

Title

Applying What You've Learned about Ai Weiwei: Using Found Objects to Create Your Own Art of Resistance

Concept/Main Idea of Lesson

The purpose of this lesson is to allow students the opportunity to design and create an original art project that illuminates a current problem or issue. The project will be created using techniques and approaches featured in the art show *SubRosa*, with special emphasis of the work by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei.

Intended Grade Levels

Grades 9-12

Infusion/Subject Areas

Visual Art

Social Studies

Curriculum Standards

Visual Art:

VA.68.S.2.3: Use visual-thinking and problem-solving skills in a sketchbook or journal to identify, practice, develop ideas, and resolve challenges in the creative process.

VA.68.S.2.1: Organize the structural elements of art to achieve artistic goals when producing personal works of art.

VA.68.O.1.3: Combine creative and technical knowledge to produce visually strong works of art.

VA.68.O.1.4: Create artworks that demonstrate skilled use of media to convey personal vision.

VA.912.S.2.6: Incorporate skills, concepts, and media to create images from ideation to resolution.

Social Studies:

S.912.H.1.2: Describe how historical events, social context, and culture impact forms, techniques, and purposes of works in the arts, including the relationship between a government and its citizens.

SS.912.H.1.5: Examine artistic response to social issues and new ideas in various cultures.

SS.912.H.2.1: Identify specific characteristics of works within various art forms

(architecture, dance, film, literature, music, theatre, and visual arts).

SS.912.H.2.3: Apply various types of critical analysis (contextual, formal, and intuitive criticism) to works in the arts, including the types and use of symbolism within art forms and their philosophical implications.

SS.912.H.2.4: Examine the effects that works in the arts have on groups, individuals, and cultures.

SS.912.H.2.5: Describe how historical, social, cultural, and physical settings influence an audience's aesthetic response.

Instructional Objective

Students will:

- conceptualize a work of art based on an issue of concern;
- apply techniques and approaches used in the art show *SubRosa* (with special emphasis of the work by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei) to create an original work of art using a found object;
- share their work with others;
- provide feedback to peers on their creations.

Learning Activities Sequence

DAY1

Set Induction/Hook:

Say: Recall the works by Ai Weiwei. What kinds of issues or problems are highlighted in the art that you viewed?

Think-Pair-Share: Consider the following question and generate a list first individually (5 min), then share with a partner (5 min):

Ask: What are some important issues or problems in the world that need to be solved?

(Have students share their lists with the entire class, creating a class list on the board. Leave this list within view of students for reference.)

Research: Make arrangements for students to research an issue of choice in the school library and/or on the Internet. Information gathered about the issue should inform the design and presentation of the project. Students are also to write a 1-page double-spaced, typed report about the issue to accompany the art project. This can be completed for homework or in class (depending on the teacher's discretion).

Say: For this project, you will have the opportunity to design and create your own work of art to highlight a problem or issue you feel strongly about, using a "found object." Found objects are everyday items that may not be considered art, but that can be utilized in creating works of art. Sometimes these objects can be considered material culture and some artists have called these objects "ready-mades."

Ask students to respond to the following question:

- How does Ai Weiwei utilize objects in his work to bring attention to the issues or problems that he is concerned with? (Examples: Ai Weiwei uses backpacks to highlight concerns over the children who died in poorly constructed schools during the 2008 earthquake in China. Ai Weiwei uses sunflower seeds to draw attention the issues related to China's role in the global marketplace.)

Distribute the “Art Project Evaluation Rubric” and explain each of the four components that will be assessed (Artwork: Creativity and Originality, Artwork: Effort and Craftsmanship, Research Report, and Reflection Paper).

DAYS 2-3

Set Induction/Hook: Bring in an object (or group of objects) that reflects one of the issues of concern that was discussed in class. (Examples: If a concern identified was waste and recycling, you could bring in some plastic water bottles. If a concern was hunger, you could bring in some empty bowls. Your objects do not have to be so literal, though. Think of creative, unexpected ways to represent issues of concern using an object, just as Ai Weiwei does.)

Design and Create Project:

Say: Utilizing the “found object” that you chose to represent your “issue” along with a range of other art materials (paint, sculptural materials, etc.), create an artwork that reflects your “issue” of concern.

Write:

Write a 1-page, double-spaced, typed reflection paper regarding your project. In this statement address (a) the issue that you chose to represent, (b) how the “found object” that you selected represents this issue, (c) explain any alterations or transformations of the object that you used in your artistic process, and (d) reflect upon the completed artistic work, considering how your work relates in some way to the work of Ai Weiwei.

Walking Gallery:

Students will display their projects in a “walking gallery” format in the classroom. Half the students will set up their projects first, being available for explanation and questions as the other half of the class tours the “gallery.” The students will then switch roles so that the other half of the students’ projects can be displayed and viewed.

Evaluation

Art Project Evaluation Rubric

Optional Extension Activities

Students can create a PowerPoint or Prezi of images related to their issue of concern.

Obtain permission from your school's administration to set up an exhibition of students' art works in the Media Center, Library, or other central location.

See the resources from Inside Art's *Mark Dion: Troubleshooting* for related lesson plans utilizing found objects:

<http://www.graphicstudio.usf.edu/InsideART/index.html>

Materials and Resources

Handout: *Art Project Evaluation Rubric*