



The Art Of: Light

Education Resources for Ovation's documentary *The Art Of: Light*

Grade Level – 9-12

Discipline

- Visual Arts

Materials for teacher

- Programming clips for the Ovation documentary
The Art Of: Light
- Visual arts activities

Note: It is recommended that teachers view all program clips (and art images) contained in these activities prior to using the resources in class.

Standards

National Core Arts Standards – Visual Arts

High School

Activities and resources contained in this document support the areas of:

- Responding
- Connecting

National Visual Arts Standards

Grades 9-12

2. Content Standard:

Using knowledge of structures and functions

3. Content Standard:

Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

4. Content Standard:



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Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

Overview of Resources

In this series “The Art Of” explores creative fields that fall outside the traditional definition of “art.” Each week an artistic medium is explored through profiles of boundary-pushing artists. Focusing on the celebrated as well as the undiscovered, this series explores the creative process behind each featured art form and uncovers how and why these artists do what they do. “The Art Of” reveals the passion that keeps these artists motivated and inspired.

“The Art Of: Light” reveals what it took for Illuminate the Arts to erect the largest light sculpture in the world on the Bay Area’s Bay Bridge, spanning almost 2 miles wide and 500 feet high. Todd Sanders shows us how he handcrafts his modern vintage neon sign art. Eric Zammitt creates works using colored acrylic and light’s luminosity to create sculptures and unique “paintings.”

Students will gain understanding of artistic creations that fall outside the traditional definition of art. They will become acquainted with leading contemporary artists and designers, a variety of styles, objects, materials, creative process, inspirations, and influencers. The students will focus upon select artists and designers. They will view footage from a documentary.

Activities

2 days, 45 minute classes

Students will explore the works and creations of a select group of contemporary artists. They will explore themes, artistic styles, materials, techniques, and colors used in particular creations. Students will view select footage from a documentary, and will discuss and make notes about various aspects of the programming segments, including the concept of merging disciplines of art and sculptural design.

Supplies for use in Activities

- computers with Internet access
- White Board, or laptop computer, screen and speakers
- journals in binder format



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- Program clips from Ovation documentary, *The Art Of: Light*

Activity – Day 1

Class work

The teacher will show students selected program clips of Ovation’s documentary, *The Art Of: Light*. Each clip is approximately two to three minutes in length. The teacher may decide to stream some or all the program clips. After viewing each clip it is suggested that the teacher engage the students in a discussion, utilizing some or all of the discussion points listed below. The teacher will ask students to make notes in their binders about objects, ideas, styles, materials and techniques, in addition to other related issues highlighted in the program clips.

CLIP 1

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Ben Davis, founder of Illuminate the Arts, discusses massive light-related works of public art. Listen as he describes the history and legacy of the San Francisco Bay Bridge, especially as he describes it falling into a “Cinderella” role for 75 years.
- Here Davis relates the relevance of envisioning “canvas of light,” how he endeavored to create a communal experience and his good fortune of locating artist Leo Villareal to create “The Bay Lights” for the San Francisco Bay Bridge. We learn here that this project incorporated 25,000 individual white, energy-efficient LEDs controlled by custom software.
- As you listen to Davis describe the taking of his vision of a “canvas of light” to its realization, contemplate the following: Outline what you expect were the challenges, addressing aesthetics, engineering and creation, to bring it to life.
- Imagine you were in Davis’s role as you were providing inspirational guidelines to a prospective artist for the project. Discuss what in your opinion were the three most relevant features you would have provided.
- It was important to arrange the city’s support of the project and to secure financing for this significant project. Discuss some key phrases that might have been used to attract and secure support to create “The Bay Lights” project.



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CLIP 2

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Once the fundraising challenge was met, raising more than eight million dollars, installation became the primary focus.
- Listen to the overview provided; discuss the elements of installation and what became the realities of working around a functioning bridge that is exposed to elements of weather patterns and traffic patterns.
- Imagine you were a part of the promotional team, responsible for social media messaging about the development of this project. Cite what you believe would have been the two primary goals of messaging for this project. Discuss phrases you would have used as “The Bay Lights” was nearing completion and most importantly leading up to the night of “The Bay Lights” lighting ceremony.
- As you view the final installation and lighting of “The Bay Lights,” in your opinion did it achieve the overall goal of incorporating light to elevate conscientiousness and create a communal experience? Describe your feelings as you view this public artwork of light. In your opinion, where these thousands of LED white lights the most effective way to inspire civic impact for the legendary San Francisco Bay Bridge? If so, or if not, expand on your opinion.

CLIP 3

DISCUSSION POINTS

- In this segment learn about a second project developed by Illuminate the Arts, also in San Francisco, call “Light Rail.” It was designed and installed along two miles of San Francisco’s iconic Market Street.
- Follow the description of this project, using lengths of LED light tubing to demonstrate above-the-ground “visual and physical harmony” of trains below the ground.
- Do you agree or disagree that this literal mapping of what was happening below ground was visually and aesthetically beautiful? Expand on your opinion about this creation and the likely challenges it presented.
- Take time to think about and discuss your own city or home town, and how the potential use of a major LED light experience would enhance the legacy, history and perception of an under-appreciated landmark in your home town.
- Expand on your ideas, and make a list of key phrases you might use in local news outlets to generate community interest and support for a potential project of this nature.



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Activity – Day 2

Class work

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CLIP 4

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Here we are introduced to visual artist Eric Zammitt. Listen and watch as he describes the creation of art using colored acrylic plastic.
- From what you observe of his art, do you agree with his statement that it is both simple yet intricately crafted? Expand on your opinion.
- Zammitt strives to have viewers have a whole body impact about what they are feeling. Listen as he describes what ideas and theories inspire him, including his own Native American background.
- Observe the patterns, colors, and geometry in his artwork. In your opinion, what do these creations inspire? What emotion/s do you experience as you view his creations? Expand on that response...what aesthetic elements of the creations contribute to the emotions you are experiencing?
- Observe and listen as Zammitt demonstrates the creative process. As you watch the artist assemble and craft the acrylic elements, discuss the areas of the process that you perceive are most challenging.
- In your opinion what would be most inspiring result to achieve in the end product?

CLIP 5

DISCUSSION POINTS

- In this segment Zammitt discusses the color swatches of plastic. Observe and discuss the attributes of color, hues and tones. In your opinion what combinations would likely result in various emotional responses?



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- Now that you are engaged in the creative and mechanical process employed by Zammitt, discuss the possibilities you perceive are available to him throughout the creative process.
- It is stated here that it is “time consuming, labor intensive, and materially limiting,” yet he finds freedom in the process. In your opinion, does this appear to be a conflicting assessment by the artist of his experience? If so, or if not, expand on your opinion.
- Where do you perceive the areas of freedom in this art-making process are most prevalent?

CLIP 6

DISCUSSION POINTS

- In this segment, Todd Sanders, Austin-based artist, describes his livelihood as a neon artist. Listen and observe as Sanders discusses the materials and sources of inspiration for his works.
- The artist describes his style as part typography and figural images...part op art...antique. As you view his artworks do you agree or disagree with that description of his style? Expand on your opinion.
- What other ways might you describe his style if you were responsible for promoting Sanders’ artwork both in the Austin environment, and internationally through use of social media?
- Sanders goes on to say that recently he’s trying to incorporate modern messages and themes into vintage design.
- Take time to contemplate the process he describes. Discuss ideas of modern themes you believe would align well and interestingly in vintage designs.

CLIP 7

DISCUSSION POINTS

- As you observe and listen to Sanders outline his creative process, discuss and list what you believe are the various skills required of this artist. Additionally, itemize the various materials and equipment required to create and implement his artworks...from the original master pattern.
- Imagine you are a tour guide, leading a group through Sanders’ studio and his creative process.
- Set out five or less key statements of activities you believe would be effective and necessary to fully relate his vision, mechanics, materials, and artistry incorporated into the neon artwork of Todd Sanders.



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Finally, take time to sum up the “art of light,” and the relevance you’ve viewed and experienced in the three main topics presented in these program clips, addressing – COMMUNITY, EMOTION, MODERN vs. VINTAGE.

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Assessment for these activities, to be determined by the teacher