

Dear Educator,

Thank you for booking a tour with the Museum of Glass: International Center for Contemporary Art. We look forward to your visit!

We're sending you this curriculum to help enhance the visit for you and your students. These activities have been carefully prepared to go with the program you will participate in when you visit. We strongly encourage that you spend some time with the packet before your visit. We've found that students understand and learn so much more if they're prepared before they come, especially with this unit.

Along with this packet, we have extensive curriculum on our website about glass blowing and working with hot glass as an art form. Please visit www.museumofglass.org and click "Education" on our home page. From there, visit the School of Glass and Virtual Hot Shop. There are several lessons including interactive quizzes about many glass-related topics. At the Virtual Hot Shop your students will get a chance to experience glass blowing by creating a *macchia*. Participants walk through the process step-by-step until they get a finished work of art! Along the way they can also choose to read more and view video clips of the process live.

We sincerely hope you enjoy these materials and your visit to the Museum of Glass: International Center for Contemporary Art.

Tools as Art: The Hechinger Collection

September 18, 2004 - January 9, 2005

Lesson One: The History of Tools

- Transparency One:
- Essential Academic Learning Requirements:
 - Reading – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2
 - Writing – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
 - History – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2
 - Social Studies – 1.1a, 1.1b, 1.1d, 1.1e, 1.1f, 2.1a, 2.1b, 3.1.1e
 - Communication – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

Lesson Two: Discussion of Art in a Literary and Social Context

- Transparency Two:
- Essential Academic Learning Requirements:
 - Communications – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.3
 - Arts – 1.1, 1.4, 2.3, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4

Lesson Three: Creating Art out of Common Objects

- Transparency Three:
- Essential Academic Learning Requirements:
 - Communications – 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.1, 4.2
 - Arts – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.4
 - Social Studies - 1.1a, 1.1b, 1.1d, 1.1e, 1.1f

Introduction

Tools as Art: The Hechinger Collection is a collection of works of art revolving around tools as the central media and theme. Presently the full collection includes over 375 works of multiple media (sculpture, painting, craft, photography, drawing, print, and digital art) of which 65 pieces are included in the traveling exhibition.

The collection was started by John Hechinger, Sr., owner of the Hechinger Company, a chain of more than two hundred hardware stores begun by his father in 1911. The traveling exhibition of works was organized by International Arts & Artists, Washington, D.C., along with the curator of the collection, Sarah Tanguy.

Hechinger began the collection when he moved the company to its new corporate headquarters in Landover, Maryland, and found the new building to be very sterile. He already owned Jim Dine's *Tool Box*, a collection of ten screen prints, combining tools with images from pop culture and his personal life experience. Upon displaying this work in his office, it received a great response from his associates, and this spurred Hechinger to continue collecting art with tools as the central theme. The collection is very diverse ranging from images of tools to pieces, which incorporate recycled tools as part of the media. Sometimes tools are the central artistic subject, but often the tools are used in a non-conventional manner that transforms the way in which the audience may view tools at face value. However, central to all the pieces is the notion of labor and the way in which artists use tools to create.

"Tools have been an essential part of our history and prehistory. When you visit the Lascaux cave paintings in France and look at the drawings of bison the cave dwellers drew on the walls, you see that along with those animals are tools. Tools are such a basic part of human existence that the Collection's unique focus appeals to the builder in all of us." – John Hechinger

Lesson One: The History of Tools

Objective:

Students will learn and understand that things one takes for granted as staples of society, such as tools, have a rich and diverse history. Students will also expand the way they define the word "tool."

Materials: Books, Internet, other research materials, pencil, and paper.

Lesson:

Each student will pick a tool. This tool can be a well-known, popular tool such as a hammer, saw, screw driver, etc. or it can be a more obscure tool specific to another

culture, e.g. traditional Japanese tools, or to a specific practice, e.g. ship making tools, etc.

Brainstorm, either in small groups or among the whole class, different tools before each student claims one to research. Have a discussion in class about what it means for something to be a “tool.” Try to think of not only popular well known tools, but also things one may not think of immediately, such as sewing machines, scissors, paint brushes, potters wheels, washing machines, car jacks, flash lights, etc. Be creative, there are many things we use as tools every day but may not call “tools.”

Things that the student should keep in mind while researching:

- What makes this instrument a “tool”?
- Why is this tool important today?
- What was its origin, who invented it, and why was it invented?
- Is it a universal tool or used for a specific practice? What determines that distinction?
- How does the tool work? Is it a simple hand tool or a complex mechanical tool? Have you ever used this tool?
- Is it a part of a larger “family” of tools? Does it come from a specific tradition of work?
- What are other ways this tool has been or can be used besides the function for which it was designed?

Students will then, in groups or individually, research their chosen tool, and present their findings to the class. The teacher can determine if he/she wants the students to write a paper or create a presentation for the class, or a combination of both.

Extended Learning:

Students can create a new tool. This can either be a simple tool, which they can actually make themselves and show the class, or it can be a proposal for a new complex invention.

Lesson Two: Discussion of Art in a Literary and Social Context

Objective:

Students will apply concepts learned in the study of literature to discussing art. Students will build on those concepts to understand how artists communicate concepts through their art.

Materials: Pencil, paper, dictionary, classroom chalkboard on which to write key concepts.

Part One: Pre-Visit Discussion

Often times concepts involved in the discussion of literature can also be applied to the discussion of art. In this way, students can begin a dialogue about concepts in art based on the way that they have learned to talk about novels, short stories, and poems. Things like metaphors, personification, anthropomorphizing, irony, puns, sarcasm, humor, and connotation are all used in art as well. These are all modes of communication that pull on the subjugated knowledge we all acquire to varying degrees by living within a society and culture. Facilitate a class discussion relating concepts used in the study of literature that the class has been learning in English and Literature classes already. (This will vary depending on grade).

Have students look up the definitions to the following words:

metaphor, simile, irony, pun, sarcasm, humor, personification, anthropomorphize, connotation, subjective, objective

Discuss the similarities and differences of these terms. From there, open a discussion about humor. Have them make a list of examples of things they think are funny, e.g. cartoon strips, jokes, T.V. shows, stories, etc. Have them share these examples with the class. Then discuss the examples using the following questions:

- Does everyone find the example funny or humorous?
- What makes it humorous and why?
- Are there things that are universally humorous, or is it always a subjective, personal thing?
- Do their examples require knowledge of a certain subject to “get” the joke? Or does everyone understand it, despite whether or not they find it funny?
- What are examples of different kinds of humor? (Slapstick, sarcasm, wit, comedy, puns, etc.) Apply these categories to the examples that students provide to identify what kinds of humor they like/dislike.

Part Two: Museum Visit Scavenger Hunt

Taking these concepts of Literature, apply them to the art they see in the galleries. Have everyone try to find examples, in the different works, of the words that they defined in Part One.

When everyone returns to class, discuss how these concepts apply to the artwork. Talk about which pieces students liked/disliked and why. Also, discuss how humor applies to some of the art pieces. Which ones did students find funny and why, based on the discussion and questions from Part One.

Lesson Three: Creating Art from Common Objects

Objective:

Students will apply concepts they learned while viewing and learning about the *Tools as Art* exhibition in making their own art. This will help to further understand the exhibit by participating in the artists' processes and help them to practice communicating concepts.

Materials: found objects (and any special supplies they may need) from home, hot glue gun, other classroom art supplies as needed (wire, string, paper, markers, pencils, paints, glue, etc.)

Lesson:

Each student will create a piece of art out of or using the imagery of a common object. The goal of each art piece will be to communicate a concept of the artist's choosing. Have the students, the night before, gather at home simple, cheap, mass-produced objects. These objects can be tools if they would like, in keeping with the exhibition. Have them keep in mind these questions when selecting their object:

- What is the function or purpose for this object?
- What is its significance to me? How do I/my parents use this object at home? Why do we own it?
- How can I use this object to create a piece of art? What kind of art do I want to create? Sculpture? Painting? Drawing? Consider alternative modes of presentation such as performance, music, poetry, or prose.
- Am I going to use this object in reference to its function or transform it into something completely different? (I.e. is my art piece going to be *about* the object, or is the object merely a tool for me to use to create something else?)
- What is the concept of my art piece going to be? Is it going to be funny? Sad? Is it going to make a social commentary?
- How am I going to communicate my concept? How are other people going to know what I mean in my art? Will I use text?

Have them reflect on the exhibition that they have seen, and use it for inspiration as well as guidance as to how to communicate their own concepts. Which pieces were successful in communicating and why?

Extended Learning:

There is a long tradition of using found objects in art. Dadaism was a movement in art in the early 20th century that used many found objects in sculpture. Found objects are also used in much contemporary art, as well as in Cubism, Surrealism, and many other movements in the 20th century. Marcel Duchamp was a very important artist who used found objects to make "automatic art." Picasso also used found objects in some of his sculptural work.

Have students research an artist who uses ordinary found objects in their art that were not represented in the show. Research the artist and the movement to which he/she belonged and present findings to the class. What sorts of concepts were these artists trying to convey by using found objects? What was the social significance of their works and how did they communicate their ideas?

Image Credits

Transparency One



Hans Godo Frabel

Hammer and Nails, 1980

Glass

9 x 12 x 6 in.

From the Collection of John W. Hechinger

Transparency Two



Howard Finster

Mountains of People Use Tools (Saw), 1990

Enamel and marker on saw

6 x 29³/₄ in.

From the Collection of John W. Hechinger

Transparency Three



Chester Arnold

Correction, 1987

Oil on linen

46 x 54 in.

From the Collection of John W. Hechinger

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