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### Assignment #3: Lesson Concept Design

#### General:

This lesson plan is intended to facilitate an educational session introducing Assemblage art to middle school grade 7/8 students in the public school system. The setting of the lesson plan will take place in the students' art classroom. The lesson plan will have the flexibility of being taught as a single unit (duration of one art session, 1.5-2 hours) or as a specific art unit in connection to the school's art curriculum. As part of this education unit, students will be exposed to a variety of materials to aid in their engagement and project completion: the main material component of the art project will include found objects in and around the students' immediate vicinity (outside and inside the school). These objects can include crumpled paper, twigs, pebbles, leaves, discarded trash. Students will use their found material to construct a 2 dimensional or 3 dimensional art piece that will push them to think conceptually. Students will be shown examples of Dada work and other artworks made by artists specializing in the assemblage medium, to become inspired by the ideas and concepts that have fueled these works. Through their art piece they will address a social or global issue of their choice (such as overpopulation, global warming, poverty); working with a variety of art materials.

Several artists and art movements have informed Assemblage art and helped define it as an independent medium. Early artists that have been known to work with found objects (before the term Assemblage was applied) include Pablo Picasso (most notably his 1912 *Guitar*, constructed from wire and metal) and Marcel Duchamp. Dubuffet has been credited with using the term "assemblage" for the first time in the naming of his collage series of butterfly wings "assemblages d'empreintes", executed between 1954-55. Assemblage art became solidified as an art movement in 1961, with the opening of the exhibition "The Art of Assemblage" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Artworks by Dada founder Kurt Schwitters were shown alongside American artists such as Robert Rauschenberg for the first time.

#### Rationale:

The decision to expose students to the history and process of assemblage art will help open their mind to different possibilities that can be achieved through art making, through material, and subject matter. In taking up this project, students will be encouraged to think creatively in the execution of their concepts and assemblage constructions. The project will not only address students' creativity but also exercise their critical thinking and analytical skills as well. Students will have to think of a way to visually represent a social or global issue within today's world that can be expressed through the medium of assemblage art. The educational unit will encompass an aspect of art history, as students

will be exposed to various artists (Picasso, Duchamp) and art movements (Dada, Surrealism) that have influenced the art form of assemblage art and used the medium. Students will be shown specific slides of artworks that are well known within the assemblage world (Rauschenberg's *Canyon*, or Duchamp's *Fountain*) and based on their newly acquired knowledge of assemblage art, will be asked to create a piece that mirrors similar techniques and motives.

#### Curricular orientations:

This particular lesson plan is most applicable to students of the middle school (grades 7-8) level. It involves creating an art piece using found materials and a range of assisting materials and techniques (watercolour, collage, acrylic paint). The visual and conceptual component of the art project combine together to actively challenge and stimulate students' creative and critical thinking abilities. Creating a project plan that gages students' perceptions of the world and their ability to creatively capture a world issue is something that is adequate for the middle school age group, as students are at the age where they begin to question things happening around them/formulate opinions and ideas on their own. For this age level, art projects should be conceived through a conceptual lens and not just a visual one. This will give the students' art piece a deeper meaning and further connect them to what it is they are making. Students are at the age appropriate level to begin combining thought provoking ideas and concepts in their pieces to create a piece of work that can not only be visually striking but valuable in its meaning and message as well.

#### Objectives:

Students will work in the medium of assemblage art to independently create a 2 or 3 dimensional work of art using found objects and various combination of different art materials and techniques to create a work of art that reflects and represents a topic/issue in the contemporary world of their own choosing. Students will be encouraged to think creatively in their decision of what materials to work with, and weigh their decision on working with particular materials/how this gives meaning to their chosen idea.

#### Pedagogy Praxis:

The educational unit will begin in the school classroom with a brief introduction of the lesson plan, intended activities, and brief overview of the process. Students will be given a mini art history lesson about assemblage art. As in the AGO's Creativity Challenge and Interactive Intervention studio sessions, students will be shown examples of various art pieces by well known artists, and asked questions about the piece (ie. what do you think this is about? What do you think the artist was trying to say with this piece?) A demonstration of the possible materials/techniques that can be used in combination with the found objects will also be at the students' disposal. Short art demos and engaging/informative question-answer periods are regularly employed by the AGO Education Officers as a preceding activity to art-making that effectively engage students and prepare them for the art project at hand. The next step in the chosen lesson plan will

be a little tour outside the classroom to allow students to find objects of their choice to later work with (ie. found objects and natural materials such as twigs, rocks, newspaper, trash). Students will return to the classroom with their chosen object(s) and incorporate them into an art piece using additional materials and techniques that will be offered to them. These can include watercolour, pastel, collage, acrylic; etc. Just as in the AGO art workshops, a range of artistic possibilities will encourage students to think creatively, experiment with exciting new techniques, and push their ideas further.

#### Outcomes:

Through the implementation of this art lesson plan, students will learn about the history of assemblage art, its role in different art movements and time periods, and the various artists that have worked in the medium (from pioneers of the art form, to contemporary artists employing the technique). Through their own individual projects, students will learn how to create a piece that is both visually and conceptually interesting. Most importantly, students will gain an understanding of how to use art and art-making to express an idea, create meaning, and share their opinions about certain subjects of their choosing. Students will engage in the art making practice, and discover new ways of expressing themselves. Self-actualization and self-expression is a very key component of my teaching philosophy, and it is one that governs this particular lesson plan.

#### Reflection:

My lesson plan is partially inspired by some of my fieldwork and observations at the Art Gallery of Ontario. While shadowing and assisting the various Education Officers, I had a chance to observe and witness many different teaching styles, sometimes for the exact same activity (for instance, I did the Inventive Intervention art session twice, with different EOs). This gave me the opportunity to compare and contrast teaching styles, and determine which teaching style was closest to my own. I was also in part inspired by the activities in themselves- Creativity Challenge and Inventive Intervention were the two art sessions that I enjoyed the most. When composing my lesson plan, I wanted to create an art project that had the potential to engage students in an all encompassing manner- the interactivity involved in searching for an object, and utilizing it in an art piece promotes positive engagement and enthusiasm from students. Just as with the AGO art sessions, my lesson plan would be in close connection to historical art references and information- so students would understand the historical art context in which they are creating their piece. However, the work would be made relevant to today's world by addressing present issues.

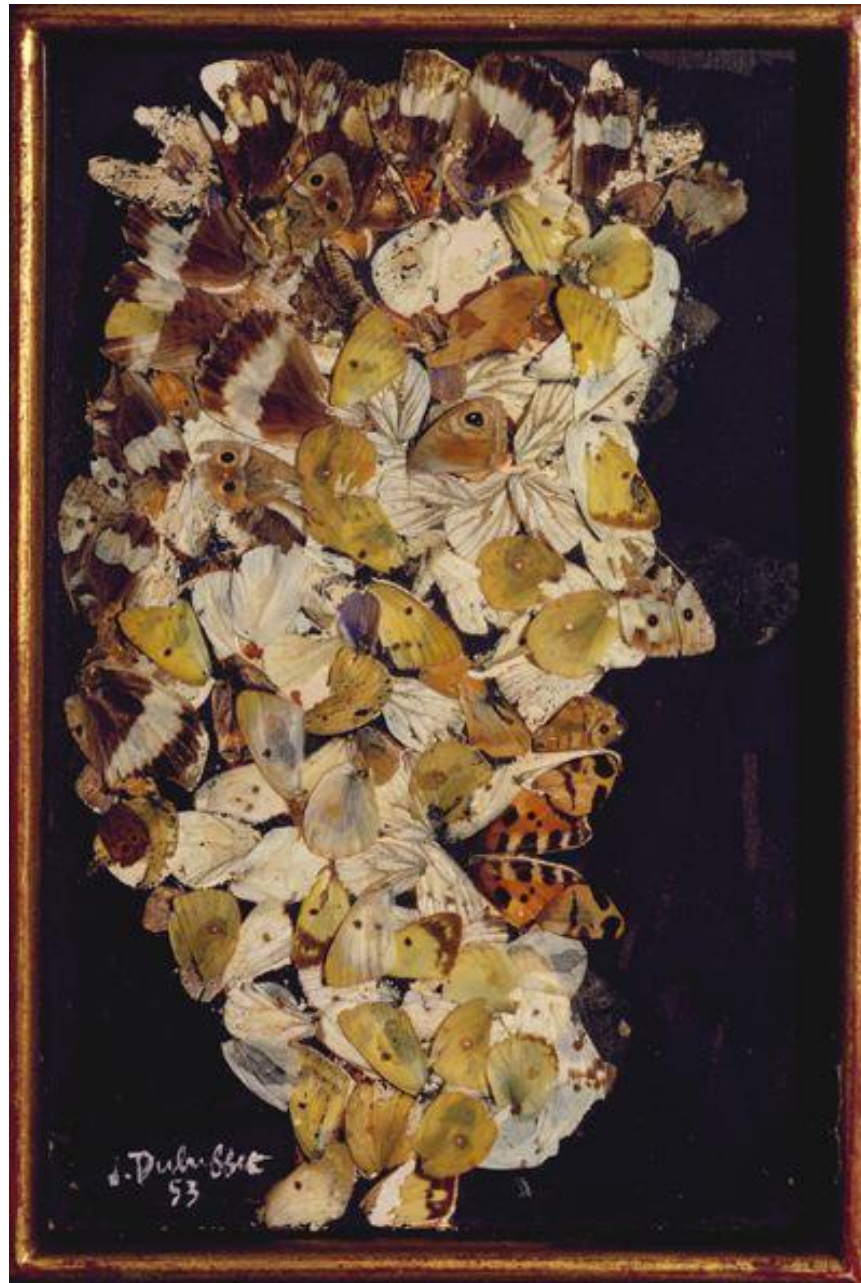
Supporting Images:



Pablo Picasso, "Guitar" (1912)



Robert Rauschenberg, "Canyon" (1959)



Jean Dubuffet, "Assemblages d'empreintes" (1954-55)