

- Upcycle -

Reimagining Art History



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Standards/Performance Indicators/Skills

- This lesson plan is made with 5th graders in mind, but can easily be adapted to all grades. The 5th grade core standards present in this lesson are: VA:Cr1.1.5a, VA:Cr2.2.5a, VA:Re.7.2.5a, and VA:Cn11.1.5a.

Learning Objectives/Goals

- Students can define “appropriation” in terms of art-making, and understand its purpose and place in contemporary art.
- Students are familiar with the historical artist or art movement that the teacher selected.
- Students are familiar with Vik Muniz’s work and style and can identify key artworks.
- Students can identify the connection between meaning and material. Students will complete a collaged appropriation of a historical artwork in the style of Vik Muniz.

Assessment

- Assessment before the lesson shouldn’t be too involved because there is a lot to cover.
- A quick class discussion or partner discussion about what materials artists use and what that says about the artwork will suffice.
- Having a worksheet to fill out during a lecture or a video is a good method of assessing what the students retain and keeping them engaged.
- Depending on your school’s grading system, it is a good idea to have a rubric based on the learning goals to assess the student’s art after the lesson.
- Another assessment tool is to have group or class critiques, allowing for introspection and feedback.

Lesson Structure and Procedures

- This lesson works best in conjunction with the study of a specific historical artist or art movement from a concurrent history or social studies unit.
- Students should already have learned about or started learning about this historical artist or art movement before this lesson. Optional: pre-select specific artworks the students can choose from for their appropriation, or even have ready-made templates for younger students.
- The lesson should begin with a presentation about Vik Muniz and his work, highlighting specifically his appropriations of art history and the connection

between material and meaning. It might be beneficial to show students his TED talk: <https://tinyurl.com/xu66uvm8>

- Have a brief discussion about appropriation and its purpose/benefits. Here are some guiding questions:
 - Appropriation: the action of taking something for one's own use, typically without the owner's permission.
 - Why would we appropriate historical art?
 - What kind of art is ok to appropriate?
 - What can an artist say through an appropriation that they wouldn't be able to say with an original composition?
 - What is the connection between subject and material?
 - What is the relationship between artmaking and play?
- Next, have the students select an artwork from the art history until they are currently studying in social studies or history. Optional: have pre-made simplified templates of certain artworks they can choose from. They will assemble the collage to recreate their chosen artwork. The materials used are entirely up to the instructor: you can use unconventional supplies similar to Muniz's style like beans or string, or something very simple that you might have surplus of, like paper.

Instructional Strategies

- Show a video or prepare a presentation that highlights Vik Muniz's life and artwork, as well as the historical art movement or artist that will be addressed in this interdisciplinary project.
- Lead a discussion or have students divide into pairs or groups and answer questions.
- Have students independently research certain artists or art movements pertinent to this lesson and to the unit of history it is connected to.
- Create a worksheet to be filled out as students watch Vik Muniz's Ted Talk.
- Demonstrate the process of the collage in front of the class.
- Have students divide into groups and critique each other's artworks.

Learning Activities

- A presentation or video, along with a worksheet, is a good learning activity for vocabulary and new information.
- Class or group discussions are good learning activities for asking and answering questions, as well as making connections.
- Having a demonstration is a good learning activity because students can observe the process and be better prepared to make their own art.

Resources and Materials

- The materials for this collage are up to the instructor. This can be done with something as simple as ripped up scraps of paper, or with something unconventional like dried beans.
- Glue, scissors, and pencils.

Technology

- Prepare a presentation and show a video (<https://tinyurl.com/xu66uvm8>) highlighting Vik Muniz and his work.
- An optional way to integrate technology into the lesson would be to have students make simplified digital templates of historical works of art.
- Encourage students to use their resources (the library, computers, even phones) to research specific art movements/artists from history.

Adaptations and Modifications

- Younger students, students lacking fine motor skills, or nervous students should use templates to build their collage on top of. This will make them feel more comfortable and confident, allowing them to focus more on the collage part of the activity and less on drawing skills or making it look perfect.
- Older students or more advanced students should be encouraged to create their own drawing of a historical work of art that they will collage onto. This will let them practice their rendering skills in addition to the focus of the lesson: appropriation and collage.

Classroom Management

- Avoid lecturing for more than 10-15 minutes at a time, perhaps break up instruction about historical context and Vik Muniz's art between multiple days or classes.
- Have clear protocol about materials and clean up, as an activity like this has the potential to get messy.
- Having a variety of instruction methods will help students stay engaged and interested.
- Be careful if you choose to have students use computers to individually research the artist to not let them get too distracted with the internet.

Extensions

- A really good activity for early finishers is to have them make another iteration of their appropriation. Have them try the same artwork but with a different material and then have them write a response or reflect with a neighbor about how the material impacts the subject of the piece.
- If there is a continuing project that fast finishers work on, this will come in handy.