

Curate your own exhibition

Secondary: (ages 11 – 14)

Visual arts

Students curate an exhibition on a theme of interest to them. The exhibition includes work by six artists, one of which is the student themselves. Students design the gallery collection, research artists working on similar ideas, and write statements describing the collection and each work within it. Ultimately, students connect the visual art world to their personal vision for an exhibition.

Time allocation About 6 lesson periods

Subject content Explore cultural and artistic context, traditions and art history
Understand and appreciate the role of a curator
Interpret ideas and reasoning behind artwork
Develop technical skill in medium of their choice

Creativity and critical thinking This unit has a **creativity** and **critical thinking** focus:

- Make connections between concepts in different artworks
- Generate unique ideas and create artworks that fit a theme
- Justify and reflect on expressive choices as a curator

Other skills Communication

Key words art history; curation; exhibition; inquiry; galleries

Products and processes to assess

Students demonstrate creativity by generating their own vision for an original engaging exhibition, selecting appropriate works, and creating their own piece of creative work to fit the theme. They justify their choices in discussions and presentations and articulate the reasoning behind the creation and inclusion of images in clear written statements. At the highest levels of achievement, they offer original, richly expressed, balanced, and appropriate explanations and demonstrate that they have carefully considered how art can be interpreted, and how artists work with concepts and themes.

Teaching and Learning plan

This plan suggests potential steps for implementing the activity. Teachers can introduce as many modifications as they see fit to adapt the activity to their teaching context.

Step	Duration	Teacher and student roles	Subject content	Creativity and critical thinking
1	Lesson period 1	<p>Teacher introduces topic, and explains that each student is going to curate an exhibition on their own chosen theme. The student will need to find work by 5 different artists on the theme, as well as creating their own works that explore the same theme.</p> <p>NOTE: Students will progress through the steps at different paces, and possibly in different orders.</p>		
2	Lesson periods 1 - 5	<p>Teacher leads a discussion about possible themes that an exhibition could have, giving examples as necessary to level of class.</p> <p>Students consider and write down their chosen theme and artworks. They need access to the internet for research (The project may also be curated online or electronically) or art reference books, in order to choose a feasible theme, find appropriate artworks and learn independently about the works and the artists.</p> <p>Teacher circulates and discusses choices with students, asking students to defend and explain their choices and giving suggestions and feedback</p> <p>NOTE: Students now work independently on steps 3 and 4 in whatever order they choose. They may be given a time-period to complete work e.g. 4 lesson periods</p>	<p>Researching artists, art movements, art history</p> <p>Interpreting artwork</p> <p>Using knowledge of art history to choose appropriate work to include</p>	<p>Engaging in independent inquiry and generating and playing with novel ideas for an exhibition theme</p> <p>Identifying assumptions and ideas in visual art; making connections between concepts in the work of different artists</p> <p>Justifying creative choices with appropriate reasoning</p>
3		<p>Students plan and create an artwork that fits into the theme. Teacher supports as needed and may impose appropriate guidelines for the artwork if they feel students need additional input, but students should have freedom to make media and subject matter decisions, particularly in regards to fit within the theme.</p>	<p>Planning appropriately to create an artwork; Developing technical skills in chosen medium (photography, drawing, etc.)</p>	<p>Playing with ideas to create visual art that shows expressive qualities and can be linked to the chosen theme</p>
4		<p>Students write appropriate statements as described in the 3rd page of the handout. This can be posted online in a simple website like Weebly, or in a MS Word page.</p>	<p>Articulating reasonable interpretations of visual art, using terminology of the discipline</p>	<p>Explaining strengths and weaknesses of visual art in the context of a particular theme</p>
5	Final lesson/s	<p>Once all students are completed, they are broken into small groups to have "roundtable discussions" in which they share their art collection with their peers. Teacher should model having a roundtable discussion for the entire class before students break into groups. Guidelines are on page 3 of the handout.</p>	<p>Offering quality explanations /presentations of their choices as curators and artists; Questioning and engaging with explanations of others</p>	<p>Discussing, reflecting, and considering different perspectives on the expressive and conceptual choices they and others have made in curating the exhibition</p>

Resources and examples for inspiration

Web and print

- Computer lab so each student has computer and Internet access
- Art history books and resources

Other

- Different media for student creation of artworks

Opportunities to adapt, extend, and enrich

- The exhibition could be staged at a parent's evening or other event
- The teacher could provide a particular artistic movement or painting technique, etc.
- Students could work in groups
- Links can be made to history and or literature by asking students to focus on a particular historical period or to find and create art works that go with a novel or poetry.

Creativity and critical thinking rubric for visual arts

- Mapping of the different steps of the lesson plan against the OECD rubric to identify the creative and/or critical thinking skills the different parts of the lesson aim to develop

	CREATIVITY Coming up with new ideas and solutions	Steps	CRITICAL THINKING Questioning and evaluating ideas and solutions	Steps
INQUIRING	Make connections to other visual arts concepts and media or to conceptual ideas in other disciplines	2-5	Identify and question assumptions and conventional rules in a piece of visual art (content, style, technique, colour, composition, etc.)	2
IMAGINING	Play with unusual and radical visual arts ideas when preparing or creating a piece of visual art	2-4	Consider several perspectives on the content, technique or expression of a piece of visual arts	4-5
DOING	Create visual art that shows expressive qualities or personally novel ways to engage a subject matter	3-5	Explain both strengths and limitations of a piece of visual arts justified by aesthetic, logical and possibly other criteria	2,4-5
REFLECTING	Reflect on steps taken in creating a piece of visual art and on its novelty compared to conventions	5	Reflect on the chosen expressive choices of a visual arts piece relative to possible alternatives	5

Independent Curatorial Project Worksheet

Your assignment: Pretend you are a curator for a museum. It is your job to set up exhibits of artworks that all have something in common.

Your assignment is to create a collection of six works that have the same thing in common. One of these works must be by a contemporary artist—you!

Some ideas of things your collection could have in common:

- Same style
- Same time period
- Created in the same geographic area
- Same or similar subject matter
- Same unusual medium or unique artistic technique

You will have class time to look for inspiration to choose your theme from existing artworks. If you have an idea now of something you'd like to use as your theme, you can begin searching for that immediately. If you need to search and look to get some ideas, that's okay, too.

You should try to find information to tell us about each of the six artworks. These will be presented in a blog format.

Some resources for finding information about your theme or ideas for creating your artwork that fits in the theme (which may be of any medium or type):

- Pinterest
- Dallas Museum of Art — <http://www.dma.org/> and <http://www.dmaconnect.org/>
- Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Walker Art Center — <http://www.artsconnected.org/>
- San Francisco Museum of Modern Art — <http://www.sfmoma.org/>
- National Gallery of Art — <http://www.nga.gov/>
- Smithsonian Institution — <http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/>
- Met Museum <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/metkids/>

Getting Organized Worksheet

Theme: _____

Artworks:

1. _____ by

created in the year _____.

2. _____ by

created in the year _____.

3. _____ by

created in the year _____.

4. _____ by

created in the year _____.

5. _____ by

created in the year _____.

6. _____ by _____ YOU _____

created in the year _____.

Format for blog posting

1. A curator's statement. You should answer some or all of these questions:
 - What is your theme?
 - Why did you pick it?
 - Did you find lots of works that fit this theme or was it difficult to find works?
 - What do you want people to know about your theme?
2. An image of each of your six artworks. Underneath each of the six artworks, list the title, the artist, and the year it was created.
3. Also underneath each of your artworks, please write a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) that tells us something we wouldn't know about the painting from looking quickly. This can be either historical information, artistic technique information, information about the artist, or information about what the piece means to you.

Format for roundtable discussion:

1. Tell your classmates about your theme (and information from your curator's statement...in a way that's more interesting than just reading them your curator's statement.)
2. Show your classmates each of your artworks, and tell them information about each of them.
3. Ask if there are any questions. Everyone must ask at least one question. If you don't know the answer to a question, the best answer is "I don't know."