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### ART CONCEPT DESIGN: Rebirth of Imagination

Our intentions for the lesson “Rebirth of Imagination” are to engage the students (grades 5 & 6), by activating their minds and imaginations with creative, studio-based challenges and on the spot response activities. Our goal is to encourage the students to change the ways in which they consider the world around them, through the practice of art making and play. By delivering initial (first-response) prompt assignments and artistic games, we will introduce alternative ways of seeing and making. These exercises will focus on collaborative creative writing and visual arts. Using a surrealist approach, we will work to promote a creative shift in thinking. The groups will be challenged to broaden their understanding of the concepts, places, roles, and objects (and their functions) that surround us everyday.

Techniques correlated with surrealism, such as automatism will help to ignite the artistic process. By encouraging the students to express themselves without hesitation, we hope to stimulate a sense of playfulness and joy in the act of creation. In particular, we will introduce automatic drawing and surrealist poetry.

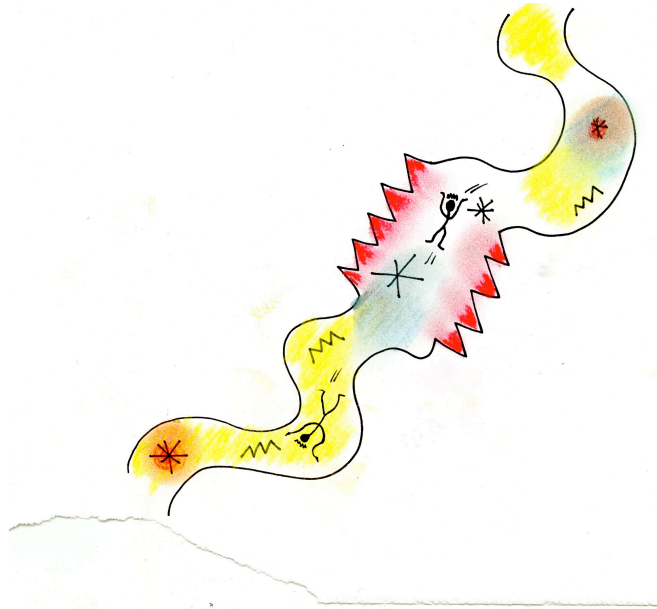
Exercises:

Automatic Drawing-

\* Reconstructive image to text experiment- Students are given various images and descriptions of fictional objects. Their task is to both illustrate and define these bizarre items (tapping into an inventive and intuitive way of responding).

Ie.

A) Image Given:



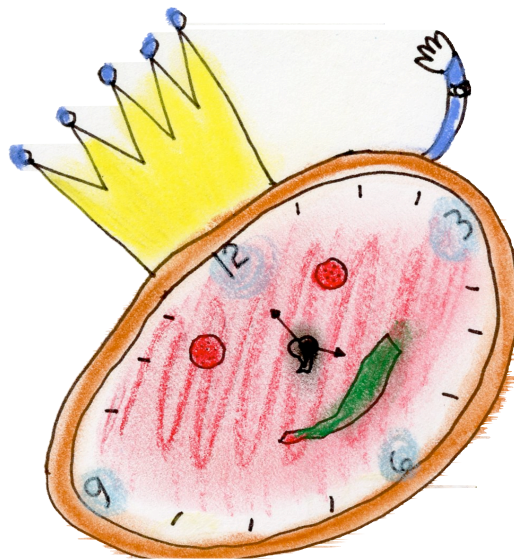
Student Response:

A “lightening tunnel”! This form of transportation is used in the year 2078. You are hurled through time and space through the force of lightening bolts!

B) Description Given:

A “forever pizza”. This delicious dinner is a never ending, savoury experience. It lasts for eternity...Eat up!

Student Response:



\* Blind drawing- Students will be asked to draw their partner’s portrait, without looking at the paper. They may also try to draw their partner while in motion, tracking their movements.



- Scribble drawing- Students will be given paper and drawing materials and will be asked to draw a free form, abstract, line drawing of scribbles. They will then exchange scribble drawings within the group. From there, they must try to envision a more realized image, allowing the scribbled lines to dictate the new reality of the picture.



## Creative Writing Games-

\* Opposite poetry- Students will be given prompt cards, which indicate the beginning line of a poem. Each word in this line must be reversed to its opposite-creating the second line of the poem. As each student takes their turn, a series of "opposite" lines are developed and a surrealist poem is revealed. The indeterminate nature of words like "apple" "flower" "purple" and "magic", are subjective, making the creative challenge of finding the 'opposite' more intriguing and open-ended.

FISHERMAN GO OUT IN BOATS  
Carpenters come in from planes  
SUIT JACKETS LEAVE, WALKING.  
Ball gown dresses, enter swingii  
RUTTY OLD BASEBALL CLOTHES WALK AWAY,  
MOTIONLESS.

The opened pineapple  
was devoured by donkeys.  
CLOSED SHUT BLUEBERRIES ARE SPAT OUT  
BY ANGELS.

Fully revealed corn nuts  
are swallowed down  
hard, by fire breathers.  
PIECES OF HAMBURGER HELPER  
REJECTED FOR WATER SMELLERS.



\* Exploring sentences – Students are asked to select a handful of words from a hat. Together, they must create as many different sentences as they can. These must contain each of the words, every time. Small, connecting words (IE. and, a, on, as, of, the) are permitted, as well as suffixes (-ed, -es, -ing) in the oral reading. Nonsensical prose are allowed and encouraged!

Eg. Words chosen:

FURTHERMORE  
BOIL  
SPAGHETTI  
HE/SHE  
ELEPHANT  
ALIVE  
FLYING  
BACON AND EGGS  
FORKLIFT  
EAT

Boiled alive, he forklifts elephants. Furthermore,  
flying bacon and eggs eat spaghetti!

Flying fork-lifted elephants eat spaghetti.  
Furthermore, she boils bacon and eggs alive.

Alive and forklifted - she is flying.  
Furthermore, spaghetti, bacon and eggs  
boil as elephants eat.

\* Spoken word storytelling- In groups, students are asked to create an oral narrative. Going around in a circle, each student will call out one word at a time, in succession, until finally the story is resolved and the words “the end” are spoken. Prompt cards indicating the first word for each story will be handed out.

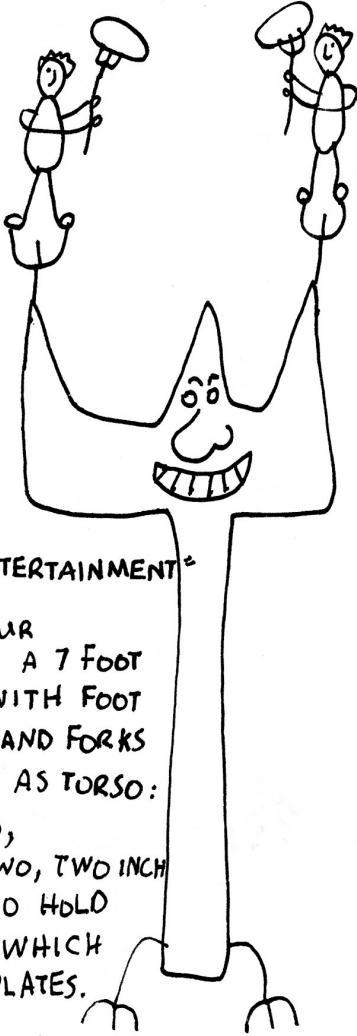
From here, we will offer the students a chance to expand upon these introduction exercises, by delivering a major collaborative project. A model will be discussed and presented, which will give the students an understanding of the expectations and objectives. The main idea of the project will be to reconfigure, rematerialize and completely fabricate a world of their creating. Students will be given single word prompts: zoo, circus, restaurant, symphony, band, outer space, under the sea, etc. The idea here is to upset normalcy, to alter conventional standards of looking and experiencing the world.

By intervening into the natural structure of our society (and all of the elements inherent within) and developing an all-new world, perspectives will inevitably be challenged. Human relationships and the interplay between physical spaces and objects must be considered, or reconsidered, as new forms of life are invented. Students are asked to conceive of an entirely new set of objects and their functions, people and their roles, as well as inventing animals, food, jobs, etc.

All creations are meant to be fully illustrated using visual, written and oral components. The students must work in collaboration with one another, (in groups) to discuss, brainstorm and draw out their conceptions. The goal here is to take on the role of inventor. No ideas are out of the question! Playfulness and spirit are regarded as key approaches to both learning and art making, and will be strongly encouraged. Resulting projects may include: paintings, drawings, collage/mixed media works,

installation/sculptural pieces, etc., depending on the length of time allotted to the assignment (I.e. a 70 minute class, full day, or week-long process).

Eg. Rough sketches from our brainstorming session: "CIRQUE DE POULET"



"THE ENTERTAINMENT"

MONSIEUR  
HENRY A 7 FOOT  
FORK WITH FOOT  
FORKS, HAND FORKS  
AND FORK AS TORSO:  
FORK-SO,  
HOLDS TWO, TWO INCH  
MEN, WHO HOLD  
FORKS, WHICH  
SPIN PLATES.

"WARNING! FORKS  
ARE KLUTZES!"

- MONSIEUR HENRY



"REFRESHMENT  
DISPENSER"

IF YOU'RE  
PECKISH AT THE  
CIRCUS, CLAP YOUR  
HANDS.  
MONKEY AWAITS YOU  
ATOP THE HUNGER  
TOWER.  
HE'S ABOUT TO LAUNCH  
ICE CREAM CONES.  
HE LAUNCHES THEM  
ALL NIGHT LONG.

Our desire is to work primarily in a studio setting, at the elementary level. We feel our brand of collaborative art making and expansive thinking, will be best suited for a young and eager audience. At the ages of 10-12, students embrace shifts in thought and are often prompted creatively by unconventional challenges. Yet, they are now old enough to construct fully realized ideas. They are able to command the art materials with a certain skill level. They also now possess the social skills necessary in order to work effectively with other peers, so that the collaborative ideas generated may be communicated successfully. The environment in which the students will best function is of paramount importance. In this case the classroom setting serves in providing parallels between that which is familiar and that of the unknown surrealist landscape of thought.

For the preliminary exercises, students will be provided with writing and drawing materials (paper, pencils, colours etc.). The larger project will necessitate the use of an array of studio supplies including a variety of colours, wet and dry drawing materials. By limiting our material list, we aim to maintain a clearer focus on the conceptual elements of the project. And thus, through the use of invention and play, we hope to stimulate a sense of rediscovery of the world around us and incite a rebirth of imagination.

This lesson takes into account many learning styles and addressing them by including several forms of expression: visual, written, and oral. The playfulness and open concept of the exercises and final project are designed to include children of all backgrounds, communities and cultures. The lesson may be applicable to all orientations because of its non-confining qualities. No one group is being targeted. Every student may contribute in some way, because the focus is on imagination rather than any other specific form of academic learning in which absolutes are prevalent. We believe that through this method, students will be more likely to find successes in the classroom and therefore, more open to the possibility of learning.

This kind of teaching necessitates a different style of evaluation. The interest lays in 'how' students are engaging and developing ideas rather than the subject matter of their



findings. Therefore the work will have to be marked according to each students' own successes, in terms of their willingness to engage collaboratively, creatively and fully during the studio sessions. The importance is placed on the students' process and enthusiasm during the class. We will observe the students' ability to navigate complexities in both the exercises and final project, using the prompts given. An emphasis on how in depth the students take their ideas will be focused on for assessment purposes. That is to say, are the students pushing their ideas to the furthest limit, in order to maximize potential and incorporate elements from each member of the group? An importance will be placed on a shift from the singular mindset to a collective, interactive and inclusive mindset. How well are the students trying to be involved, and how well are the students trying to include others? We hope that by demonstrating our own methods in team teaching, we will influence a similar way of collaborative communication.

As human beings often learn best through example, we hope to instill a sense of mutual respect in the exchange of artistic ideas. Artistic, open-ended discussions will be demonstrated and encouraged as a means of creative brainstorming and will hopefully lead to the production of insightful, dynamic works of art, from which everyone adopts a earned sense of pride. The students' ability to immerse themselves completely in the world of invention and play is integral to the overall success of the lesson. The outcome will hopefully reveal some new incites into the way in which art is made and that of the visual world, which surrounds us.

As instructors, we hope to impart to the students that which remains stimulating and vital in learning—the ability to explore imagination and self-expression through collaborative invention. We believe that through this kind of creative play, education becomes something more than a mere regurgitation of facts and figures but rather a means of self growth and enlivening young minds. We hope to instill a joy of art making and inventive thinking which will carry over into many other aspects of education and

life. As art educators, we believe much of the responsibility is to embody energy, enthusiasm and passion.

Art educator Elliot Eisner says, “Art provides children with opportunities to use their imaginations, to create multiple solutions to problems, and to rely on their own judgment to determine when a problem is solved.” By viewing art through this lens, it is possible to understand it as a study of all life. It is the act of exploration, play and creation which allows an artist to progress and move through life. In this way, art is inextricably linked to being a human being. It is the primary role of the teacher, to nurture this innate behaviour in all people, especially our youth.

Being both students of art and aspiring teachers of art we come to this project with a desire to experience art making and creative thinking through the lens of both roles. By actively having participated and produced the work we would ask our future students to make, we can better understand the process more fully (from both spectrums). This is important, we think, for the success of any learning experience, as it offers insights into the ways in which a student might approach the work and also allows the instructor to be more sensitive to the needs of their students. Our lesson, “Rebirth of Imagination” invigorates art education by stimulating minds through new ways of looking at our world and promoting humour, playfulness, collaboration and the surreal.

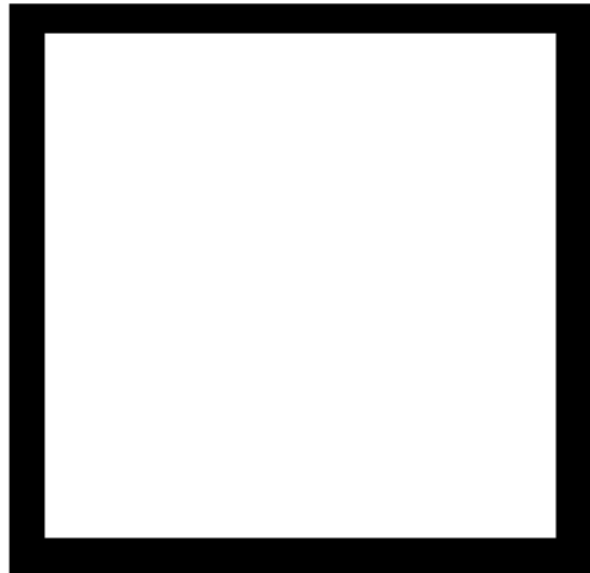


# RE CONSTRUCTIVE

# IMAGE TO TEXT EXPERIMENT

\*Please examine the phrase and image given below. For the phrase, please make a drawing which illustrates the fictional object being described. For the image, please provide a written description of what you see.\*

**A “forever pizza”. This  
delicious  
dinner is a never ending,  
savoury  
experience.It lasts for  
eternity...  
Eat up!**



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