UNIT 1: Deconstructing Mediated Identities

11th and 12th Grade Art Elective
Luis David Soltero

Lesson 1: Constructing a mediated collage

Lesson 2: Deconstructing advertisements

Lesson 3: (Re)constructing your identity
STAGE I – DESIRED RESULTS

UNIT RATIONALE

Visual culture is everywhere and it is didactic. Through advertisements, television, websites, clothing design, and museums, we all receive and learn messages teaching hegemonic and normative cultural expectations. Visual culture has become such a constant part of our lives that people often take the content of these messages for granted. The art room is the ideal place to scrutinize how visual messages are constructed and how they can influence those who receive them. This unit is designed to equip students with the ability to critically analyze common messages in visual culture, encourage them to study the historical context of those messages, and empower them to respond with their own counter messages.
ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Visual culture is everywhere and it has the ability to teach and influence.

The way people are imaged and branded through visual culture affects how we define others and ourselves.

Artist can co-opt the language of advertising in order to create counter-narratives.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What role does popular visual culture play in personal and cultural identity formation?

How can Visual Culture promote marginalized discourses or Points-of-view?

How can visual culture serve social justice?

“With my work I am trying to use the language of advertisements to talk about things that advertisements couldn’t responsibly talk about”

Hank Willis Thomas

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STANDARDS ADDRESSED

STANDARD 1 Methods, Materials, and Techniques Students will demonstrate knowledge of the methods, materials, and techniques unique to the visual arts.

STANDARD 4 Drafting, Revising, and Exhibiting Students will demonstrate knowledge of the processes of creating and exhibiting artwork: drafts, critique, self-assessment, refinement, and exhibit preparation.

STANDARD 5 Critical Response Students will describe and analyze their own work and the work of others using appropriate visual arts vocabulary. When appropriate, students will connect their analysis to interpretation and evaluation.

STANDARD 6: Purposes and Meanings in the Arts: Students will describe the purposes for which works of dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and architecture were and are created, and, when appropriate, interpret their meanings.

STANDARD 7: Roles of Artists in Communities: Students will describe the roles of artists, patrons, cultural organizations, and arts institutions in societies of the past and present.

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Hank Willis Thomas, *The Liberation of TO*, 2008
UNIT OBJECTIVES

Lesson 1:

Students will interpret magazine covers and examine the way imagery and text are used to market to an audience.

Students will analyze the role of visual culture in reinforcing culturally constructed identities.

Students will discuss and compare their collages to deepen understanding and foster empathy.

Lesson 2:

Students will research and identify the way various communities have been represented and targeted in advertising.

Students will study and examine the historical context for a culturally constructed identity.

Students will synthesize their knowledge of advertisements and history by creating a socially conscious advertisement.

Lesson 3:

Students will participate in an inquiry-based exercise examining images dealing with cultural experiences, stereotypes and their connection to identity.

Students will express their own sense of identity by incorporating personally significant images within a paper silhouette.

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Overarching:

Students will analyze the role of visual culture in creating and enforcing cultural norms and stereotypes.

Students will debate whether visual culture can be an instrument for social justice.

STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

Lesson 1:

Students will actively participate in an inquiry based discussion analyzing visual culture and how different people are represented within it.

Students will choose a socially constructed identity (example: young, Mexican, male) and collect corresponding images from magazines, newspapers, and other printed materials.

Students will create a collaged portrait using the images found in various forms of visual culture.

Lesson 2:

Students will meet with school librarian to find resources relevant to their chosen socially constructed identity.

Students will create an advertisement with a socially conscious message visually and clearly incorporating their research.

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Lesson 3:

Students will create projects that demonstrate insights into the external and internal influences that shape the student’s identity.

Students will complete a self-assessment worksheet where they will reflect on what they have learned about constructed identities and visual culture.

Students will create self-portrait by creating a paper silhouette and infusing with personally significant images.

CONTINUUM OF ASSESSMENTS:

Students will participate in a mid-way critique and will be assessed on their level of involvement.
   - Are they giving others constructive feedback?
   - Are they reflective about their work and process?

Students will generate their own rubric to measure what makes a good finished piece.

Students will complete the following Self-Assessment Sheet:

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Self-Assessment Sheet 11th and 12th Art Elective
Reconstructing your Identity

What did we do? List as many steps of the project as you can remember

What did you learn from Hank Willis Thomas artist statement and work?

What does your own piece communicate? What does it mean?

How did you incorporate “visual culture”, symbolic objects, or techniques to add content to your piece?

What did you struggle with in making the piece? How did you resolve the problem?

What would you do differently if you were to do this project again?

What did you learn about art, visual culture, identity, or yourself through this project?

Based on your level of engagement with this project, what grade would you give yourself?

A 100 99 98 97 96 95 94 93 92 91 90 89 88 87 86 85 84 83 82 81 80 C 79 78 77 76 75 74 73 72 71 70

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STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE OF LESSONS:

• Lesson 1: Constructing a mediated collage

In “Constructing a mediated collage” students will discuss the way visual culture affects their own sense of personal and cultural identity. Students will select a socially constructed identity (preferably the one with which they identify) and create a collage using pictures found through various media sources like magazines, newspapers, and art books. Through the process there will be structured activities where students will reflect about the images they are finding, the choices they are making, and how that translates into their art making process.

Art Materials

• Magazines (As many as possible, different types)
• Newspapers
• Art books
• Internet access
• Printer access
• 20 Glue (sticks and liquid)
• 20 Pencils
• Paper (20-30 sheets 18x24in)

Resources and Exemplars

Works by Hank Willis Thomas and Gaby Trinkaus
*See Unit 1: References

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• Lesson 2: Deconstructing advertisements

In “Deconstructing advertisements” students will appropriate a popular advertisement, logo, or brand in order to subvert its intended message and reveal marginalized narratives. As a crucial part of this project, students will conduct research revealing the historical context under which socially constructed identities or stereotypes have been created. Students will discuss how visual culture can manifest and promote historical systems of oppression. This lesson will then develop the students’ ability to use the language of popular visual culture to instead serve social justice.

Art Materials
- Library access
- Computer access
- Internet access
- Photoshop
  - Or
- Photocopy machine
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Pencils
- Tracing paper
- Magazines

Resources and Exemplar
Works by Hank Willis Thomas
*See Unit 1: References
• Lesson 3: **Reconstructing your identity**

In “Reconstructing your identity” students will create lists naming significant events, people, places, objects or symbols that they feel have influenced their sense of identity. After brainstorming, researching, and selecting ideas and images, the students will personalize a silhouette made in their image as a way to express identities and practice self-definition. The piece should be informed by the knowledge about visual culture built throughout the unit. Once every student has modified and personalized their silhouette, they will be installed as a wall mural representing the class identity as one of a group of individuals.

**Art Materials**
- 24 large pieces of construction paper 6’x3’
- 3 Sharpie markers
- An overhead projector
- 24 Scissors
- Magazines
- Glue
- 24 Pencils
- Colored Pencils 24 Sets
- Chalk and oil Pastels 12 sets each
- Watercolor, Acrylic, Tempera paints
- Brushes
- Access to photocopy machine
- Access to internet

**Resources and Exemplar**
Work by Hank Willis Thomas
*See Unit 1: References
And benchmark by David Soltero

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Unit 1: References


