

## *Identity as it is revealed in Art*

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### **Introduction**

My husband blames the purchase of our house on me. Don't get me wrong, we both love this place; built in the nineteen forties it has all the charming creaks and leaks you would expect from an old house. The small cozy space is filled with books, two very lazy animals, an overabundance of hippos (a collection I have nothing to do with), pictures of our family dating back to nineteen twelve, and an eclectic art collection. This was only the second house our real estate broker showed us and she was sure it was the right one for us, "though on the high end of your price range". When we first drove up the cracked driveway we looked at each other with indifference at the façade of the place. She deferred from taking us into the house, but insisted on walking us through the back gate and into the back yard. If I can remember correctly how my husband tells this story, 'I turned around, looked at him, and he knew he didn't stand a chance'. Nestled in the back, behind the biggest poplar tulip tree you'd ever seen, is a small art studio.

I'd been working as an art teacher for almost eleven years at this point and had only few opportunities to create work independent from my classroom. I was beyond excited at the possibility of having my own space to create...whatever. So much for buying something new, a home that did not require much maintenance. As I recall this story, it did not take that much convincing that this was the house perfect for us. Regardless, we bought the house and were both blissfully happy. This is when I discovered how difficult it was for me to dive into art making in such a content emotional state. Would it take the roof leaking or the heating unit to stop working for me to be prepared to focus and develop a solid plan for my art? When I thought back to my most productive times in creating works, I was reminded of some very stressful personal events. Is that what it takes for me to be inspired, creative and productive – am really in the genre of the tortured artist? I couldn't help but be disappointed in my own cliché!

No doubt, art making is hard. To be inspired, to create innovative marks on a page, and to confront personal censure are difficult challenges for artists. Since the time of the Greek philosophers, those who wrote about the creative process emphasized that creativity involves a regression to more primitive mental processes, that to be creative requires a willingness to cross and recross the lines between rational and irrational thought. Plato said that creativity is a "divine madness...a gift from the gods". Aristotle said, "No great genius was without a mixture of insanity".<sup>1</sup>

I'm not implying that the madness of men is what I hope to inspire in my classroom. (Though the thought of that idea alone continues to make me smile!) The process of art making is both personal and deliberate. It cannot be made without the voice of the artist. So whether sane, tortured, or just plain mad – what we see in a work of art is in large part – the artist's identity. Through deliberate choices in style, subject, technique and medium, artists are revealing a personal ideology. We can of course consider other influences an artist may have had when creating a work; social and political ideals for example have historically guided artist in their quest to create relevant and important works. Patrons can influence size, color and even subject matter. Availability of materials affects the outcome of many of my own classroom works. Trends in a particular technique, say the arrival of performance art in the early nineteen sixties, motivated more than a few painter to explore other venues of expression. The artist Yves Klein revealed his ideology on everything from women's bodies to entire buildings.

What is true for each of these examples, what remains constant, is the eye, the hand, and the mind of the artist. These are identifiable marks that are as distinct to the individual as the spirit that lies within them. As it turns out, the heating/air unit in our house did quit on us and I finally began to work in my studio. I was stressfully happy and making art!

## **Background**

I teach in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public school system, which is the nineteenth largest district in the nation with a population of almost 130,000 students. I teach studio art and art history in a school located in the Northeast learning community, with a population of roughly 2100 students, grade 9-12. My students come from fairly diverse backgrounds with approximately 55% receiving free or reduced lunch.

I teach a variety of courses within the visual arts department (as well as various levels within the studio art classes which include drawing/sculpture/2-D design). Most consistently I teach upper level honors art students as well as Advanced Placement students.

I have taught all levels of studio art, ceramics, and sculpture on the high school level for over fourteen years. This experience now affords me time to be more reflective with the ideas and concepts I am presenting to my students. I no longer need much practice in classroom management, pacing, or organizational skills (at least at this point I know those details will work themselves out). As a result, I have begun to question more deeply the what, how, and why of the units, lesson, and art projects that I present.

## Rationale

Around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Pablo Picasso's dear friend Carlos Casagemas committed suicide. At this time, and with very little money, he makes a move from his beloved home in Barcelona to a run down studio in Montmartre, Paris. Alone, poor, and grief stricken, Picasso develops work like *Le Gourmet* (1901), *The Old Guitarist* (1903) and *Tragedy* (1903).

How does knowing this history effect our perception of the work and the artist? How do artists reflect their personal experiences and histories with line and colors?

### *L'art pour l'art ?*

The ideal goal for this unit is to ask students to consider the relevance of the work they create. Why do this? Student wait to be told what to do, they accept what they are told, and are willing to generating an 'answer to the problem' without really understanding the question. Here is an art project; here are some relatively significant examples/solutions to the problem, now make art. What is art? This question, at any level of teaching studio art, opens the doors to some great discussions, for about three minutes. Enough time for someone to contradict another's opinion and then for everyone to realize they don't really have a solid answer to the question. But there are always more questions. It is here that the idea for this unit begins to take shape. Art cannot happen in isolation. How does understanding context help us see the value in the conversations that art can entice us into and how does it draw on our innate need to explore and question our world and ourselves?

In all my studio art classes, I reference an assorted mix of cultural, historic and contemporary works of art in an attempt to help students understand specific techniques or art principle. For example, recently I showed a series of expressive portraits by Picasso, Matisse, K. Wiehly, C. Close and others. I used them as a starting point to discuss the process of underpainting and how that technique helps to create strong value and contrast in a painting. The class assignment was for students to paint a self-portrait that made use of the expressive nature of color and mark making. We returned to look at these same works to examine how these artists dealt with those techniques as well. As a class, we spent a good deal of time reflecting on the different techniques of these artists. We did not approach any sort of formal analysis (description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment) for these paintings. This is not to say that I never do, it is simply to use this example (which is more typical of the ways I do use artists works in my classroom), as a model for how this unit will help us look at the artist in a broader context. Why did they create that work, what context does it fit in their life as an artist? How does knowing this help in my understanding of the work? Does it?

It is my hope that by talking about this, students will be able to connect and make relevant, the voice of their own work. Developing personal voice in artwork is important because it reveals a part of who you are and who you are becoming in the world. Sharing that is important because it can help clarify that for you and bring depth and meaning to how you and your work fits into a broader context.

## **Objectives**

The unit is designed to help students think about and question intent, voice, and meaning in art and in art making. First we will be critically looking at art from the perspective of the life of the artist. In what context was the work made? Are there specific parts within the work that help reveal an artist's identity? How do we then use this understanding to create our own work that communicates with a clearly defined sense of personal voice?

The following common core standards for visual art grade 9-12 support and frame this methodology. It is my intent that this approach will be used with any level studio or art history class. On artistic perception, students will research and analyze the work of an artist's as to the media selected and the effect of that selection on that artist's style. On creative expression, students will demonstrate in their own works of art a personal style and an advanced proficiency in communicating idea, theme, or emotion. And lastly on aesthetic valuing, students will identify the intentions of artists creating contemporary works of art and explore the implications of those intentions.

As stated earlier, with each assignment/unit that I teach, I use the art of others to help explain ideas, techniques, and principles. This unit is designed to help me make better use of these references by using them in a broader context. We will explore the ideologies (beginning by making inferences through observation and continue with mind-mapping activities, critical readings and analysis, and over time - develop an index of artist) of artists; how and if this is revealed in their work, what does that tell us about how we then define and create our own art. This approach directly addresses those common core standards for visual arts grade 9-12.

This unit of study will attempt to push beyond the limited discussion about technique, material, and compositions when analyzing a work of art for understanding. How do we look at works of art? What perspectives of our own do we bring when 'looking' and can we attempt to 'look' at works from perspectives other than our own? Is what you see truth or ones attempt to alter a truth? Can it be both of these things? How does considering perspective help us understand the art and ourselves? As part of the overall unit of study, these questions and others like it (regarding perspective) will be integrated into part of the critique process of existing works of art and of the work that students will be creating.

It is my hope that this unit also brings into question larger concepts for understanding the function of art in our world. Is it *l'art pour l'art*, or must art serve a more severe moral or didactic purpose? Why make art? Who is art for? Where do student projects – complete with a list of teacher driven criteria and expectations – fit in attempt to create ‘art’? And in fact this question is really the catalyst for this unit. These ideas are important to me as an art teacher because I have often questioned my own role in the art world. What am I really asking my students to do? There is this notion in my mind that my role is to continually ask students to reveal their personal voice – to figure out “what you want to say in your work”. But I wonder if what may be added to this idea or questioning is - ‘what is it that you want to know?’

Art is a form of communication. Whether it is teacher driven, or self guided, there needs to be some degree of motivation behind the idea if it is to stand a chance of resonating with an audience. In other words, students need to take the time to consider why they are creating a particular image and allow that to influence the direction of the work. Otherwise the work is in danger of becoming trite – a battle most art teachers I know fight on a regular basis. Works that lack intention, even work created with a high level of technical skill, fall short of success. It’s not to say that the motivation behind the work must be exceedingly complex. I don’t think there are restrictions to what dictates the success of the relationship between the art and the idea other than the motivation behind it.

In the classroom, it can be a delicate task to try and facilitate the development of unique ideas. The overcrowded classroom often leads to variations on a single theme. I always require students to develop any number of solutions to a problem, far beyond their initial conception. This can lead to a barrage of "what if" queries that I think gets to the core of what I am developing within this unit. In the end, making art is essentially about making decisions. Romare Bearden likened it to playing jazz saying, "you do one thing and then you improvise."<sup>2</sup> One decision leads to another and exponentially they grow into a chain of thoughts that reach out to the world in an attempt to make contact and communicate. And it all starts with just one idea.

## **Strategies**

Perspectives on seeing - making inferences.

How do we look at works of art? What perspectives of our own do we bring when looking and can we look at works from perspectives other than our own? Is what you see truth or an artist’s attempt to alter a truth? Can it be both of these things?

“Who are you?” This is a classic icebreaker game that relies on the student’s ability to think quickly and deeply about his or her own character and the character of his or her partner. I will use this activity at the beginning of each unit throughout the year. This activity can be repeated a number of times within one unit, and is most effective as a warm up leading into discussions or writing assignments to help develop critical thinking skills.

In groups of two, one student repeats the line “who are you” to their partner for a full minute. The partner answers with a one word or short phrase response. One minute for each person ends up feeling like a very long time; however, the length pushes us all to dig deeper for a response that exposes the many facets of ourselves.

The goal of the activity is to identify and recognize the various internal and external characteristics of the individuals in the class. Although students may know each other from their other classes, they tend to know very little about their lives outside of school. Following the first round of “Who are you”, partners reverse their original roles and either ask or answer the same question. As the rounds of questioning are completed, volunteers will then ‘present’ their new friends to the class. They will be asked to describe a few characteristics about this individual that we would not know just by looking at them.

The next part of the activity, and one that will link students to theme of identity can be based on any given work of art. Students will make inferences about the artists internal and external characteristics, based on the visual clues the artist provides. For example, Diane Arbus is a photographer known for her portraits of people generally on the outside of what is considered the ‘norm’ (giants, dwarfs, transvestites, and circus performers were some of her best known subjects). Her subjects were looked at as deviant or marginal because of those differences, yet her photographs situate us somewhere between complicity and awe. I will begin by using Arbus’s 1962 photograph, *Child with a toy hand grenade in Central Park, N.Y.C.* The game of “who are you” will continue as we ask that question to the artist subject (the child) and then to the artists herself. I will ask each student to respond to the question “who are you”, as though they were Diane Arbus and then again, as the child in the photograph.

Why are inferences important? When students make inferences in an attempt to grasp the artist meaning and understand "the whole picture" of an image, it demands that they look more closely at the details. For example, in the case of Arbus’s photograph, one might infer that the boy has some type of special needs based on his slightly awkward stance and expression. Making inferences demands that students look beyond the events the page and draw on their own life, experiences and knowledge. In doing this, they are learning to create well reasoned and well-supported arguments, an important part of critical thinking.

Extending the framework of the game, I will lead students in a discussion that will begin to reveal another layer of how we read into the ideologies of the artist. This particular photograph shows a young boy clenching a toy in his right hand and in his empty other hand, an open claw-like gesture. His facial expression reinforces the gesture of the empty hand, that of exasperation and impatience. One can almost hear him saying, 'take the picture already'! A look into the background of this particular photograph reveals that Arbus in fact took multiple photographs of this boy - from many angles and points of view. Most of those images reveal a much happier child, smiling and enjoying the summer afternoon. But Arbus chose to only share this particular shot. Why? In fact, these uncomfortable decisions (shots) are the impetus of her work. So does Diane Arbus reveal to us something about her own self through the choices she made as an artist? What conclusions can we make about that Diane Arbus based on those selections? What conclusions can we make about the function and of her work, and her philosophy of what art is and what it does?

Another point of interest for this activity is the notion of staring, a topic often brought up in portrait works. The subject is obviously applicable to both the artist and the viewer. Art allows us to ignore the social unacceptability of staring, and "offers an occasion to rethink the status quo...shift our focus by staring at who we think we are not"<sup>3</sup> Arbus's work calls us to stare – the surprising sight of these unorthodox people that are yet familiar somehow. The work invites us to wonder, to tell a story. At the end of this activity, students will read a short essay about this notion of staring and be asked to interpret the work of Arbus with this idea in mind. Doing this allows them to interpret works with a stronger sense of how they (the viewer) are intentionally, so much a part of the work they are viewing.

How does the fact that Arbus was a woman and making art in the 1960's possibly impact how we look at and think about her work? What does her choice of subject(s), style, and technique reveal about her as a workingwoman artist? The perception of working women in 1962 is very different than that of today. Does the period and her gender influence her choices in subject and style? Does it influence our perception of her voice as an artist?

Relying on specific and factual information that can be readily found such as the story behind the moment this image was taken, can help students consider the many layers of how we see and frame, the ideologies of artists. As the framework of this discussion expands, I will share a number of other works from the same artist. For example, *Identical Twins, Roselle, New Jersey, 1967*. This image reveals again, Arbus's signature style of the freakishness versus normality of people. Two young girls stand side by side, staring back at the viewer with an ever so slight difference in expression. Not much is known of the twins photo, but there are fewer than ten negatives of the roll, so it appears Arbus got the photo she wanted fairly quickly.

The ‘who are you’ game allows for all students to get involved in a rich discussion that easily encourages and validates their own ideas and perceptions about art. Once this is established, I think they will feel more connected and personally vested in what is being asked of them in terms of revealing their own voice in art making.

Mind mapping identity.

There are so many sources available as to how to read a work of art that I think we often deny ourselves the time for our internal dialogue to develop and inform us about the work. Take that ever-present paragraph next to so many works in most museums. What kind of information does the curator provide? How does it shape our understanding of the work in question? Textbooks also set up dialogue about works in most often in historic or technical context. Subsequently, students learning about critical thinking in art and art making, rely on these sources to give them the answer.

Thinking openly, and without and formal reference to a work of art can open us up to a myriad of ideas. Looking at a sculpture by Alberto Giacometti, one of my students asked me how he made it ‘feel so old’. *Femme Assise (Seated Woman)*, 1956 is piece in the collection at the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art and by “old” the student unknowingly meant Egyptian or Greek (if memory serves, they defined old as a work you would find in a history museum, not in a Modern art museum). That question lead to a series of other questions, which eventually lead us to the formal, classical canon of Ancient Egyptian and Greek cultures – as Giacometti himself acknowledges. Through observation and conversation alone, students presumed some very accurate and revealing ideologies about the artist and his work.

Alberto’s wife, Annette is the model, seated nude with her hands folded gently in her lap. Her knees and the lower portion of her body merge into the shaped seat that attaches to a low plinth. The pose and mood recall the sculptures of Egyptian scribes from the Old Kingdom, which Giacometti had studied while visiting the Paris Louvre and the vast holdings of the Vatican in Rome.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of mind mapping is to generate, visualize, and classify ideas, and as an aid to studying and organizing. It is a great tool to develop problem-solving strategies and help in decision-making. Mind mapping encourages you to think in terms of key words or symbols - linking one idea to the next. Imagine the image of *Femme Assise*, as the central image of a mind map; main themes radiate from her as branches that would list the of elements and principles of design. From that first set of branches (observed facts), ‘twigs’ sprout terms and associations that each individual student creates based on their own judgments, experiences and perceptions.

This strategy will help students make inferences about the ideology of a particular artist or work of art based on close observation and succinct thoughts. It will increase their observational skills because it forces them to rely on those alone, without any other formal references. This is important because it will help them to make those important critical choices in their own work.

Reading critical essays about Giacometti reveals both love and contempt for his work. At the time of his death in 1966, critics agreed that only the surrealist phase of his career was important, the later work was rejected as “formulaic shtick”.<sup>4</sup> In the 1980’s trends in expressionism, figurative works, and post-war European art, invigorated a new interest in his works. Time and trends will reveal different attitudes about art. It is therefore important to consider what we read, when we are reading it, and who has written it. Ironically, Giacometti himself said, “When you look at art made by other people, you see what you need to see in it.”<sup>5</sup> It is here where I will introduce the next strategy in this unit, critical reading of both artist and critics.

Creating an artist index.

In all my studio art classes, the sketchbook replaces the typical notebook. Units like the expressive painting unit, are sequentially organized and all reference materials, drawings, technique sheets, planning sketches and handouts are compiled in these books. What is new to this system, as a result of this seminar, is what I am calling an Artist Index.

As a way to frame and organize the works and artists that I introduce throughout the year, student’s will develop an ‘artist index’ section of their sketchbooks. The continual growth of this index will occur each time I introduce (formally, through a lecture, power point, video, etc.) and artist. If for example, I teach five units of study in one semester of an Art III class, and I try to find 5-10 artists per unit, students could have as many as fifty artists in this index. This is just a bit too many artists’ for student’s to study and examine very closely given the length of the semester! Having this many options does allow for a more diverse choice of study and can help with problem I mentioned earlier about class projects lacking individuality.

That said, the index will first look like a list of artists and may contain a sketch or two along with key points of conversation that were had about the work and the artist through the ‘who are you’, mind mapping, critical reading, as well as the general (or what I’ve traditionally focused on) techniques to media.

The index will be expanded within each unit, as students being to brainstorm solutions to the assignment presented within that unit. Of the 5-10 artists introduced for the unit, students will select one or two of these artists to explore more extensive and independent research. This research will focus on the how to frame the ideology of the artist by

looking at biographical information. The selection of the particular artist will be an independent choice of the students.

The expanded index will look like a biographical study of the artist by addressing a series of formal questions about the artist starting with some basic facts. Where they were born, lived, education, relationships, and achievements. Guided questions will have students to look at events in that artist life, influences (on them and on others), context of the time and place in which the live(d), and contributions or innovations to the art world.. Ultimately, students will be asked to generate a theory that address' the relationship between the life experiences of the artist, and the work they have created; addressing this connection between experiences/identity/ideology as it is revealed in the work.

## **Activities**

The following activities are listed as a way to support the strategies described in this unit. They are meant to help guide teachers in ways to further engage students in making deeper connections between art and identity.

### *Field trip to Bechtler Museum of Modern Art.*

Students will explore the museum and identify a work of art that they feel some connection to, a work that reflects something about themselves, or more specifically, how they perceive themselves and /or how they wish to be perceived by others. In describing the piece to the rest of the class, students will (Common Core goals for visual arts on visual literacy): use the language of visual arts to communicate effectively; understand the relationship between personal expression and design, and evaluate the use of the elements of art and principles of design in art.

Students will be given thirty minutes to explore the museum's collection on their own, select a work, and write a short 'dialogue' based on the 'who are you' game. Each student will present the 'dialogue' to the class which should reveal to us, their personal connection as well as how, and if, art exposes ideologies and identities of the artist and of self.

As a follow-up activity back at school, students will reflect on their museum presentation and then read about the work in the published Museum Guide. (note: guide provides limited reference to the historic context of the work, yet provides a perfect amount of relevant facts on the life of the artist). They will do a presentation where they attempt to synthesize the information (their personal interpretation and that of the facts provided). For clarity, reference the first paragraph in the objectives section of this unit.

This activity will end with a discussion on the question presented earlier in the unit: How does understanding context help us see the value in the conversations that art can entice us into and how does it draw on our innate need to explore and question our world and ourselves?

*“Where I’m from” A poem by George Ella Lyon. Collage self-portrait.*

How are poems different from works of visual art? Together we will read the poem, *Where I’m from*. A guided discussion will follow.

Who is speaking? What do they now know about the author of the poem, based on what they have read. Ask volunteers to contribute their ideas to a mind-map on the board – the center of the map being the poem itself, while ‘branches’ and ‘twigs’ that sprout off the center are based on elements such as rhythm, movement, texture, pattern, color (the connection between the format of writing and that of art making should be pretty obvious, wouldn’t hurt to point it out thought).

Other points of discussion regarding the poem, and more importantly the identity of the author include: How does the author incorporate place, setting, and mood into the poem? How does the author relate to the environment and other people around him or her? Is there any comparison or contrast between the author and the environment?

As a class we will look at some of the collage works by Romare Bearden and write a poem based on what we see in the works of this artist. (note: this is particularly relevant to this current school year as the city of Charlotte celebrates the 100 year birthday of this Charlotte born artist)

Following the format of this poem, student will write their own *Where I’m from* poem and create an accompanying self portrait using collage materials and techniques similar to that of the artist Romare Bearden.

*The role of symbols in defining personal identity.*

What role do symbols play in defining a person’s identity? Can symbols have multiple meanings? Social symbolism is created when a group of people employs a shared language of symbols. These symbols often identify the group by illustrating what the members have in common. Artists have investigated this phenomenon by creating their own symbols, or critiquing the symbols of others.

The ideas underlying a person's identity are numerous and complex. Here, students will investigate ideas within this large scope of identity. This lesson explores how artists create their own visual symbols to tell stories about themselves and their cultures. Everyone searches for and finds his or her own identity through a wide variety of experiences and expressions. Often a system of personal symbols can express that identity. Artists may construct a private symbolic language in order to talk about themselves or to grapple with the world's injustices and challenges. In this activity students will create drawings that center on their own personal symbolism.

Using works from the Bechtler collection, we will question ideas about identity in a group discussion. Some suggestions for discussion: What are the different ways that people identify themselves? What are some of the elements of your personal identity? What personal characteristics matter most to you, in yourself and in others? Why? Who determines a person's identity: the individual or others around the individual? Both? How does this work? Does identity stay constant throughout a person's life? If not, what makes it change?

Brainstorm: Generate a list of up to ten characteristics about yourself, and think of objects that represent each of these characteristics. Create: Draw a portrait of yourself that makes use of one or more of the symbols. The portrait can be a drawing, painting, or mixed media.

Reflection: How well does your symbolism function as a part of your artwork to say something about you? How did you have to present or alter the symbol to convey what you wanted to say?

## endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> <http://talentdevelop.com/articles/CTAAM.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://artid.com/members/teaching\\_kids\\_art/blog/post/2360-developing-ideas](http://artid.com/members/teaching_kids_art/blog/post/2360-developing-ideas)

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<sup>3</sup> Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. *Staring: How we Look*

<sup>3</sup> pg. 66 Bechtler collection book –

<sup>4</sup> [www.villagevoice.com/2001-10-30/art/figure-one/](http://www.villagevoice.com/2001-10-30/art/figure-one/)

<sup>5</sup> <http://philipchircop.com/post/7137026965/alberto-giacometti-by-yousuf-karsh-1965-a-karsh>

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Bos, Harriett P. *Bechtler Museum of Modern Art*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. John Boyer Michale Godfrey. Charlotte: Belk Printing Technologies, 2009. Students will find contextual information about works in the museums collection and will use this guide in a follow up activity to the museum trip.

Brommer, Gerald. *Discovering Art History* . 3 ed. Worcester: Davis Publications, 1977. Classroom textbook.

Chipp, Herschel B. *Theories of Modern Art; A Source Book by Artists and Critics*. Berkely. University of California Press 1968. This is an essential book of primary sources.

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Berman, L. E. A. (1995). *An artist destroys his work: Comments on creativity and destructiveness*. In B. Panter et. al (Eds.) *Creativity and madness*. Burbank, CA: AIMED Press, pp. 59-80.

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Gardner, Helen, Richard G. Tansey, and Fred S. Kleiner. *Gardner's art through the ages*. 10th ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1996. Classroom textbook.

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Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. *Staring: How we Look*. NY:Oxford UP 2009. High school students love to talk about ideas in psychology. A portion of this text (chapter one – Why do we Stare?) will be used in the introduction of the unit (see strategies – ‘who are you’) to help students think more deeply about the act(s) of staring and how artists engage this act.

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<http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/patc/twins/index.html>

## **Implementing District Standards**

### **Grades 9–12 Proficient**

#### Historical and Cultural Context

Identify similarities and differences in the purposes of art created in selected cultures. Identify and describe trends in the visual arts and discuss how the issues of time, place, and cultural influence are reflected in selected works of art.

#### Aesthetic Valuing

Articulate how personal beliefs, cultural traditions, and current social, economic, and political contexts influence the interpretation of the meaning or message in a work of art. Compare the ways in which the meaning of a specific work of art has been affected over time because of changes in interpretation and context.

Formulate and support a position regarding the aesthetic value of a specific work of art and change or defend that position after considering the views of others.

### **Grades 9–12 Advanced**

#### Artistic Perception

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Research two periods of painting, sculpture, film, or other media and discuss their similarities and differences, using the language of the visual arts.

#### Aesthetic Valuing

Describe the relationship involving the art maker (artist), the making (process), the artwork (product), and the viewer.

#### Connections, Relationships, and Applications

Compare and contrast works of art, probing beyond the obvious and identifying psychological content found in the symbols and images.

Authenticity in art is manifest in the different ways that a work of art, or an artistic performance, can be considered authentic. The initial distinction is between nominal authenticity and expressive authenticity. In the first sense, nominal authenticity is the correct identification of the author of a work of art; of how closely an actor or an actress interprets a role in a stageplay as written by the playwright; of how well a musician's performance of an artistic composition corresponds to the score. Protest art spotlights issues that need attention, using basic rules of design and carefully chosen words as well as eliciting both shock and empathy. Warfare took place on a global scale, and the weapons behind it were suddenly capable of immense destruction. It was the common citizens, not the elites, who had to wage these wars, so there was plenty against which to speak. Early layout and publication design mixes hand-drawn illustration full of emotion and meaning. (Photo credit: Everett Collection/Shutterstock.) The 1960s is perhaps when American protest culture and outspoken art came into its own, bringing the fight home from factories and faraway battlefields. Why Anonymous Artists Never Reveal Their Identity: Key insights from anonymous artists and leading street art figures. Despite rumors, Banksy's true identity has yet to be revealed. Is it possible the artist doesn't want to reveal his or her identity because it would distract viewers from fully absorbing the messages and beliefs behind the work? All of this depends on a particular, anonymous artist's standpoint and we may never know his or her motivations. However, one thing is for certain: anonymous art urges viewers to come up with their own opinions surrounding a piece without obsessing over whether or not a big name artist created it or not. Indeed, viewing anonymous art on the street is perhaps more mental