

We Are Who We Are

Building Self-Esteem through Visual Art

A curriculum for high school girls



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Overview

Albuquerque Public Schools have drastically cut funding for arts programs in the last ten years. I believe that art is an important tool that not only fosters creativity but also provides an outlet for students. This senior capstone focuses on the curriculum for an after-school workshop series for female high school students.

The goal is to use this project to encourage students to get involved at school and in the community and to provide them with more reasons to attend school and stay in school. I will be working at DATA, a charter school for grades nine through twelve. DATA not only allows students to meet all New Mexico standards and benchmarks, but also offers elective courses in media, arts and technology, and emphasize the exploration of a variety of career paths. My students will be 15 young women selected by the principal, Lisa Myhre, and the Counselor, Kristin Reeder. Both Ms. Myhre and Ms. Reeder chose students for the project because they were most familiar with the students who would benefit from and have the most interest in the project. A counselor, Ms. Reeder, will be present during many of the workshops for support with any project-based complications, and to help facilitate discussions with students.

Across a series of eight workshops, I will teach students how to create art and will give them a background in art history and developing technologies such as digital publishing. The curriculum will utilize art to discuss and teach modern issues such as body image, self-esteem, and identity. I hope to empower these students through art and learning and help show them their potential.

At the end of my semester-long program, I will hold an art show for community members to see the accomplishments of the students, and so the girls can experience others' appreciation for their work.

Proposal

Description

Art is a powerful tool that can be used to change individuals. The process of making art provides an outlet for students to think about, discuss, and understand common adolescent issues like self-esteem, body image, and relationships. With this in mind, I created a series of art-focused workshops for a group of high school girls, in order to discuss these – and other – issues.

Abstract

Albuquerque Public Schools have drastically cut funding for arts programs in the last ten years. The operating budget of the 2013 US Department of Education allocated less than \$25 million of a \$138 billion budget for Arts in Education, and focused primarily on funding STEM and literacy programs. Albuquerque Public Schools' total 2013-2014 budget is \$5.89 billion. Of that, \$5.3 million was appropriated to secondary fine arts programming, and more than \$3.5 million of the fine arts budget goes to funding personnel.

However, art programs should not be downgraded or underfunded, because they are a crucial part to a student's education, and can help students succeed beyond the classroom.

A study by the Arts Education Partnership revealed that students who participate in the arts have higher grade point averages, better standardized test scores, and are less likely to drop out of school. It is for these reasons – and my personal love for the arts – that I chose to develop a curriculum of after school workshops for students in my area. I use art, art history, and new technologies to inspire my students to make art and to learn more about themselves through their art practices.

Workshop 1: Journal-Making, Evaluation, and Introductions

In the early 20th century philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin wrote an article called “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”. In his article, Benjamin discussed the importance of the *work* of art and the importance of the process of making art itself. Benjamin wrote, “Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.” What Benjamin means is that a reproduction of a work of art, no matter how identical or perfect, is not the same as the original, because the physical act of making art and of creating the original idea or concept for the artwork is the most important part. It is not the finished product that is important, but the journey one takes to get there that is important. It is for this reason that I believe this project will be beneficial to the students I work with, as they discover the importance behind the *work* of art.

The first workshop of the series focuses on community building, introduces students to materials and creates long-term workshop goals. The students will participate in team building activities and icebreaker games to build a sense of community and to become familiar with each other and myself, their leader. These activities will include a game called “two truths and a lie,” a simple name game, and the “human knot,” where the students have to work to “untie” themselves from each other. This facilitates a certain level of comfort between the students, and will hopefully teach them to begin respecting and trusting one another.

This preliminary workshop begins to test Benjamin’s theory through the introduction of journaling. After the team building games, students will be shown a few journals I have created. Then, they will be given the materials to create their own journals. These journals will be the students’ responsibilities for all eight workshops. Each workshop will have some sort of writing component, and each week students will be asked to sketch ideas in their journals.

According to Shannon Dipple (M.Ed. Curriculum and Instruction), journaling encourages students to work through issues while building their confidence and self esteem. Hopefully, this will be a way for students to open up about their work and think

about our workshops during the week. Journaling is beneficial to students, because they are able to write about and develop their thoughts while they create art. Putting less pressure on the finished product, and more emphasis on the process, allows students to think about the *why* of art making instead of the *how*. Furthermore, journaling is a very beneficial activity in a lot of ways. The students will be encouraged to draw and write in their journals weekly (hopefully even daily), which should give them time to discuss and further develop their thoughts on *why* they are making art.

After the journal-making session, the first workshop will conclude with an evaluation of the students. It is important to evaluate the students on the first day of class, so the same evaluation can be conducted the last day to see if progress was made. This evaluation, found in the Appendix, asks a series of simple questions about the students' current relationship with art and a few questions about their self-esteem.

Curriculum for Workshop 1

Objectives

- Evaluate the students' relationship with art, school, and family
 - Become familiar with peers and teacher
 - Explore the art of bookmaking
 - Create a handmade journal
1. Team building/ice breaker activities: Play "two truths and a lie;" Play the human knot game or a name game to get the girls to recognize and remember each other.
 2. Give the students a short questionnaire to evaluate their opinions of art and how it currently affects them. Also, include questions about how they feel about themselves, etc.
 3. Show the students how to make an actual book
 - a. Discuss signatures, folding, and sewing methods
 - b. <http://curiouslycrafty.wordpress.com/tutorials/>
 - c. <http://www.designmom.com/2013/07/diy-hand-sewn-book-dos-a-dos-technique/>
 - d. <http://www.rookno17.com/2011/12/last-minute-handmade-gift-tutorial-make.html>
 - e. <http://www.lilblueboo.com/2009/07/making-composition-book-art-journal.html>
 4. Provide students with the materials to create books, and let them do so

- a. Making a book can take awhile, and students will be able to take their materials home to finalize their project
 - b. Materials
 - i. For each book:
 1. 30 pieces of paper
 2. Large strip of fabric or other material (?) for cover (18X11 inches)
 3. Sewing needle
 4. Awl
 5. Thread
 6. Ruler
 7. Clothespins (2)
5. Introduce Assignment 1
- a. Students will begin writing and drawing in their journals. The first assignment is to come to the next class with five pages of their journal filled up with writing or drawing (and the journal completed if it was not completed in class)

Workshop 2: Self Portraits for Self-Esteem

The self-portraiture workshop will cover art vocabulary, which we will apply to a selection of self-portraits taken by female photographers. The art vocabulary I will employ comes from Gestalt's principles of visual perception: proximity, similarity, common fate, good continuation, closure, and symmetry and area. These six categories are combined to form a composition. A list of vocabulary words (found in Workshop 2's curriculum page below) will be used to discuss photographs taken by female photographers.

The photographers we will analyze – ranging from Cindy Sherman to Berenice Abbott – will be the inspiration for the first project on self-portraits. When discussing the photographs, the girls will be expected to use the art vocabulary we discussed, and will learn how to evaluate photographs critically.

The girls will be given iPod touch devices to take self-portraits with over the next week. They will come to the next class with images, which will be critiqued by their peers using art vocabulary and constructive criticism. Having the students create self-portraits is important, because in the next workshop they will be discussing standards of beauty throughout history as well as modern standards of beauty. I want students to think about the ways they portray themselves in their self-portraits, and how it may represent how they feel about themselves internally. Because we will be discussing standards of beauty in workshop 3, I want students to think about how they see

themselves.

According to psychologist W.P. Jackson, “art can enable each person to see qualities of experience that remain hidden among ordinary affairs and the study of art can encourage a modification of these customary habits of perception” (Jackson 1991). Also, a study conducted by O'Thearling and Bickley-Green concludes, “the power of the individual to create positive change in his or her environment can be taught through art classes” (O'Thearling, S., &



Bickley-Green, C. 1996). The study these psychologists created for at-risk youth showed that adolescents who can visualize their future – primarily through artwork – are more aware of their potential and of their abilities to change their future or their environment. Although the students I will be working with are not necessarily categorized as “at-risk,” art projects will hopefully benefit them in a similar way as it did the students in this study. By having students look at self-portraits by famous artists and then eventually take their own self-portraits, my intention is to give them the ability to value themselves, their work, and help them appreciate the process of their individual creation.

In the study by O’Theraling and Bickley-Green, students attended a series of after-school art workshops, much like my own. According to the study, “if a child creates an object he considers valuable, he often transfers that value to himself.” Furthermore, the study states that, “the power to imagine and then to make one’s own,” is the second area from which a student gains self-esteem and value through art. O’Theraling and Bickley-Green highlight the idea that creating art can allow a student to value himself and that the process of creating something unique to his individual self can feed his self-esteem.

This workshop also focuses on photoshop and the media’s portrayal of beauty standards. Comedienne Tina Fey’s opinion on standards of beauty sums up today’s ideals pretty well: “Now every girl is expected to have Caucasian blue eyes, full Spanish lips, a classic button nose, hairless Asian skin with a California tan, a Jamaican dance hall ass, long Swedish legs, small Japanese feet, the abs of a lesbian gym owner, the hips of a nine-year-old boy, the arms of Michelle Obama, and doll tits.” If Fey shows anything, it’s the unrealistic standards that society puts on women, and particularly on models. The women we see in magazines are not typically “average” women, and this leads to lowered self-esteem every time we look at these magazines (Dohnt, H. and Tiggemann, M.,2006). A study by University of California Davis’s Richard Robins and King’s College’s Kari Trzesniewski recorded the mean levels of self-esteem for men and women across the life span. As the chart shows, after the age of about nine, women have a much lower average level of self-esteem than men until they reach about eighty years old (then the population has uniformly low self-esteem). Self-esteem drops

drastically in women from age nine to eighteen, and then hovers at a low point for a very long time.

Richard W. Robins and Kali H. Trzesniewski

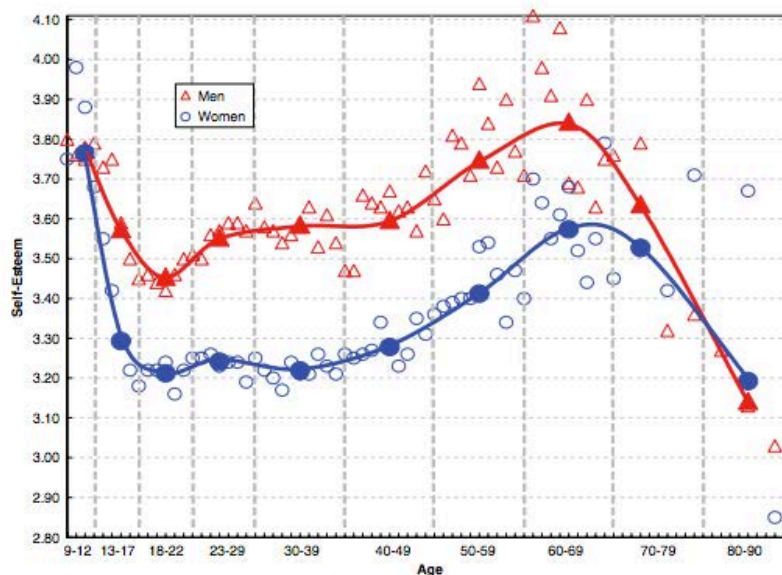


Fig. 1. Mean level of self-esteem for males and females across the lifespan. Also plotted are year-by-year means, separately for males (open triangles) and females (open circles). From "Global Self-Esteem Across the Lifespan," by R. W. Robins, K. H. Trzesniewski, J. L. Tracy, S. D. Gosling, and J. Potter, 2002, *Psychology and Aging*, 17, p. 428. Copyright 2002 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

Robin and Trzesniewski say that "Researchers have attributed the adolescent decline to body image and other problems associated with puberty, the emerging capacity to think abstractly about one's self and one's future and therefore to acknowledge missed opportunities and failed expectations, and the transition from grade school to the more academically challenging and socially complex context of junior high school."

It is not my intention to protect or shelter these students from issues of body image or worries about the future. Instead, it is my goal to show these girls their potential and their abilities, so they can understand their personal abilities to combat body image problems and think about their futures. Creating self-portraits should be a gateway into this discussion and should help the girls think about themselves in a more positive way. At the end of the workshop, I will ask students to write a journal entry about the media's portrayal of beauty and how it makes them feel. As they create their

self-portraits over the week, I will ask the students to write brief artist statements about their portraits, discussing the *why* of their work. This should help the students value their own work and hopefully value themselves more in the process.

Curriculum for Workshop 2

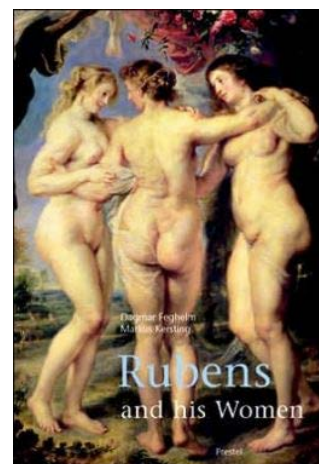
Objectives

- Discover a variety of female artists
 - Judge the quality of a photograph based on Gestalt criteria
 - Examine and discuss photographs using artistic vocabulary
 - Create a self portrait using the terms and ideas discussed in class
 - Evaluate the students' current knowledge of art and how they view themselves
1. Introduce the students to female artists:
 - Annie Leibovitz
 - <http://www.vanityfair.com/contributors/annie-leibovitz>
 - Berenice Abbott
 - <http://www.atgetphotography.com/The-Photographers/Berenice-Abbott.html>
 - Dorothea Lange
 - <http://www.americansuburbx.com/series-2/d/dorothea-lange-portraits-1938-1940>
 - Margaret Bourke-White
 - <http://life.time.com/margaret-bourke-white/>
 - Diane Arbus
 - <http://diane-arbus-photography.com/>
 - Cindy Sherman
 - <http://www.cindysherman.com/>
 - Nan Goldin
 - <http://fraenkelgallery.com/exhibitions/nine-self-portraits>
 - <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/goldin-nan-one-month-after-being-battered-p78045>
 - Rineke Dijkstra - photographs teens specifically
 - <http://www.americanphotomag.com/photo-gallery/2012/07/wall-rineke-dijkstra-guggenheim>
 2. Use these photographs to discuss the following terms:
 - Tone
 - Mood
 - Rule of thirds
 - Golden Ratio
 - Composition
 - Texture

- Pattern
 - Repetition
 - Symmetry
 - Asymmetry
 - Contrast
 - Positive Space
 - Negative Space
 - Balance
 - Emphasis
 - Value
 - Form
 - Lighting
 - Focus
 - Color
3. This week (or possibly next week if there is no time), play “art word BINGO” to see if the girls remember what the words are and what they mean/if they can identify it in a photo.
 4. Give the students a variety of resources for portrait exhibitions that they can research on their own for inspiration:
 - <http://www.npg.si.edu/exhibit/exhfacevalue.html>
 - <http://lenscratch.com/2014/03/2014-self-portraitsselfie-exhibition-2/>
 5. Introduce project 2: Self-Portraits. Give each girl a cheap digital camera and tell her to come back to the next class with 5 self-portraits they really like, and three of their art words they tried to achieve in each picture.
 1. Each student should write a short “artist statement” about these portraits. Artist statements typically include the why and how aspects of an artists’ process. How did they photograph themselves and why did they do so? Also, what does this photograph attempt to achieve?
 1. **All writing should be in the journals

Workshop 3: Standards of Beauty Across Cultures and History

Workshop 3 continues the discussion of self-esteem and standards of beauty. Because the students will have created self-portraits by themselves at this point, they will be able to analyze and discuss these in depth. The goal with the self-portrait critique is not to criticize the students' work, but to get them to discuss the *why* of their artwork. Why did they portray themselves in this way? Why did they choose this location? How does this photograph make them (and their audience) feel? After the critique, we will discuss beauty standards across history. It is well known that beauty standards have changed, even in the last 100 years. Peter Paul Rubens, for example, was famous for the way he painted "full-figured" women. *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls* discusses how 19th century American women wore corsets to define their waists, and showed their "overly-sexualized" ankles. A statue of Nefertiti



Nefertiti statue, Neues Museum, Berlin

who lived from about 1330-1370 BC, is said to be the most beautiful representation of a woman by both ancient Egyptian and modern standards. During the 1920s, the androgynous flapper girl style became popular, and after the great depression, figures like Marylyn Monroe's became popular. Since the 50s, figural beauty has gone through huge swings, with waifish, extremely thin women being considered the ideal

in the 60s, to bodies like Christie Brinkley's in the 80s and 90s. Recently, ultra-thin models

have had a tendency to grace magazine covers and runways the most, and retouched photographs of models are the norm. Almost every woman and man on a magazine cover today has been retouched and edited to look perfect or ideal. In the past two years, there have been uproars (by models and non-models alike) about retouching photographs. Many female celebrities like Keira Knightley, Jennifer Lawrence, and Kate

Winslet have criticized magazines, brands, and even film producers for photoshopping their images into unrealistic standards.

In workshop 3, I will show the students some examples of images before and after photoshop, and standards of beauty across history to show how varying and different ideals are. Also, I will show the girls an article where a woman sent her image to artists in different countries and asked them to photoshop it to their ideal beauty standards. It is amazing how different the images came back, demonstrating how people of different cultures find things beautiful. No two people have the same ideals, which means no woman or man should feel the need to fit the “ideal” of beauty. Hopefully, workshop 3 will be a good way to introduce the students to the media’s influence on body image and self-esteem, and will be a way to let them find the beauty in their own self-portraits.

This week, students will be asked to take a final self-portrait, and to journal about why they created that particular self-portrait.



United States

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Images from Esther
Honig's project:
Before & After



Keira Knightley's altered appearance in the *King Arthur* movie poster.

Workshop 3 Curriculum

Objectives

- Analyze and critique artistic images
 - Apply artistic vocabulary to photographs
 - Utilize art history to analyze differences in beauty ideals through time
 - Examine the topics of body image and self-esteem in relation to magazines, photoshop, and modern media
 - Create a final self-portrait
1. Have each girl pick three self-portraits they think are the best. Download these images onto my laptop and discuss them as a group. Use the vocabulary words from last week to analyze the images, and talk about “artistic intent.” Make sure the girls understand the difference between constructive criticism and unhelpful comments.
 2. After the critique, look at portraits from a variety of time periods. Focus on the female body, the female portrait, and the self portrait (be it male or female). The following artists/images are a good start:
 1. <http://news.discovery.com/history/art-history/history-beauty-120412.htm>
 2. Look at these images and discuss different ideals of beauty through time
 3. Photoshop: <http://viralscape.com/celebrities-before-after-photoshop/>
 1. <http://www.buzzfeed.com/elliewoodward/the-most-wtf-celebrity-photoshop-fails-of-all-time#1h30b50>
 3. Across Cultures: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/06/27/woman-photoshop-makeover_n_5535921.html
 4. Give instructions for assignment 3:

1. Create a final self-portrait. It can be a photograph or any other piece of work. Possibly find a way to give the girls access to photoshop or other materials they may ask for.
 1. Again, students should write a short “artist statement” about these portraits. Artist statements typically include the why and how aspects of an artists’ process. How did they photograph themselves and why did they do so? Also, what does this photograph attempt to achieve?

Workshop 4: Social Media for Arts Promotion

The focus of this workshop is to discuss audience, and the benefits and complications of using social media to display art. First, I will discuss the topic of audience with the students, to explain to them the importance of thinking about an audience when creating art. If a project is simply for personal benefits and enjoyment, a student should make whatever they want personally. However, if the artwork is for a class, or is going up in a public space, the artist needs to think about their audience. In terms of a classroom setting, the audience is usually a teacher and/or peers. A teacher will assign a grade based on an already-set rubric, so the most important thing is to follow the teacher's guidelines for the assignment. This rubric and the teacher is therefore the audience.

If the audience is going to be the general public in an exhibition setting, the artist needs to think about what a person going to an art museum might be interested in. A lot of times, this leaves the artist pretty free to create whatever they want, unless the museum they are working for wants something specific.

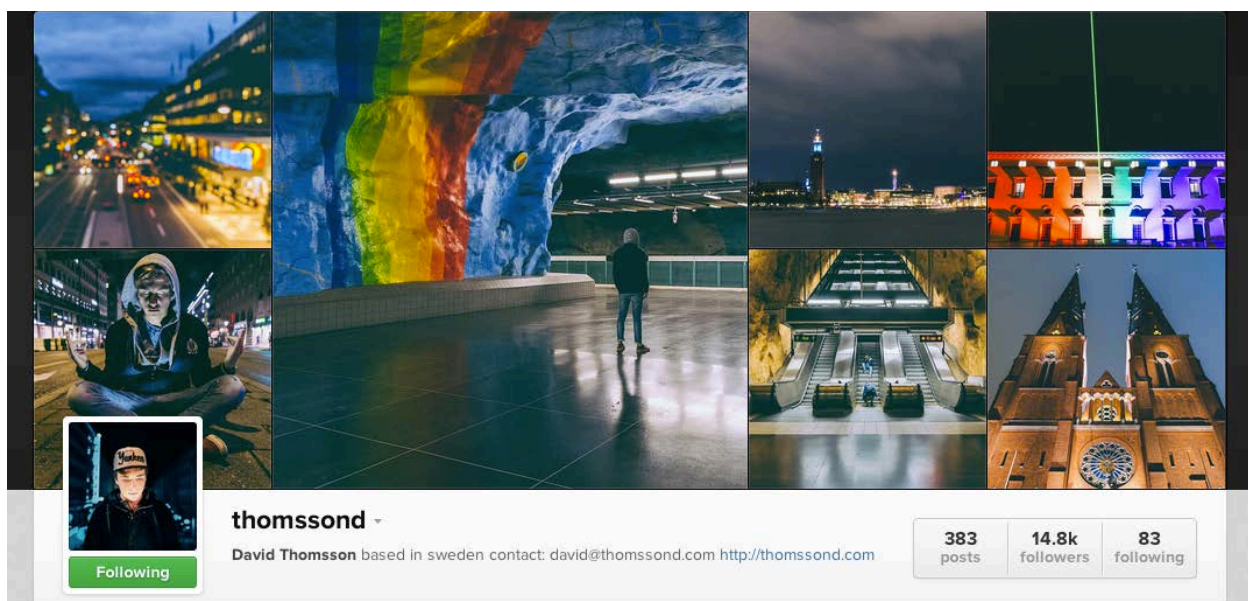
It is important to consider audiences both in real life and on the Internet. Although it may not seem like it, everything on the Internet is permanent, and this can cause some serious problems if people aren't careful. The WayBack Machine, a free Internet Archive (and a non-profit organization), that allows users to access more than 435 billion web pages over time. This includes deleted web pages, photos from Facebook, and even old Myspace pages. It is therefore important to utilize online resources with caution.

That being said, let's discuss the amazing tool that is the Internet. Thanks to iPhone applications like Instagram, anyone can post their photography on an open forum for others to see. There are also a lot of very talented and inspirational artists on Instagram, and it is a phenomenal resource for aspiring photographers. Another great iPhone app forum is Vine, an app that allows users to upload 7-second videos. These videos range from hilarious to poetic, and sometimes take a lot of time and effort. The most interesting thing about Vine and Instagram is that people can make a living using these apps. Talented photographers can get enough followers that they attract high-

paying sponsors if the photographers agree to highlight their product on their Instagram. Even people's dogs have become famous on Instagram, and many personal trainers use the app to gain a following of online clients or to get people interested in hiring them as a trainer.

The Internet can be an amazing and lucrative tool for artists, but there are still restrictions, and they must be understood to attain the full benefits of the tool. Instagram, for example, has simple rules for its users: 1. Post your own photos and videos. 2. Keep your clothes on. 3. Be respectful. 4. Don't spam. 5. HAVE FUN! (Olszanowski 2014). Of course, many artists think that rule number 2 hampers their artistic freedoms. Plus, it is more than understood that nudity has been a part of art for a very long time. However, Instagram strictly forbids it on their app; because Instagram is technically the Instagram users' audience, to get the most from the app, they must abide by those rules and avoid posting nude photos, no matter how artistically phenomenal they may be. It is important to go over these ideas with the students, to show them how success (at least success in terms of popularity and commercial benefits) in an online forum can be obtained only if one is aware of one's audience and caters to them.

The project for the students this week will be to create a few pieces of media on Vine and/or Instagram to show the class. They should also explore the two apps a bit and write down a few of their favorite artists in their journals.



The Instagram page of David Thomsson, a 15 year old artist with almost 15,000 followers.



Portraits by Instagram user *Dantom*.



Portraits by Instagram use *ioegreer*.

Jethro Ames is an amazing Vine creator, art director, and Tribeca Film Fest Winner whose Vine account is full of Vines he created that are sponsored by businesses such as New Zealand's Rugby team and Bank of America.

Another good Vine account belongs to Ian Padgham, who is a visual artist and speeds up his drawing process using Vine.

Workshop 4 Curriculum

Objectives

- Analyze and critique artistic images
 - Discuss audience
 - In general
 - In relation to the web
 - Examine and evaluate forms of media and how artists can use them
 - Evaluate the pros and cons of digital media
 - Create media for an online forum
1. Critique final self-portraits. Discuss these portraits and what each artist tried to accomplish in the photograph (whether with photoshop or not). Reiterate the importance of constructive criticism.
 2. Have the students write a list of audience members who have seen their artwork. This will vary depending on whether the students have Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc.
 3. Compare these lists, and begin discussing the public nature of online media
 4. Show the students artistic Instagram and Vine accounts, and show them the “good” side of digital media
 5. Show the students things like “Facebook Fails,” where people post awful images or things on the internet and get in trouble or shamed for it
 - a. Discuss the legal rights you have when it comes to posting things on these forums (ex: Facebook can give your info/photos/videos/conversations to the police and to the NSA)
 - b. Discuss technology and how it can help and hinder in different areas of life (how it can help art)
 6. Now have the students get into groups and make Vines (Chris Holden has a box of iPod Touches, which will allow the students to make video)
 7. Assignment 4:
 - a. Use the iPod Touch to create four pieces of media we can put on a digital (online) forum at the next class. If the students want to upload their media to an online forum during the week they can (if they already have accounts)
 - b. Write an artist statement for these works.

Workshop 5: Identity, Family, and Culture

In workshop 5, the girls will create Carnival masks to learn about folk art from around the world and to discuss identity, culture, and family traditions. The importance of this workshop is to get the students talking and thinking about their heritage. Each student will be responsible for decorating one mask that represents her family or cultural origins. Inspiration will be taken from Frutos Arceos' *Dia de Los Muertos*, Gary Wyatt's *Mythic Beings: Spirit Art of the Northwest Coast*, or *Carnival Masks of Venice: A Photographic Essay*. I will have an already-decorated mask to show the students; half will be decorated with Celtic knots and symbols from my Irish heritage, and the other half will be decorated with design from the paper cutout traditions of Polish folk art. This

will be a fun project, but will still be important to foster discussion about family.

According to a study by Pope, McHale, and Craighead (1988), family acceptance and approval is a key factor of self-evaluation and acceptance. Those who connect with and relate to their own culture and families are more likely to have a sense of fulfillment, and will typically attain a higher level of success than their peers. Students will be required to journal about this topic, and will be encouraged to speak with their family about their culture, or possibly discuss things like family traditions. In the event that a student does not identify with any specific culture or family traditions, I will ask her to research a culture she is interested in, and create a

mask that reflects her findings on that culture. In the end, we will all share with each other the way the masks

represent our families and ourselves, regardless of whether the mask is decorated to fit our actual culture. The students will be asked to write a journal entry about their families. It can range from discussing their cultural traditions, or a problem they have



Polish folk art paper cutout design

with their parents; the goal for this assignment is to encourage students to think about their personal identities in terms of family and culture. The take-home assignment for this week is to have students finish their masks at home if they didn't finish them at school. I will encourage students to go home and ask their parents about cultural traditions or about their grandparents/ancestors/etc.

Workshop 5 Curriculum

Objectives

- Analyze and critique digital media
 - Analyze digital media in terms of audience, forum, and medium
 - Discuss ideas of family and identity
 - Evaluate standards of beauty across cultures
1. Critique the projects the students created over the last week.
 2. Discuss the projects in terms of audience, forum, and medium.
 - In other words, discuss who the art was intended for, whether this audience was reached or not, and why the media was posted on the forum it was posted on. Also discuss medium (photography vs. videography)
 3. Discuss family and identity
 - Include discussions of culture, and beauty across cultures
 - Use Esther Honig's project as an example:
 - <http://www.estherhonig.com/#!before--after-/cvkn>
 4. Begin masks for Carnival
 - Create masks (via face mold) and start discussing identity.
 - Have the students start decorating the masks to reflect this identity, and have the masks ready by Workshop 5. Use these masks to discuss family and culture.
 - Have each student research her cultural background and family and create a mask that portrays that culture. Example: Students of Hispanic origin may find interest in Dia de Los Muertos masks, or the traditional Carnival of Venice.
 - I will create an example myself, based on traditional Polish decoration (I'll design the mask with traditional blue and white pottery designs) and present it to the students before they make their masks. I'll talk about traditions of my family and heritage.
 5. Assignment 5:
 - Have masks finalized and be prepared to discuss how they reflect your family and culture. Encourage students to also connect this artwork to ideas of cultural beauty.
 - Write an artist statement for these works.

Workshop 6: Working from Inspiration

Workshop six is focused on inspiration. Of course, it is difficult to define inspiration or really fully grasp it until you experience it for yourself. I will begin the class by showing a series of images I have been inspired with, alongside the works of art I created after seeing those images. Annie Leibovitz's "Fairytale" work is a good example of very direct inspiration. A series of photographs my friend created in high school shows inspiration from music, which will be a different angle to show. After viewing some of the inspiration photographs, the students will have the chance to discuss what inspires them.

Their assignment will be to take photographs rooted in inspiration, and to write about this inspiration in their journals. Although this is a simple assignment, it is important to discuss inspiration. As an art historian, I am often pressed for the *why* of an image. Why did the artist paint this in this manner, i.e. what *inspired* the artist? Often, with famous works, there is a political agenda behind the work. Jacques Louis-David is a great example of someone who created art as propaganda – he even created political propaganda during multiple regimes. Other artists are inspired by literature, like Alex Stoddard's *Return from Rabbit Holes*. Even Annie Leibovitz's very original series of "Fairytale" photographs are inspired by the fairytales they portray. The work of an artist must start somewhere, so the topic of inspiration is an important one to discuss with my students.



Jacques Louis-David, *The Coronation of Napoleon*



Alex Stoddard – *Return from Rabbit Holes*



Annie Leibovitz: *Alice in Wonderland* for *Vogue*



Claire Stasiewicz: Alice in Wonderland, 2011



Annie Leibovitz: Cinderella for *Vogue*



Claire Stasiewicz: 2010 – AP photography assignment, Cinderella



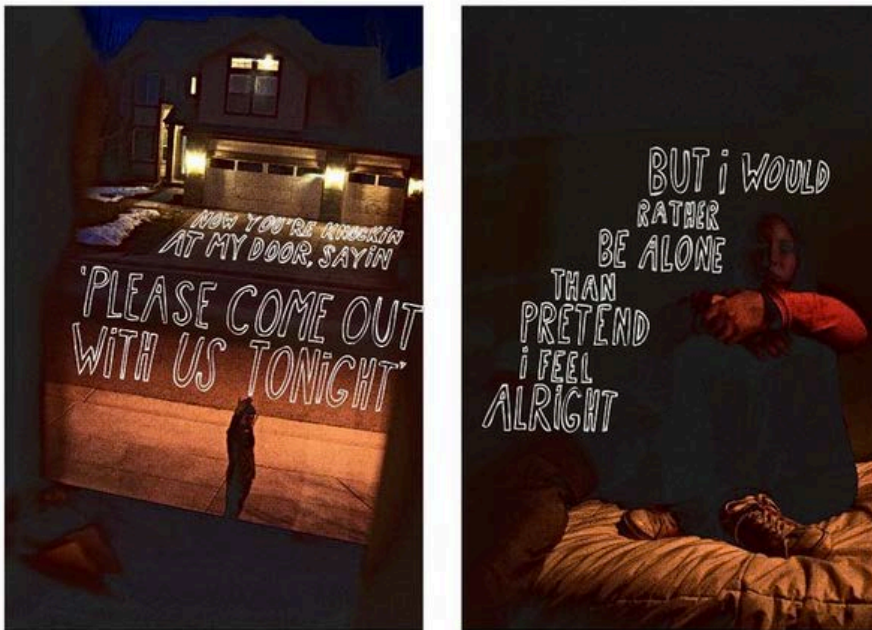
Annie Leibovitz: Hansel and Gretel for *Vogue*



Claire Stasiewicz: Hansel and Gretel, 2011



Hannah Jacobson – part of Arcade Fire project



Hannah Jacobson – part of Arcade Fire project

Workshop 6 Curriculum

Objectives

- Evaluate and critique masks
 - Demonstrate the relationship between family, identity and artwork
 - Define inspiration
 - Research artists for inspiration
 - Use inspiration to create a new work of art
1. Begin class with a short critique of the masks the students produced.
 - a. Touch on the connections the students made to their families and personal identities
 - b. Discuss how the artwork depicts these identities
 2. Show the girls a number of artists who inspire me, and show them artwork I've created in response to the inspiration of these artists
 - a. Annie Leibovitz: Fairytale Series
 - b. Alex Stoddard
 3. Discuss other types of inspiration: music, media, film, people, architecture, etc.
 - a. Make a list of types of inspiration
 - b. Have each student make their own list of ten things they are inspired by
 4. Introduce assignment 6:
 - a. Write down ten things you see this week that inspire you to make art.

- b. Come to next week's workshop with two artworks that reflect those inspirations (this can be a drawing, photograph, collage, painting... anything!).
- c. Finally, do research on three artists that inspire you. Write about what you find on the artists/what interests you about them. These can be architects, sculptors, painters, writers, musicians, family, friends... anyone.

ALSO, ensure all work previous works have been turned in and photographed by Claire, so they can be put into the digital publication during the next workshop.

Workshop 7: Digital Portfolio

Workshop 7 will involve creating the final digital publication of the students' works from the previous workshops. It is a good way to combine their work and their efforts in one space, and the digital medium is much more affordable than a print catalog, can be sent to friends and family, and is an important tool for the digital age.

This project will be the students' first step for self-reflection. They will be required to choose works they feel best represent the entire eight-week project, and works they want others to see. The digital portfolio can include work from any of the workshops and take home assignments, but students will be encouraged to include sketches and journal entries from their writing. Major pieces of artwork will be given artist statements, and the students will help each other write and edit these statements. Because the students will not be able to include every piece of their artwork in the portfolio, they will have to decide – as a team and as individuals – which works are most important and fit their audience and the goals of the project.

Although I will go into some detail in this workshop about how to actually create a digital publication (through iBooks since we will have iPads to utilize), I will have the students discuss the design principles of their publication. They will discuss the overall theme and title of their publication, the publication's design style including fonts, color, borders, etc. and they will discuss the purpose and audience of the publication.

Furthermore, the students will have to discuss and choose the order of images in the publication. They can have each project grouped together, or have each student's work in order. This will challenge the students to evaluate themselves and each other, and to think about how their work fits together.

Workshop 7 Curriculum

Objectives

- Evaluate and critique “inspiration” pieces
- Research and analyze digital publications
- Create a digital publication
 - Define theme, style, purpose, and audience of the publication

1. Begin class with a quick critique of the inspiration pieces
2. Show the girls examples of digital publication as well as “hard copy” publications
 - a. <http://inspirationhut.net/inspiration/51-beautiful-and-interactive-examples-of-digital-magazine-design/>
3. Begin developing a theme for the publication
 - a. Title
 - b. Style
 - c. Purpose
 - d. Audience
 1. Who will we publish this for?
 - e. Order: will we go by student or by project? Will each student need to write about her individual works, or just a short blurb about herself?
 1. ***Earlier in the semester, as projects are being completed, I will photograph them or scan them, so compiling the finished works will not be done last minute.
4. Digital publication creation
 - a. Do a brief tutorial with InDesign
 - b. Show students how to format the images of their work for digital publishing, and how to insert these images into pages of the InDesign document.
 - c. Include text from the students’ journals. Let the students choose a few entries about specific art pieces they have created.
5. If time, each girl can work on scanning her own journal into a digital medium for practice with the format.
 - a. They will probably need to take turns for this, and the practicability of the assignment depends on whether a scanner is available to us!
6. Discuss the logistics of the local opening
 - a. Help setting up
 - b. How people will be getting there
 - c. Concerns/Questions, etc.

Workshop 8: Final Reflections and Gallery Show

The final workshop will be held just after the students have their gallery show. The gallery show will be held in the UNM Honors College Forum. The gallery show is an important step, because showing their artwork will give the students a sense of pride and will allow their family, friends, and teachers the opportunity to give them credit for all of their hard work. Hopefully, the opportunity to be on a college campus will also be beneficial to the students. According to both Ms. Myhre (principal) and Ms. Reeder (counselor), although DATA is a five minute drive from UNM, the majority of their students never step foot on campus unless they eventually apply to the university. The group of students might also be able to visit the UNM art museum (either directly before their own gallery show, or possibly a week or two before), which is directly across from the Honors College building and is free. If the students can see this space before they have their own exhibition, they will hopefully appreciate their own work more, since their work will be presented in a similar manner.

After the gallery show, workshop 8 will be focused on evaluating the previous workshops and on evaluating the students' progress. The pretest given during workshop 1 will be handed out during workshop 8, and the students will re-evaluate their knowledge. Students will also be given a teacher evaluation form, to critique my performance as an educator. The students will write a reflection of their experience overall, including their favorite and least favorite workshops, and how they benefited (or not) from the workshops.

Workshop 8 Curriculum

Objectives

- Evaluate students' current relationship with art, school, and family
 - Reflect on the programs' effectiveness
 - Showcase the students' work for family, friends, and the public
1. Give the students the short questionnaire from class one to evaluate their opinions of art and how it currently affects them.

2. Assign a short reflection paper/journal session for students to reflect on the experience, including the pros and cons, their favorite parts and least favorite parts.
 - a. Include a “teacher-evaluation” session
3. Open up students’ artwork to the public at the UNM Honors College

Appendix A: Curriculum Materials

Evaluation Form:

1. In your opinion, what is art?
 - A. Art is an expression of the artist's self.
 - B. Art is determined by the viewer.
 - C. Art is determined by society.
 - D. Art is particular content or object (it is a thing).
 - E. Not known
 - F. Other: _____
2. How often do you make art?
 - A. Every day
 - B. At least three times a week
 - C. Once a week
 - D. Once a month
 - E. Less than once a month
3. Do you have an Instagram or Vine account?
 - A. Yes – Instagram
 - B. Yes – Vine
 - C. Yes – Both
 - D. No
4. Do you have a Facebook account?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
5. Do you enjoy going to school?
 - A. Always
 - B. Usually
 - C. Occasionally
 - D. Never
6. What is your favorite activity outside of school?

7. Where do you like to spend your free time?

8. Why do you make art?

9. How does creating art make you feel?

Funding and Materials:

From the beginning of this project, I was aware that there would be financial need for art supplies. At first, I was hoping to find funding to facilitate the purchase of supplies including digital cameras. However, Christopher Holden, an Honors Professor, has 15 iPod touch devices that have good film and photography capabilities. Professor Holden also has a few iPad Mini devices, which I will check out for Workshop 7, digital portfolio. My students will share the iPads while I go through our lesson for the day.

Because DATA is a school focused on digital arts and technology, they have facilities my students and I can use. They have computer labs that have photoshop, and they have projection capabilities so I can show powerpoints and videos to my students easily. The workshops will be held on Wednesday afternoons, after the students get out of school, and I have been guaranteed plenty of space for our activities.

Ms. Mhyre and Ms. Reeder have both indicated that the school will attempt to help me with art supplies in whatever way they can (particularly things like pencils, pens, and paints). The three of us decided early on that students would not be required to pay tuition for the program, so any other resources will need to be provided by myself, or by donations.

Because I have yet to receive funding for my project, I have started a GoFundMe account. Hopefully, I will raise money for the project. The following is a break down of materials required for each students for each project:

Journal project:

- One piece Kraft paper (cover)
- One recycled book (Sparknotes, donated by UNM Honors College's *Scribendi*)

- An assortment of lined paper, blank paper, and fun paper to add to the pages of the Sparknotes books
- Awl
- Needle
- Embroidery Floss
- Ruler

Self-Portrait project – For the final exhibition, I am brainstorming creative ways to showcase the students' self-portraits. A cheap option is to print the students' work with a laser printer, and use acrylic gel-medium to transfer the prints to an organic material like a wood plank.

- iTouch device
- Print-out of final image
- Wood plank
- Acrylic Gel medium

Social media project:

- iTouch Device

Mask project:

- Aluminum foil
- String
- Scissors or X-ACTO knife
- Newspaper
- Paper Mache mixture
- Paint Brushes
- Paint
- Other decorations (beads, feathers, etc.)

Inspiration project:

- With this project, I am giving students the object to create whatever sort of inspiration work they want. The week before the project is assigned, I will ask students what they would like to do. If they choose to make a painting, I will provide them with a canvas. If they choose a photo, I will need funding to print and display the image.

Digital portfolio:

- iPad

Gallery opening:

- Hanging materials: string, clothespins/binder clips/etc.
- Printing costs for artist statements
- Printing costs for images of each student – I hope to write brief bios of the students to hang with their work

Grants:

In October 2014, I applied for an Awesome Foundation Grant, an organization that gives \$1,000 grants to small community-based projects. The grant, and the rejection e-mail are below.

Application:

Your name: Claire Stasiewicz

Your email: claire.stasiewicz@gmail.com

Your phone number: [7202540691](tel:7202540691)

Project title: #SuperYou

Project website:

Chapter: Santa Fe, NM

About me:

Claire Stasiewicz is a senior at UNM working towards a dual degree in Art History and Honors Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts. For four years, Claire has worked to foster an appreciation for the arts among students and community members by creating Artists' Community of Albuquerque, a project that connects artists to one another and to business opportunities. Claire hopes to be a proponent for the arts and use art to connect people, encourage and facilitate learning, and better the community.

About the project:

Albuquerque Public Schools have cut funding for arts programs in the last ten years. Art is an important tool that not only fosters creativity but also provides an outlet for students. I am creating a curriculum for a series of after-school workshops for female students at Truman Middle School. 100% of Truman students are on the state lunch plan, meaning their families live below the poverty line; in 2013, only 59.6% of economically disadvantaged students graduated from high school in Bernalillo County. My goal is to use my project to encourage students to get involved at school and in the community and provide them with more reasons to go to school and stay in school.

My workshops will teach students to create art and will give them a background in art history and apply those skills to developing technologies such as digital publishing. This project will use art to discuss modern issues, including body image, self-esteem, and identity. The girls will create a series of self-portraits both before and after we discuss self-esteem and standards of beauty. They will learn to evaluate works using art vocabulary. I will teach the girls how easy it is to alter one's appearance in Photoshop, and show the girls media campaigns that focus on "real" beauty (e.g. Dove ad campaign) in contrast to the modern "standards" of beauty (e.g. most magazines). These activities will help empower students while reinforcing critical thinking about appearance and society, encouraging them to be more involved in school.

In another project, the girls will create Dia de Los Muertos masks to learn about folk art from around the world and to discuss identity, culture, and family traditions. Girls who connect with and relate to their own culture and families are more likely to succeed in school.

The project will culminate in a digital publication of the girls' work via the iPad. At the end of my project, I will hold an art show for community members to see the work of these students.

How you will use the money:

10 digital cameras shared by students, Kodak easy share camera \$40(10) = \$400

Books to facilitate projects:

Leibovitz and Sontag: Women \$65

Katherine Hoffman: Concepts of Identity \$35

James Hall: The Self-Portrait: A Cultural History \$25

Brian Smith: Secrets of Great Portrait Photography \$35

Mask making materials, paper and pens for journaling, general supplies \$250

Leftover funding will facilitate purchase of iPad for digital publishing

Materials will be reused in subsequent semesters.

Rejection e-mail:

Hi Claire,

Thank you so much for your request to the Santa Fe branch of the Awesome Foundation for a grant. Your application was compelling, well written and your budget was so well done we will be using it as an example on how to do budgets. I regret that we cannot offer the grant to you at this time.

We are a new branch and are located in Santa Fe and have decided that we want to have ourselves firmly established here before reaching out to the rest of New Mexico. I

do believe in the coming year when we are able to give more frequent grants that we will consider Albuquerque requests.

I hope you will be able to continue to generate such great ideas and get funding for them. In the future please do apply to us again, your ideas are very much in line with what we would like to fund. Best of luck in finding funding for the Super You concept.

Thank you for your interest in the Awesome Foundation,
Roberta Swan, Dean

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January 15, 2015: Workshop 1 “People Starve Themselves to Look Pretty”

This first week was more successful than I thought it would be in a lot of ways, and not successful in others. The only large problem I had this week was completely out of my control: DATA had a two-hour delay because of snow this morning, and I honestly think it threw everyone off. Ms. Reeder, the counselor who is assisting me with my projects, said she forgot to make an announcement this morning about the meeting location (because of the snow delay), and two girls weren't at school at all because they lived in snowed-in areas. All that said, only six of my fifteen girls showed up, which was obviously not ideal. Still, having a small group was nice because I got to hear a lot of ideas from each girl.

Workshop overview

We started the workshop with an easy icebreaker of “two truths and a lie.” They didn't believe I was telling the truth about having a pet rabbit – they thought that was hilarious. I learned a little about each student, and realized I have quite a few different levels of maturity in the classroom already. I had every grade level from freshman to senior, and so there is quite an age gap present. So far, this has been beneficial, as the older students have facilitated more in-depth discussion for the younger students.



We then created journals for our assignment, and they were successful. Everyone created journals very quickly, although I guess I will be doing the assignment again next week as the girls who weren't there today need journals,



too. Nothing surprised me about the journal assignment, as it was very straightforward – no one had problems, and no fingers were stabbed by awls, so I was happy.

Discussion topics

The best part of the day was when I had the girls fill out their

initial evaluations (the pre-test worksheet). I actually added a few short answer questions to the worksheet that was originally all multiple choice, and I am glad I did so. After they finished these worksheets, I started discussing some



of the questions with them. We started by talking about what we wrote for the questions, “What are your favorite and least favorite things about being a girl?” After we whined about periods for a while, Christina brought up the fact that she loved that girls were allowed to be, “soft, feminine, and pretty! We can care about how we look and we sort of represent beauty, which is cool.” Interestingly, the thing Christina didn’t like about being a girl was “being so emotional.” She complained that she wished she cared less a lot of the time.

Many of the other girls wrote similar things about physical appearance being something they liked about being a girl: Sarah said her favorite thing to do was to do her hair and makeup and make herself look nice, and Skye’s favorite things about herself were her style and hair. I’m not sure if these ideas will change at all over the next eight weeks, but it was interesting to see that many of the girls focused on physical things when they talked about what parts of being a girl they enjoyed or what they liked most about themselves.



Our conversation after that questions really spiraled in a lot of directions, which was fine by me since we were missing so many students and I didn’t want to cover anything super important. We talked a little bit about different standards of beauty in other countries, and standards that different societies have for women (Muslim religion and culture came up and we discussed how modesty was attractive to many Muslim people, and how many Middle Eastern women aren’t allowed the same rights as their male counterparts). We discussed how even in America, women are still treated differently from men, and how women are expected to be a certain way even in American culture. One of the saddest and most interesting comments I heard was from Deark, a freshman. She told us a story about trying to borrow a dress from her mom’s friend for the Homecoming dance. She was trying on this woman’s dresses, and Deark complained that they showed too much skin. Deark said, “I don’t like showing

my arms or legs very much, I like being modest. I tried on this dress that didn't have anything here (she gestured to show it was a strapless dress) and I said, this is showing too much skin. And so the woman looked at me and said, "Are you even a girl?"

Deark's story was so interesting, and all of the other girls said that what the woman said was wrong, because it's stupid to think that a girl is only a girl if she wants to wear dresses or show her skin. Ms. Reeder then talked about how what a girl wears can give her a certain stereotype, which isn't fair. She said she felt that it is bad that she has to tell her own teenage daughter not to wear anything too revealing to parties, because she's worried boys will think they can take advantage of her. Ms. Reeder said, "I shouldn't have to make rules for my the way my daughters' dress, boys should be taught not to rape girls and not to take advantage of them." After that comment, we all discussed the recent case in Albuquerque where a video of a high school girl getting gang raped went viral, and her rape was blamed on her appearance and the fact that she was intoxicated. We talked about how it would be amazing if we could all wear whatever we wanted, wherever we wanted, just because we like it, and not have to worry about the repercussions.

Basically, we covered a lot of important topics, and the girls showed me they are open to discussions about very serious topics, and I was impressed with how insightful they all were.

Next Week's Changes/Future Plans

This class has already made me rethink some of what I'm planning to do this semester, which will mean more work for me, but that's ok! The girls said they do a lot of sketching and drawing at school, but that they would really like to paint on canvases more. They're also all interested in sculpture/working with clay. I'd really like to incorporate these things into the lessons now, and I am thinking about a way to change the mask-making workshop, as many girls made masks in art class last semester. It may be possible to do a cultural statue or model instead of a cultural mask.

Also, because my class was so small this week, next week I will have a couple of tasks. First, I will need to show the new students how to make journals. While they make the journals, I will take my first six girls and ask them to show me the three self-portraits they took with their phones this week (I'll also get them to email me these). We will do a short discussion/critique of these images and then I'll combine the groups and I will start the full self-portrait and art vocabulary terms workshop!

I'm not too worried about the future workshops, because one of the questions I asked the girls on the evaluation was, "what do you hope to get out of this workshop/what do you think you will learn or accomplish?" A couple of

the girls talked about how they wanted to learn about digital media and art, which is great, as they'll certainly be learning about that. The other girls thought more intrinsically, saying they, "want to be more creative," or "want to get better at art." I'm glad, because these seem to all be expectations we can meet through these workshops!

Oh and I am definitely bringing snacks next week, because who doesn't want snacks after school??

Difficulties

There was only one thing that was hard this week, and it didn't actually happen in class. I decided to give the girls my phone number in case they had questions about assignments or when we were meeting, and I got a text from one student on my way home. It said, "Hi, this is XXXXXXXX, on #11 on my paper I mean more of "being labeled as a girl." This was in reference to question 11 on the evaluation, which asks, "What is your least favorite part of being a girl?" On that question, this student wrote that she isn't happy that she was born a girl, and in teeny tiny letters she wrote, "I'm transgender." I thought about this for a long time, and texted her back, saying that I understood what she meant on her paper, and that I have friends who feel the same way. I told her that I hoped she knew I would never mention this to any of the other students, and that I really liked how honest she was on the evaluation. She responded and said thank you J.

I obviously knew that something like this could come up. You put a group of teenagers together, and there's bound to be a lot of differences – for example one of my girls is autistic so I had to explain a few things in great detail to her so she could understand better – but I still wasn't prepared for the situation. I think I handled things well, but if I ever run into problems that are too hard for me to deal with on my own, I know I can ask Ms. Reeder about them, which is comforting.

January 21, 2015: Workshop 2

“The Colors Make Her Look Scared”

General Overview

This week's workshop, unlike last week's, was not as good as I had hoped. My goal was to facilitate some serious discussion about female photographers and self-portraits with the students. I only had six students show up, but it was good that three of those students returned from last week, which I would assume means they are enjoying the workshops! The new students spent twenty minutes making journals, and I tried to engage the other three in a conversation about self-portraits. They were pretty unresponsive, though.

After everyone finished their journals, we went to another classroom to use the projector so I could show the girls some examples of self-portraits. I attempted to get the students to discuss the images by first giving some background information on the artist, and then asking questions like, “Why do you think the artist chose this lighting?” or, “What do you like and dislike about this photo?” I tried to prompt them a bit, but they really didn't have much to say. I got a few good comments about a portrait of Annie Liebovitz, and one student said that the colors in the image made Annie look scared. She elaborated by explaining that Annie looks scared because she is covering her face in the image, but she also looks scared because the colors are dark and there are dark shadows around her. I'm glad that the students are starting to discuss pieces of art, but I'd like them to use more art-specific vocabulary. I asked one student if she knew a few of the words I had on my art vocab list, and she only knew about one third of them, so I'll be happy to use the list next week to facilitate discussion.



Two students had to leave early because of class projects that were being done outside of class. This was frustrating, but there isn't really anything I can do about that.

Future Plans

Next week, I'm planning on doing a few things differently. First, Ms. Reeder, the counselor, will be giving each

student a reminder handout on Tuesday or early Wednesday morning, so students have time to arrange for rides and let their parents know they will be done at school later if they have forgotten about the meeting. Also, I'm bringing snacks! Someone mentioned that they were hungry after school, so it obviously makes sense to start out with some snacks. If there's one thing I've learned from college, it's that free food works every time.

We will be critiquing the students' self-portraits, and discussing some images of different historical beauty standards. To facilitate these discussions, I am going to print out my art vocab list, and also give out art bingo sheets. That way, the students can start using their art words, and won't have an excuse for not contributing. Hopefully, this will encourage everyone to participate so we can have some good discussions.

January 28, 2015: Workshop 3 “People Starve Themselves to Look Pretty”

Overview

Week three was a success! I had ten students, including 8 girls who had been there before, so that was excellent. I had a couple of videos to show the girls; one was about female beauty ideals over time, and the other was called, “Are you beautiful in Korea?” and showed the different things Koreans find beautiful. Unfortunately, the Internet connection at the school wasn’t working, so I couldn’t show them the videos. Instead, I showed



the powerpoint I made with different beauty standards, and we discussed those. We had a great discussion about what different people found attractive; many of the girls said they liked the style and look of girls in the ‘20s (flapper girls), although one girl said she wasn’t skinny enough to be a flapper girl. When we got to the ‘90s, the girls were shocked by the thinness of the “heroin-chic” models. Everyone started talking about eating disorders and how people started starving themselves to be thin enough. After

I showed them modern models, they said that those girls were not as skinny as models of the ‘90s, but that they were still examples of unattainable body standards for most people. They brought up the fact that most models are now photoshopped to look perfect. I was really impressed, because many of the girls said that they didn’t worry about their body image, and realized that most of the people they saw on TV or in magazines were photoshopped.

All of the girls did agree, however, that they thought about and worried about the way their bodies looked more than the way they dressed. They also all thought that they worried about their size more than boys worried about their size. We

had a very good discussion, and a lot of the girls said they didn’t realize how much standards of beauty have



changed throughout time.

After our discussion, I broke out the paints and asked the girls to paint self-portraits. They all got pretty freaked out by this, as most of them had never painted. I explained that I didn't need them to replicate their faces or their physical appearance, but that I wanted them to create an image of something that represents them. They created some amazing things! Skye made an amazing portrait of herself that looked like she was much more grown up (I'll have to ask her what her inspiration was, because it definitely has a '20s, glamorous style to it). Maya painted a beautiful dancer's silhouette, and her sister Isla painted Katy Perry, because Katy Perry is her "spirit animal." Altogether, everyone created very unique paintings and everyone definitely enjoyed the project, so that was great.

Problems

Because I was having internet/computer problems, we weren't able to discuss the digital self-portraits the girls had created. However, they sent me their images via text, so I now have all of them and I am compiling them into a slideshow for next week. Next week, I will give the girls their art vocabulary lists and we will use those words to discuss the self-portraits. This should be a good way to teach the girls some vocab words and to also show them how to constructively critique works.

I had another problem that isn't really that much of a problem, just an observation. I have three older girls who showed up really late to the group, which was frustrating because they were distracting when they came in. They're all juniors or seniors and pretty much just talked to each other the whole time. They didn't take the painting exercise particularly seriously, but when I asked them how they felt about having their work hang at UNM they got noticeably excited - maybe they're just good friends and don't have the chance to hang out at school, I'm not sure - but they're kind of getting on my nerves. Ms. Reeder, the counselor, wasn't there this week either so they might be a bit more respectful when she is there next week!

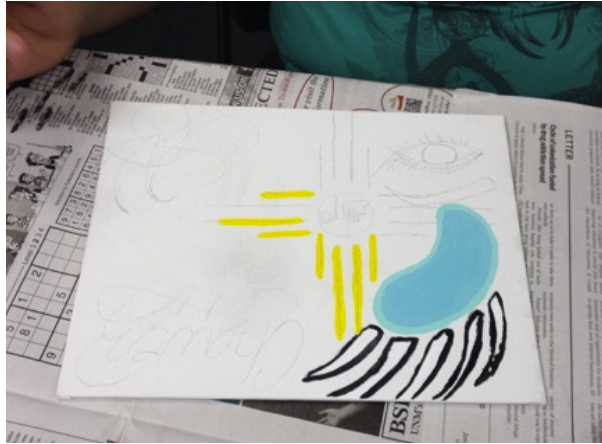
Next week

Next week, I'll give the girls the art-term vocabulary sheets and we will discuss the self-portraits they sent me via the iPod touches. We will have our first critique session.

Then, I will give a brief overview of the pros and cons of social media. The cons are the dangers of putting your private life on show for the world. I'll use examples of the Snapchat hack that allowed thousands of private pictures to be uploaded onto a website for anyone to see, as well as the example of an Albuquerque girl whose rape was posted on Instagram. I will then show the students examples of artists who have made a living posting images

on Instagram or creating Vine videos.

We will then download Vine and Instagram to all of our devices, and I will send the girls in groups of two or three to make short videos and post at least one Instagram photo each. I have decided that having in-class assignments is the most effective, as students are more engaged and excited this way. The girls who didn't finish the paintings this last week chose to take the paintings home to finish them, and indicated that they were excited about it - so that's good! Hopefully, the girls will want to continue making Vines and posting Instagram photos over the next few weeks.



Above: Painted self-portraits in progress.

Below: Painted self-portrait on left, digital self-portrait on right



February 4, 2015: Workshop 4

Overview

Week four was definitely a success, and I had eight students. One student was new, and two of my regular girls were sick. Eight is more than half, though, so I'm happy. I decided to begin the day with an activity, because I wanted to get the girls going and engaged in a project. I showed them a few examples of Vine videos, and told them about the professional Vine and Instagram artists who make a living creating videos and photos. I then sent them to make their own Vines in groups of two or three. It took awhile for the girls to get going and really commit to the task, but once I helped one group start a Vine, the other groups took off as well and everyone created some great videos.

One group used the snacks I brought to create their Vine. They used a cookie and cut a Pac-Man mouth out of it, and created a stop action video with the cookie chasing a Goldfish cracker around. It was cute and a good use of the materials we had! We also had a short discussion about the negatives of social media. I shared the Snapchat leak story with the girls and a number of "Facebook fails."

We talked about being careful posting photos and videos online, because you really can't take them back even if they're deleted - there will always be some sort of record of their existence on the internet.

The girls spent an hour working on their Vines (two Vines for each group) and then we sat down and I showed them the art vocabulary list. I had them use the list to critique the digital self-portraits they have been working on at home. It went really well, and although it was pretty awkward trying to get the girls to critique each other (lots of long silences) having the vocab terms worksheet made it easier for them to pick a word and discuss how it related to the photograph in question.

I had a guest come to this session. Amy Greene, from UNM Continuing Education came and watched this workshop. She introduced me to John Grace from DATA last Fall, and is basically the reason I am teaching there!



Instagram photo by Emilie

She asked if she could sit in, and I of course said yes. It was really great having her there, because she gave me positive feedback at the end of the lesson. She told me I was doing very well teaching, and that she was impressed at how I engaged the students. She also said I seemed very relaxed teaching. This was awesome, because I have not gotten much feedback on my teaching or on the lessons, and it was definitely a morale boost for me.

Next week

Next week is family, culture, and relationship week. I was originally going to create masks, but the students made masks in art class last semester. They told me they have not gotten to do much sculpture work, so I bought some Air-Dry clay, and will have them create sculptures on Wednesday. I have a lot of cool examples for them to look at (a lot of them I found on Pinterest, actually). Because the clay takes at least 24 hours to fully dry, I will have them create the sculptures this Wednesday, and we will paint them the following Wednesday. This means I will basically combine lessons 5 and 6 (6 is inspiration). Because we can't paint the sculptures this Wednesday, they will have more time to think about their cultural background and how they want to showcase that in the painting of their sculptures. To introduce week 6 after the sculptures are made, I will show the girls examples of my photographs and the inspiration photographs I made mine from. If there is time left in the



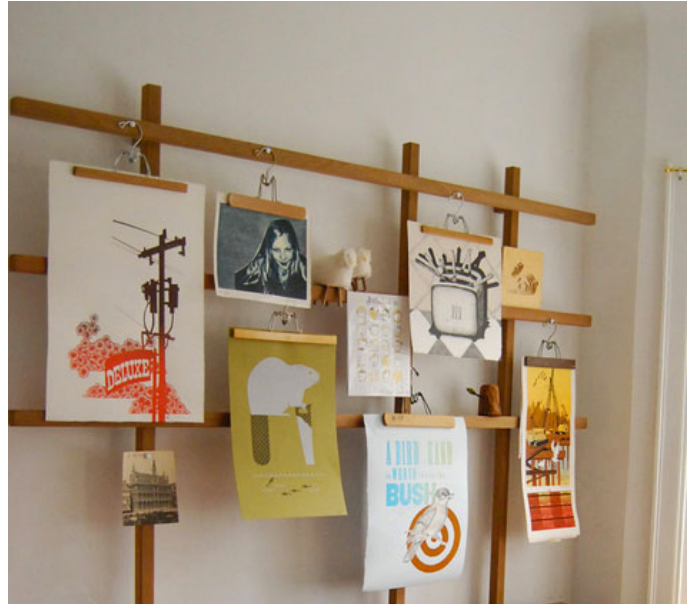
Above: Digital self-portraits: this student created three self-portraits, none of them feature her face, just objects that represent her.

lesson, I will have the girls start painting their inspiration pieces. I asked the girls what materials they wanted for the inspiration workshop, and they said they wanted to paint again.

At this point, I am very pleased with the progress we are making in the workshops. I feel that the girls have all learned something, whether it was about art vocabulary or about themselves. They also all learned a lot about painting, and seemed to really enjoy experimenting with

the paints. I am worried about finalizing everything before the big gallery show, but I am hopeful we will get it all done. I have a checklist of things I/the students need to do before March 20:

- Make invitations for the girls and their friends/families (by February 20)
- Find a way to showcase digital work, like Vine videos and digital animation (probably iPads on tables)
- Print photographs (at least 3 weeks before March 20)
- Find a way to display photographs and paintings in the Honors Forum (I am planning to made a lattice structure)
- Have the girls write bios
- Have the girls write descriptions of art
- Take headshots (polaroids?) of the girls to go with their bios



February 11, 2015: Week 5

“We don’t have a culture anymore, we’re just the perfect American family, two kids, a mom who cooks and dad who works.”

Overview

This week was definitely successful, and I think that is in large part due to a smaller class size. I had six students. Two were sick and two had appointments after school. We worked with clay during this class, so it was important that the students who weren’t there could get clay. I left a few bags of clay and instructions for the students who missed class, so they can make their sculptures at home and be ready to paint on the 18.

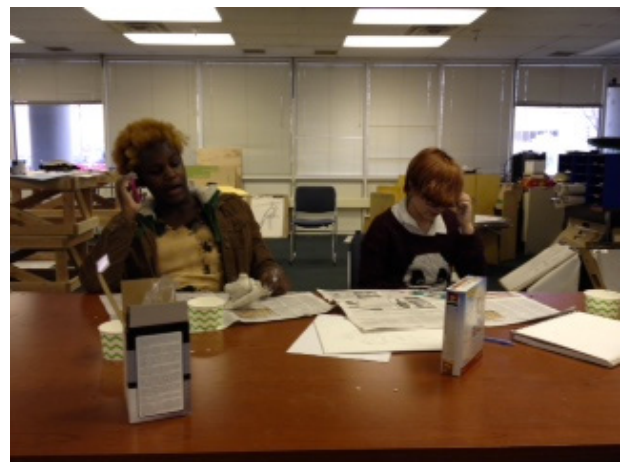
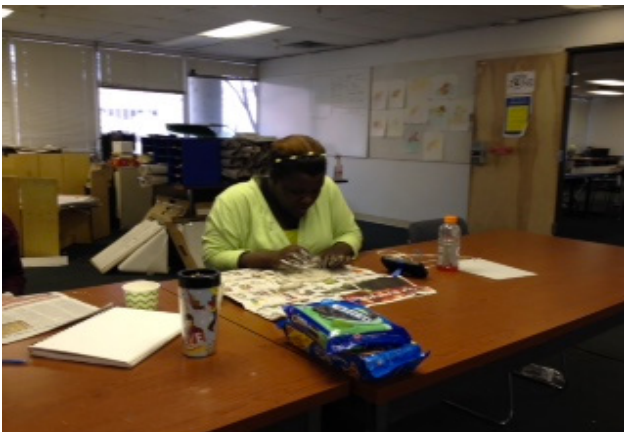
The point of making sculptures was to reflect on family and culture. To do this, I began the class by showing the

girls examples of Polish pottery that I personally connect with.

My family has used this type of pottery for awhile (for special celebrations like Easter and Christmas) and so I discussed the meaning of the pottery as a symbol of my family and our culture. I then went around and asked each girl what their cultural background was like, and how they might show that through a sculpture. Dierk lived in Japan for about three years with her

family,

and said she still connects the most to Japanese culture. She said she wanted to create a sculpture that reflects how calm and peaceful Japanese culture is (and Buddhism) as compared to American culture which is much more hectic. One of the most interesting comments I had was from Maya. Maya and her sister Ila were adopted by white parents, but are African American. Both girls said that it was hard for them to express their culture, because they knew they had some sort of African/black heritage



Students working on sculptures

but that they didn't really know what that was or how to express it. They said they celebrate Kwanza sometimes with a local group, but that they don't really have any exposure to "black culture" besides that. Maya create a really cool mask that she described as an African mask – I thought it was great!

Skye mentioned that she doesn't connect with any culture. When she used to live in Florida, she connected with Cuban culture. She said her grandfather is Cuban and her family ate Cuban food almost daily in Florida. When her family moved to Albuquerque, she said they became a "perfect American family. One son, one daughter, a dad who works and a mom who cooks." She said it was pretty boring for her. She created a fairy sculpture that reminded her of Scotland (which she visited just a while ago) because she thought it represented the most interesting place she had been. I also had one student, AJ, create a traditional Dia de los Muertos skull. This is definitely what I assumed a few students might create – and I was quite impressed at the variety of sculptures my students created. Next week, we will be painting the sculptures (this is why it was important for the sculptures to get finished this past week – they take 24 hours to dry).

Because we finished our sculptures in about an hour, I had more time to move on to the next project. The next project is "inspiration." I asked the girls to paint something in the style of another artist's work that they were inspired by. Another option is to use another form of inspiration to create a painting; examples are painting in the style of another time period, painting after a musical piece, or a piece of writing. Students will be able to work on these paintings next week after painting their sculptures. I've decided that if any student finishes their sculpture and their inspiration piece early this Wednesday, I'll put on different songs and have them draw how the song makes them feel (just as an "inspiration" exercise). The inspiration pieces I've seen so far look really good! I had a Jackson Pollock-type piece, which was cool (though kind of an easy way to do the assignment).

Next week, I have a short checklist of things to get through:

- Paint Sculptures
- Finish inspiration paintings
- Name the gallery opening so I can make invitations
- Start writing bios
- Start writing artist statements and reflections on works of art
- Have the girls send me the exact photos they want printed for the exhibition

These goals are not too challenging, and I hope to accomplish most of them next class!



Here are two unpainted, but finished sculptures. The one on the left is a Dia de los Muertos skull by AJ, who connects with her Hispanic background. On the right is Sarah's warrior bunny, which represents her Native American background and shows that something tiny can be powerful.



This sculpture on the right is Skye's. Skye said she doesn't connect much with any one culture, but loves Scottish folklore and fantasy, so her sculpture represents that passion.



February 18, 2015: Week 6

Overview

This week was pretty crazy, although altogether I was really happy with the interaction I got with the students (I had 9!!). The bad part was that I had a very upset student today. I took her aside because she was crying and



we went and talked. In short, she has a pretty horrible home life and suffers from extreme depression. She has a history of self-harm and told me a lot about that. It was definitely not easy to hear, and I honestly did not know how to react. I just tried to listen and support her and be kind to her - but I am definitely not equipped to give her advice. I texted the counselor after class and asked her to check in on the student this week and make sure she is doing ok - I also told the student she can contact me at any time if she needs someone to talk to. Her mom was in prison for a long time, and I get the feeling my student has poor self esteem and really struggles with living with her mom now that she is out of prison. Obviously a difficult situation, but we were able to get back on track and she made some really great stuff this week and interacted with the other students well, so that made me happy!

So I had a list of things to accomplish this week, and we did almost all of them! The sculptures are coming along really nicely. The students who missed last week created sculptures this week, while the other students painted their sculptures. Maya, who created an African mask, started painting a black line down the center of the mask, and I asked what it was for. She told me that she was creating a yin-yang, and half the mask would be a white girl, and the other half a black girl since she identifies with both. I thought that was a really awesome way to show culture/heritage.



A few of the girls also finished their inspiration paintings this week, but the majority of the time was spent working on painting sculptures. We spent time discussing how to write a short biography for visitors to read, and I spent some time photographing each girl while she worked for the bio photos. We also came up with a name for the opening. I decided I really wanted them to come up with something they liked, rather than just pick something myself. Maya came up with, "We are who we are," which everyone really liked. Someone said that it fit in well with our theme since we are doing so much self-reflection - so that's great! I also had the girls start writing about their projects. I told them to begin writing about one project they really liked, to get some practice. Most of the girls didn't get to this step, but we will work more on it next week.

For next week, I am honestly just concerned with getting things finalized. Yes, we have to create a digital copy of all this work, but the hardest part will be finalizing all the writing and making sure projects are done! I feel like I don't have much time left so we really need to hurry up. I am amazed by how quickly these classes have gone by.

February 25, 2015 and March 4: Weeks 7 and 8 “Can We Keep Doing This?”

Overview

Weeks seven and eight were extremely hectic, so I combined the two together for this recap. I got to DATA week 7 and realized that the girls were on completely different pages from one another. Three girls were done with every project, while the other 8 were catching up on various projects. None of the girls had done any writing on themselves or on their artwork, so I started class by having each girl answer questions for me about themselves. The questions were as follows:

What was your favorite art project during the workshop and why?

What was your favorite non-art project thing during the workshop and why?

What grade are you in and where did you grow up?

List five fun facts about yourself.

I used this information to create biographies for each girl (listed in appendix B) between weeks 7 and 8 and during week 8 I reviewed the bios individually with each girl to make sure that she was presented in the way she wanted to be presented. My favorite comments to read were the ones about the girls' favorite non-art project thing. One girl said “I liked the discussions we had because everyone was honest.” Another girl said, “My favorite part of the whole program was getting to meet all these cool girls that share the same interests.” My favorite comment was, “I like the abundance of cookies in the room. I like that every one is nice to each other.”

The girls all had positive comments, particularly about each other and how nice the other girls were. I asked if the girls thought that the people in the workshop were nicer than other people at school, and they all said yes. One girl said that she thought people were nice because there were no boys, and because they had talked about personal things so everyone was more respectful. These comments are exactly what I was hoping would come of this project, and prove (qualitatively) that art can be used to facilitate healthy emotional growth or at least the discussion of adolescent issues.

In week 7, the girls just answered my questions and finished up some projects. Everyone had something to do. In week 8, I had the girls write even more! Everyone who had finished projects (most of the girls by this point) wrote individual artist statements for at least two pieces of art. A few girls didn't write any artist statements, but

luckily it did not negatively affect the gallery show. A few of the girls asked if we could do this project again next year, or if they could at least continue the project themselves. This was amazing feedback to get, and I am really glad the students enjoyed the project enough to want to continue it. If there is anything I hope these students take away from the project it is that they are really valuable people. One of my students is the only real adult in her household. She takes care of her younger siblings because her parents aren't around most of the time (I'm not sure why). Her attendance in the project has been spotty, but she told me she loves to come and make art because it feels like something she can do for herself. I hope these students realize how talented and special they all are, and I'm thinking the gallery show will be a good way to show them this.



Students on the last day of class

Gallery Show – Preparation and Results

A huge part of this project was the gallery exhibition, which was a huge undertaking. Luckily, I had most of my spring break to create the exhibition pieces and figure out how to hang items. I was allowed to use the Honors College Forum, but was not allowed to damage the walls (obviously). This proved challenging, however, because I had about 20 painted canvases to hang. Luckily, I had a conversation with future UNM Honors faculty member Megan Jacobs from Highlands University, who has a lot of experience with creating art exhibitions. Her idea was to take to strips of thin Plexiglas, 1.5 inches high, drill holes in either side of them, and place the top of the painting between the glass. Then, you screw the two pieces of glass together with the painting in between the glass. After this, you hang fishing wire through the glass and suspend the paintings from the ceiling. The Plexiglas for all the paintings cost \$40, but I bought too much Plexiglas (I bought extra in case I messed up at some point) so really, I probably could have spent about \$30 on the glass. The idea worked perfectly. Creating all of these devices probably took me three hours, because I also had to string fishing line through them and attach the line to metal hooks that would go into the ceiling.



Pictures hanging in the Honors Forum – the Plexiglas structures are not intrusive and don't detract from the paintings themselves. The description tags hang underneath the paintings.

I allowed the girls to put other works in the show, such as other paintings or drawings they had done. I did this because I wanted more variety in the show, and I wanted the show to be about the girls as a whole. I didn't want to reject any of their work, because the gallery was an opportunity for them to show off and show how talented they are. I needed a way to display these works without hanging them on a wall, so I create wooden trellis structures (with the help of my dad). I create two trellises, each seven and a half feet tall. Each was constructed with two large 1.5 inch square beams (7.5 feet tall) placed vertically on either side and smaller, four foot long boards placed horizontally across. I hammered nails periodically along the four-foot horizontal boards and hung binder clips from the nails. These binder clips were adequate to hold works and did not damage the works or the walls. I set the sculptures out on a table and placed the description cards next to the statues. I also put description cards on each painting and next to all of the works on the trellis structures. I used painter's tape to hang the biographies at the front of the exhibition.




Trellis structures with works hanging from them: These structures were fairly easy to build, and allowed the works to hang without damaging the walls or the works themselves.

The gallery space began with a one-page description of the project. This description was printed (on nice paper) and put on the wall next to the biographies, and was also printed on printer paper for visitors to take with them. The description flowed into the biographies, and the biographies were next to the trellis structures. The paintings were hung around the perimeter of the room, and the sculptures were placed underneath the paintings on tables. The digital works were viewed on iPads in the center of the room (where there were tables and chairs for people to sit and talk).


I borrowed two iPads from Dr. Chris Holden in the Honors College to display the digital media portion of the project. Using PathBrite, an online portfolio-sharing device, I had all of the girls' works displayed online and included the Vines and Instagram photos. I also had a description of how to use the iPads, although I did get some questions throughout opening night on how to use the iPads, so most people did not read or see the directions. Each individual section (sculpture, digital self-portrait, painted self-portrait, extra works, digital works) had a short description card hanging next to it, so viewers had some idea of the specific project they were viewing. During the gallery opening, between 40 and 50 people came through the exhibition. I had a small selection of food and drinks available and about halfway through the night I made a short speech. During the speech, I thanked everyone for coming and thanked the people who helped me (Amaris (Thesis advisor), Lisa Mehyre (principal), Kristin Reeder (counselor), Chris Holden (UNM Honors), my family, etc.) and then brought the girls up to get a round of applause. I also gave a brief overview of the project and why I chose to do it. The girls seemed very pleased to be mentioned and all of them showed up! Both Lisa Mehyre and Kristin Reeder came to the exhibition. Lisa asked if she could have the biographies when I am done with them, so she can hang them in the school (I said yes of course!).

I had a stack of evaluations at the exhibition as well. These evaluations (in appendix B) came back extremely positive. I didn't get one negative comment out of the 30 evaluations I received, and I had multiple people ask if I would do this project again! I am thrilled that I got such positive feedback about the gallery opening. I left the works up in Honors for one week (until March 31) so Honors students could come look at the works and the DATA students could come back if they wanted to. The works will be returned to the students, although I am going to keep four pieces to show during


conference presentations (the girls will get these works back in May when presentations are over).



Christina is a senior who grew up in the North Valley here in Albuquerque. When she was thirteen, she realized she could draw when she took an interest in graffiti art. In high school, she began studying realism and realized she had a talent for it. Christina thinks that anyone can be an artist as long as they are determined and take their work seriously. It doesn't matter what style you like, as long as you love what you're doing. Christina is a Chicana and loves her culture and heritage.



Skye is a sophomore who was born in Miami, Florida and loves everything retro. Her favorite musicians are all either in their 60s and 70s or are no longer alive. Her art projects tend to have a vintage flare. Skye enjoyed the inspiration-painting project because she was able to create a character influenced by the '60s and '70s, with psychedelic colors. One of the best parts of the project, in Skye's opinion, were the cheese puffs and goldfish every week. Skye also likes traveling and geography, and particularly likes the UK and France (because of the food!).



Claire Stasiewicz grew up in Denver, Colorado and is in her final semester at UNM. Double majoring in Honors and Art History, Claire hopes to pursue an MBA in International Management next fall and one day work to help artists find business opportunities. Claire is an amateur photographer and very poor drawer - which is probably why she's constantly impressed with the works her students create. She thinks that art is one of the most important subjects for overall academic development, and should be taught in all schools.

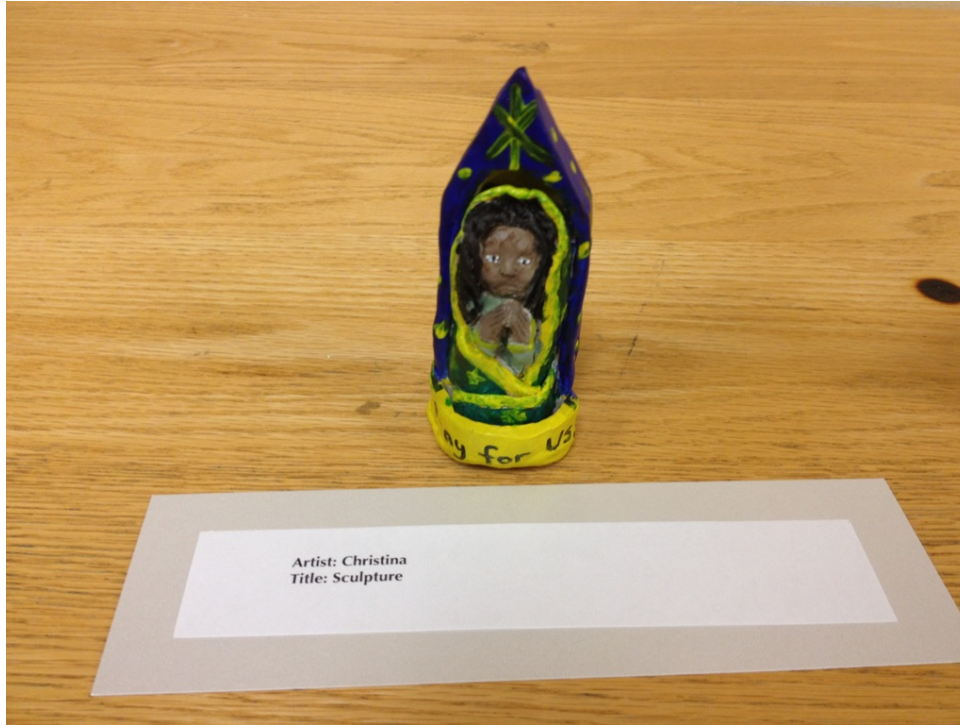
Clockwise from top Left: iPad being used in the center of the forum to view the digital works; Bio of a student, Bio for Claire, Bio for a student.



This is the beginning of the gallery. On the far right is the project description, followed by the artist's bios and then the digital self-portraits. On the table there are copies of the project description and a stack of evaluation forms.



The cultural sculptures were simply placed on a table with description cards in front of them.



This sculpture by Christina is the Virgin Mary, since she is Catholic.



There were between 40 and 50 people who stopped by over the course of an hour and a half on opening night.



Pictures of the crowd.



Panoramic view of the space

Conclusion

This thesis project has been more rewarding than I ever imagined. I set out last Fall with the intention to prove that arts education is just as valuable to students as other subjects. Although this was a huge goal, I feel that in a small way I did prove the value of arts education. In the case of *We Are Who We Are*, I showed how high school girls can use art projects to discuss difficult issues. Many of my students had not thought about issues of identity and inspiration and at the beginning of the workshop series many students rated their self-esteem as low. However, in my research on the psychology of arts education, I found that many studies had been conducted and had proven that art aids students in issues of low self-esteem and also helps them with visualizing a future. I asked all of my students at the end of the class what they saw in their future - and all of them had an answer. Whether it was to be a dog groomer or to be a tattoo artist, 8/10 of the students planned to attend college and the other 2 had solid career goals that involved attending technical school. I believe that the gallery exhibition shows what a huge success this project was. All of my students were in attendance and almost all of them brought their families. The girls seemed very proud of themselves, which was an important part of having the exhibition. The reviews of the show were all positive, and 40 - 50 people attended. I don't have a way to measure the happiness of my students or to see if they had any "growth" in self-esteem - I'm not a psychologist and I won't pretend to be. However, I had many students ask to continue the workshops, and three parents (who identified themselves as parents on the gallery show evaluation form) asked if I would continue the workshop or do it again next year. This was not a quantitative analysis, so it is hard to determine whether my project was a success. However, because of the positive evaluations and the students' desire to continue the program in the future (and also the amazing discussions I had with the girls on topics like anorexia, photoshop, identification, gender, mean girls, and family) I would say this program was a success. When policymakers look at arts education budgets, they should know that art doesn't just aid in creative practices (although this is very important). Art has so many other benefits. Art instills a sense of pride and belonging in students. Students who participate in the arts have higher grade point averages, better standardized test scores, are less likely to drop out of school (probably because they are connected to a school program more deeply), and are more motivated in general. With my workshops, I think this motivation factor was quite clear. Although students didn't attend

every week, I had ten students set aside two hours of their week to create art and have discussions about hard topics. I think that shows what art can do for students and that it can keep students engaged and interested in education as a whole.

Appendix B

DATA Charter School Demographics:

Male 62%
Female 38%

Hispanic 61%
Caucasian 30%
Black 5%
Native American 4%

Low socio-economic status 49%

Gallery invitation:

We Are Who We Are

Friday, March 20, 2015
6:30 - 8:00 PM
UNM Honors College Forum

*Join us as we celebrate young female artists
from DATA Charter School and showcase their
unique, self-reflective artwork in photography,
painting, and digital media.*

R.S.V.P. and send questions to:
Claire.Stasiewicz@gmail.com

Description page at beginning of the gallery:

Hello and welcome to *We Are Who We Are!*

We Are Who We Are is the culmination of an art workshop series conducted by me, Claire Stasiewicz, a senior in the Honors College at UNM. I began this project last fall, and conducted research on everything from the psychology of art to various educational practices in order to create the best possible curriculum for students. After searching for a school to volunteer at, I was pointed towards the Digital Arts and Technology Academy – DATA – a charter school close to UNM.

DATA's principal, Lisa Mehyre, and counselor, Kristin Reeder, hand selected 15 girls for the program (although only 11 girls participated for all 8 weeks). Each workshop was between two and two and a half hours long and involved an art project. The five main projects the students completed were a digital self-portrait (a selfie), a painted self-portrait, a social media project (either a Vine Video or Instagram photo), a sculpture based on their culture, and a painting inspired by another artist or style. In between projects, we discussed many things like cross-cultural beauty standards, figural beauty changes through time, and the power of both social media and photoshop. We also discussed family and culture, relationships, and gender.

This exhibition is the final part of the workshop series. There are over fifty pieces of art created by 11 talented girls: Abby, AJ, Beatrice, Caroline, Christina, Deark, Emilie, Ila, Maya, Sarah, and Skye. Each student has her own distinct style and has put an incredible amount of thought into her work. Personally, I am beyond

impressed at the talents of these students, and am thrilled that I had the opportunity to work with them.

Student Biographies and images:

The following are the biography pages that hung at the start of the exhibition. Each student answered a series of questions (in week 7) that I then translated into a biography. I went the biographies individually (in week 8) with each girl to ensure I was presenting them the way they wanted to be presented. Then, I took photographs of each girl and had these photographs printed using the website Sticky9. They print small 13cmX13cm square prints in high quality, which I thought was a good size for these bios. My bio stood out because the image I used was in color and not black and white. The photograph I used for my biography was a selfie I took in high school. I thought it was a good idea to have a work of my own in the show, even if it was just for my biography.



Skye is a sophomore who was born in Miami, Florida and loves everything retro. Her favorite musicians are all either in their 60s and 70s or are no longer alive. Her art projects tend to have a vintage flare. Skye enjoyed the inspiration-painting project because she was able to create a character influenced by the '60s and '70s, with psychedelic colors. One of the best parts of the project, in Skye's opinion, were the cheese puffs and goldfish every week. Skye also likes traveling and geography, and particularly likes the UK and France (because of the food!).



Deark (pronounced D-Ark) is a freshman who has lived all over the world. Her art reflects her love of travel and other cultures, like her Japanese-influenced sculpture. Deark's favorite project was the painted self-portrait, because she used different colors to represent her emotions and the emotions of other people. She represented herself as a raven, and although some people think ravens are a symbol of death, Deark thinks they're beautiful. Deark liked the "abundance" of cookies during the workshop and especially loved that all the girls were so nice to one another.



Sarah is a sophomore who grew up in Albuquerque. Sarah's favorite project was the sculpture, because the rabbit she created was symbolic and cultural. It expressed many emotions and feelings from just its appearance; she is proud of it. Sarah's favorite part of class was the new people she met and how she was able to open up more. Normally, Sarah is quite shy, but the niceness of the group encouraged her to talk more, which was important to her. Sarah is left-handed, loves pop tarts, the color pink, and makeup. Some day, Sarah hopes to visit Japan, Paris, Korea, Australia, Germany, and Canada.



Maya is a freshman this year, and is not only an artist but also a musician and dancer. Her favorite part of this project was the culture sculpture, because it allowed her to tell an entire story in one sculpture. Through the sculpture, she was able to talk about a serious issue: race. Maya really enjoyed getting to know the other girls in the project, who had similar interests to her and were a lot of fun. Maya's big sister Ila is a part of this project, too!



Ila is a sophomore who loves Chinese food and video games and grew up in Albuquerque. Her favorite project was the sculpture, because she liked getting to make things in 3-D. She also liked sculpting a man. Ila also enjoyed getting to know the other girls in the group, who are amazing! After high school, Ila wants to go to art school either at UNM or in a big city and then eventually move to Seattle. Her little sister Maya is also an artist in the group.



AJ is a freshman and grew up in Albuquerque. Aside from art, AJ is a great dancer and cheerleader, and even models in her spare time. In the workshops, AJ enjoyed the culture project the most, because Dia de Los Muertos is her favorite holiday. Her favorite part of the workshop series was becoming friends with all of the other girls. This semester, AJ attends DATA's night school program – next fall, she will enroll in the day school.



Abby is in her junior year at DATA and grew up in Albuquerque. She plans on being a graphic designer and has already done projects for clients. She is planning on going to college to take art classes once she graduates. Abby plans to draw and ink tattoos to help pay for college, which is perfect because she wants to be a graphic designer and tattoo artist after college. She liked meeting new people through the art workshops, and in her spare time, Abby enjoys drawing.



Emilie is a junior who has dual citizenship in the United States and United Kingdom. Emilie's favorite project was the self-portrait, because she was able to capture who she is in just one photograph. Emilie also liked the discussions the group had, and liked getting to know everyone involved. Emilie lived in the UK for three months, has three older sisters and no brothers, and can solve a Rubik's cube in a minute and a half.



Christina is a senior who grew up in the North Valley here in Albuquerque. When she was thirteen, she realized she could draw when she took an interest in graffiti art. In high school, she began studying realism and realized she had a talent for it. Christina thinks that anyone can be an artist as long as they are determined and take their work seriously. It doesn't matter what style you like, as long as you love what you're doing. Christina is a Chicana and loves her culture and heritage.



Beatrice is a senior who grew up in Rio Rancho, NM. Her favorite project was creating a painting in the style of an inspirational artist. The painting she created is after her father's work, who was – in turn – inspired by the street artist Banksy. Beatrice has drawn for as long as she can remember, and can also paint, sew, draw digitally, latch hook, and needle felt. All of Beatrice's art relates to animals in some way. When she graduates this spring, Beatrice is going to the Santa Fe University of Art and Design and will be majoring in film. In the future, Beatrice wants to be a dog groomer.



Claire Stasiewicz grew up in Denver, Colorado and is in her final semester at UNM. Double majoring in Honors and Art History, Claire hopes to pursue an MBA in International Management next fall and one day work to help artists find business opportunities. Claire is an amateur photographer and very poor drawer – which is probably why she’s constantly impressed with the works her students create. She thinks that art is one of the most important subjects for overall academic development, and should be taught in all schools.

The following pages are the slides from the presentation I showed at both the Western Regional Honors Council Conference in Reno, Nevada on April 11, and the Shared Knowledge Conference at UNM on April 23.

The role of art in self-esteem

- Positive change
- Make students visualize the future
- Build confidence of personal
- Creative risks
- teamwork and communication
- Sense of belonging to community

"Now every girl is expected to have Caucasian blue eyes, full Spanish lips, a classic button nose, hairless Asian skin with a California tan, a Jamaican dance hall ass, long Swedish legs, small Japanese feet, the abs of a lesbian gym owner, the hips of a nine-year-old boy, the arms of Michelle Obama, and doll tits." - Tina Fey

Project Overview

- 15 girls (9th - 12th grade)
- 8-week workshop series
- 2 hours per workshop
- 6 major art projects
- Finally gallery show

Six Art Projects

- Handmade Journal
- Digital Self-Portrait
- Digital Media Project
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- Culture/Heritage Sculpture
- Inspiration Painting



Research: Art, self-esteem, and success
Self-esteem for men and women across the life span

From age 9 to 90, female self-esteem drops drastically, and then levels at a low point until around 45.

Study by Richard Robins (UC Davis) and Kati Trötschel (King's College)

My solution to the problem:
Use art for positive change...
But why and how?

Why?
Prove that arts education is beneficial - keep art in schools.

How?
My Hypothesis:
Art can help adolescents with much more than just tests, grades, and binary. Art can be used to discuss and understand adolescent issues: the self-esteem, body image, family, culture, and identity.

The Ideal Solution
Change policy!

We Are Who We Are
Building Self-Esteem Through Visual Art
A Curriculum for High School Girls
Claire Staszewicz
University of New Mexico Honors College

The Problem

US Department of Education operating budget, 2013:
Total Funds: \$136 billion
STEM programs: \$449.7 million
Arts in Education: \$25 million
- Performing arts
- Music
- Visual arts
- Digital media

Albuquerque Public Schools' budget, 2013-2014:
Total Funds: \$589 million
Secondary fine art programs: \$5.3 million (\$3.5 million for personnel)

- Why is this a really problem?**
- Students who participate in the arts:
- High on graduation averages
 - More involved in school events
 - Less likely to drop out of school
 - Greater confidence in self
 - More motivated

Gallery Show - UNM Honors College

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RSVP and send questions to: Claire.Staszewicz@gmail.com



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Secondary fine art programs: \$5.3 million (\$3.5 million for personnel.)

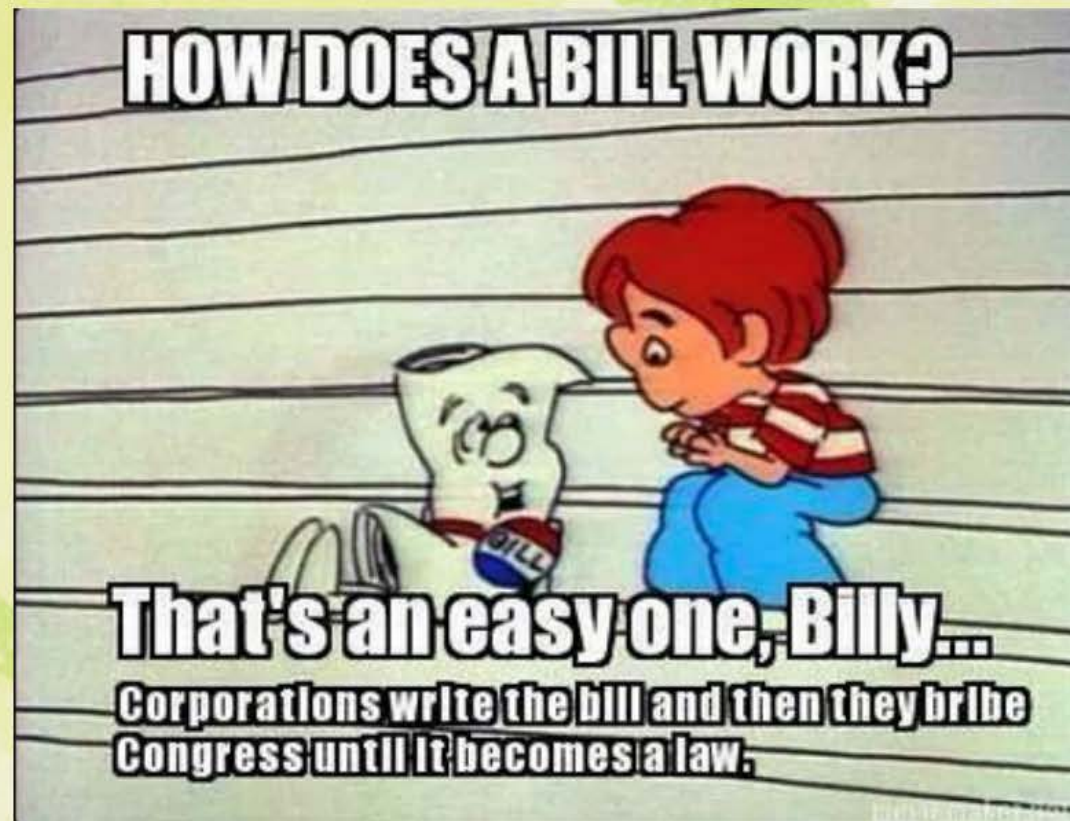
Why is this actually problematic?

Students who participate in the arts:

- Higher grade point averages
- Better standardized test scores
- Less likely to drop out of school
- Increase in cognitive abilities
- More motivation

The Ideal Solution

Change policy!



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But why and how?

Why?

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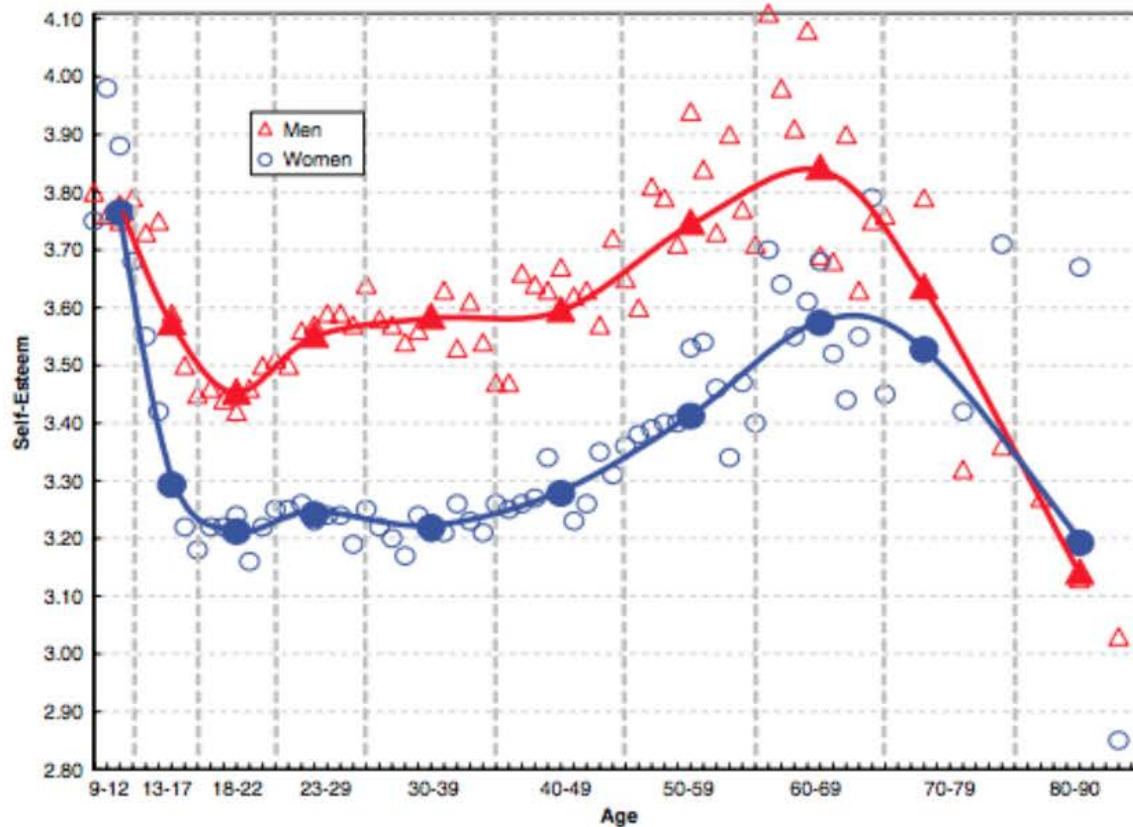
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- Builds awareness of potential
- Creates Pride
- Teamwork and communication
- Sense of belonging to a community

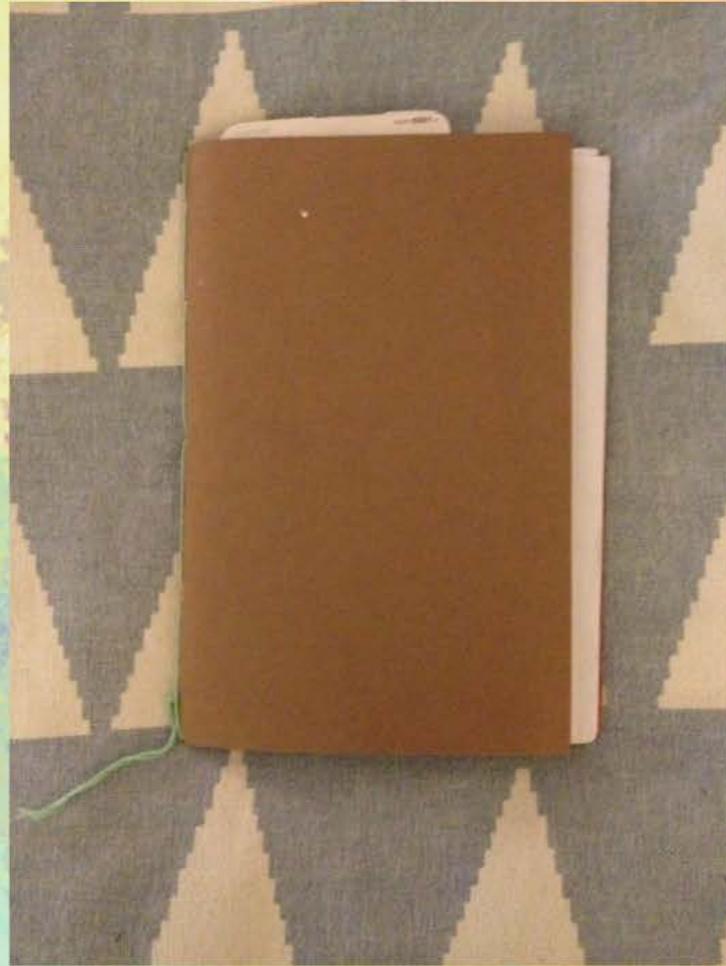
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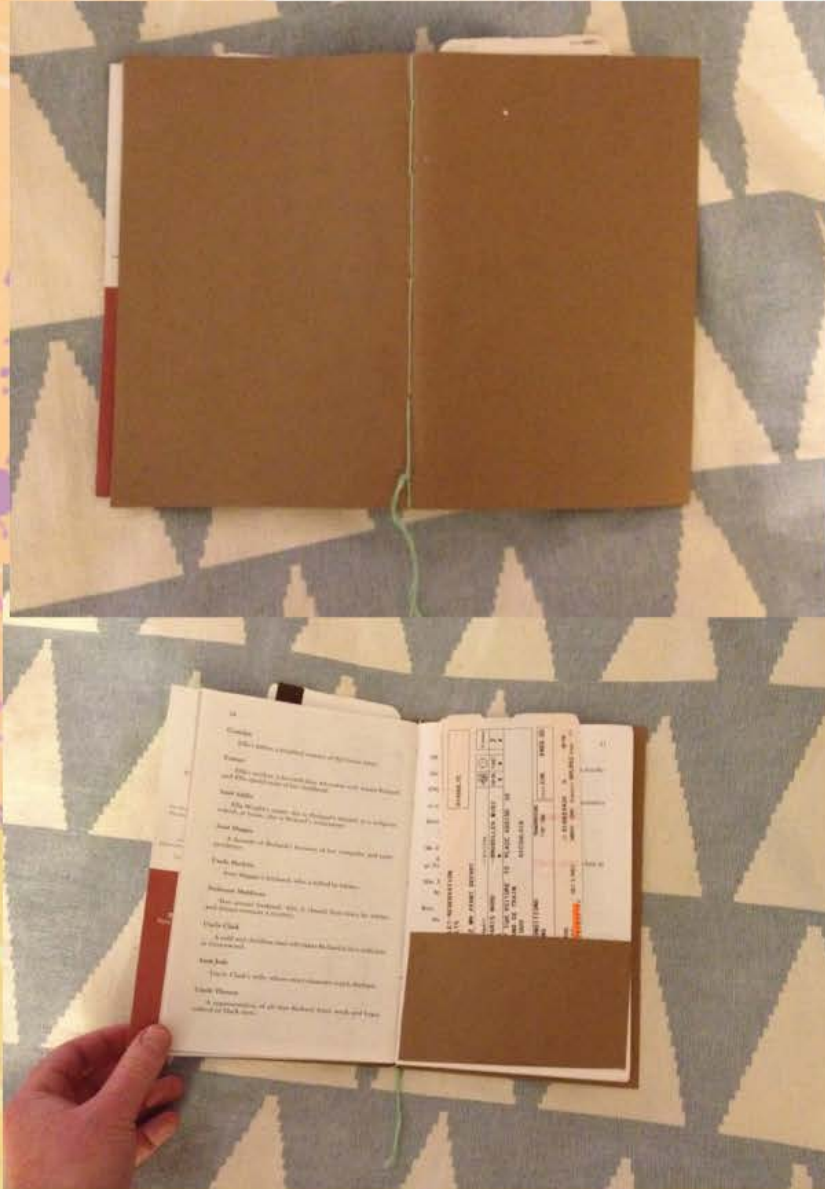
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Journal





Digital self-portrait



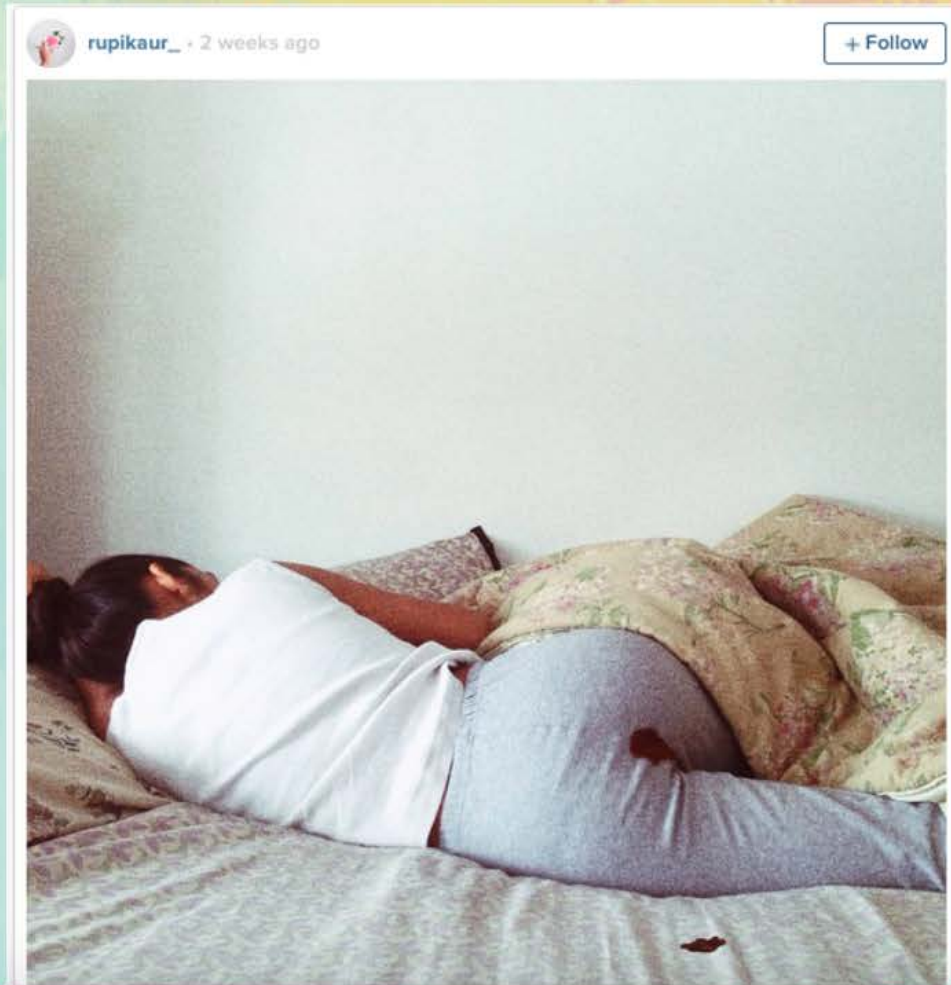
Rineke Dijkstra



Annie Leibovitz



Social media





Painted self-portrait



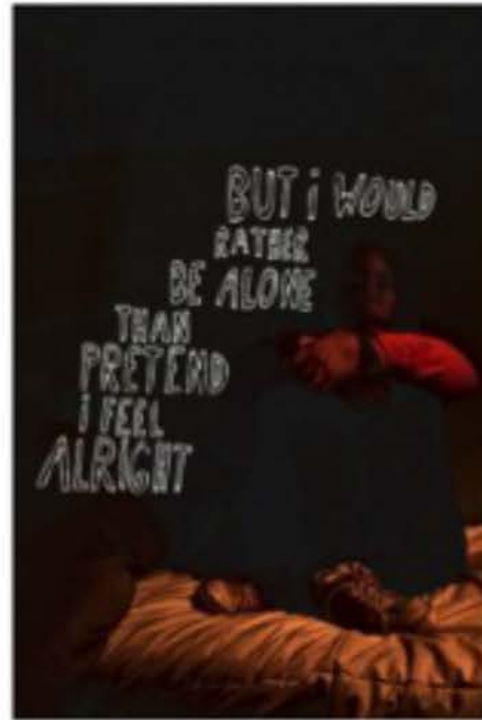


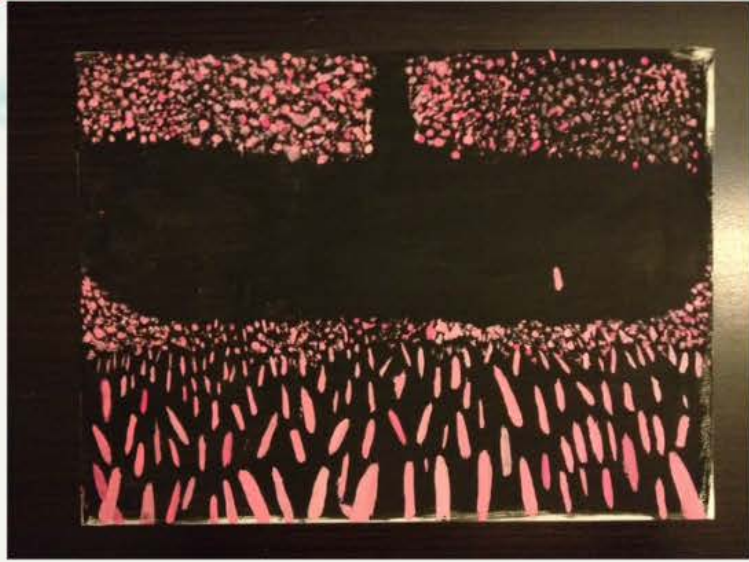
Culture/Heritage sculpture





Inspiration Painting





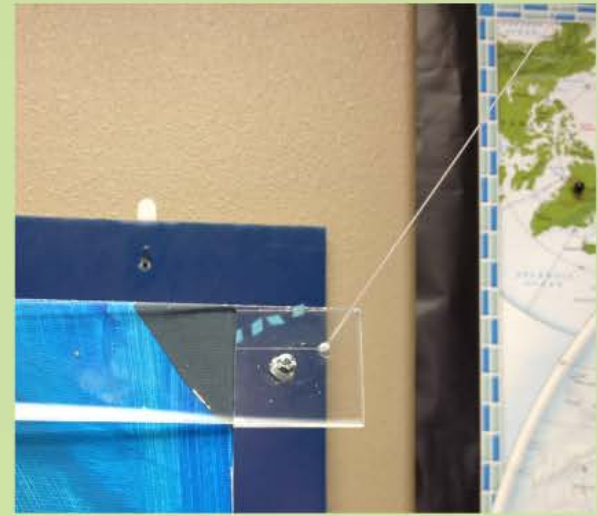
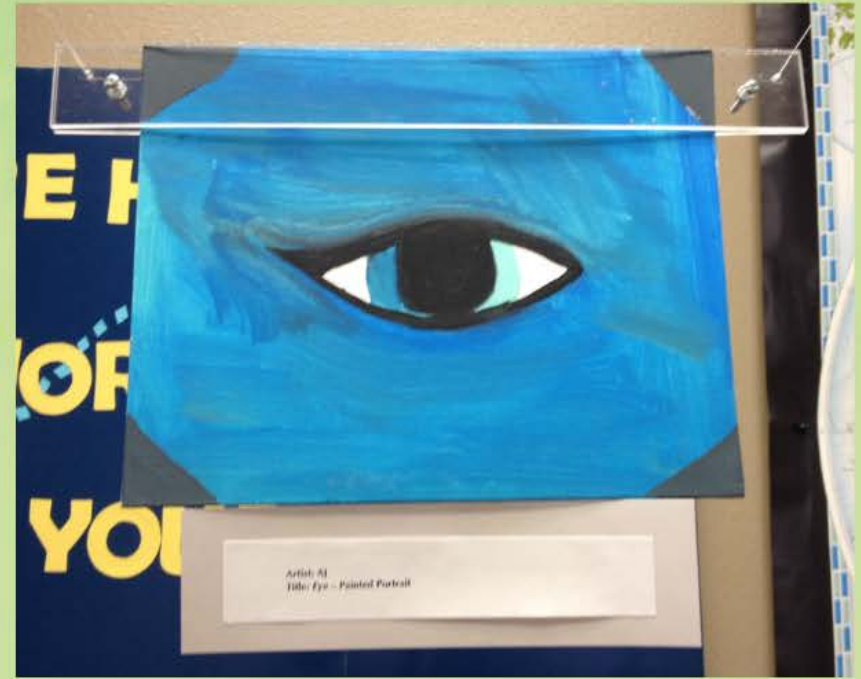
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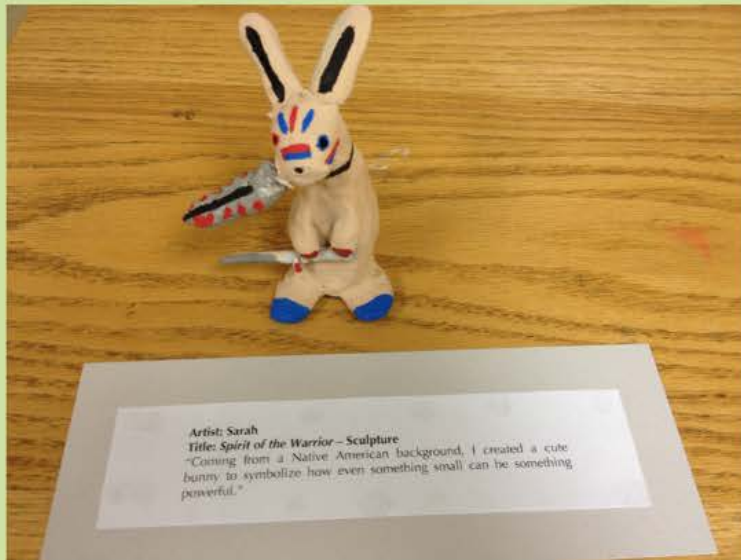
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Artist: Beatrice
Title: Dog of Cole – Sculpture
"Being part black, my great-great-grandfather was a runaway slave. He was born on the Collier Plantation, and as a young boy, he had an opportunity to flee."



Artist: Sarah
Title: Spirit of the Warrior – Sculpture
"Coming from a Native American background, I created a cute bunny to symbolize how even something small can be something powerful."









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Why is this a self-esteem problem?

- Systems are not designed to help
- Higher grade level changes
- Social and academic pressures
- Literacy to help build a world
- Research on digital media
- More and more...

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