

**Presentation Title:** Motivating Incarcerated Youth Through Socially-Transformative Art

**Grade Level:** 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Overview:**

Art making is more than skills and techniques; it is creating meaningful pieces that evoke a transformation. During my Field Experience course at Kent State University, I had the opportunity of teaching at the Portage County Detention Center. Exposing students to contemporary art and visual culture allowed me to gain their trust and relate to their interests. Studying modern-day art and imagery permits learners to make direct connections to the world around them (Darts, 2006; Cahen & Kocur, 2011). By creating double-sided puppets and inspirational mugs/cups, students addressed issues of individualism and homelessness respectively. Attendees will experience motivational activities (similar to those utilized in my classroom) and will examine a portion of my students' finished products—learning why present-day art is essential in creating socially-transformative pieces. Contemporary art and visual culture provides the opportunity to teach that art can be socially transformative—pushing students to connect their own ideas and emotions and generate meaning in their pieces (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2004).

**Presentation Outline:**

- Introduction of myself and a general overview of the presentation
- Discuss the importance bringing contemporary art/visual culture into the classroom and why it is vital to teach high school students the socially-transformative aesthetic
  - “The study of [contemporary] art can enhance multicultural and socially activist education by helping to build students’ understanding of their own place in history and emphasizing the capacity and ability of all human beings” (Cahen & Kocur, 2011, p. 9)
  - By utilizing modern-day images and artworks, one can connect/relate with his or her students, gain their trust, and aid them in the successful creation of unique and meaningful pieces
- Explanation of Lesson Plan 1—titled *We As Individuals* (lesson outline attached below)
  - Discuss how I developed the idea and why I felt it was necessary to teach such a lesson
  - Demonstrate some Opening Activity games and describe how I was able to get the students motivated
  - Explain and illustrate the creation process and show my finish model as well as the students’ pieces
  - Provide examples of Closing Activities and Student Critiques
- Explanation of Lesson Plan 2—titled *Dear \_\_\_\_\_*, (lesson outline attached below)
  - Discuss how I developed the idea and why I felt it was necessary to teach such a lesson
  - Demonstrate some Opening Activity games and describe how I was able to get the students motivated
  - Explain and illustrate the creation process and show my finish model as well as the students’ pieces
  - Provide examples of Closing Activities and Student Critiques
- Q & A—closing discussion

**Contact Information:** dhumphr7@kent.edu (Please feel free to email me at any time with any comments, questions, and/or concerns. Thank you.)

**LESSON PLAN 1****Lesson Title:** We as Individuals**Lesson Length:** Two 90-minute class periods**Lesson Focus:**

I believe it is vital that my students be exposed to Shilpa Gupta's *Don't See Don't Hear Don't Speak* because it successfully demonstrates the need for individuality. High school students are constantly being exposed to new ideas and trends. There is nothing wrong with these movements, but the children deserve the opportunity to make their own choices. Many teenagers simply follow the crowd—losing their uniqueness in the process. The work will allow the students to comprehend how the visual arts relate to cultures and groups (Clements & Wachowiak, 2010). Also, the piece will allow the students to see their sense of community within the detention center. They themselves are a unique group and they deserve the opportunity to demonstrate their personality. They will understand the intent and function of the photograph and will begin to realize art is created for multiple reasons—one being for social change (Clements & Wachowiak, 2010).

Upon completion of the lesson, I expect my students to have a vast understanding of the need for individuality. The project will allow them to see themselves as a group and/or community and as their own unique person through the creation of two-sided puppets.

**Lesson Objectives:***Cognitive:*

1. Critical Inquiry – Students will investigate how Shilpa Gupta (in *Don't See Don't Hear Don't Speak*), Liu Bolin (in *Hiding in the City No. 16 & 17 – People's Policeman*), and Olli Hihnala (in *Zombie Apocalypse*) exhibit the need for individuality.
2. Historical Inquiry – Students will debate and defend how Shilpa Gupta's in (*Don't See Don't Hear Don't Speak*), Liu Bolin's (in *Hiding in the City No. 16 & 17 – People's Policeman*), and Olli Hihnala's (in *Zombie Apocalypse*) choice of materials enhances/degenerates the overall composition of their pieces.

*Affective:*

3. Aesthetic Inquiry – Students will discover how Shilpa Gupta's *Don't See Don't Hear Don't Speak* changes our ideas about individuality.

*Technical:*

4. Studio Inquiry – Students will create a finished two-sided puppet depicting their routine, everyday role as well as the unique, original role of themselves using fabric, yarn, fabric crayons and markers, buttons, fabric glue/Elmer's Glue, black fabric paint, and fiberfill.
5. Studio Inquiry – Students will create a two-sided puppet using hybridity and representin' (Gude, 2004).

**Equipment and Materials:**

- Finished model
- Printed personal copies of 3 artists' visuals for each student
- Nametags (scrap paper to make nametags)
- Paint Shirts

- Drawing paper
- #2 Pencils
- Assortment of crayons
- Scissors
- Fabric crayons and markers
- Fabric/muslin for each student
- Assortment of yarn
- Assortment of buttons
- Unscented black permanent markers
- Black fabric paint
- Fabric Glue/Elmer's Glue
- Hot glue guns/glue sticks/placemats
- Fiberfill
- Wooden sticks
- Styrofoam (to build platforms for the puppets)

**LESSON PLAN 2****Lesson Title:** Dear \_\_\_\_\_,**Lesson Length:** One 90-minute class period**Lesson Focus:**

It is vital that my students be exposed to *What We Are...*, by Lee Jeffries, as well as his other works because they raise awareness on an issue that many of us overlook. Most high school students are mature enough to understand the destruction and faults in the world they live in. We—as humans—are not perfect. We need to stop living life selfishly and begin to help the less fortunate. Art is an essential tool in creating this change and the students need to comprehend that (Clements & Wachowiak, 2010). Art has the power to question the status quo and personally, I believe a child's artwork can speak more loudly about an issue (such as homelessness) than that of a well-known artist. Along with creating art for social change, art is also produced for functional purposes. With the completion of the studio portion of the lesson, my students will be able to appreciate multiple ideas and reasons for art making (Clements & Wachowiak, 2010). By the end of the lesson, I expect my students to fully understand the importance of art and how their creations can make a difference in the world with the completion of two identical inspirational mugs/cups—one for themselves and one to be donated to a local charity.

**Lesson Objectives:***Cognitive:*

1. Critical Inquiry – Students will investigate how Lee Jeffries (in *What We Are...*), Michael Aaron Williams (with his street art), and Blake Mycoskie (with TOMS Shoes) demonstrate the importance of helping those in need.
2. Historical Inquiry – Students will provide group presentations on how Michael Aaron William ([with his street art](#)) and Blake Mycoskie ([with TOMS Shoes](#))—based on YouTube videos—are constantly working to help the less fortunate.

*Affective:*

3. Aesthetic Inquiry – Students will discover how Lee Jeffries's amateur photography raises awareness of homelessness and leaves an everlasting impact on viewers around the world.

*Technical:*

4. Studio Inquiry – Students will create two identical quotes mugs/cups that will provide inspiration to themselves and someone in need using clay, water, and sculpting tools.
5. Studio Inquiry – Students will create two identical quotes mugs/cups using representin' and unity (Gude, 2004).

**Equipment and Materials:**

- Finished model
- Printed personal copies of artists' visuals (3 per student)
- Nametags (scrap pieces of construction paper)
- Black washable markers
- #2 drawing pencils
- Laptops with artists' videos
- Clay for each student (enough to make 2 cups each)

- Clay tools
- Water Bucket
- Water cups
- Mats for clay
- Table clothes
- Paint shirts
- Rags
- Coffee cups (for reference)
- Quotes (for reference)

**Links to YouTube Videos:**

Michael Aaron Williams – [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeT8T3-d2Bk&list=UUSx3zfR\\_2Vf8Q6Vk0TI-2Yw&index=29&feature=plcp](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeT8T3-d2Bk&list=UUSx3zfR_2Vf8Q6Vk0TI-2Yw&index=29&feature=plcp)

Blake Mycoskie (TOMS Shoes) – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MV3HWQH1s>

### References

- Anderson, T., & Milbrandt, M. K. (2004). *Art for life: Authentic instruction in art*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Cahan, S. E., & Kocur, Z. (2011). Contemporary art and multicultural education. In E. Joo, J. Keehn II, & J. Ham-Roberts (Eds.), *Rethinking contemporary art and multicultural education* (pp. 3-16). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Clements, R. D., & Wachowiak, F. (2010). *Emphasis Art: A qualitative art program for elementary and middle schools*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Darts, D. (2006). Art education for a change: Contemporary issues and the visual arts. *Art Education*, 59(5), 6-12.
- Gude, O. (2004). Postmodern principles: In search of 21<sup>st</sup> century art education. *Art Education*, 57(1), 6-14.