

A Visual Arts Instructional Resource for Teachers



Artists' CONNECTION

4

Exploring Art Media



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CONTENTS

An Introduction to Artists' Connection 4	2
Artists and Their Art	3
Looking at Art	17
Making Art	35
Art Definitions	45
Why is Visual Literacy Important?	50



Artists & Their Art

Linda Blakney



Metal Work

(oil on aluminum, 12 x 12)

BIOGRAPHY

From her early childhood in New Brunswick, Linda Blakney had an interest in art and how to communicate what she saw in her mind's eye. This was inspired by her grandmother Hazel, who was an amateur artist. The sensory experience of the ocean, sand and parks remains a source of inspiration. When she moved to Winnipeg, Linda experienced a new appreciation of the wide-open landscape and the impact of extreme weather changes on that landscape. In Manitoba, she studied medical imaging (X-Ray and Ultra-sound) and learned how to define and find meanings in abstracted shapes. British Columbia provided her the opportunity to develop her photography composition skills, using the stunning west coast landscape as inspiration.

Moving east to Toronto to work for Kodak was quite exciting—the energy of the city still inspires Linda's work. At Kodak, she gained a greater awareness for shapes and composition, from both medical and photographic imaging exposures. She began taking many courses at academic institutions and has attended numerous private workshops. Today, Linda splits her time equally between the art world and psychotherapy|career coaching.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Art for me is a means of expressing my imagination about real things and feelings, rather than depicting things as they are seen.

Laura Bromwich



Flores

(mixed media, 7.5 x 9.5)

BIOGRAPHY

Laura Bromwich is a longstanding participant in the Hamilton arts community, with twelve years of performance experience with the Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts, specifically with the Canadian Ballet Youth Ensemble, from 1997 to 2004. Her art has been shown both locally and internationally. She's been involved with the James Street Artcrawl, as well as Supercrawl where she has been a collective member of James North Studio's gallery space. Laura was selected as an artist for the King William Art Walk Exhibited, as well as the interactive Market Value project. Prior to this, she was a contributing artist to a large-scale installation for Toronto's Luminato/Nuit Blanche.

Laura studied at McMaster University, graduating in 2011 with a BA. She has also travelled to Buenos Aires, Argentina where she studied printmaking at Proyecto Ace. In July 2010, she studied at the School Of Visual Arts, in New York City.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

This work uses colour, abstract patterns and layering to create a 3 dimensional representation in a 2 dimensional space. *Flores* uses abstract floral patterns which are printed and repeated onto three sheets of transparent plastic called mylar. Colours are carefully chosen, hand mixed and layered so that when looking at the work, depth and perspective can be achieved. This work stems from my interest in printmaking, colours and sculptural paper works of art.

Sandee Ewasiuk



Nice Catch
(acrylic, 20 x 16)

BIOGRAPHY

Sandee Ewasiuk graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design and has taken a number of art history courses at McMaster University and fine arts courses from DVSA and Niagara College. Sandee has participated in many exhibitions in the Hamilton and Toronto area during the past 20 years, as well as in Calgary, Alberta and London, England. She is represented by Westmount Gallery in Toronto, Anthony's Gallery in Whitby and the James North Collective, and Creative Works, both in Hamilton. Sandee's work has been commissioned locally by Scarfone Hawkins law firm, the Riverdale Community Centre, and the McMaster Family Practice. She also completed a commission of seven paintings for the Fogg n' Suds restaurant chain in Alberta and British Columbia. She currently teaches courses at DVSA and the Burlington Art Centre.

Sandee's inspirations come from her family and friends—life and the things that make her smile.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Nice Catch is from a series of four paintings that were inspired by my family's annual camping trip to Cyprus Lake on the Bruce Peninsula. Looking at the lake in the morning ideas come to me that are a step or more away from the ordinary...flying on herons, or with dragonflies, or catching fish with your hands.

Michelle Guitard



Red Head House Finch
(acrylic, 6 x 6)

BIOGRAPHY

Michelle Guitard studied graphic design at Georgian College and received her BFA from York University. She is currently enrolled at McMaster University in Addiction and Mental Health Studies. Since 1991, Michelle has shown in many group and solo exhibitions across Ontario. She is represented by Edge Gallery, Barrie; Moyaboya Gallery, Creemore; and Sienna Gallery, Rockland. Michelle lives in Ancaster with her husband and two children.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Rather than recreating an image on canvas, I aim to express its essence. In order to capture this richness, I work on a number of paintings concurrently. This allows me to transport strong elements and effective techniques from one painting to another. I am most interested in the movement of organic shapes and patterns using colour and texture. Each multi-layered painting captures some fragment of the image's power until each piece coalesces to express its deepest essence.

Amanda Immurs



Lynda
(mixed media, 12 x 6)

BIOGRAPHY

Amanda Immurs received her bachelors degree from McMaster University (2005), and studied textiles at Sheridan College, from 2005-07. Amanda has shown her work in many group and solo exhibitions throughout Ontario since 2004. She is represented by Tag Gallery, St. Catharines; Gallery M, Cambridge; Objects to Desire, Grimsby; Artiques and James North Studio, Hamilton. Amanda has taught for the Art Gallery of Hamilton and Brantford Arts Block.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My work is a creative expression of an attempt to understand beauty in the world. Within this framework I have been painting children's portraits which have been displayed in and around Hamilton. In these pieces I focus my attention on the curiosity, and wonder of children as they engage with the world. Van Gogh once said that painting children is the only thing that "excites me to the depths of my soul, and which makes me feel the infinite more than anything else." This statement resonates with me. There is magic in capturing timeless youth.

Paintings in my children series are mixed media paintings on canvas, executed predominantly with oil paint and elements of acrylic and drawing media. *Lynda* is an example of this style: an abstract background off-setting a realistic subject. I normally begin working with a vibrant underpainting, layered with oil paint and drawing media. I enjoy examining how an image expresses happiness by manipulating the surface, and exaggerating elements of colour and texture.

Jody Joseph



Wellington Street North
(oil on canvas, 12 x 16)

BIOGRAPHY

Jody Joseph is a Dundas-based painter and collage artist, and a long time instructor at the Dundas Valley School of Art. She also spends several months a year painting and teaching in central Italy. Joseph's paintings are of the places and things she loves in Italy and in Ontario, with her “towns” in both countries among her favourite subjects. In fair weather (and foul) Joseph can often be seen painting “from life” on the sidewalks, lane ways, and streets of Dundas and Hamilton. Joseph received early art training in her native Chicago, and later at the International School of Art in Umbria, Italy where she studied with renowned painters including Nicolas Carone, Wayne Thiebaud, Andrew Forge, and Jake Berthot. Joseph’s work, both paintings from observation and her collages, have been exhibited widely at shows in Canada, the US, and in Italy. Locally, she is represented by Gallery on the Bay in Hamilton and Canvas Gallery in Toronto. At DVSA, Joseph teaches painting, experimental drawing, and collage.

ARTIST’S STATEMENT

For a long time, my intense attachment to the small hilltown in Umbria, Italy, where I trained and worked, strongly influenced my painting—the honeyed light, the earth palette of ochers, umbers and sienas, the spatial confusion of the almost aerial view of the landscape. Coming home to Dundas was always jarring—the cooler light and colours, looking up or out, not down, a rural landscape close the the horizon, an urban core, geometric buildings of wood and brick, not a tiny centuries-old stone village with winding streets.

With my newest series of paintings of Dundas and environs (of which this painting is one), I feel I have located myself in my home landscape. Like every newcomer, perhaps I first looked more at what wasn't there—a product of feeling out of place, not quite at home. Through the act of painting, the way observational painters most intimately experience their world, I have partly discovered and partly created my place here now.

Claudette Losier



Busy Intersection #2
(acrylic, 16 x 20)

BIOGRAPHY

Claudette Losier received her Honours BA from Brock University, and has taken courses from the Print Studio of Hamilton and DVSA. She is a visual artist who practices oil and acrylic painting, drawing, and photocopy transfers, and mixed media. Claudette has shown in group and solo exhibitions through-out Ontario and in New York. She is an inaugural member of Side by Each (Niagara) and past member of The Tiger Group (Hamilton), both professional artist collectives, as well as a past member of ArtRagious Art Collective. She has taught a variety of courses in Burlington, Hamilton, and Dundas; organized and juried a number of local art exhibitions; and been a model for animation and illustrations programs at Sheridan and Seneca Colleges. Her paintings have been selected for outdoor murals in Hamilton, purchased for the collection of the Ontario Government, and chosen for exhibition in Palermo, Italy.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

There is a need in me to create and have a sense of connection with the creative spirit and beauty. It has been stated that each garden reflects our longing for spiritual peace—a tie with our primordial beginnings. It is in the beauty of nature where I find this spiritual connection. In 2012, I started a new city urbanscape series of paintings, the city as garden, abstracting the inner and outer reality, revealing reflections of nature and memory to evoke a sense of place. These paintings are rooted in the physical world but are altered through the process of layering until forms emerge from the boundary where light meets the dark; this is indicative of their underlying essence of energy which gives a dreamscape quality that could change at any given moment, like life itself—always in the process of change.

Marla Panko



Collage with Acetate I
(mixed media, 9 x 7)

BIOGRAPHY

Marla Panko studied Fine Art at the University of Guelph and, later, completed an MFA at the University of Windsor. She worked in art education at the Art Gallery of Hamilton, then taught at Brock University and the Burlington Arts Centre. She has been a member of the Dundas Valley School of Art since 1984, where she instructs adult classes in colour theory, collage, and painting, as well as a children's mixed media class in the summer. She currently participates in the Artist at the Centre program, which explores creative thinking in early childhood, and serves as chair of the DVSA Gallery. Marla has exhibited her artwork since 1980, including solo exhibitions at the Art Gallery of Hamilton, the Burlington Arts Centre, Glenhyrst Art Gallery of Brant, and the Carnegie Gallery, among others. She works out of her studio in Dundas, Ontario.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

In my work, I aim to make visual sense of the chaotic contemporary world we live in. By thoughtfully organizing the different colours and shapes, and by incorporating scrap printed material, I try to make disconnected parts relate to each other in a meaningful way. This collage was constructed over a found book page, and uses an overlapping layer of coloured blue acetate to create an illusion of depth.

Cornelia Peckart



Not Without an Audience

(painted block print on wood, 2010)

BIOGRAPHY

Cornelia Peckart graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design in 1987 with majors in Printmaking and Installation Art. She resides in Hamilton, Ontario after stops in Toronto, Berlin, Ottawa, Pittsburgh, and Rotterdam. During her journey, Cornelia worked as an artist and educator at a number of internationally recognized art institutions, including the Andy Warhol Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh, and Villa Zebra in Rotterdam. She has been a teacher at the Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts for the past four years. Ms. Peckart received a MidAtlantic Fellowship in photography in 2000 and an Ontario Arts Council Exhibition Assistance Grant in 2009. She was nominated for a Hamilton Arts Award in the Visual Arts in 2011. Exhibitions of her photographs, drawings, prints and paintings have been shown in Canada, U.S.A., Germany and the Netherlands.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

A series of six block prints were created as a site specific work for Hamilton's well known live music venue, This Ain't Hollywood. In exploring the venue I began to shift the focus from the performers to the audience. Our gaze, which is traditionally been turned towards the musicians on stage, is now directed at the people attending the show. How do they move and what do they do at a club or live music event?

Gestural line is used to capture some of the intensity of the sounds, the lights and the audiences interactions. Stylistically, the thick outlines are reminiscent of early 1900 German Expressionist block prints. These outlines are contemporary in that they also echo a comic book minimalism. This style allows me as an artist the opportunity to explore colour, balance and mood when painting.

The technique of printmaking allowed for the walls to be filled, with the repetition of barely recognizable images. The exhibition on the walls provided a permanent audience and this audience is having a great time.

Clarence Porter



Ottawa Street Series: #2 - Nadel Furs
(pastel, 9 x 12.5)

BIOGRAPHY

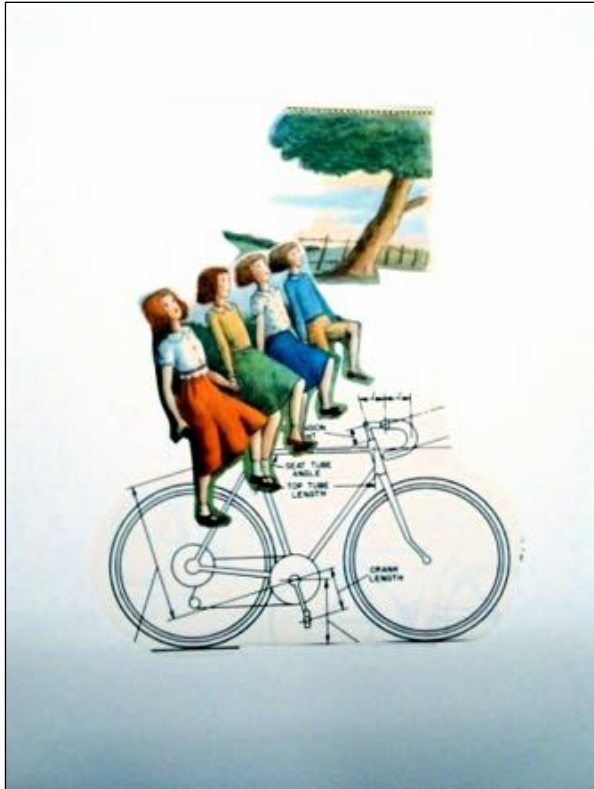
Clarence Porter was educated at the John Herron Art Institute, Indianapolis and attended the Community Artist-Educator Training Program, offered by the Art Gallery of Hamilton. He is currently a partial load instructor at Sheridan College, teaching courses in the Visual and Creative Arts and Art Fundamentals programs, and has taught in the Children and Family programs, AGH. Clarence has shown his work in numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout Ontario, and received various grants and awards since 2006.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I call my art "playing" and my creations are my toy box full of colour for the viewer's enjoyment. The pure pigments of pastels, hits of turquoise and squiggles of pink run across my work challenging the viewer to ask "But why?" I try not to get in the way of my art, allowing any subtext to be discerned by the viewer. In my art, colours, shapes and patterns all occupy the same importance. I let the contrast of light and shadow separate them out. My hope is that my art gives the viewer pause to reflect on a moment in time that I cherished, frozen in pigments.

Such a moment is *No. 2—Nadel Furs*, one of the Ottawa Street Series of nine pastels I created. My inspiration came from observing the revitalization of Ottawa Street North here in Hamilton. I would walk over to Ottawa Street when the shadows were long, capturing images of the old signage mixed in with the new, the sharp angles, the intensity of colours against the blues and the purples of the sky. The subject matter both inspired and intrigued me.

Rosemary VanderBreggen



Bike for 4
(collage, 12 x 19)

BIOGRAPHY

Rosemary VanderBreggen was educated at Sheridan College's School of Crafts and Design, and has taken courses at the Oakville Art Society, Burlington Arts Centre, Haliburton School of the Arts, and DVSA. She has also studied with artists John Wilkinson and Brian Smith. She has trained as a florist. Rosemary's award-winning collage work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout Ontario.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

At heart, I am living my grandmothers' legacy with the love of collecting papers and stories and spinning tales, my becoming an artist was a natural outcome. I love the look, feel and smell of paper and the excitement of finding something that I can reassemble sends me on an artistic frenzy. My heart beats faster and the thrill builds as I head to my studio with ideas buzzing.

I have found my objective recently in the refuse center of a small town I have been staying in while I attended a post-graduate visual arts program. Who knew that my sensibilities would turn to trash and the subsequent art that I found I was making?

I discovered that things seemed to have "souls" when I came upon them in the dismal places of discarded trash. If they spoke to me I brought them back to my studio; I also unearthed books of all shapes and sizes. This led me to my newest collages. I combined pages of colours or small bits of drawings that appealed to me, which I made into new whimsical works of hope and lightheartedness. In other works, parts of things assembled into new souls and voices.

Julia Veenstra



White Canoe
(acrylic, 12 x 12)

BIOGRAPHY

Julia Veenstra is a Canadian artist who has lived in four different countries. Her work is found in collections around the world. She is an impressionistic and representational, lively artist. Her work reflects her surroundings and translates how she sees the world. Julia's medium of choice is acrylic as she enjoys the immediacy and the bright colours. Recently her work has made a very "Canadian" turn. Canadian clients are appreciating her present body of work as evidenced by the increasing commissions that Julia is receiving and the galleries requesting to represent her. You can find her most days in her studio at 167 James Street North in Hamilton, Ontario.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

There is a moment in time that when remembered gives comfort or reassurance. A smell can transport one back into a deep memory and stir up emotions of all kinds.

I am attracted to those moments that create comfort, those scents that cause a rush of deep memories. As a child (a creative one) who was raised by a single mom on welfare, there were so many dreams of "home" and a longing for security. On walks through other neighbourhood I would be dreaming of the "whole" families that must live inside. These walks are some of my first memories of observing the world around me. Over time, this defined the moments that held rich and satisfying experiences, real or imagined.

I work with vibrant colour and expressive strokes, exploring shape and form, as well as the constant desire to portray light. The works often develop their own life and the paint creates shapes and detail that I had not planned, but that completes and rounds out the experience. The canvases I paint can be quite large; the result is an ability to experiment with a range of tools that create textural variety and interest, and can pull from me an energy and joy. Negative shapes play as important a role as the positive, and develop from the layering technique that I employ.

Looking at Art (Critical Analysis Process)

Principles of Interpretation

(Making Meaning of Artworks)

- *Artworks are always about something.*
- *Form + Content + Context = Meaning(s)*
- *To interpret an artwork is to understand it in language.*
- *Everything in an artwork counts towards its meaning.*
- *Feelings are guides to interpretations.*
- *Artworks attract multiple interpretations, and it is not the goal of interpretation to arrive at a single, grand, unified, composite meaning.*
- *There is a limited range of interpretations an artwork will allow.*
- *Meanings of an artwork are not limited to what the artist meant them to be about.*
- *Interpretations are not so much right as they are more or less reasonable, convincing, informative, and enlightening.*
- *Some interpretations are better than others.*
- *Convincing interpretations have coherence, correspondence, and completeness.*

From Terry Barrett's *Making Art: Form and Meaning* (McGraw Hill, 2011)
& *Interpreting Art: Reflecting, Wondering and Responding* (McGraw Hill, 2003).

Tips for Teaching with Works of Art

(MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK)

1. **Ask open-ended questions**
(personalize looking; elicit initial reactions)
2. **Layer information**
(validate responses; construct communal meaning)
3. **Incorporate activities**
(address different learning styles & modes; art making as a response to viewing)
4. **Make connections**
(personalize looking; access prior learning; locate social-cultural contexts)
5. **Allow for reflection time**
(synthesize information; what's new?; uncover big ideas; how does this relate to me?)

ASKING OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Looking into Art

Critical Analysis helps in (1) *understanding* works of art; (2) *explaining* art works to a specific audience; and (3) *advising* about what to see, what to admire, and what to avoid. Essentially, people who practice art criticism are asking **questions** about visual artworks in order to discover their **meanings**.

- ☐ **What do you see? How do you feel?**
- ☐ **What does the artwork remind you of?** (REACTION)
- ☐ **What is this artwork about? What does it mean?**
- ☐ **How is it connected with the world?** (INTERPRETATION)
- ☐ **How is the artwork put together?** (ANALYSIS)
- ☐ **What is your opinion of this artwork?** (JUDGEMENT)

Questions to Assist Your Critical Analysis Process – Grades 1 - 8

Initial Reaction

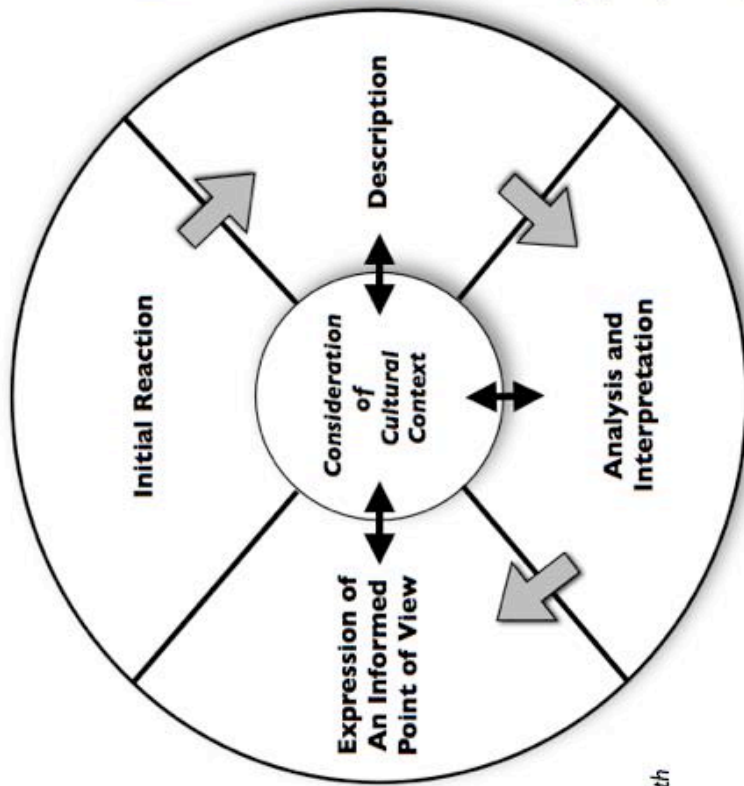
- Does this artwork remind you of anything?
- What feelings to you have about this artwork?
- What puzzles you about this artwork? What are your questions?
- What questions would you ask the artist/designer?

Informed Point of View

- Do you feel this artwork is successful? Why or why not?
- What might you change about this work, and why?
- What qualities make this artwork valuable?
- How have your opinions and feelings changed from your initial reaction?

Cultural Context

- When was this artwork made?
- Where was this artwork made?
- Why was this artwork created? How was it used?
- Was this artwork created for a particular person or group?
- What connection might this artwork have with our present society or culture?



Description

- What do you see? Can you identify the subject matter?
- How was this artwork made? Which techniques or materials are used?
- What is the name of the artist? What do you know about her/him?
- Can you create a list of everything you observe?
- Which words would be important when telling someone else about this artwork?

Analysis

- Which art elements are most important in this artwork?
- Where is the focal point or center of attention? How has this been made important?
- Where are there places of contrast or pattern?
- Where has the artist suggested a sense of movement or rhythm?
- How has a sense of balance been created?

Interpretation

- What is happening in this artwork? What is this artwork about?
- How does the title of this artwork add to its meaning?
- What feelings, thoughts or ideas does this artwork suggest to you?
- Does this artwork connect with some part of your life?

Personal Responses to Artworks

The following prompts aim to elicit personal, subjective reactions from students as part of their initial response to an artwork. This approach provides opportunities for intimate dialogue, individual negotiation of meaning, and reveals aspects of self and identity through social interactions. Personalized responses also foster self-reflection and metacognition by establishing a relationship with an artwork and highlighting private significance. Tolerance for ambiguity and imaginative questioning about meaning can also lead to acceptance and empathy for others' points of view.

- ▶ Find a work of art that reminds you of something from your past(s). Think about those connections.
- ▶ Find a work of art that you might choose to share with a depressed friend. Imagine their reactions.
- ▶ Find the work of art that is most like you. What qualities do you share?
- ▶ Find a work of art that has something to say about grief or loss.
- ▶ Find an image of a person and imagine what they would have been like at another moment in their life.
- ▶ Find a work of art that a relative might have chosen for their home. Think about the reasons for this choice.
- ▶ Find an object that, for you, embodies pure joy!
- ▶ Find a work of art that has something to tell you about your life. Look closely, and listen for the message.
- ▶ Find a work of art from a religious tradition that is not your own. Notice your thoughts and feelings as you look. Find something attractive about the work of art.
- ▶ Find a work of art that has something to say about some aspect of love.
- ▶ Find a work of art that has something to say about life in our contemporary world.
- ▶ Find an image of a person you would like to meet. What might your conversation be about?

Questions from Ray Williams, "Honoring the Personal Response: A Strategy for Serving the Public Hunger for Connection."
Journal of Museum Education, Volume 35, Number 1, Spring 2010, pp. 93–101.

Games for Looking at Art

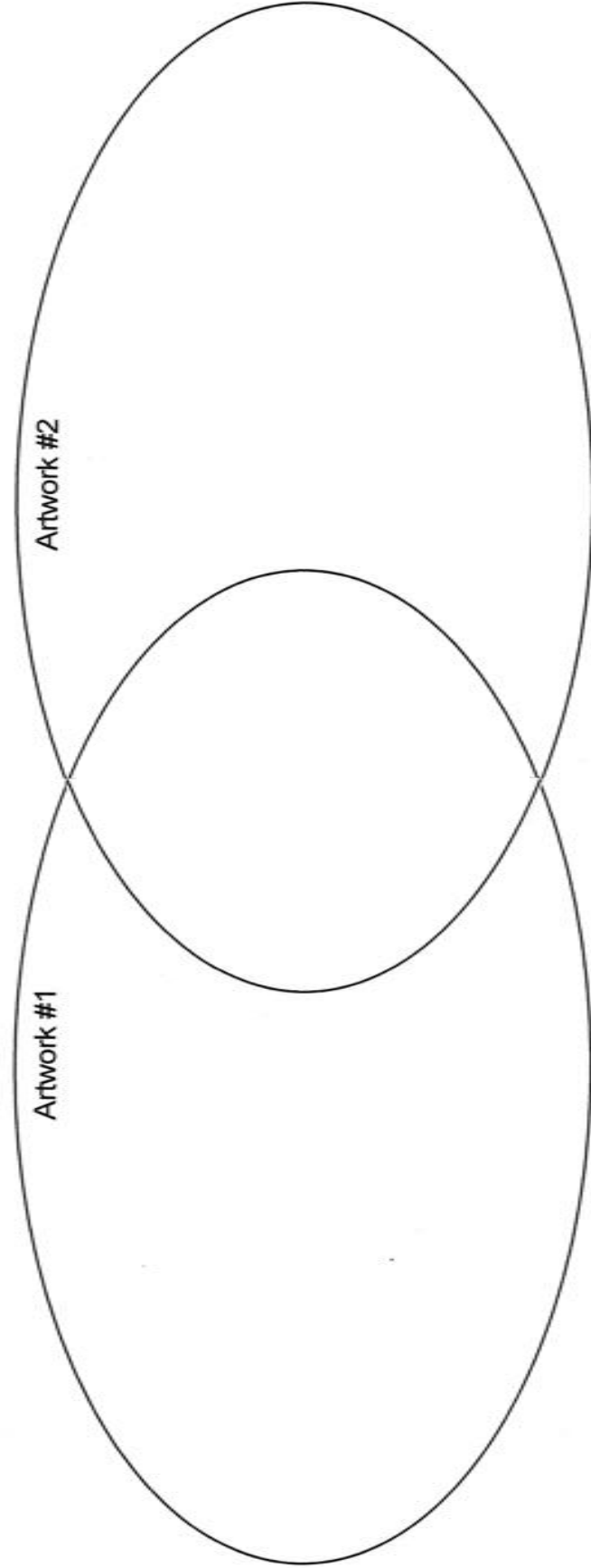
<p>KEY WORD ^</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One person chooses an artwork • Viewers say the first word that comes to mind • They then locate where that word can be found in the art, supporting their reasoning with evidence gathered from the artwork 	<p>CATEGORIES ^</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the artworks in the gallery • Select two categories for the works • Explain how you made your choices
<p>SEARCHING FOR DETAILS ^</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an artwork • Take turns describing one thing you see in the artwork • See if you can locate something that others have missed or ignored 	<p>WHAT IS IT? °</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an artwork • Pretend that your partner cannot speak English • Teach her/him the names of things as they point to them in the artwork
<p>STEP INTO THE PICTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a painting, drawing or photograph • Pretend that you can step into the picture • Describe / draw what you observe when you look around, off the sides, behind things or off towards the viewer 	<p>PEOPLE IN ACTION ^</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose one artwork that shows a person in action • Practice imitating the actions of that person • Present your action to the rest of the class • Your audience must decide which artwork is being imitated
<p>WHO AM I? ^</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a portrait • Pretend to be that person; look at image details • Your partner must ask you 10 questions about your life • Your answers should fit with clues from the artwork 	<p>STORYTELLING °</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each person selects an artwork • Organize your images to tell a story—it must have a setting, plot, and climax • Arrange your group in the order of the story • Each person tells her/his part to the class

<p>PICTURES COME TO LIFE °</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select one artwork, without telling anyone else • Dramatize the picture, creating dialogue and sound effects • Present to the class • Ask the class to identify the picture that was dramatized 	<p>MEMORY ^</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an artwork • Study your work carefully for 3 minutes • Show your artwork to your partner; turn your back to the artwork so you can't see it • Your partner must test your memory by asking you questions about what is in the picture
<p>CURATOR °</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are part of a purchasing committee for our classroom art gallery • Choose 5 works of art to add to the collection • Give reasons for your choices 	<p>WHO LIVES HERE? ^</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an artwork with a building or a landscape scene • Describe the person who might live there • Support your ideas by pointing to specific details in the artwork
<p>TV COMMERCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize your postcards into three piles: PEOPLE, PLACES and THINGS • Take 2 cards from the PEOPLE pile and 1 card from each of the other piles • Use these cards to create a commercial • Present your commercial to the class and be as persuasive as possible 	<p>THICK DESCRIPTION ^</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an artwork that's appealing to you, but don't allow your <u>blindfolded</u> partner to see it • Describe the picture in precise detail • Display your picture along with 7 others • Ask your partner to pick out your picture based on your description

^ Work in pairs or small groups ° Work in small groups

Same and Different Comparing & Contrasting Artworks

Choose two artworks that share the same subject matter to compare and contrast. In the open area of the left oval, record words or phrases that are based on your observations of artwork #1. In the open area of the right oval, write down words or phrases that accurately describe artwork #2. In the center space, record words or phrases common to both artworks.



Using the ideas that are documented above, write a few paragraphs comparing and contrasting these two artworks.

Looking/Critical Analysis Activities

These activities can be used with either elementary or secondary students, depending on their prior knowledge, skills, and readiness. They align with Overall Expectations D2 (Grades 1 to 8) and B1, 2 & 3 (grades 9 to 12)—Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing—from The Ontario Curriculum: The Arts (2009 & 2010).

Ping Pong: The Sport of Critical Looking

- Present students with two sets of paired images. Try to secure a variety of art forms, e.g. paintings, sculpture, chairs, still life, architecture, photographs. Select images which have some similarity in terms of subject matter, design or theme. (Later, they can be completely unrelated for a challenge.) Use between six and seven pairs (depending on the age group or grade). Explain the procedures simply: ask students to decide which image is “Ping” and which is “Pong”. **DO NOT** define these terms; leave a little ambiguity! Allow students to devise their own criteria for these two nonsensical words. Keep repeating the instructions throughout the exercise. They can record answers on a sheet of paper divided into two columns, one for “Ping” and the other for... you know!
- Follow up by reviewing the images and discussing the many reasons why particular students made certain choices. The responses will be as varied as the children in your class. Encourage elaboration of responses and prompt incomplete statements. Their answers must be based on their direct observation of the paired images. Keep in mind that criteria for selecting “pingness” and “pongness” do not have to be the same throughout the exercise. A different criterion might be used for each pair.
- Finally, debrief by asking them why they did this exercise. Answer? Each person can have a different interpretation and everyone will be right, as long as visual support comes from the images before them.

30 Facts About...

Students are shown an image and asked to record thirty (30) pieces of information that they observe. Have them give only facts that they can see; opinions are not required for this exercise. The evidence must be present in visual form. After a sufficient amount of time, go around the room and ask for “only the facts, ma’am.” (*HINT: Good opportunity to discuss the relationship between fact and opinion.*)

Picture Round-Robin

Have enough reproductions for each student in your class (postcards). Place them around on the desks throughout the room. (Make sure that any factual information is covered up.) Beside each image place a piece of foolscap paper. They should write number #1 at the top of the margin. Ask them a question about their image. (See questions below.) Students have a minute, or so, to write their answer on the foolscap. Stress careful observation! Once everyone is done, have them fold their paper back so that their answer is no longer visible. Then, have the entire class move to the next image beside them. The same procedure is repeated until all questions are answered and everyone has moved around the room. (Timing and numbers of questions will again depend on the grade level and knowing your own kids!) Students return to their starting point and read the accumulated statements about their image. What can you do with this information? Write a story. Complete a full description of that image using their compiled information. Create a poem using some or all the words and phrases. Do further research about this particular image. Devise other questions that could be asked. Paint a picture or do a drawing as a response to this image and its generated ideas.

- Write down one word that describes the feeling that this image creates in you.
- Write down four descriptive words about this picture.
- What is the dominant or most important colour?
- What thing stands out or is most important in this picture? What is least important?

- Which of the art elements is strongest in this image: line, shape, value or texture?
- Does this picture tell a story? If it does, explain the action in two or three short sentences. If there is no obvious story or event, describe what you see in your own words.
- If you could place yourself in this picture, describe where you would be. If you were the artist, what might you like to change about this work of art?
- Finish this prompt: "This picture reminds me of... "
- (Repeat the above task.)
- What might happen *after* in the image that you are looking at?
- Give this image a title of your own.
- (Repeat the above task.)

Devise more of your own questions!

Pictures That Come to Life

- Students in small groups select an image or slide reproduction. They are to talk about the image in order to determine what is happening and what it's all about. What are the relationships among the people, animals or objects? What is the mood? Have them use some of the art inquiry questions to instigate discussion. (Narrative, history or genre subject matter works best.)
- Next, the group improvises dialogue for the people represented in the work of art. They can essentially write a brief script. This improvisation can also be tape recorded. Refine the dialogue and roles that each student is playing.
- The group can choose suitable background music or sound effects to accompany their dialogue. In a final presentation, the image can be displayed prominently on an easel or projected on to a screen or wall. The dialogue and sounds can be performed live in front of the class or pre-recorded and played back. The picture will appear to come to life right before your eyes!

Observation Game

Show an image to a small group of 3 or 4 students. They must, in turn, accurately describe the image to the remainder of the class. Questions may be asked and answered to clarify and refine perceptions about the image. Students can also respond in writing or by drawing what they "see" in their heads. When the description is complete, the image is revealed. Follow-up discussion should involve the accuracy of descriptions, reactions to verbal impressions, additional details that could help to clarify comprehension, the exactness of communication, and so on. Repeat the exercise with new observers. Try this game with images that are familiar to the class to compare the quality of descriptions.

In the Mood

Prepare recipe cards with words that represent various feelings and emotions, e.g. thrilling, sad, angry, jealous, joyful. Make sure the students understand these. Allow students to select postcards or large reproductions and ask them to attach an emotion card to it. Ask the following questions as you and the class examine people's choices:

- Why does this image/object suggest that particular emotion or feeling?
- Why do different people see different emotions in the same image?
- How do these emotions contribute to the meaning of the image?

In a Word...

Ask students to write down the first word that comes into their mind after viewing an art work. This reaction should be spontaneous. Have them write their word on a "Post-It" note and attach to the reproduction. In small groups and have students discuss a particular image. Write down another word that comes to mind after some contemplation. Use a different coloured "Post-it." Has their initial reaction changed? Why? What more can they discover? Does this work recall a personal experience?

Match-Makers

In pairs, students are given a card with a word printed on it. The word can be an adjective, noun, verb or adverb. Ask each pair to find a work of art that they believe somehow matches their word. Discuss their choices. Alter this by having them select a work of art that is opposite to their word. This could become a library research strategy.

Interviews with Famous Canadian Artists

Students work with a partner. Each selects a Canadian artist, historical or contemporary, and a particular work by that person. Students are to assume the role of their artist, while the other plays an interviewer. In their role as the artist, each is to devise responses to the interviewer's questions based on their understanding and research of the art work. Costumes and props may be used to enhance the final presentation. Here are the questions:

- Describe your work of art for us and tell its title.
- Where did you get the idea or inspiration for this work?
- Describe your way of working and your style as presented in this painting.
- What art element or design principle is most important to this work?
- What particular reaction or emotion would you like the viewers to experience?
- How have you achieved this emotional reaction?
- Why did you create this work? What was your purpose or intention?

Categories

Students examine a pile of randomly distributed postcards. After examining all the images, they must group them into categories. They must decide on the criteria for each category and prepared to explain their decisions later. **Variation:** tell them they can only have two or three categories and ALL the images must fit into one or the other.

How Good is Your Memory?

Working in pairs, have each person choose two images that they like from a larger pile. Once selected, give everyone three minutes to closely study their two images. Examine details and the larger composition. Times up! The partner chooses one of the other's images. Now, while hiding the postcard from the partner's eyes, they must try to stump their partner by asking a question about this image that they might not be able to answer. Switch and try again. After, discuss why certain things were easy to recall and others more difficult.

Once Upon a Time...

Working in small groups, each person must select an image that appeals to them. Arrange these into a narrative or story with a specific beginning, middle, and ending. The story must begin with the phrase "Once upon a time..." and conclude with "the end." Share this narrative with the class. *Extension:* translate the visual narrative into written form or paint|draw an episode from the story.

Interrogation

A student must orally describe various aspects of an artwork which is hidden from the view of the class. Then, three or four different reproductions, including the one that was described, are displayed. Students must try to determine which work was described. **Variation:** Devise a monologue for a portrait or give the weather report for a landscape. Students have to respond to the descriptions or cues by drawing what they are visualizing, much like a police artist does based on an eye-witness's account.

Take a Walk Into a Painting

Have students imagine that they can walk into a painting (or some other two dimensional image). Look around at alternate points of view and from various perspectives. Draw or paint the resulting scene. Dramatize this experience. Draw a map of your wanderings. Great exercise to develop abilities of visualization!

Frozen in Time

Recreate an artwork as a tableau or frozen picture. Sustain the poses long enough so that observers can determine the art source of this three dimensional performance. Photograph these scenes.

Telephone or Network

Use an artwork to instigate a phone dialogue or computer network conversation between partners, to illustrate the selected image or object. As a variation, do this exercise as a one-way conversation, using a character from the artwork as the hidden caller. The group should listen carefully to the ensuing conversation to determine who is being spoken to.

Who's Who in the Artworld

Have students role play the various people who are an integral part of an art gallery or museum. The role of artist, spectator, curator, patron, and art critic can all contribute different meanings to the same or various works of art. The following are examples of questions that could be printed on prompt cards:

- **ARTIST**

Why did I make this work? Would I like to exhibit, sell, donate or keep this work? Why or why not? How do I want it displayed in the gallery? Is it important that everyone understands my artwork?

- **SPECTATOR**

What is this work about? Do I like it? Why or why not? Would I like to place this work in my home? Which room and why? What other things does this work remind me of? Does it support my personal values, beliefs or feelings?

- **CURATOR**

Why do I want to display this work? Do I have to ask or consult with anyone else? Why would people be interested in coming to the gallery to see this? What important information about the work should be communicated? Which other artworks should surround it, in the gallery? Why?

- **PATRON**

Why would this artwork make an appropriate addition to the museum's collection? Where will it be displayed? How will it be kept safe and secure? How will it be cared for? Why am I willing to allow others to see this artwork?

- **CRITIC**

What three things do I enjoy about this artwork that I will communicate to others? What would I like to ask the artist about the work? Why would I try to persuade people to view this artwork? Why should people remember this artwork?

(Have students make up their own questions based on real interviews with these gallery personnel.)

Something from Nothing

Have students take a conceptual and synaesthetic leap by asking them to dramatize an abstract or non-objective painting or sculpture. They will apply synaesthetic thinking as they physicalize and vocalize design elements (line, shape, colour, texture, value) and methods of composition (contrast, balance, rhythm). Begin by having them create a tableaux of a realistic work, then a more abstract example.

Soundtracking

As a small group, select a painting and use realistic or stylized sounds to accompany the depicted actions or extend the visible scene. Try this with realistic or abstract works. Devise dialogue to fit the narrative.

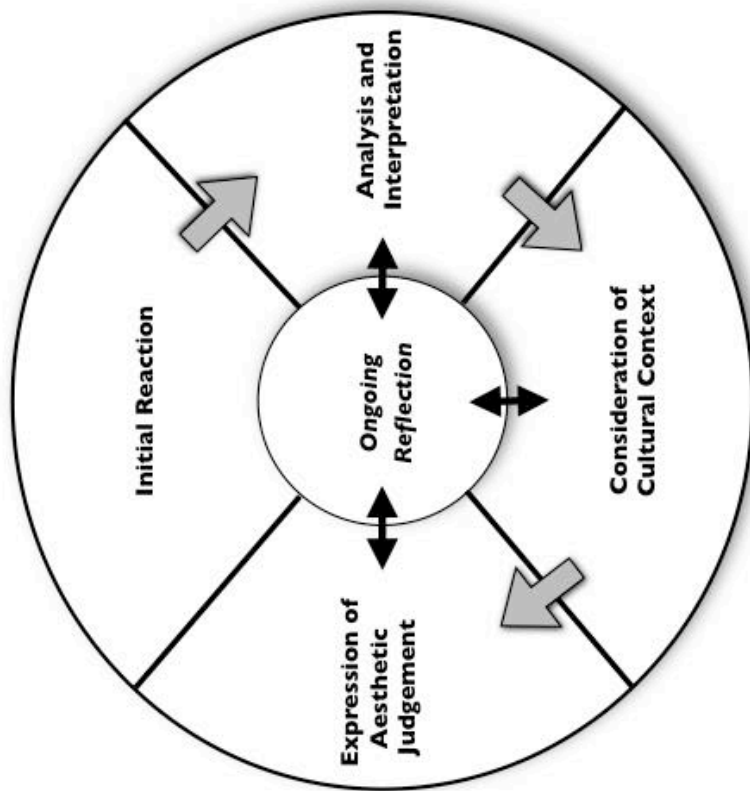
Questions to Assist Your Critical Analysis Process – Secondary Grades 9 - 12

Aesthetic Judgement

- Do you feel this artwork is successful? What are your reasons?
 - In what ways does this artwork look like other artworks?
 - How does this artwork connect with me or some aspect of my life?
 - What qualities make this artwork valuable?
 - What might you change about this work, and why?
 - Have your opinions and feelings changed from your initial reaction?
 - How might you combine various judgments about this artwork?
- ## Cultural Context
- What is the name and culture|nationality of the artist?
 - When & where was the artwork created?
 - Why was this artwork created? What purpose might it have served or how was it used?
 - In what condition is the artwork? How did it look when it was new?
 - Who were|are the intended spectators of this artwork? Was it created for a particular individual, group or culture?
 - Does the artwork belong to a particular period of history or a specific art style?
 - What connection might this work have with our present society or culture?

Initial Reaction

- What is your first impression of this artwork?
- What does this image remind you of? Is there anything that you recognize?
- What emotional reaction do you have to this artwork?
- What puzzles you? What are your questions?
- Can you make any personal connections with this artwork?
- What would you ask the artist|designer?



Analysis

- How was this artwork made? Which medium, technique, and/or process has been used by the artist?
- Can you identify the subject matter of this work? Can you describe what you see?
- Which art elements are most significant in this work? Use adjectives to describe their particular qualities.
- Where is the focal point or area of emphasis in this work? How has the artist|designer made this location important?
- Where can you locate any contrasts among art elements?
- Can you indicate where the artist has used rhythm or tried to suggest movement?
- How has the artist|designer created a sense of visual balance in this work? Which parts contribute to this balance?
- How has the artist|designer used colours or values to achieve unity?

Interpretation

- What specific emotions, feelings or thoughts does this artwork provoke in you?
- What is this artwork about?
- What big idea does this artwork represent?
- Does this artwork symbolize something else?
- Does the title of this artwork add to its meaning?
- How is this reproduction different from the original artwork?
- Can this artwork be interpreted differently? Does it mean what the artist|designer intended?
- Can this artwork be interpreted using a particular art theory?

CRITICAL ANALYSIS (SECONDARY)

Looking into Art

☐ Initial Response & Description *(Inventory of visual information.)*

1. When you look at this artwork, where do your eyes go first? Why?
2. Record *three* questions that come to mind as you first examine this artwork.
3. Is there anything about this artwork that you recognize? Does it make you think of anything in your own life (i.e. memories, personal experiences, dreams)?
4.
 - (a) Give the full name and nationality of the artist. What is the title of the work? Give the date the work was made or completed. What are its dimensions? In which museum or city can this work be found? (Where should you look for this specific information?)
 - (b) Which art medium and/or technique is used by this artist?
 - (c) Can you identify the subject matter of this artwork? (still life, landscape, figure, portrait, genre, narrative/history, abstraction, fantasy)
 - (d) Provide a FULL description of exactly what you see in this artwork. Make your inventory detailed and complete. Don't leave anything out!
5. Which art elements are *more* significant in this artwork? (*line, colour, shape/form, texture, value*) Describe where these are located and how they appear. Use vivid, descriptive language (adjectives) to detail the *qualities* of these art elements.
6. Imagine taking a walk into this artwork (or observing a sculpture come to life). Describe what you would see, touch, hear, smell, and taste. Look for things that are not shown directly, but are suggested.

☐ Interpretation *(Making meaning about the artwork.)*

7. What specific emotions, feelings or thoughts does this artwork provoke in you?
8. What is happening in this artwork? Does it represent or symbolize something else? Essentially, what is this work about?
9. How does the title of this artwork add to its meaning?
10. Why was this artwork created? What purpose might it have served?
11. Who were/are the intended spectators of this artwork? Was it created for for a

particular individual, group or culture?

12. Does this work belong to a particular period in history or a specific art style?
13. What connection might this artwork have with our present society or culture?
14. Could this artwork be interpreted in another way? Can you explain another possible meaning? Do these multiple meanings conflict?

☐ **Analysis** *(Relationships between the form of the artwork and its meaning.)*

15. Where is a focal point or an area of emphasis in this artwork? How has the artist/designer made this location important?
16. Where can you uncover any contrast among art elements, in this artwork?
17. Can you find a place where the artist/designer has used some kind of rhythm or tried to suggest movement in this artwork?
18. How has the artist/designer created a sense of visual balance in this work? Which parts of the work contribute to this balance? Is this an example of symmetrical (formal) or asymmetrical (informal) balance?
19. How has the artist/designer used colour or value to create unity in this work?

☐ **Informed Evaluation** *(Valuing the quality of the artwork, with reasons.)*

20. What do you admire or dislike about this artwork? What are your reasons?
(Look back at some of the things you've mentioned earlier.)
21. Do you think this artist/designer has been successful in communicating something important to those who view it? Why or why not?
22. Which of the following statements best fits your reason for assessing this artwork as you have? Does this fit with a particular art theory?
 - ☐ *It is accurate and truthful in the way it imitates real life.*
 - ☐ *It encourages a strong emotional or felt response in the viewer.*
 - ☐ *It is visually well organized and/or has an exciting design.*
 - ☐ *It says something specific about a culture, and its beliefs or concerns.*
 - ☐ *It presents the beauty and/or visual appeal of what it's about.*
 - ☐ *It looks like something that belongs on display, perhaps in an art gallery or museum.*
23. How would you rate this particular artwork compared to other artworks that you have seen before?

Making Art

(Creative Process)

Making Art to Respond to Art

All art is in part about other art.

TERRY BARRETT

The following activities use art making to explore concepts and ideas related to the artworks in this exhibition. Art educator Olivia Gude (<https://naea.digication.com/omg/Welcome/published>) reminds teachers at all levels that students are involved with authentic tasks and genuine learning when they make meaning for themselves and tap into the artist's intentions or thought process, rather than mindlessly copying a style or imitating visual qualities. Also, be wary of simply "lifting" styles or replicating artifacts from other's cultures (e.g. spirit masks, ancestor figures, decorative motifs)—you may be misrepresenting or even offending someone's beliefs or traditions.

These activities can be used with either elementary or secondary students, depending on their prior knowledge, skills, and readiness. They align with Overall Expectations D1 (Grades 1 to 8) and A1, 2 & 3 (grades 9 to 12)—Creating and Presenting—from The Ontario Curriculum: The Arts (2009 & 2010).

- ❖ Examine Judy Joseph's *Wellington Street N.*, Claudette Losier's *Busy Intersection*, and Clarence Porter's *Ottawa Street Series: #2—Nadel Furs*. Each of these artworks is about looking at aspects of a local community, but with eyes that pay attention to images that we don't normally heed. **Entice your students to look at the community around the school—which can include the school's parking lot or playground—to capture in a painting, drawing or photograph. Have them search out details, landmarks or unusual points of view that other people might typically ignore and walk right by.** Have them attend to interactions between the human-made environment and the natural environment of a street.
- ❖ **Have students create a narrative response—painting or storyboard or comic strip—by bringing together two very different artworks.** This is a type of synectic thinking exercise in which disparate items are juxtaposed to produce a new solution. For instance, if the child in Amanda Immurs' portrait were to live in the house painted by Jody Joseph, what would her bedroom or basement look like? If the charming woman in Sandee Ewasiuk's *Nice Catch* or the young women in Rosemary Vander-Breggen's *Bike for 4* set off for adventure in Julia Veenstra's *White Canoe*, what would they see and where would they go?
- ❖ Show students the abstract works of Linda Blakney (*Metal Work*) and Marla Panko (*Collage with Acetate I*). Ask them about their reactions and feelings pertaining to the shapes, colours, and overall appearances of these works. Note how repetition and random pattern are differently used in each. **Have students create their own abstract works—perhaps as a painting, ceramic relief or cut paper collage—by using only two simple, geometric or organic shapes to create a composition.** Vary the two initial shapes by changing colours, sizes, placement, stretching, repeating, reversing, squashing, fragmenting, distorting, and varying the textures of these shapes.
- ❖ **Ask students to create a soundscape for one of the artworks.** Using their own voices, original or prerecorded sound effects (copyright free), and perhaps music, they are to create an audio or sound work that captures their impressions of the AC4 artwork or adds a narrative layer of meaning. Here is a perfect opportunity for integrating music, drama, and language arts expectations. Students should prepare a script and/or sound score as part of their creative process and preparation. The final sound works could be presented in a Powerpoint™ presentation so that all the components can be brought together for display. Audio software like Garageband™ could be used.

- ❖ Investigate how a number of artists have used colour to not only provide structure to their works, but have reinforced or provoked emotional meanings about their subjects, using specific colour choices. Compare students' reactions to colour use in the works of Sandee Ewasiuk, Michelle Guitard, Claudette Losier, Jody Joseph, Cornelia Peckart, and Clarence Porter. Some might term their use of colour as expressive or expressionistic, in other words, using colour to heighten feelings or sensations. Discuss the emotional associations and cultural symbolism of colours, both stereotypes and others' cultural connections. **Have students locate a black and white photograph—their choice of subject matter: a face, a landscape or a view of their home or something else in their community. Ask them to represent this image with colours that attempt to capture a particular emotion or feeling, using either paint or pastels.**
- ❖ Additional imaginative responses to individual works in AC4:
 - ▶ Laura Bromwich's *Flores* makes use of multiple layers of plant-like forms to create its complex imagery. **Direct students to imagine, then visualize an environment that can be represented as multiple, superimposed layers.** Markers and some paints will work on acetate. Tissue paper and a watered-down glue solution can achieve a similar transparency. Tracing paper is more translucent, but useful, too. Layering can easily be done with digital imaging software like Photoshop™.
 - ▶ Clarence Porter's pastel drawing, *Ottawa Street Series: #2—Nadel Furs*, depicts a close-up view, from a lower perspective, of this building's outside signage and supporting structure. **Have students use Bristol board viewfinders or cameras to zoom in on portions of buildings, bridges or collections of outdoor objects (e.g. bicycles in racks, garbage cans at the curb, cars in a parking lot) to see them differently and as more visually intriguing.** Try changing points of view (worm's eye or bird's eye), as well. A great opportunity to work on composition planning!
 - ▶ Marla Panko's mixed-media work, *Collage with Acetate I*, incorporates text with abstract shapes. Even some of the letterforms are cropped and rearranged to make them less readable as parts of the alphabet. **Challenge students to create small scale collages that use both text and found images, but in more abstract, perhaps unrecognizable ways.** Give them an inciting word|phrase for initial inspiration, e.g. playful, aggressive, beyond time, intersection, family gathering.
 - ▶ Cornelia Peckart's relief print triptych, *Not Without an Audience*, uses multiple images to capture the excitement of night club patrons and their musical revelry. When are there times in our lives of celebration and communal exuberance? How can these gatherings be depicted in still images? **Ask students to recall or document a community or family celebration, or school event through a series of related images.** These could be done as relief prints (using softoleum or styrofoam) or photographs or mixed media drawings|paintings. The thoughtful and effective arrangement of images should also be part of this imaginative inquiry.
 - ▶ Michelle Guitard's painting, *Red Head House Finch*, pays careful attention to underpainting and vibrant contrasts among adjacent and layered colours. **Students can be asked to paint from an actual object or a photograph, but the objective is to select, mix, and layer hues that will bring their subject to life through light and colour.** This can be an effective exercise to apply under-standings about complementary and contrasting colours, and the use base hues for colour depth. Acrylic paints and oil pastels work best.

Questions to Assist Your Creative Process – Elementary Grades 1 - 8

Challenging and Inspiring

- What is your creative challenge?
- Describe your dreams, ideas, fantasies or goals?
- What are you curious about?
- How does the art work of an artist or designer inspire you?
- Where can you find ideas? Where might you look for information?

Reflecting and Evaluating

- Is this art work finished? How do you know?
- How have your original ideas changed while making this art work?
- What have you learned about working with this technique or these materials?
- What skill or idea have you learned well enough to teach to someone else?
- Did you find this art making experience satisfying? Why or why not?

Imagining and Generating

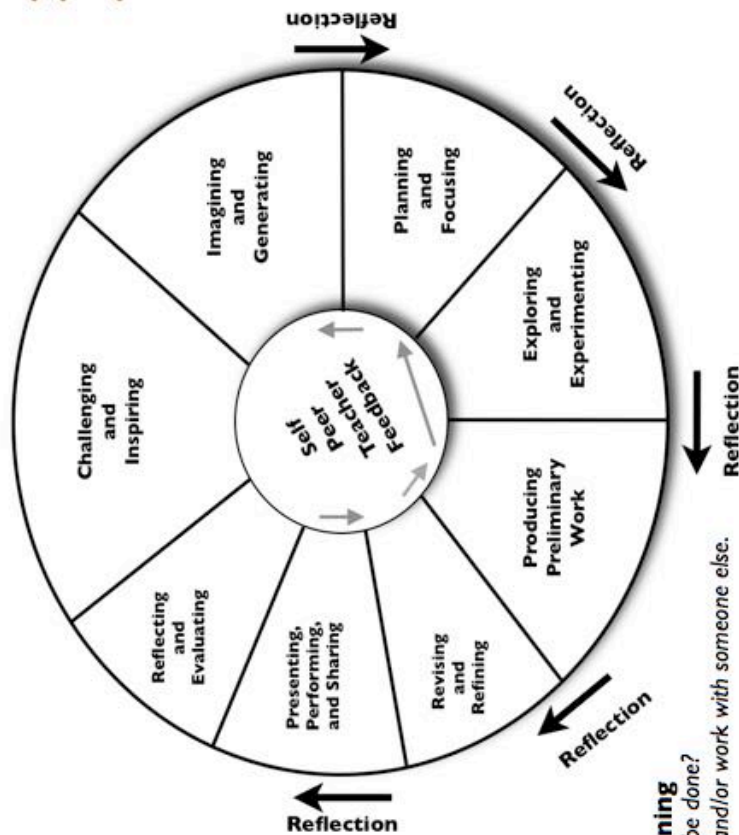
- What if...?
- What ideas have you thought of from brainstorming?
- How can you look from another point of view?
- What happens if you change the form or context of an image or object?
- How might a different visual art style affect your work: abstraction, distortion, symbolism, transformation?

Presenting, Performing and Sharing

- What is the title of your art work?
- Does your art work need a frame, a base or display background?
- Does your art work need a written explanation or artist's statement?

Revising and Refining

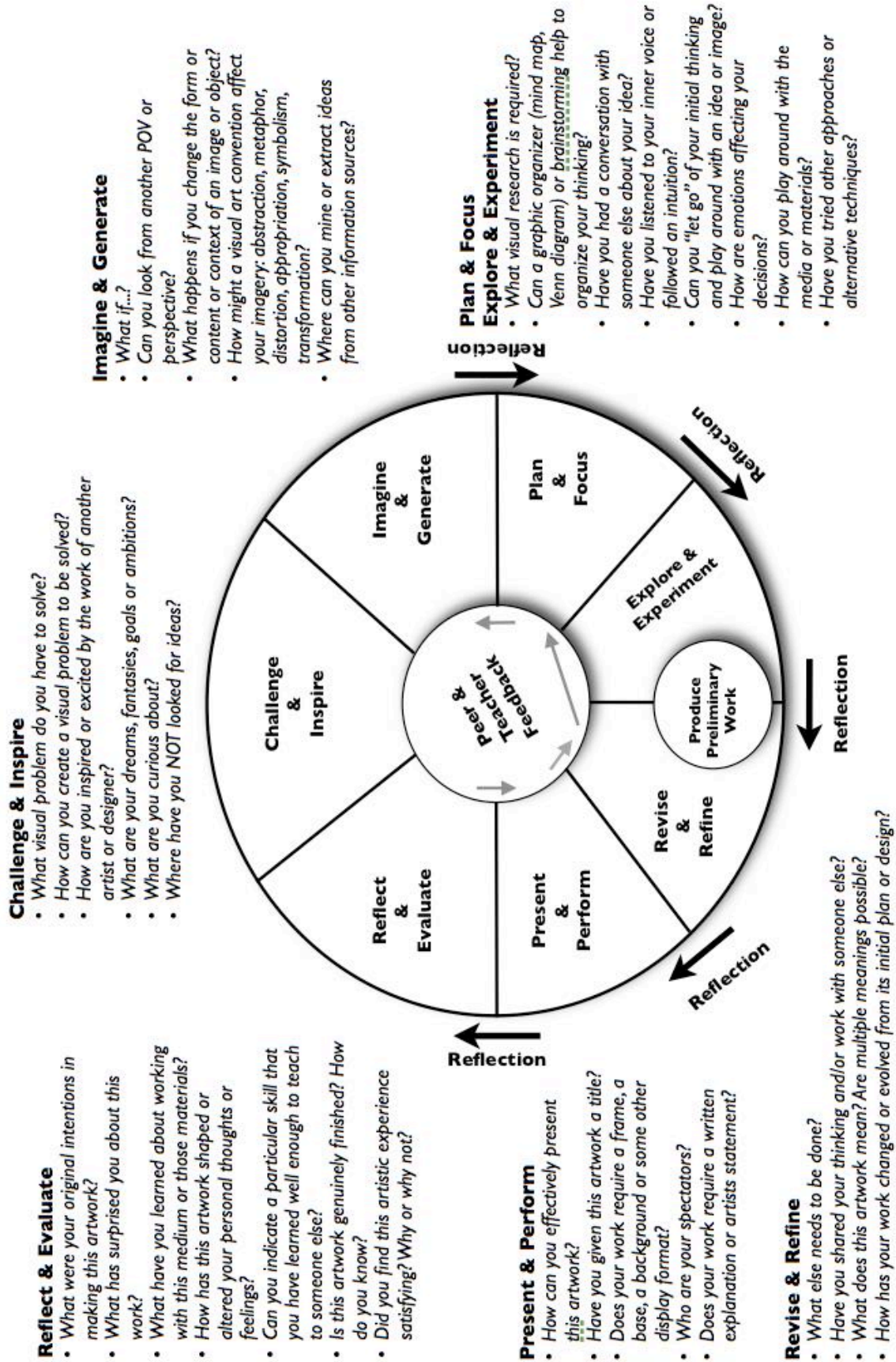
- What else needs to be done?
- Share your thinking and/or work with someone else. What did they say?
- What does this art work mean? Is there more than one meaning?
- How has your art work changed from its initial design?



Planning and Focusing Exploring and Experimenting

- What visual research will you have to do?
- How can a mind map or Venn diagram help to organize your thinking?
- Have you "let go" of your initial thinking and played around with your idea or image?
- What emotions are affecting your creative thinking?
- What experiments can you do with the art materials?
- What other approaches or techniques have you tried?

Questions to Assist Your Creative Process – Secondary Grades 9 - 12



Writing Responses to Artworks

Student writers can choose from a number of different strategies or structures when responding to art. Knowledge and understanding doesn't have to be demonstrated through an essay or a detached, objective voice. Put the "subjectivity" into the subject.

- ▶ Describe the scene; recount your imaginary walk into the artwork
- ▶ Compare an image in the artwork to something else
- ▶ Express an awareness of yourself as spectator while looking at the artwork
- ▶ Describe how the subject or narrative is presented by the artist
- ▶ Communicate an interpretation of the artwork, in poetic form
- ▶ Explore a relationship between the artist and the subject of the artwork
- ▶ Assume that the reader is familiar with the artwork
- ▶ Discuss the history of the artwork
- ▶ Imagine a story behind a scene depicted in the artwork
- ▶ Speak to the artist
- ▶ Imagine what occurred while the subject posed for a portrait
- ▶ Speak to the subject(s)
- ▶ Speak in the voice of a character or multiple characters from the artwork
- ▶ Speculate about what the artist created this work
- ▶ Give voice to an inanimate object in the artwork (*anthropomorphism*)
- ▶ Allow the art elements or design principles to speak
- ▶ Create a dialogue between or conversation among a number of adjacent artworks, in the same gallery space
- ▶ Write about the gallery environment—atmosphere, structure, dynamics
- ▶ Relate the unseen life or personal history of a portrait
- ▶ Superimpose an aspect of your life or history on the artwork

Some ideas from Honor Moorman, "Backing into Ekphrasis: Reading and Writing Poetry about Visual Art," (2006), p. 48.

Curating and Exhibiting Art with Students

Exhibiting art completes the artistic cycle.

DAVID BURTON

In his book *Exhibiting Student Art* (2006), art educator David Burton presents a clear rationale, organizational structures, and effective strategies for ceding ownership of art exhibition planning and implementation to the students. Although Burton's intentions are directed at using students' artwork for display, the author's methods can also be applied to others' art, from the local community—like these professional works in the *Artists' Connection 4* collection. Students can be charged with the task of displaying the art and providing an educational context for this presentation. In other words, students become the curators. A collaborative class project like this also furnishes learning opportunities about the cultural work and responsibilities of art gallery or museum employees (see below).

Teachers must ensure that artworks are handled by responsible, senior students or other adults to avoid damage to either the art or their frames. Students should never be unsupervised during the installation of an exhibition. **Board health and safety guidelines should always be followed.**

As Burton indicates, curating and exhibiting art with students fulfills various educational goals: it's collaborative, authentic, goal-specific; offers students choice and voice; is activity-based and involves a degree of risk-taking, imagination, and conflict resolution; celebrates both students' and artists' accomplishments; and involves the school community and elicits administrative support.

- ❖ Stages of art exhibition planning can include: theme development, exhibition design, installation, publicity, and event planning & assessment. Student-run committees could be established for each of these.
- ❖ Theme categories for an exhibition can involve descriptive (*to explain or interpret meaning*); educational (*convey information*); narrative (*tell a story*); metaphorical (*explore symbolic relationships*); affective (*arouse a feeling*); ideological (*express an opinion*); or biographical (*based on one artist*) ways of organizing.
- ❖ Ask students to consider the design and installation of the exhibition, using different arrangements for two-dimensional artworks: random salon-style (all-over, filling the wall) or modern (single horizontal row); sequential or chronological; paired comparisons; and groupings to indicate similarities. Which works best?

Art Gallery/Museum Staff

(Students can research these roles.)

Director
Curator
Educator
Interpreter
Guide/Docent
Conservator
Exhibition Designer
Registrar/Archivist
Installation
Marketing/Publicity
Publications
Photographer
Security
Hospitality
Public Relations

- ❖ Time management becomes an important factor in a student-run exhibition (and is applicable to developing their Personal Learning Skills). Have task groups create their own timeline or checklist of dates and duties to be performed. Also, a great opportunity for teaching/reinforcing group norms and social skills (See *Social Skills Anchor Charts* from <<http://www.edugains.ca/resources/ClassroomDynamics/SocialSkillsAnchorCharts.pdf>>)
- ❖ Literacy expectations can be met through the writing of interpretive text that accompanies the artworks. Students can summarize and condense information provided in the “Artists’ Information” section of this document. Writing effective text for display panels requires thinking about the spectators and their visual interaction with the words. (See the following website for guidance with writing effective art gallery interpretive text <http://backdoorbroadcasting.net/documents/seminar_supplements/DavideHaan_Writing_the_Script.pdf>)
- ❖ Promotion and publicity for the art exhibition can become an art making opportunity in itself. Poster and flyer design can address an imperative of graphic design, that is to persuasively integrate image and text.
- ❖ Another exhibition opportunity can involve the adjacent display of students’ artistic responses to the artworks in the *Artists’ Connection 4* collection. Of course, this can also include literary responses—poems, prose or other writing forms. (See “Writing Responses to Artworks” in this document)

References

- Burton, David. (2006). *Exhibiting Student Art: The Essential Guide for Teachers*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Stone, Denise. (2001). *Using the Art Museum*. Worcester, MA: Davis Publications.
- Thomson, Peggy & Barbara Moore. (1997). *The Nine-Ton Cat: Behind the Scenes at an Art Museum*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.



Art Definitions

What Makes an Artwork?

Form + Content + Context = ART

Medium
Elements
Principles

Subject/Narrative
Symbolism
Function
Interpretation

Artist
Spectator
Time/Location

How?

What?|Why?

Who?|Where?|When?

Form (How?)

Medium

The materials, methods, and processes through which artists communicate their ideas in artworks. Medium can also refer to the actual substances and tools (e.g. charcoal, oil paint, clay, videotape, marble, computer) used in art making.

Art Elements

The basic visual components or forms which make up all artworks. These elements are colour, line, shape/space, texture, and value.

Design Principles

The essential strategies or principles which artists use to organize the art elements. These principles include balance, contrast (or variety), emphasis, movement, proportion, rhythm & pattern, and unity.

Content (What? Why?)

Subject | Narrative

The subject refers to what artists make images or objects of (e.g. person, place or thing)—both what you observe and what the art is about. Artworks can tell a story as part of their content.

Symbolism

Images or art elements that stand for or represent some other thing or idea, besides themselves. Symbols are culturally defined and must be learned. Metaphors are implied comparisons between one image and another in order to convey meaning.

Function

Some artworks or objects have a particular function that they perform within a culture, a purpose for which they are intended. A function may change or evolve with a change in context (time or location).

Interpretation

This involves the process of making meaning about or “reading” an artwork for understanding. Interpretations get at messages or themes—intended or not—as recognized by the artist, spectators or critics.

Context (Who? Where? When?)

Artist

The individual or group creators of an artwork. Artists communicate using images, objects or performances which are always influenced or shaped by their knowledge, feelings, beliefs, thoughts, experiences or memories.

Spectator

This term refers to all those who observe visual artworks. As spectators, our looking and understanding are often influenced by personal knowledge, feelings, beliefs, thoughts, experiences or memories.

Time | Location

Artworks are created at specific times (era, year, day), in particular places (country, culture, site). In trying to understand art, we need to recall when and where it was produced and under what circumstances. As well, where the artwork is currently displayed, performed or viewed may also influence meaning.

Art Elements

COLOUR is created by light that is reflected from an object. It's three properties are hue, value, and intensity. Colours also have temperature—warm or cool—which remind us of things from daily life.

LINE is a continuous mark, made on a surface, by a moving point. Lines can change in direction, colour, texture, thickness, length, and velocity. Lines define edges and suggest movement.

SHAPE is an area of space that is defined or enclosed by a line or other element. Shapes have length and width. The essential shape families are geometric (square, circle, triangle) and organic (free-form, biomorphic; found in nature). Negative space is the emptiness that surrounds a shape. **FORM** is a three-dimensional version of a shape, with all the same properties.

SPACE is the emptiness or absence around, between, above, below or inside shapes or forms. Objects and events are contained in space. It exists because of other elements.

TEXTURE is the quality of a surface, and how it feels (tactile) or how it looks if it could be touched (visual). Textures can be rough, smooth, silky, soft, prickly, fuzzy, bumpy, and so on.

VALUE is the presence or absence of light. Values can suggest culturally defined feelings, emotions or other states of mind: light values might imply happiness, optimism, airiness, youth or honesty; dark values might suggest depression, loneliness, fear or aging.

Design Principles

BALANCE is concerned with arranging art elements so that no single part of the artwork overpowers, or appears visually heavier or stronger, than any other part.

EMPHASIS involves a focal point or area of special interest to grab a spectator's attention and encourage further looking.

CONTRAST creates attention or attraction through visual change or difference.

RHYTHM is the repetition of an art element to create a feeling of activity, similarity and/or connection through pattern.

MOVEMENT imitates the feeling of actual motion or physical change that we experience in life, and creates a sense of action or dynamism in an artwork.

PROPORTION involves the relative size of images or objects, and contributes to emphasis.

CONTINUITY|UNITY refers to a visual agreement or connection that exists among the art elements in any artwork. An artwork is said to have unity if it looks|feels complete. Other principles contribute to this perceived order or relationship of the parts to the whole work. On the other hand, **CHAOS** or **VISUAL DISCORD** can also be considered a kind of organization.

Why is Visual Literacy Important?

Educational psychologist David Perkins (1994) talks about the “hungry eye” and its need to “make sense of what lies before it” (p. 8). Camille Paglia (2004) advocates the slowing down of visual perception in the young so that they can better process still images, as opposed to moving ones, and enlarge their capacities for visual attention. In her highly articulate “Visual Literacy White Paper,” Ann Bamford (2003) lists various reasons for teaching visual literacy, among them developing critical thinking to help students become more discriminating visual consumers; demystifying the creative process, including artist’s intentions and their aesthetic choices; and encouraging students to become image makers to extend their ability to communicate with the wider community. As our students become even more expert at using and applying new technologies and digital media, it becomes increasingly important to teach essential skills of visual literacy. As Bamford muses:

Literacy will be about being able to imagine and model possible actions that might be taken into the future. These models will be communicated visually and sensually. ...the real world has just become too dull by comparison. Pivotal to communication [through] technology is the way images can be manipulated. The idea that ‘seeing is believing’ is now a naive concept. Manipulated images now serve to recode culture. This virtual world becomes the new symbol system for the way in which we perceive the reality of images we are presented with.... Interactive mediums rely heavily upon visual imagery, movement, drama, and sound to communicate. (p. 7)

Below is a succinct compilation of reasons for teaching visual literacy as the core content of every visual arts program, K through 12. These justifications should form the theoretical foundation of the curriculum, from which other components of art making, visual culture (art) history, criticism, and philosophical questions about art (or aesthetics) should emerge. If we are truly serious about so-called “enduring” or “key understandings,” then these fundamental ideas, concepts, skills, and dispositions about visual literacy should constitute what we value enough to impart to our students. A visually literate student should be able to:

- Look with attention and purpose
- Identify the subject matter (“aboutness”) of artworks
- Explain the use of culturally based signs, symbols or metaphors in an artwork
- Analyze and interpret meaning and/or function in artworks
- Identify and analyze the medium (techniques, materials, processes) of an artwork
- Analyze the composition, structure or style of an artwork, including use of design principles
- Relate and assess the significance of an artwork’s context(s)
- Evaluate the success or value of an artwork for its meaning and/or function
- Perceive, perhaps explain the affective impact, ambiguity or intensity of an artwork
- Produce artworks that communicate ideas and intentions with imagination and vitality
- Create visual statements using a variety of media, formats, and styles
- Recognize and value artworks from past and present cultures

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