

FINDING A COMMON GROUND BETWEEN THE CONTEMPORARY ART WORLD
AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL ART CLASSROOM

By

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A CAPSTONE PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS
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By
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Abstract

Due to limited staff development opportunities I, a public school high school art teacher, have not been exposed to up-to-date strategies that show me how to successfully integrate contemporary art topics into my instruction. This paper describes a capstone project that I conducted to identify possible strategies, challenges and benefits involved in integrating contemporary art into the curriculums of high school art classrooms. The result of the research documented within this paper not only defines the need for updated art curriculum topics but it also suggests specific ways for myself, a high school art teacher to successfully integrate contemporary art into classroom instruction. Although the topics and strategies suggested can be adapted to all grade levels, the research focuses on strategies mainly for the high school art classroom. As part of the research, I asked six high school art teachers who have spent a combined total of 76 years teaching to share the strategies they use to integrate contemporary art into their curriculums. Following suggestions from the survey, I reviewed 181 contemporary art museum education department websites for useful educational materials. These departments create lesson plans and activity guides to accompany their contemporary art exhibits, which are shared freely and digitally through their websites. Through the curation of

my interview results and the online research I developed a website (<http://contemporaryartideasforteachers.weebly.com>) that contains classroom strategies and resources for incorporating contemporary art into classroom instruction. Finally this paper concludes with informed advice from first hand experience for any teachers hesitant to integrate contemporary art into their classroom due to its sometimes controversial nature.

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During my fourth year of teaching, an incident occurred in my classroom that made me realize that I have very little background for properly integrating contemporary art into my curriculum. This revelation happened after a new student was placed into my classroom. Following a short period of getting to know the new student through normal teacher-student interaction and some research of the student's personal file, I came to realize that this student was placed in my classroom because of his behavioral background as well as his interest in art. This student was removed from his previous school because of a confrontation between himself and the principal. The student was then placed into my classroom because of my ability to engage students who were deemed at-risk academically and/or behaviorally.

Knowing this student's background, I decided to ask him to do work outside of the normal classroom curriculum. I asked this student to create a work of art based on a contemporary art book that I found to be parallel to the student's personality and artwork. After I had sent this book home with the student, I was asked to come to the principal's office to discuss the assignment. The student's mother had come to the school to complain to the principal that the content of the book was not appropriate for the age of the student and had asked that I be disciplined due to my reading choice. Not wanting to anger the parent any further, the administration placed me on disciplinary leave and nearly dismissed me from my position.

Looking back on the event, I now realize my choice of subject matter was not school appropriate, even though my intention was to relate my content area to the student. The emotionally draining event has inspired me to want to research and identifying ways for myself and any other interested art teachers to integrate contemporary and social issues into their curriculums in school-appropriate ways.

Statement of the Problem

As a high school art teacher in my ninth year of teaching I feel as though my classroom practices and philosophies need updating. My motivation and passion for the arts over the last few years has become stagnate. If I can sense this, one could understand how my students have formed a detachment from my current teaching practices. It is my belief that other art teachers struggle with engaging students within aspects of their teachings. The focus of this research project is to narrow the gap between contemporary art and K-12 public art school programs to raise student interest levels and promote the arts throughout our communities.

Purpose or Goals of the Study

As a ninth year art teacher and moving to a new school I felt as though my curriculum needed an update. Knowing there is new art being created everyday that I was not integrating into my instruction enough, I needed to find ways to integrate contemporary art topics and contemporary artists within my curriculum with the hopes that student learning and engagement will increase. The information presented in this research project and paper is based on a combination of Internet resources, scholarly articles, personal professional teaching experience and also interviews with high school art teachers who are successful at integrating contemporary art within their instruction.

Research Questions

Reflecting on my current practices as a high school art teacher has led me to investigate new student-centered learning opportunities that integrate contemporary art and contemporary artists into my curriculum. These reflections center on the following questions that have guided my research:

1. What are some ways that I, as a public school art teacher, can successfully integrate contemporary art into instruction?
2. What are some challenges to introducing contemporary art topics and practices within the high school classroom?
3. How might I, as a public school art teacher, stay abreast of contemporary art trends and information about contemporary art?

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Through conversations I've had with other art teachers about the lack of focused staff development for art teachers and my experience of reaching out to a troubled student by using contemporary art as a strategy for engagement, I felt the need to locate appropriate, effective ways in which to integrate contemporary art themes and practices into classroom instruction without fear of reprisal.

Assumptions

I assume that, like me, other high school art teachers have difficulties with engaging students with contemporary art themes and art making practices that are authentically applicable to students' lives. This assumption, along with my belief that teachers might have a difficult time identifying contemporary art that is appropriate for a classroom discussion, has shaped my reasoning for conducting this research project.

Definition of Terms

Contemporary Art: Smith (2009), professor of contemporary art history and theory at the University of Pittsburgh, states in the introduction of his book, *What is Contemporary Art*, "Contemporary art is most of the art that is being made now" (p. 1).

Multi-Cultural Education: Banks (2008) defines multi-cultural education as a set of strategies and materials in U.S. education that was developed to assist teachers to respond to

the many issues created by rapidly changing demographics of their students. It provides students knowledge about the histories, cultures, and contributions of diverse groups.

Limitations of the Study

Throughout this paper I will discuss strategies and challenges to integrating contemporary art into classroom instruction. The research outcomes do not examine specific strategies between student age groups. The strategies mentioned as part of this research can be adapted to any age group. Furthermore, as part of this process, I hope to illustrate that the inclusion of contemporary topics that are relative to our students' lives can provide them with opportunities to gain appreciation for the oftentimes confusing subject of contemporary art at any age. Contemporary art is a very expansive topic that seems in a continual state of flux. It was not possible in the limited time that I had available to conduct this project to completely cover all of the possible topics and practices of contemporary artists working in the field today. Also, I teach in a rural, southern community that has fairly conservative values. What I can teach or not teach in my classroom may be quite different from what a high school art teacher can cover in a large urban school district.

Literature Review

Defining and Questioning Contemporary Art

Terry Smith (2009), professor of contemporary art history and theory at the University of Pittsburgh, states in the introduction of his book, *What is Contemporary Art*, "Contemporary art is most of the art that is being made now" (p. 1). After reading Smith's book, doing a quick survey of my classroom art textbook published in 2005, and reflecting on my current teaching practices I realized that I was not integrating contemporary art topics and artists enough into

my curriculum. Even though this all-encompassing genre of art making would seem accessible, there are aspects of contemporary art that created a boundary between itself and my classroom. The first obstacle was deciding what artists to integrate into my instruction. While conducting an online search of contemporary art, I found the website of the non-profit organization *Art21* (<http://www.pbs.org/art21/>). The PBS series is the leading chronicler of contemporary art. Not only does each episode narrate the work and life of several contemporary artists, the series also aids teachers such as myself by “providing free materials such as educator guides and programs devoted to the explanation and further exploration of contemporary art and artists” (Public Broadcasting Service, 2011). Another great resource that PBS series *Art 21* provides is a list of 100 contemporary artists that they consider the most successful (<http://www.art21.org/100artists>). This list allowed me to concentrate on artists that I knew was successful and I could have a validation of sorts to integrate their artwork and concepts into my classroom instruction. The one problem I found with the series and most of contemporary art, “contemporary art is conceptual, often surrounded by controversy and/or censorship issues” (Jeffers & Parth, 1996, p. 22). The obstacle carries with it a burden of defining what is appropriate for students and classroom viewing.

Contemporary art has undeniably made an impact on society, which is evident if we look to the past to understand where this genre of art began its evolution. Contemporary art is the direct result of a group of artists that gathered to hold the Armory Show in 1913, which has been “lauded as one of the most influential events in the history of American art” (Staples, 2001). According to Doss (2002), the Armory Show of 1913 “sparked American aesthetic experimentation and encouraged a new generation of U.S. patrons sympathetic to contemporary cultural directions” (p. 145). The success of the Armory Show inspired

"independent and progressive currents in contemporary art," which gave artists a new reason to search for a new answer to the insurmountable question of "What is art?" (p. 56).

Philosophies and Aspects of a Contemporary Art Curriculum

Discussing the complex issues that contemporary art raises within a safe and orderly environment such as a classroom could prove useful to "help bridge [students] ordered classroom experience with the chaos and complexity of life outside of school" (Milbrandt, 2002, p. 143). Recognizing this aspect of students' complex lives, a "curriculum should allow students to negotiate dilemmas" (Wiggins, 1989, p.58).

American educator and influential educational theorist George S. Counts states to "face squarely and courageously every social issue and come to grips with life in all of its stark reality," an art teacher must carefully design his/her instruction (as cited in Milbrandt, 2002, p. 154). Gude (2007) states "that teachers must teach students to want to question for knowledge; that questions inspires social growth; and that curriculum must be written with a student's point of view in mind" (p. 2-3). The components she discusses are inspired by interviews conducted with contemporary artists, art educators, and art directors (Gude, 2007).

Given the multi-cultural status of many contemporary artists and the cultural influences often abundant within their work, as educators we must realize that multiculturalism is not going anywhere. The over used term multiculturalism still should be valued as being a part of any successful art education program. Stuhr (1994) suggests that the inclusion of multicultural strategies into instruction could aid reconstruction—not only of society—but possibly aid in the reconstruction of participation in the arts for all social demographics. Stuhr explains several concepts that should be integrated into K-12 art instruction to complete this

reconstruction. These strategies include modern approaches to curriculum design, teaching methods, content, goals, and curriculum objectives.

As a great resource for student learning participatory habits that could lead to involvement within the arts at an adult age, students must be involved within their own contemporary topics within their communities. For teachers such as myself, there are numerous community-based art lessons that can be found on the Web. The North Texas Institute for Educators on The Visual Arts (2011) provides community-based lessons appropriate for teachers such as myself who are looking to engage art students and community. In this series of lesson plans, students actively participate in many discussion-based activities that ultimately build to the creation of a mural located within a community setting. For example, in one of the exercises, students view Chinese artist Zhang Daqian prints and respond to these works in writing. The simple task asks students to bring something from their own background into the discussion. Their responses are documented on big, bright paper, using this result to create a mural in the hallway for public viewing. Even though the products of this exercise are not extremely formal and polished, students will get a quick glimpse into mural making and process oriented art making.

According to Gude (2009), Stuhr (2003) and Blandy (2011), the aims of contemporary art education are to develop the philosophy and consciousness of its participants with the hopes that students are more easily able to articulate and question contemporary social issues. Gude (2009) narrows this statement by concluding that the “art-educated are better participators in a democratic society” (p. 6.) She backs the statement by precisely focusing on how “contemporary art prepares people to engage, to shape, (and sometimes to preserve) aspects of

our ever changing world” (p. 5). These authors, especially Gude, plainly identify reasons for the inclusion of contemporary art in the K-12 art curriculum.

Integrating Contemporary Art into Instruction

If art educators and curriculum designers accept that contemporary art practices as being necessary aspects of art curricula, the next step is to identify how to redesign existing art curricula to ensure such goals are accomplished. Stuhr (1994) identifies specific ways and strategies for the art educator to ensure students are engaged in social and cultural lessons tied to art instruction. The strategies include integrating diversity aspects into lessons, being sensitive to multi-cultural learners, and integrating other curriculums within art instruction (p. 176). The primary goals of Stuhr’s strategies are “authentic student engagement and improved student functioning in social groups” (p. 176). Stuhr’s philosophies align with North Carolina common core essential standards (NCCCS, 2011) that ask educators to include social and group components to instruction to improve students’ ability to work in teams (p.177).

Curriculum can be created to authentically engage students with contemporary ideas that are authentically applicable to student lives. According to Wiggins (2007), “a curriculum should actively enable students to consider questions and products simultaneously to produce successful artistic products as the current human landscape evolves” (p. 28). Applying Wiggins’ ideals for curriculum design could reach learners in a way so that they feel part of their personal lives are intertwined with the assignment. For example, the education guide that the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (2008) published to run concurrently with their Sol LeWitt wall-drawing exhibition provides numerous contemporary fundamentals that combine students’ background knowledge with art making. In this unit of lesson plans for educators, the MASS MoCA uses LeWitt’s conceptual philosophy and adapts these ideas to

lessons that could be taught in a classroom. These very basic lesson plans are a great starting point; however, most of these lesson plans are simple exercises that would not lead students to complete more formal finished works of art. As shown with this example, most major art museums offer an education resource to their current exhibition. After finding inspiration for contemporary art lessons such as this one, the next step is to adapt these lessons to my teaching. For example, I used a still camera and created a stop motion animation movie from the work students created using LeWitt's methods.

In reviewing the literature involving teaching contemporary art I have identified the following strategies that can aid in the successful integrating of contemporary art into classrooms. The first is to break down curriculum into themes. I have broken down my teaching into themes. I use community based lesson plans, identity based lesson plans, and technology based lesson plans. There are obviously other but these three examples allow students to bring contemporary and very personal aspects from their lives into the classroom to ensure lesson plans are more authentic experiences for students. The second strategy is the integration of social media such as blogs and class websites. Students are very knowledgeable in terms of social media, integrating this aspect into a classroom can allow students to feel like they can participate because of their own personal experiences with social media. The third new strategy that can be realized when integrating contemporary art into classroom instruction is new art making techniques. Many contemporary artists work with found or unconventional materials, transform them and with that come new art making techniques. The final and most important strategy to employ when a teacher integrates contemporary art is student centered learning opportunities. Contemporary art is very exploratory in nature, this characteristic lends itself to allowing more student centered learning opportunities. These opportunities allow

students to explore the boundaries of media than most of the traditional lecture-based art lessons. The integration of contemporary art allows students to become proactive in their learning environment, which will increase mastery of vital concepts and ensure learning has taken place.

Challenges to Integrating Contemporary Art into Classroom Instruction

The last topic of my research was finding ways to safely and successfully integrate contemporary art into classroom instruction. The reason there are challenges to integrating contemporary art is contemporary art is filled with topics and ideas that are sometimes not school appropriate. These issues can prevent teachers such as myself from integrating contemporary art into their instruction. However true, there is some literature that deals with the very subject. Authors and art educators Pat Villeneuve and Mary Erickson (2008) in their *The Trouble with Contemporary Art is* article takes on this very issue. The authors discuss how important contemporary art is to teach. The authors did a study about how people look at controversial issues in school. They asked several types of people about the issue including teachers, administrators and students. The results were not shocking in that all their participants replied there are ways to deal with issues that question the boundaries of what is school appropriate safely. The authors conclusion the primary “controversy were a communities concern” not necessarily the schools. The authors go on to state that many of the ideas in contemporary art “teenagers find interesting and could promote higher level thinking skills” (2008, p. 46).

Research Methodology

To define my methodology I must first start at the beginning of my process of the reason behind my research. As a ninth year teacher I began to see student interest becoming

more and more detached by many of the ideas being discussed in my high school art class. In an attempt to raise student interest levels I decided my curriculum needed updating. After researching what other art teachers were doing in their art classes, I came to the conclusion that integrating more current topics and most of all more contemporary art into my curriculum would hopefully encourage my students to appreciate art class again. As stated earlier in this paper contemporary art covers a wide spectrum of ideas and topics, so where should I begin?

The logical answer was to find out what other teachers have done. Rather than have the informal back room type gossip session with teachers, I decided to create a more formal survey asking other high school art teachers to highlight some of their best practices and philosophy behind the decisions. Thus, my research methodology was qualitative in nature involving the use of survey and interview techniques, based in part on Gummesson's (1991) book, *Qualitative Methods in Management Research*. The author defines the methodology as "purposive sampling where the aim is not only to establish a representative sample but also to identify key informants whose content-specific knowledge adds to the value of the information being gathered" (p. 15).

To start out the survey I asked a few demographic and class size questions to allow me an understanding of the type of classroom each of my participant taught. After these quick answer questions, my survey shifts to understand when and how each one of my subjects integrated contemporary art. The third and fourth questions asked teachers to answer if they integrated contemporary art and how many times they talked about contemporary art. This research focus was based on Gray and Malin's (2004) chapter on the same topic from their book, *Visualizing Research: A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design*. The chapter breaks down different approaches to using qualitative research as a way of collecting data.

These approaches listed in the book were: reflecting on professional practice (teaching), surveying for results, and observation of students' products.

The last methodology that I based my research on was the philosophy of author Jack Watson (2012). In his article *We Turned Your World Upside Down: Contemporary Art Practice in the High School Classroom and Spaces Beyond* Watson describes his curriculum philosophy as “modeling the practices of contemporary artists, students make works that have real-world professional connections with cultural relevance” (p. 33). The next three questions of my survey are tied directly into Watson's philosophy of modeling practices of contemporary art. One question asked teachers to identify just how many contemporary artists and/or lesson plans they integrate in their curriculum within a particular week. The next question asked the teachers to name contemporary artists that they discuss in their teachings. The third question of my survey that was inspired by Watson's writing asked teachers to share a contemporary art based lesson plan. These questions asked teachers to give specific examples of how they integrate contemporary art within their instruction.

After locating an extensive collection of online resources the question then became how do I know what artist or artists to integrate into my instruction? This is where I needed to depend on my prior knowledge and training as an art teacher in evaluating art, and make the right decisions for my students. In doing so, I know I need to remember that there are other factors such as appropriateness for school topics that should be looked at when deciding on any contemporary art topic or artist to bring into my classroom.

Subjects

After creating a survey instrument to collect my data, I identified six teachers that I could trust to give accurate information. After consulting with my capstone committee

members, they suggested a variety of teachers all of whom were experienced and had been successful in integrating contemporary art. These teachers were from various parts of the country, with one of the teachers actually only being a couple hours drive from where I live in North Carolina. They have a combined 76 years of teaching experience and all have shown to successfully integrate contemporary art into their teachings. Five of the six of the art teachers have advanced degrees within the field of art and all of them have terrific curriculum resources of their own available online that allowed me to find out more about them and what some of their teaching practices are before they completed the my survey.

Data Collection Procedures

My research involved survey and interview methodology. Rather than schedule one-on-one interviews I created a survey that I could digitally send to the participating teachers that they could answer on their own. The aim of the survey was to identify ways these six teachers have incorporated contemporary art themes into their instruction. The survey was mainly comprised of questions that asked these teachers to share integration strategies of contemporary art. For example one of the questions asked teachers to describe a lesson from start to finish that engages students within contemporary art practices and also share contemporary artists that inspired the lesson. After receiving all six survey back through email, I created one form that listed all of the teachers answers. This strategy allowed me to easily compare the answers to see if any common trends emerged. The data collected from the survey had suggested I look to social media websites and contemporary art museum educational websites for information that would eventually inspire lesson plans based on contemporary art. Taking this advice, I then started searching for contemporary art museum websites, where on these sites that included documentation of current, past, and future

exhibitions. To accompany an exhibition many of these museums create an educator guide for teachers to teach students about the current exhibition prior and/or after a museum visit. The educator guide will often have a brief biography of the artist, a few select artworks, art related vocabulary that relates to the exhibition, and even art making lessons that tie to the artists media or even the artists techniques. Going through all of this data was overwhelming and I needed to come up with a way to use it.

Data Analysis

After identifying my research questions, deciding on a method to find possible answers, and collecting my data, the last aspect of my project involved organizing and analyzing my data to ensure the successful integration of contemporary art into my curriculum. Taking into account that I received my surveys through email, the information was easy to organize. I first copied each question from my survey, then typed each teacher's name under the question so I could categorize his or her answers by name. After each answer was copied, I also made one more listing of each teacher's name for any additional comments that a participant may have left on the survey or if I had a follow up question I could insert it into this section. After creating one document with all of my answers I could now easily compare answers from each of my participants.

The questions of the survey were based on finding out information from my subjects on their own approach to integration of contemporary art. The first question of the survey asked teachers to define the number of students they taught in a normal day. This question would allow me to understand at what types of environment were these teachers integrating certain strategies that discuss contemporary art. I received a variety of answers, the low being only 45 students and the high being 200. The average however was somewhere between 65 students a day. The second question asked teachers simply if they integrated contemporary art in their

teaching. This question, although trivial, was meaningful because if the teachers did not integrate contemporary art they would not be a good subject for the research project. Fortunately all of the teachers answer “yes” they did integrate contemporary art within their curriculums. The third question asked teachers to give an approximation of how often they integrated contemporary art in their instruction. My subjects were given a variety of choices to answer the question, almost daily, once a week, once a month, or other. Every teacher answered that they integrated contemporary art at least two to three times a week. This answer sets up the rest of the survey very well for my purposes. From these answers I knew my subjects would have a lot of information to share as the rest of the survey asked these teachers to share specific strategies of how they integrated contemporary art within their instruction.

After reviewing answers and asking a couple of follow up questions to clarify some points, I knew my research was only beginning. The common theme to the answers of the first five questions that asked the participants to define aspects of the integration of contemporary art was two things. First, as stated above, all of the teachers that participated in the survey taught contemporary art topics at least once a week. This was a great finding from my survey because I could be sure that throughout the 36 weeks of a normal school year each one of my teachers were talking about contemporary art at least once a week and also I could rely on the fact the information they shared would be proven strategies that integrate contemporary art in a high school classroom. Another topic that I will discuss further in the results portion of this paper was the resulting data from the fifth question of the survey stated all of the teachers use the Internet as their primary source for information on contemporary art topics. This answer told me two things. First, I have used the Internet for research but have had a hard time

locating valuable sources on contemporary art and contemporary artists. Secondly, this helped me to conclude that my research had only begun.

After concluding that I needed to look in different places for information on contemporary art and artists, I looked through my survey answers to locate specific sites that were suggested as sources for research on contemporary art and artists. Just to name a few sites of interest, Pinterest, Scoop It, Twitter, Facebook, Blogs, and lastly museum sites. The fourth question of my survey asked teachers to give three to five examples of contemporary artists that they discuss in their classroom. Their answers were: Banksy, JR (British Photographer), Kara Walker, Chuck Close, Paul Ruiz, Julie Mehretu, Jane Smith, Laurie Hogin, Sherin Neshat, Kehinde Wiley, Hung Liu, Mary Ellen Mark, Ai Wei Wei, Shepard Fairy, Vic Muniz, Kate Clark, Barbara Kruger, Judy Chicago, and Cindy Sherman. Prior to completing this research project I had heard of about half of these artists. The answers to this question led me to want to know what these artists' artwork looked like. Furthermore, I needed to know where to go to find out information about these artists.

As stated above one of my participating teachers suggested that I look at contemporary art museum websites for ideas. The museum website is an intriguing suggestion because what better place to locate contemporary artists than the current exhibition page of a contemporary art museum website. After making my way through such contemporary exhibitions as the James Turrell exhibition on light and space in the Guggenheim museum, my search led me to an incredible resource. Most museums offer an educator guide to their current exhibitions. Contemporary art museums are no different. An educator guide will often have a brief biography on the artist. It will also have discussion questions on the topics covered through the artwork. Lastly an educator guide will also typically have lesson plans that relate closely to the

artist's methods or media. After locating the educator guide for the Sol Lewitt retrospective at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art that had a variety of drawing exercises that could be integrated into my classroom in a variety of ways, my goal became to sift through each contemporary art museum educational website to find more educator guides. Through the search I have highlighted my findings on a website that I have titled *Contemporary Art Ideas for Teachers* (see Figure 1) at <http://contemporaryartideasforteachers.weebly.com>

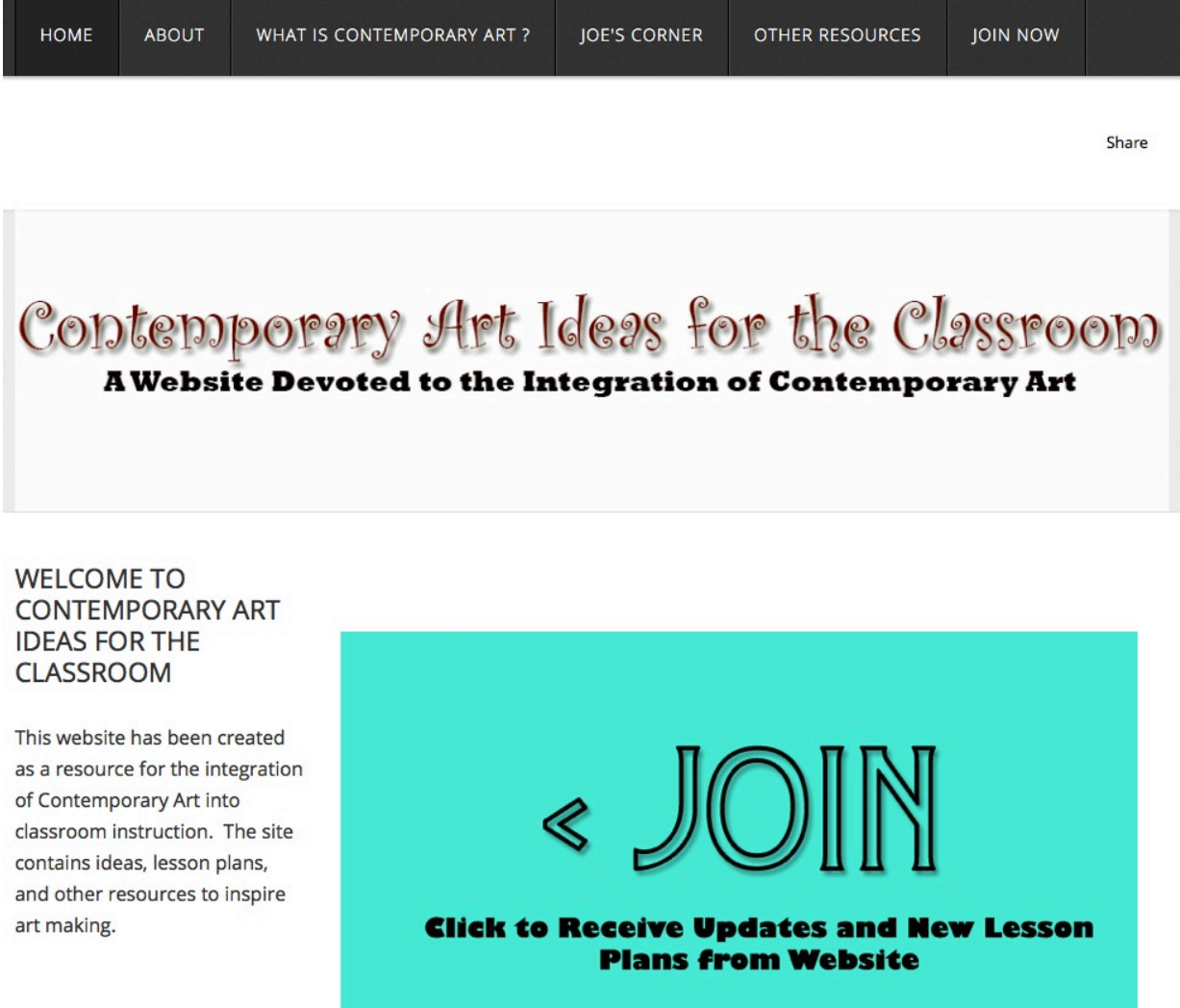


Figure 1. Screen shot from website that hosts ideas for integrating contemporary art.

Results

In this section of my paper I will further discuss my survey results, my Internet research of contemporary art, and the website I created as a result of my research. To do so, I will use three subheadings that are based upon my original goals for completing the research. This project was done to enable me to successfully integrate contemporary art within my teaching at a high school in a rural area of North Carolina. It is also my hopes that the product of my research will inspire other teachers to look for ways to integrate contemporary art into their curriculums.

Ways that Public School Art Teachers can Successfully Integrate Contemporary Art into their Instruction

As I stated earlier my research goals involved finding ways to integrate contemporary art into classroom instruction, overcoming challenges to introducing contemporary art topics and practices into a classroom setting and finding ways to stay current with contemporary art trends. The first way to achieve integration I will discuss is a themed-based approach. This curriculum approach asks that I base my instruction and lessons on themes, or big ideas. Thus, for this project, I chose repurposing, community, and technology as themes to plan and organize my lesson plans. Under each of these three themes students are directed to use a variety of media and are taught various skills and fundamentals. On my website that I created I have numerous lesson plans that fit under these themes and allow for the integration of contemporary art into the lesson. Secondly, as my research continued I noticed a multi culture trend emerge in contemporary art. Many of the artists that I was studying are from a variety of communities and underrepresented cultures. After becoming aware of this trend I knew a multi-culture approach to creating lesson plans was appropriate. Using this curriculum

philosophy that asks educators to become aware of students' needs that are from different communities and cultures, I created the last category of lessons found on my website, *Joe's Corner*. This series of lesson plans are somewhat all over the place in terms of ideas being discussed, however all of these lesson plans or prompts asks students to integrate aspects of their own personal experience into a product that they produce. It is my thinking in order to have an engaged classroom I must integrate ideas such as a student's identity or even allowing students to trace their heritage in mapping exercises. Lastly, everyone's favorite topic to tackle with students is social media. The fourth question of my survey asked teachers to actually give three examples of contemporary artists that they discuss with their students. Using the answers survey participants gave, I created 24 Pinterest boards with only contemporary art and artists being the subject matter. See Figure 2. Each Pinterest board is filled with artwork by a contemporary artist that I decided fit in with my curriculum needs. Pinterest is a site that for my purposes allowed me to quickly find and organize information about contemporary art. I have provided a link to these Pinterest boards on my personal website that I provided a link for above (<http://www.pinterest.com/ezbrde1/boards/>). All of the teachers that I surveyed had a enormous online presence. They had a classroom website that documented their curriculum expectations, a classroom blog that offered up to date lessons and student artwork, Twitter accounts that they used to inform parents and students of after school activities, and many were active in art teacher Facebook group discussions. Students are familiar with these resources and as I become more familiar with them I see the need for the integration of these tools into my own curriculum.

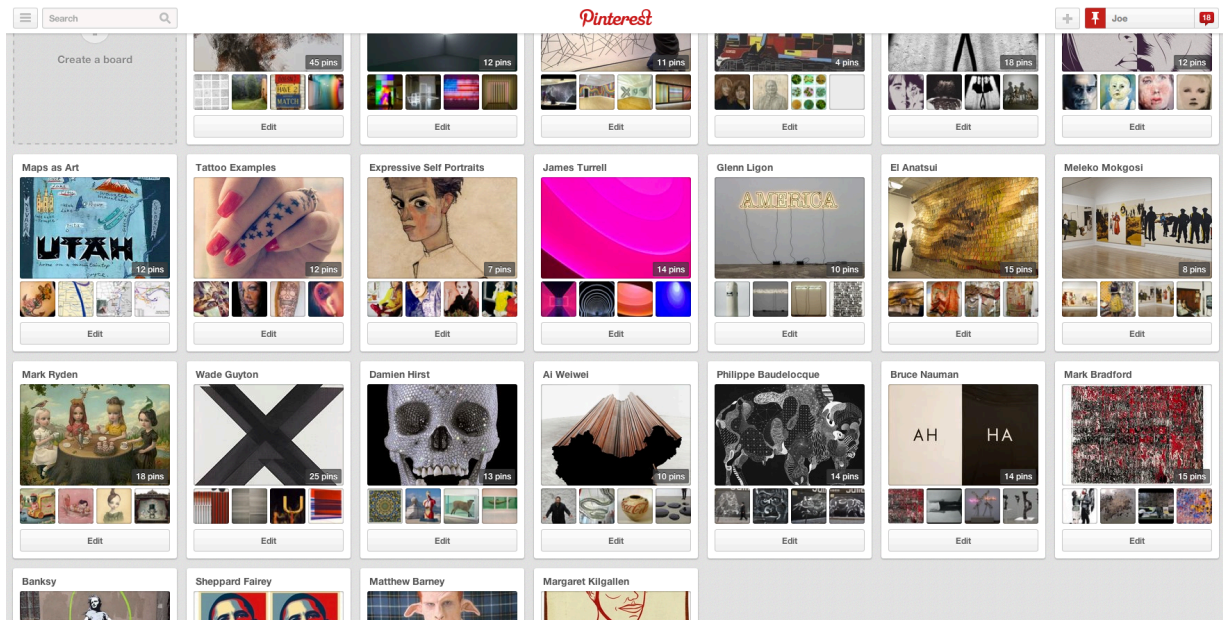


Figure 2. Collection of Pinterest boards created as a result of my research.

Another teacher in my survey suggested that I use the idea of cartography (mapping) as a basis for a lesson plan. After searching for mapping on Pinterest I found a huge amount of contemporary artists like Mark Bradford that use the idea of a map to inspire his artwork. Mark Bradford uses repurposed paper that he finds on his travels to create his map type paintings, after finding this information and realizing repurposing is a huge component of contemporary art, I decided to look more into the idea of repurposing.

The fourth question of my survey proved to be very fruitful as another one of my survey participants suggested a photography assignment that was based around the artist Cindy Sherman. The teacher's lesson covers the theme of identity. The first component of this lesson plan starts out by showing the class an *Art21* video segment on Cindy Sherman. The lesson goes on to discuss the influences of media on society with the use of magazine images. After the discussion and students understand how certain aspects of a portrait convey meaning to the viewer, students create two self-portraits expressing different modes of personal identity. The lesson asks students to consider an altered self-image that is a powerful lesson for students

to understand how body language comes through when communicating. Further details on this lesson can be located on my website (<http://contemporaryartideas.weebly.com>). See figure 3.

The Image and the Meaning:
 In this series of lesson plans, students examine the world around them. Students create a final image with the goal of selling the viewer on their school's beauty. The activity asks students to plan and collect images from around their school using a variety of media. The final image is recreated and displayed, creating a dialogue of how the image conveys a message. [Lesson Guide Link](#).

The World Around Students:
 In this series of lesson plans, students examine the world around them. Students draw from an object as simple as a tree from their memory. This leads into a discussion of environment and community. The final work of art from this series of lessons deals with being a member of a community. In the example, students are asked to discuss what it means to be Canadian; however, this lesson could be changed to include the community of the teacher's choice. [Lesson Guide Link](#).

Singapore Culture:
 This link will take you to a brochure that has been created by the Singapore Contemporary Art Museum Education division. In the brochure, one can find a variety of discussion questions that pertain not only to contemporary art but also to Singapore Culture. The brochure could be helpful when discussing Asian art or contemporary art. The brochure includes both images and questions specific to the images. [Lesson Guide Link](#).

Figure 3. Screen shot from collection of lesson plans that fall under Community based art.

Challenges to Introducing Contemporary Art Topics to Integrate within High School

Classroom Instruction

After stating a few different approaches to integrating contemporary art, you might be saying that is well and good but I am still not sure I want to tackle integrating contemporary art into my classroom. I agree there are challenges to introducing contemporary art topics into public school art instruction because of contemporary art's sometimes controversial content. On top of that there are other issues to address such as meeting curriculum regulations from state or local agencies. To this issue of a school art curriculum being regulated by state mandated standards and pacing guides, I say that if a teacher would create lesson plans using contemporary art as guide it would become clear that the content could actually be more beneficial for students to learn than some of the traditional art content that has been taught over and over again in art classrooms for decades. Since many state mandated curriculum objectives

have been written in the last ten or so years, many of the topics that are required for a teacher to cover, contemporary artists also cover in their artwork. These contemporary topics then become more familiar with students. For example as part of my collection of technology-based lesson plans, I found a photography assignment where students are expected to photograph aspects of their community. I adapted this lesson plan idea to fit my own needs. Taking from the original idea, I then added a drawing element to this project, by having students draw from their photographs expressing their favorite part of their community. We then created a website that hosted not only my students' work, I asked other art teachers and their students to be a part of our efforts. The idea of the website display is to provide an opportunity to compare a student's local community to that of the globalized community they now live in as part of the digital age. The results have slowly started to accumulate (<http://communityartproject.weebly.com>).

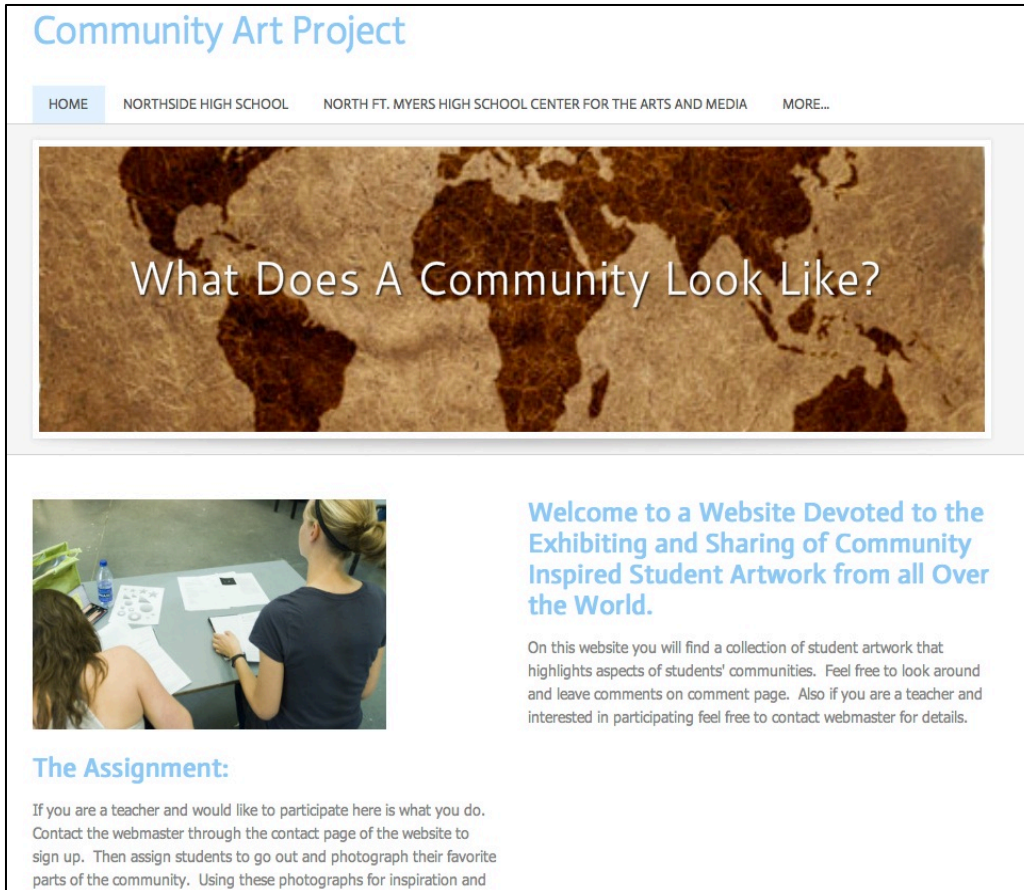


Figure 4. Screenshot from Community Art Project (<http://communityartproject.weebly.com>)

The second challenge a teacher might face in integrating contemporary art into a school art curriculum is that many contemporary artists deal with topics and issues that a teacher may not feel comfortable covering with students in the classroom. As discussed at the beginning of this paper, I have dealt with an angry parent and administrator about covering artwork that is not appropriate for students. The integration of new artists and artwork can be a scary thing but it is essential to providing an authentic learning experience for students today. The idea of keeping to themes as my website does allows students to stay with a centralized idea, and not stray to far from the goal. My research has allowed me to understand that there are ways to “keep it clean” when talking about contemporary art with students. In my literature review I discusses an article that was written on this very topic. As the last name of authors, and year

found that the topics that contemporary art include many students will find much more interesting than other art topics typically covered in the curriculum. However, as with any unfamiliar topic, teachers must do their homework prior to integrating the lesson into the curriculum

When I decide on what artists or topics to discuss in my class there are a few strategies I consider. First of all I have lived in the community that I teach for nine years now and know my community's morals. A community's morals is a big determining factor when deciding on content for a classroom lesson. While some topics in some communities may be viewed as acceptable, the same topics might be considered inappropriate in a different community. Another strategy when deciding on content is you have to know your students and decide whether can they handle the content. Lastly, when in doubt ask your school administrator. If an image is questionable and it fills the need of the lesson, have a discussion with your administrator about the image face to face. Follow up the meeting with an email stating the content of the meeting and even attach the image to the email. This provides documentation that the image has been discussed and it has been decided by your administrator that it is okay for the lesson. In addition to determining which images to show in the classroom, the teacher also must have the precise images that will be discussed in the lessons. I suggest downloading the images or creating a Pinterest board with only the images you want students to view on the board. In conclusion my research and the authors Villeneuve and Erickson (2008) suggests that even though contemporary art takes on subject matter that is sometimes not school appropriate a teacher can find ways to integrate it with possible guidance from a community, from a administrator or even other teachers.

Staying Abreast of Contemporary Art Trends and Information about Contemporary Art

As indicated in one of my surveys, the teacher shared with me a recent Facebook discussion on contemporary artists in which a few art teachers defined a contemporary artist as being Andy Warhol or Frida Kahlo. These examples are not contemporary artists. This raises the question of “How does an art teacher become aware of contemporary artists?” Staying up to date within current trends in any field is a difficult thing for a teacher to do, and art is no exception. Just like the latest fashion trend may change overnight the art world does too. So how would an art teacher living in a rural area of the country or anywhere else stay aware of these changes? Through my research I have come to find out that the Internet is the great place to start. As I have stated contemporary art museum websites should be the starting point for any art teacher wanting to stay up to date. These information sources should become vital to any art teachers wanting to integrate contemporary art into their instruction. This does take some time, but as one of my survey subjects suggested this should not be something a teacher wants to do but something a teacher should be required to do on his or her own. A teacher must find what works; for me it was the *Art21* 100 artists website that was a great starting point for research on contemporary artists. The list operators make the decision on what contemporary artists to integrate into classroom instruction easy; *Art21* is definitely a viable resource. Another way to overcome challenges that contemporary art brings with it is to seek guidance from other art teachers in the area. It is my advice to get to know the other art teachers in your area by becoming friends with them. Even if the relationship involves sending just an email every once in a while, I am sure they would love to hear what’s working for you.

Summary Across All Findings and Discussion

To summarize my research project on possible ways to integrate contemporary art into a high school art curriculum I would conclude that as a teacher I must keep up with current trends from sources such as contemporary art museums, contemporary art galleries, and be especially connected to other art teachers and art information sources through social media sites. I am aware that as time passes new contemporary artists will emerge that I have never heard of. One important role of my website is the “Dive” page on my site. The “Dive” page as I have titled it, will not only allow me to keep viewers aware of changes but also allow me to organize new updates to the site. It is my hope that the site will become a starting point for myself and possibly other teachers to aid in the integration of contemporary art into our classrooms.

Contemporary art reflects contemporary artists’ reactions to the world around them. The ideas and content in their works express the world in which we as teachers live in, and more importantly the world our students live in. I know now after this research project I need to do a better job of keeping informed of what’s happening in the art world. I will do this by maintaining my website and keeping it up to date with new lesson plan ideas, new artist profiles, and possibly integrating new themes for instruction. As a result of this project and as a teacher I now feel I must not become stagnant with my curriculum but become a life long learner and continuously update my curriculum.

Conclusion

I am here to offer my own answers. I am claiming to offer no answers to other classroom teachers. All I can do is report what I found and what works for me. I have learned that through the many resources I have discussed in this paper such as other teachers and the

Internet, the answers for any engaged classroom is out there. Get to know the other art teachers in your area, become friends with them. Even if it's just an email every once in a while, I am sure they would love to hear what's working for you. Also contemporary art museum websites are typically great resources that sometimes get overlooked. These sites are resources to get people engaged with what they are doing at the museum, so take advantage of what they have to offer. Many of these sites have lesson plans already written for teachers to download and use for free. Furthermore, a teacher should make use of social media such as Pinterest, Facebook and Blogs. I was not a big fan of social media to begin with but after utilizing Pinterest during this project with ease, I will be the first one to say, its something that allows you to connect with millions of resources very easily. Lastly, a lot of the art teachers that I communicated with during this project had an online presence such as classroom blogs and personal websites. On these sites they documented everything that went on in their classroom. On their blogs they share images of projects, assessments, and even some personal information.

As educators we all know the sometimes inappropriate content that makes up contemporary art. Sometimes it is these very daring topics that artists tackle in their work that makes the work attractive and interesting to young viewers. I have found ways to tackle controversial issues in my classroom through the use of classroom discussions, knowing my community morals, and talking with an administrator if I still have questions. What will work for other teachers? I am not sure, I can only offer how I will guard myself against exposing students to something their community and their school would not approve of.

Lastly, since I have created my website as a home for curriculum resources that actually integrate contemporary art. Why reinvent the wheel? It is my goal to continue building this site as a resource for myself and for any teachers in need of inspiration. It was the during the

sketchbook class at the University of Florida when I realized I needed to add more *meat* to my own teachings. I was blown away by some of the small prompts given us such as the collage color reproduction exercises. As I researched this project, the more I realized how much I actually did not know about contemporary art. I am excited and feel as though as a teacher it is my duty to continue to learn and continue to be emerged within the arts.

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Appendix

1. About how many students do you teach in one day?

Teacher 1- We have a 7 day 5 period fully rotating schedule so my answer would vary based on the day. The average before this schedule would have been 60-70 students.

Teacher 2- This semester I only have 67 students a day, but that is smaller than usual. My total is usually closer to 100...

Teacher 3- I teach about 90 students each day.

Teacher 4- 200

Teacher 5- About 45

Teacher 6- 58

2. Do you integrate contemporary art into your teaching?

ALL SAID YES

Teacher 1

Teacher 2

Teacher 3

Teacher 4

Teacher 5

Teacher 6

3. How often do you discuss contemporary art and/or contemporary artists in your classroom?

Teacher 1- Almost Everyday

Teacher 2- Almost Everyday

Teacher 3- Once a Week Sometime More..

Teacher 4- Almost Everyday

Teacher 5- 2-3 Times a Week

Teacher 6- 2-3 Times a Week

4. Give three to five examples of contemporary artists that you discuss with your students.

Teacher 1- Banksy, JR British Photographer, Kara Walker, Chuck Close, Paul Ruiz, Julie Mehretu, and artists on the Site <http://unurth.com/>

Teacher 2- Jaune Quick-To-See-Smith, Laurie Hogin, Sherin Neshat, Kehinde Wiley, Hung Liu, Chuck Close, Mary Ellen Mark, Ai Wei Wei...

Teacher 3- I'm going to refer you to an article I wrote for the Art of Education website titled, The Top 10 Contemporary Artists to Teach alongside Traditional Artists

<http://www.theartofed.com/2013/08/20/the-top-10-contemporary-artists-to-teach-alongside-traditional-artists/>

Teacher 4- Graffiti and Street Art, Shepard Fairey, Banksy, Vic Muniz, Local artists, former student artists

Teacher 5- Kate Clark, Barbara Kruger, Judy Chicago, Cindy Sherman

5. Where do you get information on Contemporary artists or art that helps inspire lessons? Internet, Staff Development, College, or Other...

Teacher 1- Internet, Twitter, Pinterest, Ning Art 2.0, blogs, and Facebook art sites

Teacher 2-Books on Contemporary Art, Art21, Pinterest/ Google/ blogs, current enrollment in UF Masters in Art classes, discussions with other art teachers, Youtube

Teacher 3- Mostly, I surf the web daily. I also see things other artists post of Facebook and Twitter, sometimes I find things in art magazines,

Teacher 4-Internet, staff relationships, former student-teacher relationships, museum visits

Teacher 5-Internet

Teacher 6- Internet, Books, Art 21, Pinterest, Blogs

6. If you could highlight one project that integrates contemporary art from your curriculum explain how you created the lesson then thoroughly explain the lesson from the introductory lecture to the assessment.

Teacher 1-

Body Map- self-portrait exploration

It is an opportunity for students to think about themselves as a visual document or a journey into what makes them unique. I used the inspiration from Body Maps that was used as therapy for individuals struggling or dealing with illness or physical trials. Students are asked to create an original image in any medium on any surface to deliver a message about them in a body map. We view several artists' self-portraits through art movements and include contemporary artists in this exploration. We discuss the tie in what observe about the artists choices of media to the layout of the composition to the style of the piece. We discuss what color, texture, scale, and motif says to us. Students can approach this project from any point and reveal what they most feel represents them today as an artist and person. The emphasis is on style, material, scale, and point of view. All pieces are very unique and take time to complete. Some artists take the time to continue to add and embellish the body map as the year continues. Students explore and share the work they complete in sections. We do this through verbal and written critiques. We have the greatest conversations about their choices and as lots of questions that often promotes further embellishment and layers. We discuss very personal ideas and messages and also trivial and silly imagery. The body map may not ever include self-portrait or it could be a literal tracing of their body and include a visual timeline from birth to present. It all varies and I love it.

Teacher 2-When teaching the basic history of the camera as well as the basic physics of optics, I attempted to bridge this historical process with contemporary photography. Artist and professor, Abelardo Morell, provides an excellent example of how artists can use antique photographic processes to create compelling contemporary photographs. I have included my lesson plans for this particular history lesson and project called, "History Repeats Itself."

Teacher 3- A lot of what I'm doing now with lessons is theme based teaching. I cover contemporary themes and principles and have the students create art based on these themes. A few examples include Text as an art Element, Intertextuality, Hybridity and Interactivity.

From these themes, I show examples of how contemporary artists are creating art, using these concepts. The artist's examples are used to demonstrate how artists work, not to be used to copy or create a work like the artists. i.e. Some teachers today will have students create a painting of lily pads in the style of Monet. Instead, I'm

showing how artists incorporate contemporary principles into their work. I expect the same from my students.

Teacher 4-Looking at my website you will be able to see what I do with the AP Art sections as well as the Advanced sections of art including VA III, IV, and Photography III. These sections are all placed in one class period together therefore the curriculum is lumped into one package. The website has an explicit breakdown of how the class runs for the entire year. If you need one only, please choose from those listed. All of the assignments are based on contemporary artwork, artists, and styles. Historical references are also given in some instances. All students also communicate and research through contemporary means such as Remind 101, Pinterest, Facebook, and my website-stephaniepickens.com. My entire classroom is setup to incorporate contemporary art within the curriculum.

<http://www.stephaniepickens.com/visual-arts-lesson-plans.html>

To give you a short brief explanation of how these lessons are taught since each lesson is structured the same:

- Monday-discuss and research artworks, artists, and other inspirational possibilities for the prompt each week. The prompt is what guides and directs us in these lessons. The students complete their individual sketchbook/research pages on that day and night for homework.
- Tuesday's they receive materials and discuss each individual project with me.
- Wednesday they begin to work on their artwork.
- Thursday and Friday they work in a studio setting.
- Friday or Monday we do a group critique and discuss how it relates to their inspiration artist.
- Studio time completes the rest of the week through Friday and work is graded after that time.

The rubrics are listed on my website also. The rubric given is cut out for each student to attach to their work. They fill out what they feel they deserve and then I go behind them and grade it with a different colored pen. We discuss what they have questions about on a case by case basis.

Teacher 5-Class - Photography

- Artist Cindy Sherman
- Topic Identity (perception versus reality)
- Pre-Art Creation Activities
 - o View Art 21 video segment dealing with Cindy Sherman
 - o Discussion of mimicry, parody, social commentary, perception
 - o Discussion of stereotypes, transformation, self portraiture, gender and identity
 - o Mine the magazines for media's influence on what we perceive as idea and to find common ideas of stereotypes supported by the media.
 - o Discussion of movies or TV shows of impact to a generation or group of people (and favorite movies of the students and why they are the favorites)

- o View video clips from various movies focusing on gender roles, lighting of characters, fashion, impact of poses and character interactions, and perpetuation of various stereotypes
- o Students complete think sheet by filling out personal characteristics, perception of self, how others perceive them, how they feel in various situations, their personal goals, and then what would be the characteristics of their “alter ego.”
- o Class brainstorming and practice on how to use lighting, poses and props to convey a message about the subject of a portrait.
- The Assignment
- o Students create 2 self portrait artworks (Either 2 single images or 2 separate series of images) that express their personal identity as they wish to be perceived or that express their goals (career ect.) for one artwork, and the other work is to be an “altered self” in that they either take on the identity of a character or stereotype in order to make a comment about a largely accepted idea. (even if that idea is false)

7. What could be done to improve teachers ability to integrate contemporary art?

Teacher 1 _____ Other (please specify)

I feel that isn't a problem for me because I am networking online and I am always trying to grow not only as an art educator but as an artist. I love learning and exploring artists.

Teacher 2 More Staff Development for the Integration of Contemporary Art
Teachers need to be encouraged to continue their education and stay current with the ever evolving field of art. Through technology, perhaps apps like Flipboard, or blogs/

nings/ websites like Art 2.0, MET, MOMA, Google, can provide user friendly methods of highlighting major contemporary artists and shows that are emerging. Many contemporary artists gain recognition through the various Bi-Annual or Bianale exhibitions too, so perhaps an accessible digital catalogue of contemporary artists and a digital visual encyclopedia of their artwork that continually grows. New editions of books like Vitamin P, Vitamin D, and Vitamin PH would be excellent too (P=paintings, D=drawings, PH= photography). Art21 is a great resource, but it's really selective. I chose “more staff development” because artists and art teachers learn really well from each other and exposure to new ideas from one another; it spurs creativity. I also think though that more resources need to become available and accessible through web and app interfaces that are really easily navigable and continue to be expanded. Google Art Project, MOMA app on the ipad, and Khan Academy (SmartHistory) are a few opportunities that come to the forefront of my mind that could be potential platforms for furthering knowledge and exposure of contemporary artists ☺.

Teacher 3 _____ Other (please specify)

While all the above would be effective, I truly believe the teacher needs to take the effort to seek out and learn about contemporary art and incorporate it into their lessons.

Not to be snarky but, it is a teacher's responsibility to understand and be on top of what is happening in the field they teach.

Teacher 4 x More Resources for Contemporary Art Lesson Plans
Teacher 5
 X More Staff Development for the Integration of Contemporary Art
▪ X More Resources for Contemporary Art Lesson Plans
 X More Specific Common Core Standard

List of Figures and Figure Captions

Figure 1. Screen shot from website that hosts ideas for integrating contemporary art. P. 24

Figure 2. Example of the collection of Pinterest boards created as a result of my research. P.

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Figure 3. Screen shot from collection of lesson plans that fall under Community based art. P.

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Figure 4. Screenshot from Community Art Project. P. 30

UFIRB 02 – Social & Behavioral Research

Protocol Submission Form

This form must be typed. Send this form and the supporting documents to IRB02, PO Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611. Should you have questions about completing this form, call 352-392-0433.

Title of Protocol: Integrating Contemporary Art in Classrooms

Principal Investigator: Joseph Burns **UFID #:**

Degree / Title: Masters of Art **Mailing Address:** (If on campus include PO Box address): **Email:**

Department: Fine Arts **Telephone #:**

Co-Investigator(s): **UFID#:** **Email:**

Supervisor (If PI is student): **UFID#: 3989-8300**

Degree / Title: **Mailing Address:** (If on campus include PO Box address): **Email :**

Department:

Date of Proposed Research: September 2nd through September 9th as a window for participants to have the available time to participate in research.

Source of Funding (A copy of the grant proposal must be submitted with this protocol if funding is involved):

Scientific Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of my study is to create and share a curriculum resource to inform art teachers and facilitate their successful integration of contemporary art into public school art programs. Dates of study expected to be within two to three weeks of IRB approval. Interviews to be conducted August 12- 17.

Describe the Research Methodology in Non-Technical Language: *(Explain what will be done with or to the research participant.)*

Through conversations with other art teachers and my experience of reaching students on an individual level by using contemporary art as a strategy for engagement, I feel art teachers need appropriate, effective ways in which to integrate contemporary art themes and practices into their instruction without fear of reprisal from school administrators. To help identify effective teaching practices, I will survey and then interview six high school art teachers on the ways in which they integrate contemporary art practices in their curriculums. These six teachers will be asked a variety of questions will call for them to highlight and illustrate their teaching and practices within their classrooms. Their responses along with my own literature and web research will allow me to create a curriculum that could be valuable to other high school art teachers who are in need of new content and strategies to teach their students.

Describe Potential Benefits:

Throughout this research I will be interview six art teachers and ask them to highlight and share with me their practices that integrate contemporary art within their instruction. The information collected can benefit art teachers by providing a resource for high school art teachers to gain more content specific tools and information to aid in improving their classroom instruction.

Describe Potential Risks: *(If risk of physical, psychological or economic harm may be involved, describe the steps taken to protect participant.)*

No known risks.

Describe How Participant(s) Will Be Recruited:

The participants for this study will be recruited from social media sites frequented by art teachers on the web as well as local art teachers in my school district and practicing art teachers enrolled in the UF online MA program in art education.

<p>Maximum Number of Participants (to be approached with</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Age Range of Participants:</p>	<p>22 & UP</p>	<p>Amount of Compensation/course credit: None</p>
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consent)

Describe the Informed Consent Process. (Attach a Copy of the Informed Consent Document. See <http://irb.ufl.edu/irb02/samples.html> for examples of consent.)

(SIGNATURE SECTION)

Principal Investigator(s)

Date:

Signature:

Joe Burns

Co-Investigator(s)

Date:

Signature(s):

**Supervisor's Signature (if PI
is a student): Craig Roland**

Date: 6/11/13

Department Chair Signature:

Date:

Author Biography

My name is Joe Burns, and I am an Art Teacher.

I am 33 years old and head of an art department at a high school in Washington, North Carolina. Before moving to North Carolina to teach, I completed my undergraduate studies at University of Missouri, St. Louis. During college, I played golf, minored in art history, and studied studio art with an emphasis in drawing. This is my eighth year teaching, all at the middle school level.

As far as art goes, I practice what I preach and teach. I work with all types of media from animation to photography to encaustic. I used to exhibit regularly, though not recently. In my personal work, I love the idea of challenging the art machine, especially the contrived, stuffy, contemporary art world.

I love to travel, and I am also crazy passionate about new experiences. The supreme evening I spent traveling, if I had to pick one, would be camping underneath huge Sequoia trees in Big Sur, California, and reliving old beatnik adventures with locals. I have lived in five states throughout my life and still have more rambling ambitions. Although North Carolina is a great place to be, I still consider St. Louis, Missouri, my home.