

Objectives

- Students will discuss current challenges and overarching global issues faced in the world today.
- Students will learn about contemporary artists as activists.
- Students will define the concept of guerrilla art and design a work of their own.
- Students will target a social or global issue and decide how they will become an activist now.

Activity

The benchmark #4 for sixth grade Social Studies in Utah is written as follows: “The modern world has witnessed incredible change in global trade, the spread of democracy, the influence of technology, an increase in environmental awareness and advances in human knowledge. The 20th century saw two world wars, the rise of competing economic systems, and unprecedented technological change. Against the backdrop of the modern world there are many opinions regarding the civic responsibilities humans have to one another.” In this lesson students will evaluate current global issues and their rights and responsibilities in the interconnected world.

1. Brainstorm a list of hardships or difficulties that society is facing in the modern world. Answers may include things like loneliness, racism, homelessness, illness, poverty, or pollution.
2. On a piece of paper ask students to take a few minutes to answer the following prompt: “Look at the list on the board we have created. Can you make a difference? How? In what ways can you address the items on the board?” Discuss answers in small groups as tables first, then share answers with the class.
3. Show the students *Above Camp Douglas* by George M. Ottinger. This is an image of the Salt Lake Valley that was painted over 150 years ago. Discuss how the landscape has changed from then to now. Discuss the impact that people have had on the land as it has been changed and developed over time. Is the impact positive? Negative? How?
4. What is activism? Discuss ideas and give definitions. Essentially, activism is taking action to effect social change. It can be done in many ways. Share artworks from the **Speaking Volumes | Transforming Hate** exhibition. Explain that this is a show that includes the work of more than thirty artists who have transformed thousands of controversial white supremacist books into uplifting works of art.
5. Show the artworks of Chris Jordan. How does his artwork bring awareness to important issues? In what ways does Chris Jordan help the viewer to understand large numbers and important statistics? (His manner of stacking and layering objects helps us to arrange information in a way that our minds can comprehend.) How can his work be considered activism?



George M. Ottinger, *Above Camp Douglas*, 1868

Materials

- Assorted video clips about guerrilla art and important historical activists.
- Paper
- Camera
- Recycled materials
- Assorted odds and ends.

Images from the Museum

- George M. Ottinger, *Above Camp Douglas*, 1868

Utah Core Standards

Social Studies Standard 4: Students will understand current global issues and their rights and responsibilities in the interconnected world.

Objective 3 Determine human rights and responsibilities in the world.

- a. Identify rights considered essential for all humans.
- b. Propose steps individual students can take to protect these rights (e.g. support for sister schools, energy and resource conservation, letter writing, career choices, fundraising efforts).

Visual Arts Standard: Students will relate artistic skills, ideas, and work with personal meaning and external context (Standards 6.V.CO.1–2).

Standard 6.V.CO.1: Generate a collection of ideas reflecting current interest and concerns that could be investigated in art-making.

Standard 6.V.CO.2: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding by analyzing how art reflects changing times, traditions, resources, and cultural uses.



Activity (continued):

6. How can you become an activist? Guerilla art, also known in some circles as “street art,” is a great way to explore ideas and interact with the world around you in a non threatening way. It usually involves intentionally abandoning anonymous artworks in a public space. It can be created for a number of reasons...to make a statement, to interact with a stranger, to invite the viewer to think differently, to open a discussion, or just to send out good vibes. Small artistic acts can start a revolution. Point out that sometimes artwork can be more than an object, it can be an idea.

7. Tell students about the Secret Toy Society. The Toy Society is a world-wide collective of toy makers who make toys and leave them as gifts for perfect strangers. The project was started in Australia in June 2008 by a crafter as an attempt to create a ‘something for nothing’ experience for anyone who discovered a toy. What behavior does this encourage? What was her objective? How is this activism?

8. Explain that guerrilla art can be done in many different ways, but it is primarily interacting with strangers with a predetermined objective in mind. For example, maybe you are trying to target lonely senior citizens, so you create a series of friendly postcards to mail to individuals in a local old folks home. Maybe your objective is to make others aware of the need to recycle, so you create an artwork out of one weeks worth of trash. Maybe you’d like to help the world see things differently so you re-name objects at the grocery store using post-it notes. Remember that in order to participate you must respect others and your surroundings. Never deface or add inappropriate words or images.

9. Show the video clips about kids making a difference. How are Cole, Alivia, Austin, and Lia activists? What are they doing to solve problems in our world? How could you turn these projects into guerrilla art? In what ways can you contribute? As students are thinking about their answer, have them watch the “You can make a difference” video clip. (The first 3-4 minutes is enough).

10. Next have students start designing their guerrilla art project. What is their objective? What would they like to target? Would you like to work alone or as a team? Complete the Guerrilla Planning Guide worksheet to help you.

11. After the guerrilla project is complete have students create a poster detailing their experience. Students will report back to their classmates, show their pictures and share their experience. Were they effective activists? What could have gone differently? How would they change things if they were to attempt guerrilla art in the future?

Assessment:

Carefully evaluate each section of the Guerrilla Planning Guide and the finished poster. The teacher will evaluate student thought processes and execution of those processes on a scale of 1-5. Five=Magnificent, Four=Great, Three=Good, Two=Standards were not met, One=Needs Improvement. Possible criteria may include: great planning, shows evidence of clear objective, quality work, and evidence of activism.

Sources

Famous Activists: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBGqfIH5s>

You can make a difference by:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z95QYwry2k>

Cole: Learn about how cole raises money for pediatric cancer research through the Snowdrop organization and his kids-only race, Cole’s Cancer Crusade. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tj-1gC1AhSM&t=2s>

Alivia: Learn about how Alivia and her mother founded Hugs with Love. They make and donate weighted blankets for kids with autism and related disorders. : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdVzQ00t2CA>

Lia: Learn about how Lia started the Hopeful Hearts Club to help kids staying at the homeless shelter in her community. She plans birthday parties, throws holiday celebrations and does so much more <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEw0Kz30d1k>

Austin: learned that some kids didn’t have warm winter hats and gloves, he decided to help. Learn about how he and his mom started Austin’s Closet, where they collect clothing, food and other items that local families need. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObTMUKWhSBC>

(won’t play at work) At 11 and 13 years-old, Melati and Isabel Wijsen started an enormous fight to force their government to ban plastic bags in Bali. (Start video at 3:35)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCQHdVfeops>

Chris Jordan artworks

<http://www.chrisjordan.com/gallery/rtn2/#gyre2>

<http://www.chrisjordan.com/gallery/rtn2/#t-rex>

<http://www.chrisjordan.com/gallery/rtn/#cans-seurat>

Gallery <http://www.chrisjordan.com/gallery/rtn/#silent-spring>

The Secret Toy Society: <http://thetoyssociety.blogspot.com/p/about.html>
Local artist Alyson Adams BYU: <http://fox13now.com/2018/02/26/byu-student-turns-campus-into-a-controversial-art-project-displaying-lack-of-female-representation/amp/>

Other resources:

The Guerrilla Art Kit, by Keri Smith



George M. Ottinger, *Above Camp Douglas*, 1868

