

Name: Gillian Pokalo

Lesson Title: Look Closer...the Photography of Andrea Baldeck

Grade Level: 6

PA Standards:

9.3.8.E Interpret and use various types of critical analysis in the arts and humanities.

9.3.8.C Identify and classify styles, forms, types and genre within art forms.

9.2.8.G Relate works in the arts to geographic regions.

9.2.8.A Explain the historical, cultural and social context of an individual work in the arts.

9.1.8.I Know where arts events, performances and exhibitions occur and how to gain admission.

Objectives:

Knowledge: Students learn that Andrea Baldeck, a contemporary photographer, created abstracted photographs of the natural world.

Skill: Psychomotor: Students learn how to create an observational charcoal drawing that transforms an everyday object into something "talismanic".

Attitude: Affective: Students learn to be more aware of abstraction, through close analysis of a natural object.

Prepare Ahead: Visuals, former student examples, supplies, information on Andrea Baldeck, a school trip to the Galleries at Moore

Prior Knowledge: Students have worked with charcoal since fifth grade. They have knowledge of tonal drawing since fifth grade, and they also have knowledge of abstraction in art.

Motivation: (Show several photographs from Andrea Baldeck's "Talismanic" series). What do you see when you look at these photographs? Where might you find the objects that are in these photographs? What are they? What makes them abstract? Why do you think she abstracted these natural objects? I know we talked (a while ago) about another woman artist who painted abstracted close-ups. Do you remember her? (Georgia O'Keeffe). Do I have anything on the walls of hers? These images are by a contemporary artist named Andrea Baldeck. What does it mean to be contemporary? That's right, she's still alive and working as an artist. How are O'Keeffe's work and Andrea Baldeck's similar? Andrea Baldeck initially went to college to study music, and then traveled to Haiti as an anesthesiologist (which is someone who does what?). Will someone please point to Haiti on the map? What do you know about Haiti? Her other passion was photography, so while in Haiti, she photographed the everyday life that she experienced. Now, Haiti is actually the fourth poorest country in the world. It was occupied by the Spanish, the French, and has had a history of political turmoil and dictatorships for centuries. As a result, life is hard for the average Haitian. Her photographs of everyday Haitian life are paired with proverbs, or sayings, that tell a story about the people photographed. I'm excited to see what you'll think. The show that we're going to see next week at Moore is the Andrea Baldeck Retrospective, and in her show, she has five separate bodies of work. In other words, five series of photographs that each deal with a different subject. So let's leave off our discussion about Haiti until next week. These pictures are from the series called "Talismanic". Let me ask you what a talisman is. Does anyone know? A talisman is a small object that a person carries for good luck. Why do you think she would call this series that? She says that the title for this series came from transforming the everyday into the "other", which she does by abstracting her subject matter. By making the everyday object seem like it's otherworldly, she wants the viewer to pay attention to how unique and unusual the everyday can be. She says, "Objects from the everyday world, crystallized and changed through selection and process, remind us that sometimes the quotidian is the strangest of all." Quotidian is just another word for common or everyday. When we see her work next week, you'll see that in all of her series she has this underlying theme of paying attention to the everyday and often overlooked. We'll talk more about her other subject matter next week at the gallery. But today, we're going to make our own "talismanic" drawings, or

drawings that are of an abstracted everyday object that is turned into something special and unique.

Demonstration: I know you have worked with charcoal before, but I just want to review a few things with you about drawing in charcoal. At the station, you have one sheet of paper, a piece of charcoal, a viewfinder, and an eraser. What you're going to do after you gather your supplies, is you'll grab something from the pile of stuff I collected on the way to school this morning. They're everyday objects, like weeds from the side of the road, leaves, etc. Pick something that is intriguing to you, and then, once you sit down, take your viewfinder and locate an area of your object that you feel is unique and unusual. Here, I've started my drawing. First, I colored the paper with a light layer of charcoal, so I have my midtone. Next, you'll be drawing in the dark and light areas. You remember how to locate and measure as you draw. Put your viewfinder up to your object, and just make small tick marks (like this) to figure out where your object will be on your page. Once you've drawn your object where you want it on the page, go back into the drawing with your eraser to bring out the highlights and the lightest areas, and with your charcoal to bring out the darker areas. The cool thing about charcoal is it is very easy to erase, and I think you can almost finger-paint with it. Use your hands to push the charcoal to blend and create a range of grays. In this drawing, I want you to pay attention to your tonal range, or your grays. I want to see a lot of gradation from black to white. Let's get to work!

Visual Aids: images of Andrea Baldeck's work (Talismanic and Heart of Haiti), map, student and teacher exemplars

Reference to Art History: Georgia O'Keeffe, Andrea Baldeck, Haiti

Exemplars: Former student artwork, teacher's example

Activity: Students will draw an abstracted object from close observation using charcoal and eraser.

Week 1: Students find an object from which to draw, and work on their drawings in class.

Week 2: Students visit the Galleries at Moore to see the Andrea Baldeck Retrospective. Students will complete a "scavenger hunt" packet.

Supplies: White 11x14 rag paper, black charcoal, erasers, scavenger-hunt booklet (week 2).

Vocabulary: talisman, abstract, tone, photograph, alchemy, proverb, Haiti, Mekong

Closure: Who is the artist we talked about today? Andrea Baldeck also created a series of photographs about a country we discussed in the beginning of class. What was that country? What is the theme of Andrea's series "Talismanic"? How do you think the "Talismanic" series is similar to her "Heart of Haiti" series? (Show images from "Heart of Haiti" series) If we were to say her work had a theme, what might that be? What does she want the viewer to think about? (Look closer, pay attention to everyday minutia).

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Assessment Strategy: Students put up their work for a class critique. Did the student complete the work, considering a range of tones? Is the object abstracted? Does it occupy the entire page? In the critique, does the student participate? Use appropriate vocabulary? Explain his/her answers in full?

Correlated Lesson: Students will write in their sketchbooks about their experience at the show in week 2, and will be directed through a series of investigational questions in a scavenger-hunt manner.

Interdisciplinary Domain: Social Studies: students become aware of Haiti. Language Arts: students will be expected to write in their sketchbooks about the art show.

Reflections: A more watered-down version of this lesson would be developed for students in grades K-5. The students seemed to enjoy having a packet to guide them through the show. If we had access to a darkroom, I would have liked the students to have an opportunity to work with photographic processes. The lesson would then become an entire unit about photography, studying various techniques and artists. They will have access to a darkroom in the high school, and in that case, were I to teach this lesson, we would have a more extensive discussion about Haitian society and history.