

Connecting with our Community: Public Art, Monuments, and Social Justice

Alison Marzuoli

Academy at Palumbo

Abstract

Public art and monuments are everywhere in our communities. How much do we know about them and how they came to be? Do they represent values that the community believes should be upheld? How do we recognize the injustices of the past and create an accurate representation of history to honor the voices that have been silenced? This unit will guide students through the process of becoming aware of public art and monuments, analyzing their history in culture and society, and thinking critically about their existence and whether they should continue to hold space in the community. Students will independently gather information through an art scavenger hunt, then work in groups to redesign a monument to accurately represent history. Through this exploration, we will discuss the values and ideals that should be upheld in society for the good of all beings. Through the study of abstract sculpture and abstract public art to understand the artistic process of these artists, students will create an abstract work of art that expresses an ideal of their choosing. Students will reflect on their process, product and what they learned through a rubric and reflection, and presentation of their work in a final class critique.

Keywords

Social Justice, Monuments, Public Art, Abstract Sculpture

Unit Content

When hearing the term social justice, images that come to mind are protests and marches, not art, monuments, or museums. This seminar examined how objects and people are represented through monuments and museums and what that says about our society as a whole. Through this seminar we examined monuments and museums and what roles they play in our culture and society. So much goes into the history of an object: How and when it was acquired or made, what period in history it was acquired or erected, and who played a part in these processes. Through the readings, discussions, museum visits, and guest speakers, I thought about how I would present this to my students. What connections would they be able to make to monuments in our city? Do they even notice them? As we travel through the world we pass by public art, often taking it for granted. I collected data on how many murals, monuments, and sculptures I saw on my drive to work. Why is the art there? Who or what is depicted? What do they mean? When were they created? What a culture chooses to display in public spaces tells so much about the values and morals upheld by that culture in that time, but times change. The people depicted in monuments are symbols of values and cultural ideals that are held in high

regard. People need to understand the deeper values of monuments and question their validity in a space because it does matter. Reevaluating art and monuments in our public spaces can be a difficult and challenging process. I believe that ultimately it will strengthen humanity, creating connections between cultures, understanding history and coming to terms with the past. This unit of study will introduce students to public art. Students will answer the questions: *What is the purpose of art in a culture? What is held in a museum and why? What is a monument, why do they exist? What and who do we choose to honor and uphold?* We will learn about the difference between public art and monuments. Students will compare and contrast public art with monuments, learning how they are similar and different. We will study selected monuments in our community learning about their history and how they came to be. In groups, they will investigate local monuments that are problematic to our current belief structure. They will learn the history of the piece, finding the why, when, how, and who of the piece. They will then design a reconstruction of the piece to tell a more accurate story of the history. Understanding art and monuments, through analyzing and interpreting, is a form of cultural literacy that is integral to the growth of our students. The more students can work together to learn about others, the more assumptions and misunderstandings of cultures are dispelled. After the group work of investigating a monument, each student will design and create a work of art that upholds an ideal or value important to human societies. Each student will share and present their work to the class and school creating an opportunity for others to appreciate the importance of societal values that bring us together as a school and community.

School Demographics

Students at my 9-12 academic magnet high school create a diverse cultural and socio-economic school. We are an academic magnet, drawing students from neighborhoods all over our major East Coast metropolitan city. Based on recent data, 91% of students at our school are economically disadvantaged, and 7% are English Language Learners. The languages/cultures represented through this data are: Chinese (Mandarin and Minnan Fukiene, Yue/Cantonese), Spanish, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Arabic, Fulah (African diaspora), Bengali, Burmese, Gujarati (India), Nepali, and Swahili. Students identify in the following racial groups: Black/African American: 34%; Hispanic/Latino: 11%; White: 15%; Asian: 36%; Multi Racial/Other: 4%. This data is important because it shows the diversity of our student body and underscores the importance and need for cultural literacy, understanding how different life experiences shape our understanding of the world around us.

Background Knowledge

My interest in this seminar stemmed from wanting to find ways to engage students in the topic of social justice and activism through art. Art isn't just about technique and being able to draw or paint at a certain level or in a particular style. Art is

also about ideas and communicating a message. Being aware that art is around us is just the beginning, understanding what the art is about and why it is there are the next topics to tackle.

As we discussed monuments in class, I realized in order to host and guide these discussions with students, I needed to firm up my own knowledge and understanding of history, especially American history. The meaning of a monument is inextricably linked to time, place, the subject of the piece and who is responsible for erecting the piece. I chose to focus my attention on monuments dedicated to Christopher Columbus. In reading Howard Zinn's *Voices of A People's History of the United States* I realized that Columbus knowingly and intentionally committed multiple atrocities against the native people he came in contact with in the Caribbean. (Zinn & Arnove, 2022) Questioning the legacy of Christopher Columbus has become contentious in the past few years as communities struggle with realizing the truth of a once honored hero. Removing monuments dedicated to Columbus should be about reckoning with his actions, but it feels like an attack on some Americans with Italian heritage and their communities. Many of the Columbus monuments were erected at a time of great racism against Italian immigrants. (Doss, 2012) By learning about the time period and cultural attitudes of that time period, we can understand why monuments to certain people were erected. It is also through this cultural study that we need to realize why some monuments should be removed. *The Monument Lab*, a non-profit public art and history studio based in Philadelphia, PA, conducted an audit of monuments in the US from October 2020 - December 2021, finding 149 monuments throughout the United States dedicated to Christopher Columbus. The Columbus monument in Philadelphia has been one of the most contentious examples. Through the study of this object, students will learn how different entities play a role in the placement of a piece of public art or monument. While it could be challenging to connect with ideas that are different from our own, it is important to search for the origins of people's opinions. Creating a non-judgemental space to help understand people's different perspectives is how groups can come together.

Teaching Strategies

Previous Knowledge about Public Art and Monuments

To begin our study of Public Art and Monuments, I will ask the students what they know about Public Art and Monuments, if they can recall any public art or monuments, or if they have studied these topics before. I will also ask if they have worked in any way to create public art. This will help me understand my students better and draw upon their previous knowledge throughout the unit.

Analyzing and interpreting works of art

Observe:

With each work of art, students will start by taking a close look at the work and write down clear observations of what they see. This can be done by looking at the Elements and Principles of Art and Design as well as creating a list of materials used in the pieces. The Elements of Art and Design are: Color, Line, Value, Shape/Form, Space, and Texture. The Principles are created with the Elements: Repetition (Rhythm/Pattern), Contrast, Emphasis, Balance, Movement, Unity. We will practice together with one work, then have the students work independently or in groups with subsequent works.

Analyze and Interpret:

Once the students see what is in the work, the next step is to interpret the meaning of the work. This is done by taking the observations of what is present and connecting it to who made the work, where and when the work was made and where the work exists. Together these create the interpretation or meaning of the work. We all come to understand a work through our own lived experience, works have multiple meanings and we each see them differently. It is important to have background knowledge of each work presented to understand it fully, but it is impossible to know everything. Invite questions when they arise and be honest if you don't know the answer.

Compare and Contrast:

A helpful way to recognize similarities and differences in works of art is by comparing and contrasting them. This is especially helpful in the study of works that may appear to be similar. It allows students to look for small details in works and develop a deeper understanding of the nuances of the works presented. For this unit, I will pair a monument with a work of public sculpture. Similarities could be the placement (outdoors), content (person/people, or event), form, and intention of the artist or commissioning group. Differences could be the content, form and intention of the artist or commissioning group.

Reflect:

Reflecting on a work of art is two-fold, both objectively and subjectively. In an objective way, the student can understand and appreciate the role the work plays in the larger art world. They can explain and reflect on the impact the work has on society and decide for themselves the importance the work plays in their understanding of the art world. In addition, this step provides an opportunity for students to make personal connections and judgements about the art they have studied. Do they "like" the work they see? Why or why not? Have the students explain their opinion with a meaningful

response, not just “It’s cute.” or “I like the colors.” Remind them that it is possible to appreciate the meaning of a work without enjoying the aesthetic presentation of the work.

Cultural Study

The main concepts in this project: study of history, role of art in history, role of art in contemporary life, and what values a society upholds shown through public art. The study of history and the role of art in history and contemporary life provide background knowledge and insight for students to evaluate works and consider what they think is important to a society or culture. Students will take that knowledge and create works of art based on what they deem as an important ideal or value of a society. While doing this, students will ultimately compare what they don’t think is a worthy value or ideal with those that they think are important to a society or culture.

Artifact Creation

In an art classroom that functions more like an artist’s studio, the goal of each artist/group is to make a unique artifact that represents their vision and conveys the meaning of their ideas clearly. In my classroom I use the term “*artifact*” instead of project to focus the student on the process of learning and not just the product. We traditionally think of an artifact as what remains or is left behind from a specific cultural group. We usually see these in museums, apart from their original environment. A work of art is the artifact created by the artist and what remains of the choices they make in their exploration of a topic or idea. One way to foster more artistic choice is to provide a choice of media when creating their work. This allows for the artist/group to choose the media that will enhance or synthesize their ideas. The role of the art teacher in this phase of the project is to act as a manager of production and materials and less of an expert of technique or guiding students to a common outcome. It is important to expose students to a wide variety of media, both traditional (painting, drawing, photography, sculpture etc.) and non-traditional or contemporary art practices (performance, video, installation, community/participatory art, etc.) so they can make a choice that best suits their ideas. For each work created an artist/group will complete a Project Proposal and have planning and process meetings with the teacher. The teacher is responsible for helping students gather necessary materials, trouble-shooting or talking through challenges in the production process, finding or creating appropriate space for the students and their work to guide the group to achieve their goals.

Rubric and Reflection

Due to the individual nature of each artifact, an expectation for each medium will be decided upon when students present their proposal. A rubric will be presented and developed at the beginning of the project that clearly states the desired outcomes for the

work. In addition, the Project Proposals and Process Updates can serve as ways of assessing the progress and artistic concept and effectiveness of the work.

The goal of these teaching strategies is to create a number of ways for students to think about art, its meaning and relationship to history and culture. The scope and sequence of activities is designed to flow from group discussion and formal analysis of works of art to art making and reflection. The following themes will be explored throughout the unit: public art, social justice, cultural heritage and community. We will study works of public art and monuments to understand the ways that art depicts and upholds the values of a community or culture. The students will demonstrate their findings and understandings through the creation of works of art, both individually and in a group.

Preparing the class for cultural analysis and creating safe spaces for sharing

Asking students to share about themselves and their experiences and their culture can be stressful. Studying works of art and monuments that depict a specific culture or are part of a controversy can bring up conflicting feelings in students. They might feel persecuted or uncomfortable to talk in front of their peers about their ideas, beliefs, or beliefs of their families. It is important to create a learning environment where all students feel comfortable sharing their ideas or questions. The four topics below are suggestions about where to start when creating a safe space in a classroom.

Listen: Be present during the discussion. This means no obvious physical distractions such as a phone or headphones. Focus on the speaker.

Respect: Be mindful of your response to a person or information you are taking in. Body language says a lot about our beliefs and feelings. Phrase a question or response in a non-judgmental manner.

Trust: What do we need to trust each other in this space? In order to trust each other we need to believe that they are acting in the space in a positive manner.

Intention: What is the intention of our remarks or actions? Reflect on what you say and do to find the goal of your action or words. Focusing on kindness and positivity.

Classroom Activities

Duration and Sequence of Activities

This series of activities will guide the students through the learning process. At my school, art courses meet every day for the full school year. We have seven 50 minute class periods each day. Students are expected to complete work outside of class, the assignments I created reflect this. With these factors in mind, I envision the duration of this unit being between 5 and 6 weeks (28 - 30 class periods).

Activity 1:

Check-in/Pre-Test:

It is a good practice to first ask students what they know about a topic before embarking on a unit of study. Depending on your relationship with the group of students you are working with, assess their knowledge, understanding and identification surrounding the topic of art, public art, monuments. Some questions to consider asking are:

- What is public art?
- What is a monument?
- How are the two the same?
- How are the two different?
- What do you think a monument should honor?

Use these responses to learn about your students and inform your presentation of works of art and discussion topics throughout this unit.

Activity 2: I am....We are....

Duration: 1 class period

In order to create a community of understanding while discussing challenging topics, we first need to notice what makes us unique and how those identities can affect our outlook on a situation, while at the same time, noticing what we all share and how that also affects our choices or ideas.

Students will work individually and in groups to complete the “I am...” and “We are..” worksheets. Students will identify many aspects of how they identify themselves, how they are identified by others and the similarities we have as a group. There will be a period of work time and then a period of sharing, focusing on noticing similarities and differences among individual students and what we can all share as a group. There are many ways to have students interact and share, decide what will work best for your students and space. One way is to have different topics on individual large papers around the room, have students add their name or an icon that represents them to the different categories. Another way is to create a large wall size paper and have students write the parts of their identities they are comfortable sharing on the paper and then students connect and “join” each other in shared identities.

Day 1-2: What is Public Art? Why does it matter?

After reviewing initial responses to their previous knowledge, formally define what constitutes a sculpture, public art, and monument. In a video series Canvas produced by the PBS News Hour, artist Littleton Alston discusses his sculpture of Willa Cather that he created for the United States Capitol building. Alston is Black and he realizes the importance of creating works that represent a range of people. He wants people to see themselves and connect in a positive way through public art. Hearing directly from the artist and how he connects to Cather, a white woman, shows that while people have differences, they also share similarities. (PBS News Hour, 2022) To further students' understanding of the similarities and differences between public art and monuments, have students categorize works of art as either art or monument in a game-like fashion. First, students will discuss in small groups what qualities and attributes each category should have. Groups will share their ideas with the class during a brainstorming session to define the two categories before analyzing and sorting the works. There are many works that could fit into both categories, and there is significant overlap between Public Art and Monuments. This exercise is designed to have students think critically about works and avoid the temptation to claim the work in both groups, instead, finding which group it would fit with best. Invite debate and question their reasoning to encourage critical thinking about the works.

Public Sculpture/Art

Content could be about anything; Intentionally placed, made by someone famous, paid for by the government or organization, could be anywhere, accessible to all for free

Monument

About a specific person or idea, paid for by government or organization, in a noticeable place: Designed for the specific purpose of honoring and/or remembrance; accessible to all for free

Using a digital slide presentation, students will categorize works as either a piece of public art or as a monument using the decided upon criteria. Include local monuments and works of art, as well as national and international works with an emphasis on the cultures, backgrounds and interests of your students.

This could be done in two rounds: first without any information about the objects. Then in a second round, reveal information about the works, such as title, artist(s), time period, place, and sponsor. See how or if the categorizations change once information is known.

Possible works to include:

Monuments:

Mt. Rushmore

Statue of Liberty

Washington Monument, D. C.

Rock carving of Decebalus, King of Dacia, Orsova, Romania

Sculpture/Public Art

Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco, CA, USA

Jean Claude and Christo: The Gates, Temporary, New York City, NY, USA

Watts Towers - L.A., USA

Street Art - Banksy, Shepherd Fairey, Mural Arts Philadelphia

Eiffel Tower, Paris, France

Hanoi Ceramic Road, Hanoi, Vietnam

After the groups categorize the works, discuss how they decided what was a work of art, what was a monument and if there were works that would qualify as both. Invite discussion whether the categories are necessary or if there is a difference between art and monuments. See if groups had any thoughts on this idea or conflicting categorizations, invite students to share their thought process or explain their reasoning. Have students examine the choices cultures made when deciding to create the specific work, and how that might affect their interpretation of the work.

Finally, have students reflect individually on the works they saw. Were any of the works familiar to them? How or why? Which of the works presented did they like/find most interesting? Why? These questions allow students to revisit the works and make personal connections and identify their aesthetic responses to works of art, which they can apply to their own works later in the unit.

Activity 3: Scavenger Hunt

Duration: taking place over the course of a week or more -

Now that students have familiarized themselves with the ideas and concepts of public art and monuments, they will embark on a public art scavenger hunt. As a school in a major city, we can do this during class walking only a few blocks to find various works of art. I will take my students on a walk to get them used to walking around with a purpose to look versus transporting themselves from place to place. Students will then do this on their own over the course of a few days. Students photograph public art and monuments

in the local community and organize their findings in a digital document (Padlet, PowerPoint, or other digital presentation). As they find works, have them briefly reflect on each piece to reinforce the habits of questioning what they see and forming personal preferences:

Had they noticed this work before?

What do you know about this work?

What do you think this work is about?

What does this work mean to you?

Why do you think the work is where it is?

Do you “like” it? What does “like” mean when you talk about a work of art? (color, content, style...)

Students will present their findings in class for further discussion.

Day 3: Monument Re-Design

What makes a monument? Review some of the monuments students found on their Scavenger Hunt while discussing the criteria that define a monument. Introduce students to the Monument Lab, a non-profit public art and history studio based in Philadelphia. This project has cataloged and documented monuments around the country with the goal of fostering conversations about the past, present and future of monuments in the United States. The major tenets of this organization are to recognize monuments as dynamic and changing; call attention to the use of symbols in public places and how they connect to history; change the way monuments are created, preserved and interpreted. Seeing monuments as something that can be changed is a radical way of thinking and can cause great discomfort and upheaval in a community.

In the video *Public Art Study*, artist Fred Wilson details his process of redesigning a monument in Indiana. He discusses the reason for the redesign and the challenges he faced to make the work a reality, which has not happened. Use this opportunity to highlight the different entities that go into designing, creating, and erecting a monument or public art. Whose voices are heard and honored, whose are pushed away and why.

Day 4-5: The Christopher Columbus Question

Who was Christopher Columbus? Who do we think he was? What did he do? What do we think he did? Why is he honored?

While there are many instances in recent history surrounding the removal or covering of a monument, one that has been contentious in many places are monuments to Christopher Columbus. To fully understand the controversy that surrounds Columbus, we need to know his history and his actions. Columbus is thought to have been from what is now Italy. He was a navigator and wanted to find a route to China, to find gold, by sailing west. He asked many countries before Spain agreed to sponsor him. When he landed in the Caribbean he thought he had made it to China, also referred to as “the Indies”. He did land on what is now the Bahamas, then continued on to Cuba and Hispanola. In his own logs of his travels he states when meeting the Arawak people that, “..they would make fine servants....” (Zinn) There are further accounts of how the Taino people were killed for not gathering enough gold. Should Columbus be honored in a monument? Someone who killed thousands in the quest for power and wealth. Should the monument be removed? Or should this truth be part of the monument?

In Philadelphia there has been great controversy about the Christopher Columbus monument in Marconi Plaza since the summer of 2020. Why are people in the community against the removal of the statue? What can be done to help groups with different opinions work together to understand each other's positions on a controversial topic?

Activity 4: Redesigned Monument

Group Project: 4-5 class periods

How do we correct the injustices of the past? Should monuments be moved or removed? Should monuments be temporarily or permanently altered? With a selected group of well-known monuments, students work in groups to research and understand the subject of the monument, when they lived, why they were significant, when and where the monument was erected, and who funded the monument, and possibly the motivation for erecting the monument. They will create a proposal of how the monument could be redesigned to bring the voices and stories of the oppressed or forgotten to the forefront instead of the story of the oppressor. Students will develop and present a visual interpretation of their idea through a work of art. This could be a digital work, physical sculpture, or drawing. Students will write a summary of their historical research, describe their redesign and explain how their redesigned monument honors those who suffered the injustices.

Below are suggested monuments for the redesign activity, however, consider works in your community and how your students connect to the works presented. Use the Monument Audit by the Monument Lab to find monuments in the United States that have been controversial. Allow students to research and present a monument as well, either in the United States or in other parts of the world.

Suggested Monuments or subjects:

Christopher Columbus

Robert E. Lee

Washington Monument - Philadelphia

Woodrow Wilson

Day 6: Modern Monument

While students are tackling the challenge of redesigning an established monument they are discovering what a monument shouldn't honor, raise the question of what a monument "should" honor. Foster informal conversations about ideals and values that honor all living things - humans, animals, and nature. Many antiquated monuments are usually likenesses of specific people, creating a work about an idea or value contrasts the traditional approach. In addition to contrasting with subject, their Modern Monument will also contrast with style, being created in an abstract style instead of a realistic rendering. Looking at work by artists who create abstract sculptures will help students envision the possibilities and ways to approach this design process. Some artists to consider including are:

David Smith

Barbara Hepworth

Lee Boroson

Mark DiSuervo

Martin Puryear

Constantin Brancusi

Louise Nevelson

Theaster Gates

While presenting and discussing artists, highlight their ideation process, how they use materials in connection to their idea, and how they interpret the qualities of their inspiration to an abstract form. Break down the main ideas of two to three sculptures to outline the artistic process.

Activity 5: Culminating Artifact - Modern Monument

Duration: 2 - 3 weeks, 2 class periods of intro/planning; 8-10 class periods of work time; 1-2 class periods for critique.

Provide prompts for students to find the content that resonates with them. What story do they want to tell? Is it about a person or a community of people? Is it about a place or an event? What are the underlying ideas in that larger narrative? Use word webs or other visual journaling techniques for students to gather and organize their thoughts and ideas for their individual work. Refer back to the ways artists generate and gather ideas and then interpret them through the use of the Elements and Principles of Art and Design. Students will have a choice of medium, ceramics will be encouraged, but they will have the option of creating work with a medium of their choice. Include choices that are reasonable for your students and space.

Student proposal and timeline for final culminating project:

Each student will submit a project proposal along with a timeline and work plan. (*Figure 1*) The role of the teacher is one of a studio manager and production assistant, setting the time frame for completion and upholding the expectations for the artifact. Students are responsible for creating and monitoring the progress of their work as well as communicating with the teacher about any problems, questions, or needs.

Individual planning meetings:

While students are creating their proposals, the teacher will meet with the student artists and discuss their works, providing guidance and expertise where necessary, regarding materials and art techniques or content. The timeline, work plan and tasks will be reviewed to ensure that all students are engaged in the art making process and the project has a manageable scope. It is important to be flexible and accommodating in order to meet with all artists. These meetings are integral in facilitating independent student work, turning responsibility over to the students for their ideas and production of the work.

Artifact Production:

Process meetings will happen throughout the production of the works. The artists will be expected to keep a Production Log (*Figure 2*) documenting what they accomplish each day as well as setting new goals for the next work session. This process helps keep the work on track to meet deadlines or stretch and explore through an idea to deepen the meaning of the work. Students are encouraged to take a break from their work to observe other artists, allowing for new ideas and collaboration. While feedback can happen at any time, a formal mid-point class critique is encouraged to address any changes in ideas or roadblocks the artists have come up against.

Presentation, Critique, and Reflection:

Students will present their final works along with an artist statement describing the meaning of the work to the class during an in-class critique. The students will evaluate and reflect on the works their classmates have created through meaning/concept and technical use of the Elements and Principles. Remind students that feedback should be constructive and relate clearly to the work created. Topics that should be included for the final critique are based on both content and meaning, as well as analyzing how the artists used the Elements and Principles of Art and Design to create effective communication of a concept or meaning. A handout (*Figure 4*) for notetaking is helpful to guide their thoughts during the looking phase and start discussion about a work.

Rubric and Reflection:

Each student completes a rubric and reflection for their final artifact which helps them look objectively at the art making process through categories and the reflection is a way for them to elaborate and qualify their reasoning. True growth emerges from facing reality and being able to look at the work you created in an honest and objective manner. I have provided an example of a rubric and reflection (*Figure 3*) for this activity.

Expected Outcomes:

The expected outcomes of this unit of study are that students will deepen their understanding of the history of monuments, the purpose of public art, and the artistic process through the study and creation of art. Students will gain independence creating in the art classroom, stretching and exploring through various mediums. Students will learn how to analyze and interpret works of art and cultural artifacts for content and meaning, using this type of formal study to deepen their understanding of culture and art history. In addition, they will use these methods to inform their art making practice, and continue to employ these skills and methods for future art investigations.

Evaluative Tools:

The students will be assessed throughout the project through written assignments, class discussion, small group discussion, individual discussions, rubrics, reflections, and artifacts. All of these serve as ways to evaluate student learning. The two purposes to assess student learning, the most important should be authentic student reflection and evaluation. The second is for the teacher to assign a grade to the project and work. Focusing on authentic student reflection is what should be honored in the process of evaluating the work.

Formative Assessments: Pre-Test, Class Discussions, Discussion Questions, Process Critiques

A *Pre-Test* gauges understanding and familiarity with a topic, especially one with potentially sensitive content, before embarking on the unit. Take into account the student responses and adjust the lessons accordingly. Throughout the unit facilitate short checks for understanding or responses. In addition to class discussion, I also use an online platform, posting 2-3 questions regarding the in-class discussions or content. *Process critiques* (individual or group) are helpful during the production of an artifact to evaluate process and progress.

Summative Assessments: *Rubric, Reflection, Artifact, Critique*:

Upon completion, the students will evaluate themselves using a rubric and reflection about their engagement as well as their artifact. The teacher uses this same rubric and reflection to evaluate the student based on their engagement, growth as an artist, and artifact(s) that were created. The artifact along with the rubric and reflection will serve as a thorough assessment of student learning.

The final artifact will be presented to the class through a gallery walk. The artists will present an artist statement to qualify the work. During the class critique, the students will participate in a discussion reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of the artifacts in an objective and constructive manner. The teacher ultimately gives the student a grade based on the student's objective evaluation of their artifact through the rubric, reflection on their process and product, their overall effort and engagement in the project, as well as the overall presentation of the piece.

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Materials: Art materials provided for student use are at the discretion of the teacher implementing the unit.

Appendix

Visual Arts Standards:

The arts standards addressed in this unit are based on the National Art Education Association's Visual Art Standards as well as the Pennsylvania Standards for Arts and Humanities.

National Core Arts Standards:

Creating:

This standard is about the artistic process and how students go about conceiving and developing new artistic ideas.

Anchor Standard 1: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

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.IIa: Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.

Anchor Standard 2: Artists and designers balance experimentation and safety, freedom and responsibility while developing and creating artworks.

VA:Cr2.1.IIIa: Experiment, plan, and make multiple works of art and design that explore a personally meaningful 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.

Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

VA:Cr3.1.IIIa: Reflect on, re-engage, revise, and refine works of art or design considering relevant traditional and contemporary criteria as well as personal artistic Vision.

Presenting:

The standard is concerned with how students interpret and share artistic work as well as convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

VA:Pr4.1.IIIa: Critique, justify, and present choices in the process of analyzing, selecting, curating, and presenting artwork for a specific exhibit or event.

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

VA:Pr5.1.IIa: Evaluate, select, and apply methods or processes appropriate to display artwork in a specific place.

Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

VA:Pr6.1.IIa: Make, explain, and justify connections between artists or artwork and social, cultural, and political history.

Responding:

This standard focuses on how students perceive and analyze artistic works, and interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work

VA:Re7.1.IIIa: Analyze how responses to art develop over time based on knowledge of and experience with art and life.

VA:Re7.2.IIIa: Determine the commonalities within a group of artists or visual images attributed to a particular type of art, timeframe, or culture.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

VA:Re8.1.IIa: Identify types of contextual information useful in the process of constructing interpretations of an artwork or collection of works.

Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

VA:Re9.1.IIIa: Construct evaluations of a work of art or collection of works based on differing sets of criteria.

Connecting:

This standard deals with how students synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art; how they relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to create a deeper understanding of the art world.

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

VA:Cn10.1.IIIa: Synthesize knowledge of social, cultural, historical, and personal life with art-making approaches to create meaningful works of art or design.

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

VA:Cn11.1.IIa: Compare uses of art in a variety of societal, cultural, and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary and local contexts.

VA:Cn11.1.IIIa: Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society.

Pennsylvania Standards for Arts and Humanities

Production and Exhibition: 9.1

A. Elements and Principles in each Art Form; B. Demonstration of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Art; D. Styles in Production, Performance and Exhibition E. Themes in Art Forms; F. Historical and Cultural Production, Performance and Exhibition; I. Community Performances and Exhibitions; J. Technologies in the Arts

Historical and Cultural Context: 9.2

A. Context of Works in the Arts; B. Chronology of Works in the Arts; C. Styles and Genre in the Arts; D. Historical and Cultural Perspectives; E. Historical and Cultural Impact on Works in the Arts; F. Vocabulary for Historical and Cultural Context; G. Geographic regions in the arts; I. Philosophical context of works in the arts; J. Historical differences of works in the arts; K. Traditions within works in the arts; L. Common themes in works in the Arts

Critical Response: 9.3

A. Critical Processes; B. Criteria; F. Comparisons

Aesthetic Response: 9.4

*A. Philosophical Studies; B. Aesthetic Interpretation; C. Environmental Influences;
D. Artistic Choices*

Figure 1: Individual Project Proposal and Timeline

Project Proposal: Individual Work

Working title: _____

Meaning/Enduring Understanding:

Type of work: 2-D 3-D Installation Performance

Medium: List what materials you will use to create this work.

Describe the work you envision:

Sketch: Create a sketch of your finished work. Make notes to clarify understanding.

Timeline Plan: write what you think you will accomplish each day. Be as detailed as possible.

Day 1:

Day 2:

Day 3:

Day 4:

Day 5:

Etc.

*Add as many spaces as is needed for the duration of your project

Figure 2: Production Log

Note: For the group Productivity Log, make sure it is noted which students accomplished which tasks or sections.

Plan

Actual

Day 1

Day 2:

Day 3:

Day 4:

Etc.

*Add as many spaces as needed

Figure 3: Rubric and Reflection

I generally keep the categories in “Objectives” and “Qualities of an Artist” the same, but change the definitions to suit each project. This can be used for the Personal Artifact also.

Rubric and Reflection: You give yourself a grade in each category, then the teacher assess your work.

[Score scale: 15= 100; 14= 93; 13= 87; 12=80; 11= 73; 10= 67; 9= 60; 8= 53 etc]

Objectives:

Content/Meaning: meaning conveyed clearly,
..... /15

Originality/Creativity: fulfilled requirements with unique ideas, explored different ideas ... /15

Craft/Skill/Techniques: well crafted, intentional choices, appropriate techniques for piece /15

Group Dynamics: respected group ideas, equitable work habits, flexibility, on task/on time... /15

_____/60 **Qualities of an Artist:**

Planning/Preparation: evidence of planning, insight and knowledge, shows growth and progression..... /10

Design/Craft: technical skills and craft, organization, intentional choices /10

Creativity: Growth, exploration, problem solving ___/10

Qualities of an Artist: Perseverance, intrinsically motivated, collaboration ___/10
_____ /40

Artifact: _____ /100

Example Reflection questions:

1. Describe one challenge you had while creating this project, how you overcame that challenge and persevered to be successful.
2. Look at your original sketch and compare it to your finished piece. Describe one aspect (or more!) of your piece that changed, how it changed, and why.
3. Describe your favorite part of the finished piece or process of making the work and why (more than just “I like it”).
4. Describe one thing you would change or do differently if you were to make this again.

Figure: 4: Final In-Class Critique

Create a section for the appropriate number of works presented.

Final In-Class Critique:

Work 1: Title: _____

What are your first impressions based on the visual representation?

What are your first impressions of the meaning of this work?

What Elements and Principles are present, where are they being used?

Describe (at least) one thing this work does well. It could be based in technique, content, or a different area:

Describe (at least) one area for improvement. It could be based in technique, content, or a different area: