



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
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## **Things That Make You Go Hmmm: The Elementary School Artist Acting as a Contemporary Art Historian**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 11.01.10

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Although this visual arts unit is intended to be taught to fourth-grade elementary students, it is easily adaptable to be taught through high school within a visual art or art history course. This unit correlates language arts strategies with visual arts skills while introducing students to contemporary artists who look back on history and reinterpret it for the present moment. The hope is that students will be able to become critical thinkers and change-agents within their communities by developing new narratives of their own histories. Students will be gradually guided through the process of describing artworks using both visual-arts and language-arts terminology. Students will then be introduced to a variety of contemporary artists and learn how to make connections between the artists and their works of art. Last, students will participate in creating an art show to host within their local community. By presenting students with both historical elements and language-arts strategies, this unit will achieve the ultimate goal of having students become holistic thinkers.

(Recommended for Art and Art History, grades 4-12)

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