

Zoe Garderet and Ezra Kanarick
Aesthetics: Beauty and Art

Materials: Paper, pens, Play-Doh

Goal: Explore definitions of beauty. Distinguish objective and subjective traits within beauty and art.

Warmup:

- The students take three minutes to write down some things they find beautiful (Either examples of beauty in their lives or traits that make something beautiful)
- Students briefly share what they wrote

Activity:

- Take 10 minutes to make something you find beautiful
- Zoe creates a neutral work (not conventionally beautiful), Ezra creates a work that is conventionally unbeautiful
- Students share their items one by one
- Zoe shares her work: Do the students find Zoe's work beautiful?
- Ezra shares his work: Do the students find Ezra's work beautiful?

General Discussion on activity:

- Why did you decide to make what you made?
- What made certain works beautiful? What made them not beautiful?
- Are there any traits of an object that are universally beautiful?
- Is living/life itself beautiful? What is meant when someone says "life is beautiful?"

Discussion on art (if time permits):

- What is the difference between beauty and art?
- How can we judge what is and is not art?
- Is all art beautiful?
- Does intention matter in creating art?
- Can actions be art? (think about performing arts)

Concluding thoughts:

How do our perceptions of beauty influence the way we live our lives? How can it be productive? How can it be harmful?

Why do we ascribe moral qualities to beauty and ugliness (beauty as "good" and ugliness as "bad")?