



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1999 Volume II: Art and Identity in Mexico, from the Olmec to Modern Times

Reflections in the Mirror: A Visual Journal and Mural Inspired by Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera

Curriculum Unit 99.02.11
by Martha Savage

Look at this.

It is my mirror.

This is me.

How do you see me?

Do you see yourself ?

Understanding and exploring the self is a concern investigated by all art makers at one time or another, from very young children to renowned visual artists. Not only are we, as young art makers, adult amateur artists and professional artists, striving to clarify who we are, but we are compelled to communicate this information to others. An art work which takes as its subject the self becomes a complex device, for it can reflect and illuminate. It may be a realistic rendering of the artist's appearance, an oblique, symbolic representation, or a surrealistic conundrum. For the astute viewer and scholarly student, the art work is a window into the psyche of the artist. The art work holds yet another possibility for the viewer. This other possibility rests in the awareness by the viewer that the art work contains the capacity to reveal truths about her or himself. By looking deeply at self-portraits and in the making of self-portraits following the example of artists, one is drawn into the discourse of identity.

Reflections in the Mirror examines identity through the creation of two contrasting forms of visual expression—a personal visual journal (vj) and public mural. The inspiration and catalyst for this exploration is found in the history of twentieth century Mexican art. Two artists, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera serve as exemplars. Similar to her delicate physique, Kahlo's artistic production consists of small paintings of her life and an illustrated diary, illuminating her innermost spirit with words and pictures. In contrast, Rivera was a very large man. His best known artistic output consists of monumental frescoes. Kahlo and Rivera must have been an eye-catching couple in their day. Today, their art work offers a fascinating example of contrasting approaches to the expression of identity. The fact that they married, worked closely, shared similar cultures, experiences and political ideology and yet produced highly differing, individualized expressions of self, is even more interesting. Their work provides a glimpse into two enormously interesting individuals, their relation to society as well as the forming of the modern Mexican identity.

The unit is written for middle school students grades 5-8, but is adaptable for use with younger or older students. It is designed to take place in an art studio, but a variety of educational settings are suitable.

Objectives

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera guide and inform this unit in two important ways- through their mode of art production and the art work itself. Art production by students follows the form and content of Kahlo's diary and the making of a mural in the spirit of Rivera. Rather than looking at the extensive examples of art work available by these artists, focus is on one key work by each artist which is examined in depth, "Fulang-Chang and I" (Kahlo, seeks to illuminate identity through enormous, heroic mural frescoes done in a realistic style. The combination of indigenous Mexican culture, the history of Mexico, the ideology of the Mexican Revolution and occasionally, autobiographical narrative, comprise the subject matter of Rivera's frescoes. He is often portrayed in his frescoes. His work is primarily in Mexico. Frescoes by Rivera in the United States, of which there are three, celebrate the American worker and industry. Two frescoes are located in San Francisco, California.

Two works of art are examined closely: Kahlo's "Fulang-Chang and I" (Two-part ensemble, assembled after 1939- Part one: 1937, oil on composition board, 15 3/4 X 11"; painted mirror frame added 1939, 22 1/4 X 17 3/8 X 1 3/4". The Museum of Modern Art) and Rivera's "The Making of a Fresco, Showing the Building of a City" (April- June 1931, fresco, 5.68 X 9.91 m. San Francisco Art Institute). Close examination of these two art works present insights, questions and answers which are accessible to middle school students.

According to Hayden Herrera, the Kahlo self-portrait, "Fulang-Chang and I" was given by the artist to a friend, Mary Sklar along with a folkloric mirror and frame. Kahlo hoped that Sklar would hang the mirror next to the painting so that the two friends would appear together, Sklar's image reflected in the mirror, Kahlo's in the painting. Sklar later bequeathed the painting and mirror to the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The painted, folk mirror frame which currently houses "Fulang-Chang and I" in the museum, exemplifies a significant point. It not only represents the indispensable tool of self-portraiture, the mirror, but it stands for the folk traditions embraced by Kahlo. A red and white painted floral motif decorates the segmented mirror frame. Kahlo looks out with a characteristic gaze, appearing relaxed. A lavender ribbon gently weaves through her loose, but neatly arranged hair and around her neck and around her pet monkey, Fulang-Chang, joining the two. The monkey is still, not typical behavior for a monkey, posing, as if human. Behind Kahlo and the monkey is a background of lush, indigenous vegetation, suffocatingly close to the pair.

"The Making of a Fresco" in the exhibition hall at the San Francisco Art Institute is unusual and interesting. It was a commissioned by the San Francisco Art Association. It shows Rivera and his assistants on a scaffold from behind, employed in the act of making a fresco of the construction of a city. It is a painting within a painting, a trompe l'oeil. It is, in fact a self-portrait of the muralist in his characteristic environment, on a scaffold, in front of a mural. The intended audience is art students. The scaffold provides a compartmentalized arrangement of space and metaphorically represents a structure or social system with the artist or industrial worker as the central character. The artist, sitting on the scaffold with his back to the audience, paint brush and palette in hand, pauses, as his assistants paint a huge, industrial worker. Arrayed around the worker in a dense, claustrophobic composition, are the other "builders of the city," some displayed as anonymous faces and others clearly depicted. In addition to Rivera, other figures include Ralph Stackpole, sculptor, William Gerstle, president of the San Francisco Art Association, Timothy Pfleuger, architect and Arthur Brown, Jr.

architect of the California School of Fine Arts (later San Francisco Art Institute). Assistants to Rivera, John Viscount Hastings, Clifford Wright and Matthew Barnes and others are discernible. Bellows and steel workers, steel and heating riveters and nameless sculptor's assistants are among the cast of characters. One woman, Mrs. Marion Simpson, also identified as Geraldine Colby or Mrs. Fricke, appears in the mural, working at a drafting table. Symbols are found throughout the composition such as the pressure gauge, and soaring airplane. It appears as if the students of the San Francisco Art Institute may have "corrected" one of the symbols on the fresco. The pocket of the central figure bears a red patch. Documentation from 1930- around 1982 showed it be a red star within a circle, perhaps a subtle symbol of communism. After 1982 the red patch appears as a hammer and sickle, a blatant symbol of communism. After a cleaning of the mural in 1990, pigmented toothpaste was removed from the hammer and sickle patch to reveal the original star and circle. It appears as if the students at the Art Institute have a close affinity with this impressive fresco, and an even closer bond with its maker.

These two works of art invite comparison. Both works depict the artist. How does the viewer see the artist? The viewer observes Kahlo gazing intently at herself in a mirror which is located about where the viewer stands to examine the painting. Rivera is gazing intently as well, but not at the viewer. Rivera looks at his fresco, his mirror. He is revealed to the audience from the rear, Kahlo from the front. In both works, the viewer gazes persistently upon an artist who is in the center of her or his respective universe. Kahlo looks back at the viewer. Rivera also returns his gaze, but through his painting of the industrial worker. Rivera's painted image contemplates this symbol of twentieth century man who looks at the viewer in Rivera's stead. A provocative series of contrasting dyads emerges: front- back, female- male, the artist alone (with a pet)- the artist in the center of a large group, small- large, intimate- heroic, private- public, surrealism- realism, oil painting- fresco, direct- indirect. Each comparison offers a point of departure for thought and reflection. What is in the pictures? What are the formal constructions? What are the artists trying to say? Have the artists been successful? Does this comparison effect how I see myself in my art work? Will it change how I portray myself in the future? Am I more like Kahlo or Rivera?

Pre-Columbian art and the folk art traditions of Mexico appear in the work of Rivera and Kahlo from traditional Mexican attire to art objects and allusion to Aztec sculpture. Their residences and studios abound with objects showing their reverence for the past and popular arts. Both artists celebrated the glorious past of Mexico and art of the people as part of the national identity. The use of cultural symbols in the art of Kahlo and Rivera serves to further define their identities. When students depict themselves, what symbols are included? To which cultural groups do students identify?

Kahlo and Rivera present pictorial narratives. Kahlo's was a personal narrative, her life history in paintings. In her own words, "I paint my own reality. The only thing that I know is that I paint because I need to, and I paint whatever passes through my head without any other consideration." Rivera's narrative was that of the past and present histories of nations shown simultaneously and personalized. In "The Making of a Fresco" and other works, Rivera's narrative includes images of people of the past and present, nameless masses, specific individuals, Rivera himself and his contemporaries. The fresco, "Pan-American Unity" includes in its vast array of humanity, a depiction of Frida Kahlo. Rivera describes the origin of his mural style upon returning to Mexico from Europe.

"My homecoming produced an aesthetic exhilaration which it is impossible to describe. It was as if I was being born anew, born in a new world... I was in the very center of the plastic world, where forms and colors existed in absolute purity. In everything I saw a potential masterpiece- the crowds, the markets, the festivals, the marching battalions, the workingmen in the shop and in the fields- in every glowing face, in every luminous child..."

How do students describe their motivation for image making? My students say they make art to express themselves, to say what can't be said in the regular course of the day. They make art because it is a pleasure. They say without art, life is drab. They elaborate and say that without a means of expression, anger and bottled up feelings might explode in an anti-social manner. Young people want to visually assert their individual narratives, in fact they urgently need to do so, and in the process, they begin to form and develop personal identity.

Strategies

The unit is a studio course revolving around two central art production strategies: the visual journal and the mural. Within this dual focus, the exploration of Kahlo's, Rivera's and the student's identity takes place. There is an endless variety of ways of presenting the activities in this unit. There is no prescribed order for the studio activities. A progression which introduces the artists and moves in a developmental manner from simple to complex is suggested. It is the author's intention that the visual journal be an ongoing process from day one to possibly beyond the final day of the unit. The mural project might be added around half-way through the unit. It gives a bigger and more social dimension which is lacking in the art activities in the visual journal which tend to be contemplative and compact. Balancing between these two different art modalities should keep everyone happy. Like Kahlo and Rivera, students tend to have widely differing ways of preferred work style. When and how the components are introduced, one at a time, overlapping, alternating or ongoing, is a decision for the educator when considering the constituents of the class. The unit could be done solely using a visual journal or by only producing a mural with satisfactory results.

Visual Journal

The visual journal can take any manifestation, but a high quality artist's sketchbook of 80- 100 pages is ideal. The vj serves many roles and functions. It is ubiquitous throughout the unit. It is a standard sketchbook for doodles, drawings, museum sketches, plans, designs and a place for storing visual ideas. It also contains more elaborate art expressions such as monotype, mixed media collage and transfer prints. Kahlo's diary contains a rich and varied smorgasbord of material. It is a visually arresting and thought provoking work. If possible, obtain a facsimile edition and share excerpts with students.

Visual Art

The visual art activities within the pages of the student visual journal are an amalgamation loosely based on Kahlo's diary with supplementary material added to round out the learning objectives. Some activities parallel specific diary entries, such as the surrealist game, constellations, drawings of pets, and self-portraits. Other activities are created for the visual journal, for example visually paraphrasing the art work of Kahlo and Rivera.

@3H(after2H):Visual Art Techniques An array of art techniques and media some employed by Kahlo and some not, are used. Drawing, photomontage and collage are found in Kahlo's diary as are colored pencil, ink, gouache (opaque watercolor), wash technique, crayon and Conté crayon.

Kahlo did not use traditional printmaking techniques in her diary. However, the leaking through of inks from page to page have the look and some of the visual flavor of monoprint. She splatters ink intentionally, pressing the pages of the diary together. From the smears and blobs, leaking and bleeding through pages, she

harvests images, ripe from the imagination. Simple printmaking techniques are included for students, to add richness and texture as well as stimulate the mind. Monotype, for example, when printed on a blank page, is suggestive and evocative and provides a backdrop for writing and drawing and a place to discover images, much like the pages and echoing the methodology Kahlo uses in the diary.

Writing

The visual journal is also a writing journal. Just as the visual elements have their source in the diary of Kahlo, so do many but not all, of the written pieces. Stream of consciousness writing and reflections on the symbolism of color are two examples of writing in Kahlo's diary. A descriptive and comparative analysis of "Fulang-Chang and I" and "The Making of a Fresco" is a writing experience created for the visual journal.

Mathematical calculations for the mural project are kept in the vj as well as daily process notes on the progress of the mural.

The Mural

The second educational strategy is a contrasting but complementary artistic production, a mural. Students design and execute a mural showing some aspect of student life. Process is the key to the mural project. Establishing rules, routines and decision making strategies is essential so students can work as independently of the teacher as possible. Students work as a team, cooperatively and collaboratively. They work out the mechanics of producing a large work of art with multiple artists moving through the art process as a group. Brainstorming, collecting data, planning and evaluating are part of the process. Student assigned tasks provide organization and fluidity. Mural documentation, sketches and calculations are done in the visual journal. Precision in mathematical calculation, measurement and use of a grid system to enlarge the design are employed.

The organization of "The Making of a Fresco" serves as a guide for the student endeavor. Instead of showing a fresco that shows how a city is made, students will make a mural featuring some aspects of daily life at school. Utilizing an underlying organizational visual metaphor, the art work also includes symbols. A recognizable portrait of each student is contained within the mural. The portraits show the students performing a role in the typical school day.

Important to Rivera and the mural project are its connections to the Modern Mexican Mural Movement, Italian Renaissance frescoes, ancient Mexican murals, movies and comic art which are all storytelling devices.

Rivera, along with David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896- 1974) and José Clemente Orozco (1883- 1949) comprise the three major artists of the modern Mexican mural movement beginning in 1921. Each of the artists renders the figure and historical events with characteristic style, technique and with highly distinguishing approaches. A primary source of inspiration for Rivera, is the Renaissance fresco. Rivera saw and admired these works in 1920-21 during a trip to Italy, at the end of his fourteen year stay in Europe. When he returned to Mexico, Rivera set out to make frescoes in Mexico and the United States in the traditional manner of the Italian masters. When Rivera looked to the Renaissance examples, he found a narrative form of the people, a formal composition and classical technique. He also saw the ancient Mexican murals, newly discovered. Hollywood and film were of particular interest to Rivera. Students will be able to make the visual and intellectual connections among the art and message of a Rivera mural, a comic strip and a movie.

"Rivera saw in motion pictures a reconciliation between art and technology, as well as the fusion between

southern and northern (Mexico and the United States) cultures that he sought. In addition he recognized the populist dimension of film, notably the earlier silent movies that dealt directly with class and labor issues, ... Rivera appreciated the mass communicative power of cinematic narrative to which his murals offered a parallel. The comic-book nature of his presentation of historic events has also been noted as an aspect of his approach to modernity."

A fresco is permanently affixed to wall. It is painted directly onto a wall or ceiling covered in fresh, wet plaster, one small part at a time. Unlike a real fresco, the student mural is not permanent, nor made with plaster. Using a ground such as laminated pieces of paper, burlap, canvas or other fabric, the student mural is portable. Another way in which the work of students differs from the traditional fresco is in dimension. A fresco is flush with the wall. The student mural is slightly three-dimensional or low-relief. Exploration of three-dimensional techniques and media lends texture and excitement to the project. Siqueiros thought murals should be powerful and energetic. His painted figures move through space with vitality. Siqueiros proposed that mural walls should be shaped three-dimensionally so that paintings on these surfaces would physically come forward and recede. In fact, this idea is old. Some of the images in the 17,000 year old cave paintings in Lascaux, France use the natural contours of the walls to make the animals appear three dimensional.

Evaluation

Evaluation tools such as rubrics, are created by students and teacher and are employed at intervals during the unit. Results are useful in determining the degree of success in achieving objectives and for adjusting and correcting work habits throughout the process.

This studio experience is meant to be artistically rigorous, rich and complex. In it, students learn with profundity, about themselves in their environment, both as private individuals and as public people. Students create a personal narrative in the form of a journal, and place themselves within the larger narrative of a mural.

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KAHLO, Frida

Fulang-Chang and I. 1937

Two-part ensemble (assembled after 1939). Part one: 1937, oil on composition board, 15 3/4 x 11" (39.9 x 27.9 cm); painted mirror frame (added after 1939), 22 1/4 x 17 3/8 x 1 3/4" (56.6 x 44.1 x 4.5 cm). Part two: (after 1939) mirror with painted frame, 25 1/4 x 19 1/8 x 1 3/4" (64.1 x 48.5 x 4.4 cm), including frame.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Mary Sklar Bequest. Photograph © 1999 The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Diego Rivera

The Making of a Fresco, Showing the Building of a City,

April- June 1931, fresco, 5.68 x 9.91 m.

San Francisco Art Institute

Photograph © The Detroit Institute of Arts

Photographer: Dirk Bakker

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera: An Abbreviated Timeline

1886

December 13 Diego Rivera born in Guanajuato, Mexico.

1889

Rivera begins to draw.

1898

Rivera enrolls in San Carlos for the study of art.

1906- 10

Rivera wins scholarship for study in Europe.

1907

Frida Kahlo born in Coyoacán, a suburb of Mexico City.

1910

Mexican Revolution. Rivera has successful exhibition.

1911

Rivera returns to Europe to paint and exhibit.

1913

Kahlo contracts polio.

1913-7

Rivera's Cubist Period.

1921

Rivera returns to Mexico.

1922

Rivera begins first mural.

Kahlo enters La Escuela Nacional Preparatoria (The National Preparatory School).

Kahlo and Rivera first meet when Rivera paints murals in the auditorium at the Preparatoria.

1925

Kahlo takes private art classes.

Kahlo severely injured in streetcar accident.

1926

While recovering from accident, Kahlo begins to paint.

1927

Kahlo and Rivera meet.

1927-8

Rivera visits Soviet Union

1929

Rivera begins work on Palacio Nacional murals showing the history of Mexico.

Kahlo and Rivera marry.

1930

Rivera and Kahlo travel to San Francisco, California.

April 30- June 2 paints the "Making of a Fresco" in the gallery of the California School of Fine Arts

1931

Rivera returns to Mexico.

1932

Rivera and Kahlo travel to Detroit, Michigan and New York. Rivera paints murals at the Detroit Institute of Arts and at the New Workers School and RCA Building in New York.

1934

Rivera returns to Mexico.

1935

Kahlo painting.

1937- 42

Rivera paints no murals in Mexico, works on sketches and paintings.

1937

Kahlo paints "Fulang-Chang and I."

1938

In New York, Kahlo's first painting exhibitions.

1939

Kahlo travels to Paris and exhibits work.

Kahlo and Rivera divorce.

1940

Rivera and Kahlo travel to San Francisco to exhibit and paint. They remarry.

1941

Rivera and Kahlo return to Mexico to continue working, Rivera on murals, paintings and a mosaic and Kahlo on paintings.

1944- 54

Kahlo keeps painted and written diary.

1943

Kahlo begins teaching painting.

1946- 53

Kahlo undergoes many surgeries.

Kahlo is awarded the National Painting Award.

1949

Major retrospective of 1,000 pieces of Rivera's work in Mexico.

1953

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Kahlo's first solo exhibit in Mexico.

1954

Kahlo dies.

1955

Rivera travels to Moscow and Eastern Europe.

1957

Mural at California School of Fine Arts (now San Francisco Art Institute) is cleaned and rededicated after being hidden behind a false wall in around 1947.

Rivera dies.

Learning Activities

Included in this section are mix and match ideas and four fully realized learning activities: I'll Try Out the Pencils, Moments in Time, A Close Look and The Big Picture.

Mix and Match

Mix and match activities are suggested for use in the visual journal. They consist of three groups : Visual Art Themes, Visual Art Techniques and Writing Themes. Many of the Visual Art Themes and Writing Themes are taken directly from Frida Kahlo's diary while others are suggested to round out the learning experience. With imagination and personal style, educators synthesize elements from one, two or three categories to create journal activities. In some cases, media and technique suggestions are made with the Visual Art Theme suggestions. Educators may be inspired to create their own themes with which to combine the suggested themes.

Visual Art Themes

- title page
- self-portraits
- illustrations for a Pre-Columbian myth
- self as animal
- animal as symbol
- pet drawings
- museum sketches
- monochromatic monotypes
- Mexican flora cut-outs

gesture and contour drawings
personal visual narratives
transfer and counterproof prints using Pre-Columbian sources (sculptural and architectural)
paraphrasing artists' (both Kahlo and Rivera) work
scenes from the artists' lives
collage with a photograph
mixed media activity based on el día de los muertos
surrealist games of constellations and exquisite corpse
automatic drawing
sketches
diagrams
doodles

Visual Art Techniques

drawing with marker, colored pencil, pen, pencil, pen and ink, watercolor pencils
watercolor monoprint
transfer and counter transfer print
watercolor painting
collage
photomontage

paper cut-out collage

Writing Themes

title page
descriptive and comparative analysis of “Fulang-Chang and I” and “The Making of a Fresco”
stream of consciousness
description of an imaginary world
autobiographical writing
reflections on the symbolism of colors
letters to the Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera
subjective responses
descriptions of methods of working
notes
stories
personal myths
poetry

Fully Realized Learning Activities

I'll Try Out the Pencils...

I'll try out the pencils
sharpened to the point of infinity
which always sees ahead:
Green- good warm light
Magenta- Aztec. old TLAPALI
 blood of prickly pear, the
 brightest and oldest
 color of mole, of leaves becoming
 earth
 madness sickness fear
 part of the sun and of happiness
 electricity and purity love
 nothing is black- really nothing
 leaves, sadness, science, the whole
 of Germany is this color
 more madness and mystery
all the ghosts wear
clothes of this color, or at
least their underclothes
 color of bad advertisements
 and of good business
distance, Tenderness
 can also be this blue blood?

Well, who knows!

(mole- dark brown spicy chocolate sauce)

Content Standard #1 Understanding and applying media and processes.

Content Standard #2 Using knowledge of structures and functions.

Content Standard #3 Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.

Content Standard #4 Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Content Standard #6 Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

Background- Personal and cultural symbolism of color can be examined in the diary of Frida Kahlo. The diary is a visual journal of the artist's innermost thoughts, ideas and feelings on art and life. It is the diary entry that forms the basis of this student activity. Picture Frida Kahlo looking at a set of colored pencils. Often the materials of art are part of the inspiration. In gold, Kahlo writes in her diary: Probare los lapices tajados al punto infinito que mira siempre adelante: (I'll try out the pencils sharpened to the point of infinity which always sees ahead:). Kahlo refers to the metaphysical quality of art to reach beyond the surface of illusion to a deeper meaning. She continues forming words in blue, magenta, brown, green, red and yellow, describing and connecting her thoughts and beliefs to the colors of her pencils. Kahlo's color associations create a prismatic view of her inner world.

Extension: Explore the meaning of color further by reading from two additional sources. A folktale from Chiapas retold by Subcomandante Marcos, The Story of Colors and an Aztec myth retold by Gerald McDermott, Musicians of the Sun, tell how color is brought to the world.

Goal- Explore self through the meaning of color.

Objectives- The student will be able to:

Associate color with people, places, events, food, emotions.

Identify color association in Kahlo's diary..

Create a sketchbook page showing personal color associations.

Materials

The Diary of Frida Kahlo, an Intimate Self Portrait
sketchbook
colored pencils
white drawing paper 12" X 4 1/2"
glue

water soluble colored pencils
brushes
watercolors
copies of Kahlo's diary entry

Extension Materials

Subcomandante Marcos, *The Story of Colors*
Gerald McDermott, *Musicians of the Sun*

Activities

1. Read all or part of Kahlo's diary entry on color symbolism. Determine the appropriateness of the content for the age of the students. Explain, point out and discuss how Kahlo's choices tell us something about her. Look at the facsimile in *The Diary of Frida Kahlo, an Intimate Self Portrait*.
2. Class makes a larger than life facsimile of all or part of Kahlo's diary entry by dividing the lines among the students. Lines are copied onto strips of paper in colored pencil and glued together in order. (Variations: Students make a partial or complete facsimile in their sketchbook. Another approach is to have , students write assigned lines in their sketchbook rather than making the large class display.) Students explain what, if anything, is learned about Kahlo from the line(s) she or he copied.
3. Find a developmentally appropriate way to encourage students to associate color with feelings, places, people and objects. For example, give students an array of twelve colored pencils. Name an object such as apple. Ask students to pick up the pencil that they associate with an apple, red, yellow or maybe green. Another way to investigate color associations is to hold up a colored pencil. Ask each student to name something that is that color. For example, What is red? Answers

may include apple, stop lights, valentine hearts, blood, anger, passion. Explain and point out that the choices made about colors and associations tell something about the person making the choices.

4. Continue by having students make one color statement or several in their sketchbook. Sketchbook color entries can be made over a space of time or all at once. Limit number of colored pencil hues to be used at any given time. For example, do one color or four in one sitting. Consider each color carefully. Make personal associations with the colors and write in color, modeling writing after Kahlo's diary, Embellish with watercolor, watercolor monotype or watercolor pencil.

5. Share all or part of sketchbook color entries if students wish to do so. What, if anything, is revealed about each student's personality? What characteristics and associations do students in the class share? How are they different?

Extension Activity

6. Read about color associations in traditional folk lore in Subcomandante Marcos, The Story of Colors and Gerald McDermott, Musicians of the Sun. What are the color associations?

7. Write a myth about the origin of color.

Evaluation

art work and writing in sketchbook
Kahlo facsimile
discussions

8. I'll try out the pencils [GOLD]
9. sharpened to the point of infinity [GOLD]
10. which always sees ahead: [GOLD]
11. Green- good warm light [TEAL]

12. Magenta- Aztec. old TLAPALI [MAGENTA]
 13. blood of prickly pear, the [MAGENTA]
 14. brightest and oldest [MAGENTA]
 15. color of mole, of leaves becoming [BROWN]
 17. earth [RED]
 18. madness sickness fear [YELLOW]
 19. part of the sun and of happiness [YELLOW]
 20. electricity and purity [TURQUOISE] love [BROWN-BLACK]
 21. nothing is black- really nothing [BLACK, nada underlined in GREEN]
 22. leaves, sadness, science, the whole [GREEN]
 23. of Germany is this color [GREEN underlined with BLUE]
24. more madness and mystery [YELLOW]
25. all the ghosts wear [YELLOW]
26. clothes of this color, or at [YELLOW]
 27. least their underclothes [YELLOW]
 28. color of bad advertisements [TEAL]
29. and of good business [TEAL]
 30. distance, Tenderness [BLUE distance underlined in BLUE and RED]
31. can also be this blue [BLUE] blood? [RED]

Well, who knows! [RED]

[Number and color notations added by Savage.]

Moments in Time

Content Standard #1 Understanding and applying media and processes.

Content Standard #2 Using knowledge of structures and functions.

Content Standard #3 Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.

Content Standard #4 Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Background- This is a journal activity with results to be shared with the class. Each student creates a visual journal page which is a combination of monoprint, illustration and written element about an event in the life of Kahlo or Rivera. Upon completion, the journals are opened to the event and assembled in chronological order. Students teach each other about the artists.

Goal- Learn and share information about artists.

Objectives- The student will:

Collect information about Kahlo or Rivera from a variety of sources.

Choose an event to illustrate.

Choose a suitable writing form.

Use monoprint technique.

Present work.

Relate selected events in the lives of Kahlo and Rivera.

Materials

resources- see Bibliography, Student Resources, Posters and Postcards

visual journal

watercolor paint

brushes

variety of drawing and writing media

Activities

32. Teacher presents some material and students collect information about the lives of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. View videotapes, read from magazines or biographies. Look at posters, timelines and teacher made displays. Search electronic resources. Students narrow focus to one artist, and then concentrate on one significant event.

33. Create a rubric for evaluation of activities and fill out as each activity is completed.

34. Using a format or criteria for note taking, students gather pertinent material. Record information: written and sketched, in the visual journal. Photocopies, if used, are glued into the vj.

35. Experiment with monoprint technique first. Experiment with color, texture, brushstroke and composition. Choose colors, composition and brushstrokes to complement vj entry. Then open vj to two adjacent, blank sheets. Paint quickly in watercolor on one sheet of the vj. Press the adjacent blank sheet against the painted sheet. Open and allow to dry. Important- use transparent colors which will not overpower further drawing and writing to be done over the monoprint.

36. Choose a writing type which best suits the event in the life of the artist. For example, use a newspaper headline for the death of Rivera, a marriage announcement for the marriage of Kahlo and Rivera, a letter from Kahlo to a friend describing the opening of her first art exhibition. Write a draft in the vj. Include the date and place of the event.

37. Choose imagery to illustrate the event. Make preliminary sketches in the vj.

38. Superimpose image and writing over the monoprint. Choose from a variety of media to draw and write.

39. Prepare a short statement, explanation, reading and showing of vj entry.

40. Open vj to events and arrange in chronological order. Present.

Evaluation

notes, sketches, drafts
monoprint
completed vj entry
presentation
student/teacher created rubric

A Close Look

Content Standard #1 Understanding and applying media and processes.

Content Standard #2 Using knowledge of structures and functions.

Content Standard #3 Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.

Content Standard #4 Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Content Standard #6 Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

Background- These activities guide students in an investigation of the work of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera by taking an in-depth look at two works of art, "Fulang-Chang and I" and "The Making of a Fresco."

Goal- Explore two contrasting artists' ways of depicting identity.

Objectives- The student will:

Describe, analyze and interpret art using spoken and written language.

Describe, analyze and interpret art by making visual images.

Materials

Reproductions of “Fulang-Chang and I” and “The Making of a Fresco.”
watercolor paint
brushes
crayons or oil pastels
a variety of writing media

Activities

41. Display “Fulang-Chang and I” and “The Making of a Fresco.” Discuss or write, looking for points of comparison. Fully describe one art work in a column in the vj. Then describe the other work of art, comparing at each juncture. For example:
woman- man; one person- many people; front- back; small- large (give dimensions).

42. Draw and paint parts of the two art works. Choose one element of the art work to look at more closely such as the background, the clothing worn by the artist, his and her hair or the figure closest to the artist. Make two drawings, one of each art work, however, only draw the chosen element. Render in oil pastel or crayon leaving white paper showing. Paint with transparent watercolor, allowing the oil based media to resist the watercolor paint. Dry.

43. Add words to images, further describing the subjects of comparison.

Extension- Follow with a self- portrait activity zeroing in on one part, an eye or hand. What does this small part say about the whole? What clues of identity are revealed? Jewelry, fingernails, make-up, eye color, expression, gesture?

Evaluation

Discussion
Written comparisons
Visual comparisons

The Big Picture

Content Standard #1 Understanding and applying media and processes.

Content Standard #2 Using knowledge of structures and functions.

Content Standard #3 Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.

Content Standard #4 Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Background- Students plan and execute a mural which includes each student's portrait and is made along the organizing and thematic principals of Rivera's murals. The mural depicts an everyday scene from school. Since there is no "Diego Rivera" or single person chosen to design the art work or direct others, students take on the responsibility as a unit. Equipped with some rules of conduct and means to make decisions, students make decisions through group process. The teacher mediates only when absolutely necessary. Group process, if allowed to flow, may result in the appointment of a "master artist," someone who is chosen to create the mural plan. Another way to proceed is to vote on mural proposals submitted by everyone in the class. Students are given jobs such a timekeeper, supply manager and recorder. Tasks on the mural are divided by physical space or by specialization such as faces or architecture so each student has a role. As a point of interest, it should be noted that mural painting was a course of study offered at the California School of Fine Arts during the era of the New Deal arts projects.

To add interest and vitality, the mural is slightly three dimensional.

Goal- Experience group process in the execution of a collaborative, large scale art work.

Objectives- The student will:

- Participate in the design of a group mural.
- Participate in the execution of a group mural.
- Participate in the decision making process.
- Use a grid.
- Explore three-dimensional potential.

Materials

pencils
visual journal
paper
paint (markers, oil pastels)
assorted collage material (papers, fabric, photographs)
adhesives
mural backing
rulers, yard sticks

Activities

44. Teacher and students agree upon a set of rules and strategies to govern mural making. Review elements of group process and inclusion of everyone in the process. Decide on the strategy for making the mural plan. It may be to decide by consensus that one student design the mural, or each student make a plan and one is chosen, or parts of each student's plan could be included in one design. Another method is to decide upon a given framework and divide the spaces. An example is a school, each student designing a room.

45. Record daily progress in the visual journal.

46. Create and use an ongoing assessment rubric. Include group process as well as art assessment.

47. Review the parameters of the project- the mural must depict some aspect of school life, include a representation of each student and be three-dimensional or low-relief.

48. Decide upon and assign work tasks.

49. Choose a mural design. Enlarge to monumental size on backing material using a grid.

50. Decide upon media.

51. Experiment with three-dimensional techniques such as additions of cardboard, folded or crumpled paper.

52. Decide upon and assign art tasks.

53. Proceed to work on mural.

54. Display completed mural with written explanations about the process of making the mural gleaned from the vj entries.

Evaluation

visual journal daily process notes
participation in group process
written explanation
three-dimensional experiments
participation in final mural project
assessment rubric

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