

Activist Art

Lead Teacher: Cassidy Sullivan

Course: Painting

Grade Level: 9th-12th

Number of Students: 21

LESSON OVERVIEW (RATIONALE)

This lesson involves creating activist paintings that represent student beliefs and fight for change. Students will consider what issues they care about, choose one to fight for, and compose a watercolor painting that makes a statement about said issue.

This lesson is valuable because it allows students to see the importance in art and how it can help enact change. It also helps students to reflect on what is important to them, allowing them to learn more about their personal identities and purposes.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What issues are you passionate about?
- How can art be used to enact activist change?

LEARNER OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

- Students create an artwork that fights for an activist issue.
- Students utilize learned watercolor techniques to convey a message.
- Students reflect on the unit through writing an artist statement.

NATIONAL ART STANDARDS

- VCA:Pr6.1.Ia: Analyze and describe the impact that an exhibition collection has on political awareness of social, cultural, or political beliefs and understandings
- VA:Re7.2.IIa: Evaluate the effectiveness of an image or images to influence ideas, feelings, and behaviors of specific audiences

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STANDARDS

- 9.1.12.E: Delineate a unifying theme through the production of a work of art that reflects skills in media processes and techniques

ART / ARTIST(S) OF RELEVANCE:





Tina Bits



Keith Harring



Teacher Example(s): Although these are not all watercolor projects, I will show them to my students to show how art can be used to make a statement about issues one cares about.



PREREQUISITES:

- Students know basic watercolor techniques taught in previous lesson.
- Students have previous experience planning, sketching, and creating an artistic idea.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

- **Reading:** Students will read PowerPoint and other assignment information to help guide their art exploration. They will also research their chosen social issue and read articles online.
- **Writing:** Students will create an artist statement that reflects on their artwork and chosen topic. They will also participate in warm up exercises that has them write reflections on what they care about.

ACCOMMODATIONS

- Students who are unable to pick up watercolor pencils may use traditional watercolors for this assignment.
- Students are given creative freedom to fit to their individual beliefs.

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR LESSON

- Watercolors
- Watercolor pencils
- Watercolor paper
- Paintbrushes
- Water
- Pallet
- Pencil
- Scratch paper
- Palette

TEACHER ACTIONS

DAY 1: EVERYONE participates	
Time	Teacher Actions
10 min	<p>Intro</p> <p>Reflect on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What current issues do you care about? Why do you care about these?• What do you think would make the world a better place?• Have you ever taken actions to stand for your beliefs? What did you do? <p>Ask a few students to share</p>
15 min	<p>Introduce project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show PowerPoint including relevant artists, teacher examples, and project criteria• Ask questions throughout to engage learners
10 min	<p>Brainstorming of ideas and research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give students time to look up social issues and research ideas for creation
5 min	<p>Closure</p> <p>In-person students take home watercolor pencils for tomorrow: offer that virtual students can pick them up</p>
DAY 2: EVERYONE participates	
10 min	<p>Check in:</p> <p>Review content from yesterday</p> <p>Jam Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On this board, list as many social issues as you can think of (This will help inspire students who are not sure what issues they care about)
10 min	<p>Demo on using watercolor pencils (OPTIONAL if students were able to get them)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students practice and follow along
15 min	<p>Brainstorming and planning</p> <p>Show questions on screen to consider to help struggling students with their ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What social issues do you care about?• What problems do you think there are in the world?• What are possible solutions to those problems?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can you show this through art? <p>Give time for brainstorming and sketching of ideas</p> <p>Check for understanding by walking around and checking in with each student about their ideas and sketches</p>
5 min	Closure: Questions?
DAY 3: EVERYONE participates	
5 min	Check in
30	<p>Student work day to finish sketches of their composition</p> <p>Check in with students about their ideas (in-person and for virtual students)</p>
5 min	Closure: Questions?
DAY 4-?: In person students participate, at home students work on other project, virtual students go back and forth on projects	
5 min	<p>Check ins with various started questions/ activities (TBA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One check in: Where could you display your work of art so that others can see it and be inspired?
30 min	<p>Work days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk around and help students through their process Check in with virtual students to ensure understanding
5 min	Closure: questions and reminders
LAST DAY	
5 min	Intro: Fill out Google Form and any last-minute submissions for critique
30 min	<p>Critique Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students choose one artwork that they would like to share with the class They talk about their artwork while the other students leave critique comments via JamBoard

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must leave at least one positive comment, and may also leave a comment of what the artist could do to make the artwork even better
5 min	Closure & farewell

REFERENCES TO MATERIALS CONSULTED

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/63715287/Body-positivity-plastic-surgery-illustrations>

<https://thejugular.org/keith-haring-and-political-activism-in-pop-art/>

Watercolor pencil demo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-dq-2mhCkU>

RUBRIC

Category	Excellent (11-15)	Satisfactory (6-10)	Needs Development (0-5)
Craftsmanship / Techniques	Student uses taught watercolor techniques and pays great attention to detail to create a visually successful artwork.	Artwork uses some taught techniques, but student could have spent more attention to detail and design.	Artwork hardly or does not use watercolor or is very messy and rushed.
Idea / Effectivity	Artwork makes a powerful statement that can help to inspire others about a topic the artist cares about.	Artwork touches on an activist issue, but is not creative / does not get the full intended point across.	Artwork does not touch on any activist issue.
Effort / Improvement	Student puts effort into project and learns and grows as an artist throughout the entire process.	Student works semi-productively during class and puts in some effort.	Student is hardly productive and puts little to no effort in learning/improving.
Artist Statement	Student submits a thoughtful artist statement that reflects on their artmaking and ideas.	Student submits an artist statement that does not fully reflect on their process and ideas.	No artist statement, or does not reflect on what is required.