

Perspective and Voice: the artist and the message.

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Introduction

This summer began with a thorough cleaning of my art studio. My plan was to get the space clean and organized and then start working. The cleaning part went great; found things I didn't know I had and made my tool box a model of organization. I bought some beautiful porcelain clay; a clay body that is very smooth and creamy, I was really anxious to get my hands in it. I began working on the wheel, throwing basic forms and trying to remind myself of techniques that had become a bit rusty. The excitement lasted for about a week. I threw bowls, mugs, a number of lopsided plates, and some nice vases. I set them all out for drying and was completely frustrated. They were nothing- communicated utility and nothing more. I began to search for a plan, a source of inspiration.

The art making experience for me has always been a bumpy road; through great bursts of energy and productivity to periods of redundancy and frustration. Though, what is always consistent, what can never be changed, is my desire to communicate ideas. For my student however, the problem is generally contrary to this. Their motivation to create works is generally because they want to get a good grade! The inspired bursts of productivity are seen in a select few while the majority waits to hear constructive criticism in hopes of moving forward – quickly –towards a finished product and an A.

When I stand in front of my class and begin to present a unit, it is often the case that I start with a demonstration of an art making technique that will be the catalyst for the new work the students are being asked to create. These techniques are generally broken down into a series of steps; and like the start of my summer work, they need to begin with a visual plan and a subject that inspires them. There in lies one of the great frustrations and accompanying redundancies in teaching art. How will I present an idea that will prepare my students to create works that reflect a personal style and awareness of the power of art to illuminate, inform, and influence opinion? When do they start making works that are meaningful to them, works that reflect a genuine concern for the world they live in and their role in it, versus a teacher directed product where each work has a very similar style – the 'class project'.

Through art, we can be connected to the world. The subject of conflict, the roots of conflict, and the plight of children in war is rich with imagery, yet can be linked to students own experiences in many ways. Teenagers are forever trying to find their place in the world, and in the classroom among their peers. Even as adults, we seek connections to make sense of the events in our lives. As we look at art we all have the propensity to make that personal connection and association. When we look at works of art we are drawn into the composition through a number of techniques the artist has learned to manipulate. The organization of elements within a composition is a powerful tool. There is the message, and then there is how the message is presented.

I have used the analogy in my Art History class of the religious scene of the last supper to help illuminate this idea. Seen through the eyes of Leonardo DaVinci (commissioned by the Duke of Milan), this story is presented to us in almost perfect one point perspective. There is clear visual order and balance. Additionally, Leonardo's use of the golden ratio – in this case, the golden rectangle; creates an aesthetically pleasing composition where all the figures are unified and organized in four groups of three. In its original form we could have clearly seen and related to the very human emotions the disciples are displaying. The figures are in three quarter and full profile, their expressions and gestures clearly indicating the sentiment at the table. In striking contrast we can view the *Last Supper* by the Venetian artist, Jacopo Tintoretto. Here we are presented with a strong diagonal force that takes us deep into the painting, and through dramatic lighting, gestures and glances; our eyes continually circle the space. This picture communicates the same story in a much different way. We can't see everyone's face, the lighting is overall very dark and there is an atmosphere of tension. Why did each artist choose the elements of art and principles of design that they did? How does that influence our interpretation and feeling about the work and subsequently, the story depicted?

The message, how the message is presented – these are powerful tools that an artist has. As a teacher, I want to present subjects and ideas to my students that are relevant to them. To present ideas that they feel connected to in some way, to care enough about that they want to voice their opinion, take a social, moral, or political stand on an issue. Ultimately to help them envision themselves as part of something bigger than themselves. This unit is an attempt to help my students clearly communicate a point of view in their artwork, by carefully selecting these artistic elements and principles in order to successively present that point of view.

Background Information

Our school has a peer mediation team, which is set up to help deal with conflict. The conflicts include disagreements in hallway confrontations, relationships, fights, bullying and intimidation. I have taught in a number of schools that have used such a model and their success is supportive of the idea that personal connections and experiences create for more meaningful understanding. Standing in the shoes of others help to develop these understandings.

I teach in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public school system, which is the 19th largest district in the nation with a population of almost 130,000 students. I teach studio art and art history in a school located in the Northeast learning community, with a population of roughly 2000 students, grades 9-12. My students come from extremely diverse backgrounds. Charlotte continues to be one of the leading cities in the nation for families to relocate. We have seen a steady increase in the rise of ESL students as well as students from all parts of the country. This diversity has created many opportunities for me as teacher to make connections to cultures and to history in ways that are more meaningful and rich for each student.

My studio art classes consist of students with varying abilities and interests. As part of the advanced studio art curriculum, students are encouraged to develop 'personal voice' in their artwork. This is a direct extension that supports the English 9 teaching standards

for discovering voice in literature and developing it in writing. I use many of these strategies in my art class using the same English workbooks in my class – modified into a sketchbook. Because of what is often a considerable difference in ability and interest, this approach helps me provide differentiated instruction.

Objectives

I have developed this unit with the intention of providing an opportunity for my students to learn from their peers and make history applicable. My grandfather was a child soldier in World War II. Like many young men of his era, he manipulated his birth certificate and enrolled in the United States Navy at the age of 17. As a young girl, I can remember listening to his stories about exotic places and looking at some of his favorite souvenirs from Italy. Those stories created an extremely skewed version of this history. Those romantic adventures were crushed when I began learning about the World War II in sixth grade Social Studies class with the reading of Anne Frank's diary. The reality of effects of war was startling to me. I can vividly remember the confusion I felt – trying to reconcile my grandfathers wonderful stories with this girls personal account of the same conflict. Her story resonated with me on many levels. Certainly the fact that we were peers must have influenced me greatly.

The overarching goal for this unit is the study of conflict through a number of perspectives. Each section of this unit will begin with a study of historical facts about a conflict in a specific region of the world or a period in history in history. Through a variety of sources – each with the unifying factor of a child soldier's perspective - students will be able to experience accounts of child soldiers as hero's, victims, and as perpetrators. They will study works of art created around that particular conflict and consider the motivation behind how the art is used (to inform and misinform the viewer). They will create works of art that clearly communicate point of view and personal voice.

Students will be engaged in an analysis of a number of primary and secondary source materials. They will develop the ability to contextualize child soldiering as a subject of historic enquiry and artistic inspiration. They will make conscientious artistic choices in the development of their artwork that will be more personal and clearly express a point of view. This will require students to ask meaningful questions about the role of child soldiers – ‘could this have happened to you?’ ‘given a similar situation, what do you think you would have done’?

This unit will include an in-depth study and practice of the techniques artists use to arrange a compositional space. The studio taught portion of this unit will focus on the arrangement of compositional space and how to engage the viewer in a variety of ways. Perspective in the literal sense; controlling ‘the line of sight’ in a composition can have a significant influence on how a work of art is perceived. Diagonal compositions, foreshortening, and the figure - ground relationship will play key roles in developing works of art that express a specific message or tone. We will also explore the contemporary ideas that prevail in the world of graffiti art and installation art such as space, scale, and context. Students will be interpreting the stories from this unit and creating works that reflect a personal style and awareness of the power of art to illuminate, inform, and influence opinion.

This unit will examine the major world conflicts students have previously studied (or are currently studying) in World, European, and US History classes through a series of primary sources documents, photographs, and works of art. Interdisciplinary teaching has long been a part of my teaching practice and one that proves to have a positive impact on my students. This unit will be taught to my upper level studio art students (the majority of whom are in 11th grade). They will have already taken World and European history, and most are in US History at this time. Using these primary sources, we will develop a more in-depth and personal understanding of an otherwise impersonal history. We will revisit events and major characters of these conflicts through the eyes of children, many of who are their own ages. There are limited courses taught at the high school level that allow for close studies of some of the more contemporary conflicts of our times. This unit will also introduce student to the child soldiers in Sierra Leone and children on opposing sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Strategies

Images of War - whose side are you on?

The first step in engaging my students in a new unit is to develop an activity or presentation that very quickly requires their input. In the case of presenting an art making technique, sometimes it can be as simple as asking for an assistant(s) to help me with the materials or asking a student in what color I may use in that particular example. Approaching the presentation of a concept is a bit more complex. Because of the violent nature of this subject – I have decided to introduce this unit with a series of activities that will start with an independent assignment. As homework, students will be asked to find two images. The first image should be of war and the second of a child soldier – one that appears to be their age/sex. A guided class discussion will allow a range of topics within this unit to be ‘put on the table’. What is happening in this image? What is the point of view? Who are the victims/perpetrators/ heroes? How did the artist compose the space and what art elements dominate? What purpose does this image serve?

Following this discussion, the class will break into two groups. Using a set of new images of child soldiers that will be provided for them; each group will be asked to organize the images into a photo essay. This activity will allow students to take ownership of the images in a way they decide is most important. They will be asked to present their photo essays and explain their rationale for the arrangement of their images.

An introduction to the origins of war will be presented in a new photo essay that will make use of images such as the British Imperial Federation map of the World of 1889. Using this map and supporting images, we will talk about Colonialism: a political-economic phenomenon whereby various European nations explored, conquered, settled, and exploited large areas of the world. Imperialism: a policy of extending a country's power and influence through diplomacy or military force. Nationalism: a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups. Social Darwinism: a popular late Victorian era belief that states that the strongest of the fittest should survive and flourish in society and that competition among all individuals, groups, nations, or ideas drives social evolution in human

societies. The discussion will focus on the how these political beliefs have effected various nations and their relationships with each other.

I will also present for discussion some of the Economic justifications of war. Looking at the British Imperial Federation map, we can glean some ideas about the quest nations have for resources, the demands made by citizens in ever-growing nations, and the suggestion that they are capable of helping those less fortunate nations. We can also look at the perspectives nations like Britain take in Federation Map, the suggestion of a peaceful co-existence with the Empire along side the implied Colonialism.

From an artistic perspective, we will look at two series of etchings. The first is entitled *Miseres de la guerre (Miseries of War)*, by Jacques Callot. This series consists of eighteen images protesting the chaos, misery, and suffering (in particular, unruly troops preying on civilians) associated with dynastic and religious quarrels that plagued Europe during the 1620's.¹ The second set of etchings, completed almost two hundred years later, is Francisco Goya's *Los Desastres de la Guerr (Disasters of War)*. A Spaniard, Goya began working on these prints around the beginning of the Spanish War of Independence in 1810.² Here the artist produces sobering images of the brutality and despair of wartime. These images are an intensely honest look at man's inhumanity to man.

In 1633, Callot began to create the series of war etchings as a response to the popularity of new military treatises justifying wars, which were gaining much notice in Europe. Each etching is approximately 3"x7", horizontal frames with stylistically decorative Victorian borders. Each frame in the series has a poem at the bottom that serves as a caption.

In the series, Callot observes a soldier's life. The first plate in the series is entitled *Recruiting Soldiers*. Here we see a huge procession of armed soldiers, each unit organized by repeated elements of flags and weapons; symbols of military force and pride. Here soldiers are enlisting and engaging in drills still recognizable in today's armies. This standardization and lack of personal autonomy feeds the idea of service and allegiance to the country. This poem reads

The metal inside Pluto's veins/
Which at the same time causes peace and
war/
Attracts the soldier without fear of danger/
From his birthplace to
foreign lands/
Where having chosen to follow the army/
He must arm
himself with virtue against vice.³

What concern does Callot imply? What sublet techniques does he use to support his poem? Another example of the concerns that Callot may be expressing in this series is the very graphic plate entitled *Plundering a Farmhouse*. In this plate, chaos and violence committed by soldiers upon residents is erupting throughout the composition. On the far left, a woman is attempting to run away from a very aggressive soldier, her clothing in disarray she is grabbed by the soldier who has his sword in the air. There is impending rape implied along with other atrocities. Near center, a man begs for his life in the face of a soldier's sword, behind this scene, another group of soldiers is stealing food and household items. In the far background, two men are committing rape, the woman held down on the bed, her breasts exposed, she struggles to be freed. And in the far left, a man

has been stripped bare, hung up by his feet, and set on fire. The poem reads

Here are the great exploits of these inhuman hearts/They ravage all over, nothing evades their hands/To get gold, one invents torture/Another inspires his accomplices with a thousand misdeeds/And all in the same spirit commit wickedness/Theft, kidnapping, murder, and rape.⁴

Throughout the Renaissance images of rape were commonly used in war imagery as national propaganda to raise fears towards foreign assailers and fuel political hatred towards specific enemies. Images showed highly eroticized women being overpowered by gods - the women here were seductresses.⁵ Callot's concerns surrounding ethical warfare is clearly evident –he denounces the soldier as a villain, the towns and villages inhabitants are the victims; rape is an act of violence – these women are victims of suffering.

Other titles in this series include images show the punishment of criminal soldiers. They have such titles as *The Strappado*, *The Hanging*, *The Firing Squad*, *The Stake and The Wheel*; in each the soldiers are publicly punished for their crimes against the villagers. Callot continues to portray the soldiers' life as one of fierce violence; where those who survive were battered, mutilated and often left to beg. In one of the final prints, *The Hospital*, the poem reads

When the war is over, his misfortune starts again. Then he is compelled to go begging, and his poverty arouses the laughter of the peasants, who curses him when he asks for alms and considers it an insult to see before him the object of the afflictions he endures.⁶

Callot is leaving us to wonder if the soldiers that survive war are not worse off than their peers who were killed in battle. Paulette Chone argues that these images deal with "...the contemporary political and legal debates on the problem of the discipline of soldiers in their country and abroad. Are soldiers supposed to plunder a country during war? Are the peasants entitled to avenge themselves? Is this plundering and avenging right or wrong?"⁷ Asking these questions will support and encourage students to engage more closely in the subject of child soldiering as a subject of historical enquiry and artistic inspiration. They will be asked to make conscientious artistic choices in the development of their artwork that will be more personal and clearly express (both a political and emotional) point of view.

Robert Hughes describes Francisco Goya's , *Desastres de la Guerr (Disaster of War)* series of etchings as " incomparably the more dramatic...more savagely beautiful, and, in every way, more humanly moving: ... they are the true ancestors of all great visual war reporting."⁸ The eighty etchings are a vision of war that is lacking in any glory, and is without mercy and redemption. This group of etchings are particularly graphic and not necessary appropriate for all age groups. It is recommended to preview the series and select from the set, images that will best suit each particular class.

In 1808, Napoleon's army invaded Spain as part of his plan to create a great new French Colonial empire. The French soldiers were known to have brutally tortured the Spanish peasants, a guerrilla type warfare materialized. The Spanish resisted the foreign

occupation with their own acts of violence. It began with small groups of Spaniards who would attack French soldiers; slaughter and torture them, and then disappear into the countryside. Professional soldiers are used to some 'laws of warfare' – fighting undisciplined forces such as the Spaniards; the warfare on both sides resulted in incredibly violent and brutal killings.

Goya had reached the pinnacle of his career around 1785, when he was appointed Painter to the King. Shortly after this period he was struck by an illness that left him completely deaf. Though he completed this series from 1810 to 1814, they were not published for almost 50 years. Perhaps he was looking out for his own self-interest "lest he face punishment from the warring powers buffeting Spain during this time".⁸ It is clear that this now deaf artist was silently mouthing and gesturing the horror he witnessed on both sides of this conflict.

Goya's emotionally charged images lack the detailed narrative that Callot deemed necessary. Viewers can't get lost in the architectural details and decorative borders; instead, we are confronted with executions and mutilations. Additionally Goya confronts our emotions with captions such as *Por que? (Why?)*, *Esto es malo (This is Bad)*, and *Carretadas al Cementerio (Cartload to the Cemetery)*. *No Quieren (They don't like it)* shows a woman struggling against a man who is trying to rape her; *Barbaros! (Barbarians!)* shows a man tied, face-first, to a tree, about to be executed at close range. *De que sirve una taza? (What is the use of a cup?)*, depicts weak, starving men and women huddling around a single cup, no relief, no chance of survival in sight.

In *Enterrar y callar (Bury them and be silent)*, Goya's poignant honesty is palpable. Standing on top of a hill, two survivors bury their faces in pain and disgust at what they see below; a pile of naked corpses left unburied. One story about Goya tells of his servant asking him, "Why do you paint these barbarities that men commit?" Goya's answer was, "To tell men forever that they should not be barbarians"⁹

In *No se puede mirar (One can't Look)*, we can study the techniques Goya uses to create such emotional intensity. The compositional technique places the shooters (critical players in the scene unfolding) outside the picture plane – we have only the immediate action of impending death confronting us. The compositions make use of strong, active vertical and diagonal lines. He uses these techniques throughout the series along with the Baroque practice of high contrast values.

What sort of effect is there when we interact with horrific images, when we are, indirectly, witnesses to atrocity? The prints give us horrible visual detail and present us with intense drama. We might feel sorrow, grief, disgust, or a maybe even some sort of morbid fascination when we interact with this kind of work. There is a transfer of emotion. But I am interested in what students might then do with that emotional connection; can they internalize that emotion and then use it intellectually in their own art making. For students, studying how the artist uses his tools to intensify the emotional aspects of the work will help them make their own artistic choices and develop work that more clearly and personally expresses a point of view.

After looking closely at the work in these two series, will complete a compare and contrast study of Callot and Goya, with particular attention paid to the personal motivations these

artists may have in creating these works. Using the activities posted in the English 9 curriculum mentioned earlier (personal voice) – student will complete a writing exercise in which they will take on the voice of one of these artists as they explain their artistic point of view and how they effectively communicated that point of view. This exercise will become part of a series of critical writing samples students will produce in this unit.

Following this we will read “Jerusalem” by Yehuda Amichai,¹⁰ an 85 year old German born Israeli citizen. This beautifully written poem provides us with an image of the ill effects, divisiveness, and illusions that war creates. The second is entitled ‘The War Works Hard’ by Dunya Mikhail.¹¹ It is an unpredictable look at the qualities of war. It ends “...It works with unparalleled diligence! Yet no one gives it a word of praise” This unexpected perspective will be used to provoke a discussion on the potential positive aspects of war.

National Standard Course of Study for Arts Education competency goal number three reads - The learner will choose and evaluate a range of subject matter and ideas to communicate intended meaning in artworks. All of the studio activities in this unit will focus on this goal specifically. After reading and discussing the content as well as the aspects of personal voice in each poem – students will create a mixed media, collage that uses the literal text of the poem combined with images drawn in response to it. Students will have to choose the poem they personally feel is most representative of the ‘reality of war’ as a tool to solve conflict.

The following section of this unit will look specifically at four historic conflicts through a series of primary and secondary source materials. Students will be asked to create works of art within each of these sections from the point of view of that source.

World War I - The Great Adventure

Using the excerpts from the book Boy Soldiers of the Great War by Richard van Emden, we will address the enthusiasm of war from the perspective of the British youth. The stories here are reminiscent of my grandfather’s romantic storytelling. A guided discussion leading will begin with a series of inquiry-based questions. What were the motivations that fueled such enthusiasm? What social/economic factors played a role in the actions of these soldiers? How was their reality of soldiering different from their early perception?

1. It can be said that each side felt they were ‘in the right’. Throughout history there is a sense that war is the tool to settle such disputes. (see/review origins of war section) 2. Certainly the feeling of nationalism and pride played a role in the belief that this war was justified. 3. The Industrial Revolution created a transition in parts of Great Britain towards an economy that was based on manufacturing of machines. The impact on society was enormous. The strength and power that was associated with this revolution gave many the impression that it would be a short and victorious war and therefore defensible. 4. This was the ‘great adventure’ of their generation. Wilfred Owen helped glorify this in his poem *Dulce et decorum est Pro patria mori* –the Latin title of this poem means “Sweet and fitting it is to die for one’s country”.¹²

In addition to the reading the excerpts from this book, we will study the most popular form of visual communication from this conflict, the postcard.

Because they were a major means of communication, postcards were produced to communicate the full range of human thought and intent. From humor to nostalgia to joy to hate. It is precisely for this reason that they are important cultural and historical artifacts... They are not merely snapshots of a world at war. They are virtual windows into the minds and hearts of millions who fought that war on the battlefields and the home front as well.¹³

There are a number of websites listed in the bibliography that provide high quality images of postcards from this period. Many of the images from these cards can help facilitate this discussion and studio project. Using the chapter titles from the book as the theme in their series (such as Youthful Dreams, Held to Serve, and All or Nothing), students will create a series of postcards from the point of view of one of the young British soldiers. As they explore the

World War II – The Propaganda Machine

Using the Third Reich's effective, deliberate, and excessive tendencies to organize and categorize the war effort, we will look at the effects of propaganda on the Hitler youth as well as the German people. We will begin by reviewing the rule of a Totalitarian state: a form of government that theoretically permits no individual freedom and that seeks to subordinate all aspects of the individual's life to the authority of the state. A guided discussion leading will begin with a series of inquiry-based questions. What were the motivations that fueled such unwavering support? What social/economic factors played a role in the actions of the German government and citizens?

We will read an excerpt from Alfonse Heck's A Child of Hitler: Growing up in the days that God wore a Swastika. This account of young man indoctrination into the Nazi youth was spurred on in part, for his love of flying. Was this an opportunity for the Gleichschaltung – or was this young man destined to become a soldier regardless of his citizenship? What role did education play in the development of this process? What were influences

We will look at German propaganda art as the art of persuasion. Spearheaded by Joseph Goebbels. The German word Gleichschaltung (literally "Synchronising"; synchronization) is used in a political sense to describe the process by which the Nazi regime successively established a system of authoritarian control and tight coordination over all aspects of society. The term itself is a typical Nazi euphemism. According to Goebbels;

The essence of propaganda consists in winning people over to an idea so sincerely, so vitally, that in the end they succumb to it utterly and can never again escape from it.”¹⁴

What is the motivation behind how works of art are used to inform and in many cases, misinform? Propaganda art serves as a means of pushing political messages into cultural forums. Political leaders understand the significance of using art to present messages and

ideals to the mass public. Art incorporating strong political and social messages serves the propagandists purpose of facilitating the spread of information and opinion on a large scale.

This propaganda machine relied on some very for basic principles. 1. Simplify – 2. Create large lies – 3. Repeat – 4. Utilize subconscious actions. There are number of excellent website that help illustrate these ideas including well-referenced and high quality original posters from the war. I have made note of them in my bibliography. Posters like these resemble movie advertisements, films take on dramatic plots and famous personalities reinforce political messages. The illustrations are easily recognizable and present a clear message. Through association the viewer is more susceptible to accepting a message. Words and phrases are brief and to the point – they clarify the message of the illustration. The illustrations give the political message a more emotional appeal.

Reading excerpts from Heck's book and viewing images the Nazi youth would have also seen will provide student with the perspective to create a propaganda poster that combines persuasive techniques and imagery.

The Holocaust – Prejudice

Reading excerpts from Gerhard Durlacher's Drowning: growing up in Nazi Germany and Louise de Wijze's Only my Life: A Survivor's Story, students will discuss each survivors perception of the conflicts that occurred on their lives. How did the early actions of the Nazi party affect their family life? What did anti Semitism feel and look like to a young German Jew? What was it like to live and work in the concentration camps?

Students will look at the steps taken by the Third Reich that led up to the Holocaust and consider the political environment of Germany that helped fuel this conflict. We will then look at the effects of anti-Semitic behavior on the lives of Jewish families and individuals sent to the Nazi concentration camps. The images and text taken for this section of the unit will be used understand the point of view of the victim(s) of conflict.

The history of the Jewish people is as old as any man's history. So why were the Jewish people singled out for extermination by the Nazis? How and when did this all start? What German would support such a vile plan? Did all Germans support Hitler? This is the framework from where we will be able to then look at the concentration camps, the victims and the impact it has on the world.

Nazi Germany was not the first group to single out the Jewish people. Century old Christian traditions propagated a negative stereotype of the Jews. From 80 A.D until 420 A.D, leading Christian thinkers defended their new beliefs through a number of early Church doctrines. In their attempt to make Christianity the more legitimate, they had to elucidate the sins of others. It was implied the Jews were leading people away from salvation; so the Jew as an agent of the devil and practitioner of witchcraft was propagated.

In 1933 Adolf Hitler was named chancellor of the Nazi party, which was already taking full advantage of the existing political unrest in Germany. As Germany continued to struggle with its identity – after the Treaty of Versailles ended WWI, Germany had to cut their army as well as surrender land holdings. This of course was a big blow to an already struggling economy, not to mention the morale of a defeated German people.

Hitler and his Third Reich perpetuated the belief that all of history was a fight between races that should culminate in the triumph of the superior Aryan race. ‘Blood poisoning’ of the German Aryan race is what the people of Germany began to hear early on in Hitler’s Nazi party. This originated with the accusations in ancient history claiming that certain Jews sacrificed Greek victims.

In April 1933, the German people were instructed to boycott Jewish owned stores. Government created flyers posted signs “traders” and “defend yourselves”. (Durlacher) Though the boycott was not a successful long-term operation, it did set a tone for isolating and segregating the Jewish population. In 1935 the Nuremberg Laws were introduced - this further help segregate Germans versus German Jews. The laws deprived Jews of citizenship and prohibited marriage between Jews and other Germans. The following year began a voluntary removal phase - again it was not a successful operation. The German Jews had their own sense of Nationalism (seeped in generations), there was also a sense that this anti-Semitic behavior would pass with time. By 1938 Jews were suffering intense economic and political persecutions.

In January of 1942 Reinhard Heydrich is assigned the task of eliminating Jews from Germany. He then presented Adolf Eichmann with a final solution, deportation of Jews to extermination camps in Eastern Europe.

There is a very different tone in each of these books. From the perspective of Durlacher, students will consider how anti-Semitism felt and looked like to a young German Jew; from Louise de Wijze’s, the daily struggles and rare moments of joy during his life in a concentration camp. Each victim has a history to tell that ultimately brings the reader to the same dilemma. We will view a series of works of art that memorialize the victims of the Holocaust. Through a guided discussion, students will explore the tone of the works and what specific techniques the artist uses to evoke those attitudes. Like Goya’s intensely emotional and often gruesome imagery, student will be asked to make conscientious artistic choices; to internalize that emotion and then use it intellectually in their own art making. The student-generated work created here will be from the point of view of one of these victims.

Sierra Leone – Identity

You can hold a gun to a man’s head - if you are tall enough, if you are hungry enough, if you have no one to go home to. Could you use that gun? What else could you be convinced to do? Reading the accounts of then child soldier, Ishmael Beah in [A Long Way Gone: Memories of a Boy Soldier](#), one can’t help but consider these questions. This conflict will focus on the point of view of the perpetrator.

Student will first be introduced to Ishmael Beah through an interview he did with John Stewart and the Daily Show. The short interview provides us with a face and personality that is sweet, honest and very real. Beah talks about how his 12-year-old life was

dramatically affected by the decisions of others. It is heartbreaking to read how his identity is stripped from him, and the painful process of “regaining your humanity and trust”.

The countries of Africa share common histories of Imperialism. During the Industrial Revolution, the early 1800s, European nations had just a toehold in Africa, holding only areas along the coast. Later, as more and more nations needed raw materials for their own industries, there became a greater interest in these lands. They also wanted to open up markets for the goods they made. Nationalism fed the drive for empires as well. A nation often felt that gaining colonies was a measure of its greatness. What happened when Africans tried to resist imperialism? As colonies begin to gain independence from these European Nations, leadership fell into the hands a select few; government rule by dictatorship became widespread.

The violence that has emerged from the various power struggles in this area of the world is startling. The success of these dictatorships was and is reliant on their ability to control the population. Rebel groups have emerged such as the Lords Resistance Army in Uganda. They claim they are fighting for the establishment of a government based on the biblical Ten Commandments. They are notorious for kidnapping children and forcing them to become rebel fighters or concubines.

According to Amnesty International about a third of the world's child soldiers are in Africa. According to a report by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, a non-governmental alliance that includes and Human Rights Watch, an estimated 120,000 child soldiers, some as young as seven, are fighting in Africa. For those who recruit them, "children are cheap, expendable and easier to condition into fearless killing and unthinking obedience".¹⁵

These children are forcibly abducted into government or rebel armies, but others join for ideological reasons or because viable alternatives do not exist, given widespread socio-economic collapse, schools that do not function and the break-up of families. In the case of Ishmael Beah, the reasons all seem to blend into one. As part of this unit's goal to identifying with and making an emotional connection to these historical conflicts, students will view segments of the PBS film *Ghosts of Rwanda* (2004). As they watch these segments they will be asked to create a list of experiences they saw that provide and example of one's loss identity. When you begin to loose your identity, how does that affect your decision-making? What becomes of your ability to make decisions?

Student will again be asked to consider the role of the soldiers in this film as well as Ishmael Beah's. They will be asked to decide what responsibility these child soldiers have, if any- in the history of this conflict. The student-generated work created will be from the point of view of one of these children as they fall into their role as soldier. A continuing class discussion of the roles these child soldiers played in the various conflicts will help students internalize the point of view and answer some key questions before they take on (or attempt to interpret a specific point of view). Are these child soldiers' victims; are they perpetrators, what is the criterion to make this kind of judgment?

Palestinian Israeli Crisis - Hate perpetuated?

The hatred between the Israelis and Palestinians is deep and pervasive. Both sides have justifications for their feelings. Each clings to the belief that history and justice is on their side — not to mention God. The film Promises shows us this conflicted history through the lives of seven Palestinian and Israeli children. Rather than focusing on political events, the children featured give us a refreshing, human and sometimes humorous portrait of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. These children offer my students a chance to see youth passionately involved in thinking about the roots of their own prejudices and confronting them.

Prejudice is usually formed early in childhood as boys and girls inherit the rigid ideas, ideals, and political perspectives of their parents and their communities. Does this ideal prevail from generation to generation? Who, or more importantly what can break a cycle of prejudice? English clergyman Charles Colton said, “We hate some persons because we do not know them, and we will not know them because we hate them.”¹⁶

In 1948, Israel fought the War of Independence. During the war, 750,000 Palestinians fled or were forced off their land and became refugees. In 1967 Israel took control of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and many refugee camps came under Israeli military occupation. This conflict has grown in violence and intensity ever since this time.

In June 2002 the construction of the Israeli “Separation Wall” began. Consisting of a series of twenty five foot high concrete panels, trenches, barbed wire and electrical fencing; the barrier is being built by the Israeli government to prevent suicide bombers from entering Israel. In 2001 and 2002, suicide bombers claimed the lives of 335 civilians and Israeli troops in Israel. Israeli forces killed 1,442 Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank during the same period, according to B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights.

Dubbed the "Apartheid Wall" by Palestinians, it has increasingly attracted international media attention, due in large part to scale of the project. Still under construction, is expected to reach at least 403 miles in length. The most obvious historical parallel to the barrier is the Berlin Wall, which was 96 miles long, built to keep citizens from escaping communist East Germany. The average height of the Berlin Wall was 11.8 feet, compared with the current height of Israel's Wall- 25 feet. Israel's barrier is therefore planned to be four times as long and in places twice as high as the Berlin Wall.¹⁶ There are many problems with this wall (and with all walls)—rockets can go over them, tunnels can go under them. Walls can offend people, they can comfort people, but ultimately they fail to deliver security.

I am interested in what my students think about this attempt at conflict resolution. To what extent do they consider the ramifications of building wall between opposing sides of a conflict? In the United States near San Diego, California, almost nine miles of a doubled layer fence has been erected. In Arizona, sixty-five miles of barriers have been constructed. The 14th century construction of the Great Wall of China, built to keep northern tribes out, Hadrian's Wall protecting Roman citizens from northern barbarians. What do these walls say about human needs? Do we love them because they provide for us protection? Do we hate them because they create barriers to our existence? Could they in fact be physical manifestations of prejudice?

The film Promises concludes with the children of both ‘sides of the wall’ meet and talk about their lives. They share a meal and play soccer. At the end of the day the young boy, Faraj breaks down and cries, anxious that the ties formed in this warm encounter will not last the test of time. In interviews conducted two years later, his forecast was correct. In addition to the film, we will look at a number of maps and photo essays that will help deepen their understanding of the regions history.

A well-known street artist known as Banksy has stencil paintings on the Palestinian side of Israel's separation wall. One of the nine images on the West Bank shows the head of a white horse appearing to poke through the wall. Another shows children digging a hole, breaking through the wall. In a third surreal image a ladder appears to be going up the wall and over to the other side. We will use the symbol of the wall as a final and collaborative project. Student will be asked to make conscientious artistic choices; to internalize that emotion and then use it intellectually in their own art making. The student-generated work created here will be from the point of view of how conflict resolutions need full participation from both sides of the conflict.

Lessons

Writing about art - Critique

North Carolina standard course of study in arts education requires the student ‘to reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others’. This goal will be developed using both the student-generated works and the reference images presented to them in different parts of the unit.

We will be looking at contemporary and historical images through a critical lens and ask questions such as: How do our experiences (as well as other’s), influence the development and the interpretation of works? Here is the power of art to inform and misinform. I will introduce students to critiques that involve analysis beyond the ‘formula’ for art analysis: Description –Analysis- Interpretation -Judgment. Though this is the prescribed method for teaching how to write about works of art, I have struggled to move students beyond this format in part because there is little or no personal connection that students make to the painting or photograph. Beyond describing the principles and elements of design – they find little relevant subject to discuss. Meaning, feeling, mood and ideas are generally interpretations that are left for me to drag out of them. Subjectivity is lost. This critique lesson will focus on questions to generate ideas. Students will begin looking at the content of a particular work of art. Different than subject, content will be considered as it is expressed through style. Iconology as defined by Barnett is the study of images as they reflect cultural thoughts and attitudes.¹⁷ The earlier example of the Last Supper (see Introduction section) will be used again when showing how pictures of the same subject can communicate different meanings.

Students will begin with a series of basic questions. What is my first response to the work? Where and by whom was the work made? What purpose did the work serve? From this basic understanding of the work we will focus on two more basic questions. What is this doing (what is the artist up to)? Why do I have this response? It is these basic questions where I hope to give students the opportunity to be more confident and personal in their writing about works of art. These questions require the student to

identify with the artist – why one material/composition/ color was chosen over another. The second question requires students to trust their feelings. This format will be used throughout the unit on the work of their peers and on historical works.

Photomontage of a poem

National Standard Course of Study for Arts Education competency goal number three reads - The learner will choose and evaluate a range of subject matter and ideas to communicate intended meaning in artworks. After reading and discussing the content as well as the aspects of personal voice in each poem from the beginning of this unit, students will create a mixed media, collage that uses the literal text of the poem combined with images in response to it.

Students will be introduced to a number of transfer techniques used by artist Robert Rauschenberg. There are a variety of image transfer techniques and materials available, an inexpensive choice is a stripper found at any hardware store. Using these techniques along with a variety of media, class discussions regarding color, contrast, and imagery will help students analyze the visual problem of representing voice.

Mural painting

Collaborative works piece. Using images and techniques from Banksy, students will generate a series of stencils that will be used to create an installation piece in the school. As mentioned earlier, my school has a peer mediation team set-up to help deal with conflict. Using that particular hallway as the backdrop, students will create a mural that clearly communicates their point of view about the desired outcome for thoughtful and peaceful resolution to conflict.

Endnotes

¹ Ishmael, Amelia. "*Images of Violence*." June, 2008.<http://ameliaishmael.com/> (accessed October, 2009).

² Hughes, Robert. *Goya*. 1 ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 271

³ Dubrulle, Hugh. "*Web Gallery: The Age of Disorder*." 2003.<http://www.anselm.edu/academic/history/hdubrulle/WarandRevolution/text/generalinfo/gallery/ageofdisorder.htm> (accessed October, 2009).

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Wolfthal, Diane. *Images of Rape: The "Heroic" Tradition and Its Alternatives*. New York: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

⁶ Dubrulle, "*Web Gallery: The Age of Disorder*."

⁷ Bertrand, Anne. "*The prints of Jacques Callot (1592-1635) at the University of Pittsburgh* ." <http://www.haa.pitt.edu/callot/home.htm> (accessed October, 2009)

⁸ Hughes, *Goya*, 263

⁹ Robinson, Maisah. "Francisco Goya's, Disasters of War." May 27, 2006.http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/34144/review_of_francisco_goyas_disasters.html?cat=9 (accessed October, 2009).

¹⁰ Amichai, Yehuda. "A Touch of Grace." 2001.http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2001/12/A%20Touch%20of%20Grace-%20Yehuda%20Amichai (accessed September 2009).

¹¹ Mikhail, Dunya. "The War Works Hard." 2005.<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/16991> (accessed September 2009).

¹² Owen, Wilfred. "Dulce Et Decorum Est." March, 1918.<http://www.rjgeib.com/heroes/owen/owen-poetry.html> (accessed September 2009).

¹³ Kosanovich, Jerry. "Propogande Postcards from the Great War." 1999.<http://www.ww1-propaganda-cards.com/> (accessed September 2009).

¹⁴ Trueman, Chris. "History Learning Site." 2000.http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/joseph_goebbels.htm (accessed October, 2009).

¹⁵ "Coalition to Stop the use of Child Soldiers." <http://www.child-soldiers.org/childsoldiers/some-facts> (accessed September 2009).

¹⁶ Colton, Charles. "War and Warriors." <http://essays.quotidiana.org/colton/> (accessed September 2009).

¹⁷ Barnett, Sylvan *A Short Guide to Writing about Art 6ed.* (New York: Longman, 2000.), 31

Annotated Bibliography

Barnett, Sylvan, *A short guide to writing about art*. 6ed. New York: Longman, 2000. Makes use of a variety of pictures (drawings, paintings, photographs), sculptures and architecture, and prepares students with the tools they need to present their ideas in effective writing. Key Topics: formal analysis, distinguishes between description and analysis, iconography and iconology, as well as how to document sources and great editing strategies. I have made use of this book as part of group reviews; as 'teams' tackle to job of analyzing works of art.

Beah, Ishmael, *A Long Way Gone: Memories of a Boy Soldier*. 1 ed. New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2007. This book is available in many public school libraries and is used by many high school English teachers. Many interdisciplinary opportunities have come from talking with these teachers. For this unit, I will introduce this book with an online interview of the author. There are a number of interviews available; his is a very warm, likeable kid and my students will make the peer connection quickly.

Carroll, Andrew. *War Letters*. Washington Square Time Press, 2002. Many of the letters in this book offer great visual references; descriptions such as the landscapes, the weather, and the neighborhoods – all of which should help create references for drawings.

Diane. H. Jacques. *Callot: Prints & related Drawings*. (Jacques Callot) Russell, 1975. A wonderful image resource with details of Callot's work and technique.

De Wijze, Louis, *Only my Life: A Survivor's Story*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. A sixteen-year-old boy recalls the life he led in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. His story of survival is vivid, non-judgmental and frank. I anticipate the use of this book to help students visualize the setting of a concentration camp.

Durlacher, Gerhard. *Drowning: Growing up in the Third Reich*. New York: Serpent't Tail, 1993.

Ghosts of Rwanda. DVD Directed by Greg Barker. Perf. Will Lyman. 2004. DVD. Through interviews with government officials, diplomats, soldiers, and survivors of the slaughter, "Ghosts of Rwanda" presents first-hand accounts of the genocide from those who lived it. The accompanying web site is also a great resource.

Heck, Alfons. *A Child of Hitler*. 2 ed. New York: Bantam Books, 1985. A good first hand account of a German Hitler Youth. The narrative is descriptive of both the German countryside and accompanying illustrations of warplanes. Heck's memories are very vivid and can be used as a vehicle for discussion of how youth (and even adults) got caught up in the war machine – both voluntary and involuntary.

Hughes, Robert. *Goya*. 1 ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. Hughes in-depth look at the life of Goya is amazing. He recreates the life the artist led with detail and historic context that will help students recognize the position that Goya took in his etchings and why.

Promises. DVD. Justine Shapiro, B.Z. Goldberg, Carlos Bolado, 2000. Follows the journey of one of the filmmakers who travels to a Palestinian refugee camp and to an Israeli settlement in the West Bank where he meets seven Palestinian and Israeli children. It is only 106 minutes long and in addition to great footage of the region, it explores through a wonderful dialogue, the influences and opinions that the children have.

Lifton, Robert J.. *The Nazi Doctors*. 1 ed. New York: Basic Books, Inc , 1986.

van Emden, Richard. *Boy Soldiers of the Great War*. London: Headline Book Publishing, 2006. The letters in this book provide great cultural context from the children who lived it. It will be used to help introduce the ideas of conflict and those who volunteer to be part of it.

Web Sites

"Coalition to Stop the use of Child Soldiers." 2007. <http://www.child-soldiers.org/home> (accessed October 2009).

"Gallery of Holocaust Images." <http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/gallery/gallery.htm> (accessed October 2009).

"Nazi and East German Propaganda ." <Http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/> (accessed October 2009).

" Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs." March, 1987. <http://www.passia.org/publications/bulletins/> (accessed October, 2009).