



The Art Of: Photography

Educational Activities for Ovation documentary *The Art Of: Photography*

Grade Level – 9-12

Discipline

- Visual Arts

Materials for teacher

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

Note: It is recommended that teachers view all program clips and related web links 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:

- Creating
- 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



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Overview of Activities

There are two parts to these activities

Part I

Students will explore the art of photography – focusing on three contemporary photographers of distinctive and various styles. They will view selected footage from a documentary about photography, *The Art Of: Photography*. Students will gain an understanding of the difference in digital and analog photography. Students will research information on the Internet about issues related to visual elements of photography, and about specific images produced by three contemporary photographers.

Part II

Students will engage in activities: writing and discussion/presentation. Students will analyze and evaluate the merits of their own work and the work of other students.

Length of Activities – Seven 45 minute class periods

Part I – 2 days

Part II – 5 days

Instructional Objectives

Students will:

- Gain knowledge about the art of photography, and understand distinct styles, themes, compositions and techniques.
- Identify works of three contemporary photographers.
- Gain knowledge about three contemporary photographers, and identify/compare/contrast distinctive elements of their works.
- Gain an understanding of important visual elements of photography.

Supplies:

- Computers with Internet access
- White Board, or laptop computer, screen and speakers
- Journals in binder format (for each student)
- Ovation documentary *The Art Of: Photography*



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- Images of specific photographs
- Journal or blank writing paper for each student
- Materials for writing activity – lined papers and pencils for each student

Subject Related Words

The teacher will relate the following list of words and definitions to the students for use during class discussions and in their writing assignments. This information was selected, specifically for its correlation to words used in association with this lesson, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>. The students can obtain additional meanings for these words and usage from this website.

aesthetic *adjective* :appreciative of, responsive to, or zealous about the beautiful; also, responsive to or appreciative of what is pleasurable to the senses

composition *noun*: the way in which something is put together or arranged
: the combination of parts or elements that make up something

Digital camera *noun*: a camera that takes pictures without using Film: a camera that records images as digital data

dimension *noun*: the quality of spatial extension: MAGNITUDE, SIZE *c*: a lifelike or realistic quality *d*: the range over which or the degree to which something extends: SCOPE —usually used in plural

pattern *noun*: repeated form or design especially that is used to decorate something: the regular and repeated way in which something happens or is done

process *noun*: a series of actions or operations conducing to an end; especially: a continuous operation or treatment especially in manufacture

symmetry *noun*: *the* qualities of something that has two sides or halves that are the same or very close in size, shape, and position: the quality of having symmetrical parts



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technique *noun*: a way of doing something by using special knowledge or skill
: the way that a person performs basic physical movements or skills

PART 1

Activity 1

Homework

The teacher will ask students to research through use of the Internet specific photographers featured in the documentary. They will also be guided to explore general websites about visual elements, design, and inspiration for photography. Following are suggested links for this exercise.

Related Websites

Hongkiat – Technology, Design, Inspiration

<http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/photography-tips-12-elements-to-capture-that-winning-shot/>

Photography Mad – 10 Top Photography Composition Rules

<http://www.photographymad.com/pages/view/10-top-photography-composition-rules>

Wikipedia – Digital Photography

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_photography

Sabrina Hall – Various photographic topics and styles

<http://www.thesabrina.com/>

<http://www.thesabrina.com/streetballet/>

<http://www.thesabrina.com/bankofamerica/>

Mac Danzig – Photographer’s website – Various images, concepts, and information

<http://www.macdanzigphoto.net/>



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Hadi Salehi – Photographer’s website – Various images, concepts, and information

<http://www.hadisalehi.com/>

PART 1

Activity 1/Day1

Exploring the world of photography – themes, compositions and processes of three contemporary photographers

Class work activity

The students will be introduced to the world of photography. They will view and discuss selected programming clips from the documentary *The Art Of: Photography*. Each clip is approximately three minutes in length. Following each clip, the teacher will engage the students in some or all of the discussion points listed below.

Clip 1

Discussion Points

- A you observe and listen to Sabrina Hill describe her profession, and navigate between paid advertising photography and her own artistic endeavors, discuss a list of characteristics you believe she possesses in order to be proficient at each endeavor.
- It is stated that Sabrina learned the importance of teamwork collaboration in order to enhance the final product. Discuss the significance of successful teamwork in this profession and how it likely enriches the overall experience.

Clip 2

Discussion Points

- Here Sabrina is shown photographing ballerinas in unlikely urban settings. She cites the relevance of imagining the lines of the graceful dancer with the gross dumpster. As you observe this photo session, discuss the overall effects you believe will be apparent the images resulting from the session.
- Do you believe you will find them of interest? If so, or if not, expand on your opinion.



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- Sabrina references the contrast of “hard and soft” in the meshing of the ballerinas’ forms in the urban, graphic environment. In your opinion, do you believe this meshing of so-called art forms is an effective one? If so, or if not, expand on your opinion.
- Discuss other types of “hard and soft” art forms you might consider to achieve an effect of similar impact.

Clip 3

Discussion Points

- Here we are introduced to landscape photographer Mac Danzig. He describes his former profession as a fighter, and his current profession as photographer. He comments that if he didn’t have a camera with him, he always thinks about how it (a scene) would look through a lens. Discuss the significance of this awareness of focus and what sensibilities it calls upon.
- During this sequence, following Mac’s description of his former profession, he references his intention of finding something aesthetic about the landscape to photograph, saying it is less like a realistic painting and more like an abstract painting. In your opinion, what might be the benefit and ultimate interest in focusing on the abstract qualities and characteristics of a landscape?
- As you observe Mac focusing on the elements of nature he is seeing through his camera lens, discuss the types of symmetry he is likely referring to in this setting.

Clip 4

Discussion Points

- These sequences feature a variety of landscape photographs. Discuss the diverse nature of these images, the overall composition, light vs. dark values, colors, and other photographic elements of note. In your opinion, what makes these photographs distinctive? Be specific in your assessments.



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- Mac states that “If I’m looking at a wildlife photograph, I want them (viewers) to feel like they’re there with that animal in that environment.” In your opinion, what elements likely need to be included in a wildlife photograph to lend that sense of being present to the viewer?
- Mac’s shares insight about the importance of being patient with the conditions (of nature). Discuss this characteristic and the other personal and professional qualities he likely possesses to render him a successful wildlife and landscape photographer.

Activity 1/ Day 2 Homework

The teacher will ask students to keep journal entries, focusing on various images, both indoors and outdoors, they observe throughout the days of these activities. Examples of images might relate to: overall composition, lines, symmetry, patterns, colors and texture. The purpose of this exercise is to sensitize the students to the various visual elements that inspire photographers. The teacher will tell the students that they should refer continually to their notes.

Class work activity

The students will be introduced to the world of photography. They will view and discuss selected programming clips from the documentary *The Art Of: Photography*. Each clip is approximately three minutes in length. Following each clip, the teacher will engage the students in some or all of the discussion points listed below.

Clip 5

Discussion Points

- This sequence features photographer Hadi Salehi. He talks about his background and his attitude when he arrived in America, saying “I’m going to be a photographer.” Discuss the difficulties and challenges Hadi most likely encountered making his way in this profession.
- Hadi’s photography is that of analog. It is stated here that he is able to achieve beautiful images using traditional methods in untraditional ways. Be mindful of that statement and make a list of elements you observe in the photographic images in these program clips.



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- It is stated here that Hadi often works with two different photographic images to create an illusion of layering. As you observe the photographic images in this sequence, note the texture, depth, and illusion Hadi creates by use of this technique.
- As you listen to Hadi describe his inspirations, his background, and his early years in Los Angeles, discuss what personal and professional characteristics he likely possesses to have resulted in him being a successful and fulfilled photographer.

Clip 6

Discussion Points

- Here Hadi describes an experience of his technique for creating a photographic image. Discuss the various steps he describes, and what he decided to do, and what not to do, to achieve an interesting and desired effect.
- Hadi states that “These are the accidents and pleasures of analog photography....something you can’t get with digital photography.” Discuss the relevance of this statement.
- A reference is made about the happy accident in photography. It is also stated that is what’s missing in digital photography, because you get instant gratification. Discuss this comparison of analog vs. digital photography. Make note of the creative advantages and disadvantages of both.

Clip 7

Discussion Points

- Here Hadi states that photography is art and science, and you have to know a little bit about physics. Take time to discuss, in your opinion, what is the science and what is the art in photography.
- As you engage in this analysis, be mindful of references to both digital and analog photography.



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PART II

Activity 2/Day3 Generating Photography Concepts

Class work

Over three class periods, the teacher will tell students they will engage in writing activities reflecting upon and describing photography concepts. The teacher will ask students to imagine they are generating this material with the intention of writing to a photography magazine, to attract interest in being hired for a photography assignment.

The teacher will show students photography of the following photographers and discuss distinctive styles, concepts, compositions and techniques.

Sabrina Hall – Various photographic topics and styles

<http://www.thesabrina.com/streetballet/d8macne7tuh8if6gfpowuxci0jitze>

<http://www.thesabrina.com/streetballet/5s8dw5ssry3ksy26jpwispaix0vn2s>

<http://www.thesabrina.com/streetballet/5s8dw5ssry3ksy26jpwispaix0vn2s>

Mac Danzig

(select three photographic images of landscapes from the following page)

<http://www.macdanzigphoto.net/landscapes>

Hadi Salehi

(select three photographic images of faces with texture in the composition)

<http://www.hadisalehi.com/>

By viewing these images, the students will:

- Analyze the style, mood, composition, objects, scenes, techniques, colors and other significant visual elements captured by the photographer
- Compare and contrast the photography and discuss the following:



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- What is the overall composition of the photograph?
- What is the theme or topic of the photograph?
- What objects appear in the image that are central to the image?
- What objects appear in the image that are secondary to the image?
- What do the patterns, textures, lines, and colors convey?
- What symmetry might exist in the photographs?
- What's going on in the backgrounds of the photograph?
- What do you feel when you view each photograph?

The teacher will explain to the students that as part of this activity, they will each be developing (up to three) written paragraphs reflecting a creative concept, intended to lead to a photography assignment for a photography magazine.

The teacher will ask each student to select one of the three photographers and their distinctive styles.

The teacher will ask students, as a homework assignment to do the following:

- Keep their journals with them during the next two days
- Observe their surroundings, indoors and outdoors, people and objects
- Make notes about themes, patterns, textures, objects, lines, colors, symmetry and central objects or individuals

Activity 2/Days 4-5 Generating Photography Concepts

- Day 4 - 5
 - Write (up to three) paragraphs describing a photography concept, including reference to the creative aspects and the technology to be used in the photography.
 - Include a sentence about what inspired him/her to write about this concept.

Activity 2/ Days 6-7 Analyzing and Discussing Photography Concepts

During this final activity, the students will discuss their experiences of understanding the styles, themes, objects, compositions, visual elements, techniques and processes of the three photographers featured in the program sequences which they have viewed and discussed. The students will be asked to refer to the notes they have kept in their journals. The students will discuss and compare their photography concepts with the



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class, to make a case about how they would effectively communicate their ideas to a photography magazine, for the purpose of being hired.

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Assessment for these activities, to be determined by the teacher

Related Websites

Hongkiat – Technology, Design, Inspiration

<http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/photography-tips-12-elements-to-capture-that-winning-shot/>

Photography Mad – 10 Top Photography Composition Rules

<http://www.photographymad.com/pages/view/10-top-photography-composition-rules>

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