylic paint or ink

Printing paper

Hard plastic squeegees

Double-sided tape

Paper towels

Sponges

Additional materials for Etching:

“Enchant” (Sodium Persulfate) and catalyst

Etching ink

20 gauge copper cut in 4” x 5” pieces

baking soda (bicarbonate of soda) for neutralizing Enchant

rubber gloves, plastic tweezers

600 grit sandpaper

several yards of tarlatan

Etching tank made out of a plastic shoebox with a snap on lid and a

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plastic basket hot glued upside down to the shoebox lid, plastic tubing, air stone and air pump as used in fish tanks.

Masking tape

Rubber gloves

For students

Pencils

Paper

Computer for research

Magazines/Newspapers.

Key Vocabulary

Editor- a writer of an editorial

Editorial-expressing opinions in the manner of an editor

Satire-a literary work in which vices, follies, stupidities, abuses, are held up to ridicule and contempt.

Satirist-a person who satirizes

Social Commentary- a series of explanatory notes, illustrations or observations about the common welfare of human beings

Technology and Research Connections

Use a computer to research the artists noted in this lesson and their work. .

Attachments

Supply list

Biography links

This lesson is based on the work of

Barbara Zollinger Sweney and Jessimi A. Jones

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THERMOFAX AND ETCHING SUPPLIERS

Thermofax

Welsh Products supplies everything you need for Thermofax projects. They are very helpful if you have any questions.

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www.welshproducts.com
P.O. Box 845
932 Grant Street
Benicia, California 94510
Phone (800) 745-3255
FAX (707)745-0330
Email wpi@welshproducts.com

Etching

For metal supplies and jewelry

Armstrong Tool and Supply Co. Inc
www.armstrongtool.com
Don Squires
31747 W. Eight Mile Rd
Livonia, Michigan 48152
(800) 4446-1600
FAX 248-474-1600

For Sodium Persulfate and catalyst:

Kepto Circuit Systems
www.kepto.com
3640 Scarlet Oak Blvd
St. Louis, Missouri 63122-6606
(800)325-3787
FAX (636) 861-9109

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ARTIST BIOGRAPHY LINKS

Gary Trudeau

Garry Trudeau was born in New York City in 1948, and was raised in Saranac Lake, New York. He attended Yale University, where he received his B.A. and an M.F.A. in graphic design. *Doonesbury* was launched in 1970, and now appears in nearly 1400 daily and Sunday newspaper clients in the U.S. and abroad. In 1975, Trudeau became the first comic strip artist ever to be awarded a Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning. (In 1989, he was a finalist for a second Pulitzer.)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garry_Trudeau

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (March 30, 1746 – April 16, 1828) was a Spanish painter and printmaker.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco_Goya

Thomas Nast (September 27, 1840 – December 7, 1902) was a famous caricaturist and editorial cartoonist in the 19th century and is considered to be the father of American political cartooning.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Nast

Honoré Daumier (February 26, 1808 – February 10, 1879), was a French printmaker, caricaturist, painter, sculptor, and one of the most gifted and prolific draftsmen of his time

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honor%C3%A9_Daumier