Unit 6: Photography Artist Inspiration

Content Area: **Fine Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**
Length: **5-6 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Unit 6: Photography Artist Inspiration

This unit focuses on exploring the works and techniques of renowned photographers, encouraging students to draw inspiration from these artists to enhance their own photographic style. Students will investigate the history, themes, and methods of influential photographers and then create their own works inspired by these artists. The unit will emphasize critical thinking, creativity, and technical skills in photography.

Revision Date: July 2025 - Samantha Berk

Standards

ELD standards:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wdmsiGOdCHlrjU-WPvAtENnEgi0EStZXo0uiFYv1Nu4/edit

1.5.12acc.Cr1a	Individually and collaboratively formulate new creative problems based on student's existing artwork.
1.5.12acc.Cr1b	Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.
1.5.12acc.Cr2a	Through experimentation, practice and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form.
1.5.12acc.Cr2b	Demonstrate awareness of ethical implications of making and distributing creative work.
1.5.12acc.Cr2c	Redesign an object, system, place, or design in response to contemporary issues.
1.5.12acc.Cr3a	Engage in constructive critique with peers, then reflect on, re-engage, revise, and refine works of art and design in response to personal artistic vision.
1.5.12acc.Pr4a	Analyze, select and critique personal artwork for a collection or portfolio presentation.
1.5.12acc.Pr5a	Evaluate, select and apply methods or processes appropriate to display artwork in a specific place.
1.5.12acc.Pr6a	Make, explain and justify connections between artists or artwork and social, cultural and political history.
1.5.12acc.Re7a	Recognize and describe personal aesthetic and empathetic responses to the natural world and constructed environments.
1.5.12acc.Re7b	Evaluate the effectiveness of visual artworks to influence ideas, feelings, and behaviors of specific audiences.
1.5.12acc.Re8a	Identify types of contextual information useful in the process of constructing interpretations of an artwork or collection of works.

1.5.12acc.Re9a	Determine the relevance of criteria used by others to evaluate a work of art or collection of works.
1.5.12acc.Cn10a	Utilize inquiry methods of observation, research and experimentation to explore other subjects through artmaking.
1.5.12acc.Cn11a	Compare uses of art in a variety of societal, cultural and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary and local contexts.
1.5.12acc.Cn11b	Compare uses of art in a variety of societal, cultural and historical contexts and make connections to global issues, including climate change.

Essential Questions

- How do the techniques and styles of famous photographers influence contemporary photography?
- What are the unique visual elements that define a photographer’s style, and how can they be adapted to my own work?
- How does understanding the context behind an artist's work help in interpreting and creating meaningful photographs?

Essential Understandings

- Students will gain an understanding of the contributions of influential photographers and how their work has shaped the evolution of photography.
- Students will explore and apply photographic techniques inspired by historical and contemporary photographers to develop their own personal style.
- Students will learn to critically analyze photography, understanding the connection between technique, composition, and thematic content.

Students Will Know

- Key historical and contemporary photographers and their significant contributions to the field of photography.
- Techniques, concepts, and styles used by different photographers (e.g., lighting, composition, subject matter).
- The importance of creating original work inspired by others while still maintaining their unique artistic voice.
- How to analyze and critique their own work as well as the work of others.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Fine Arts students demonstrate differentiated proficiency according to their ability to answer the essential questions through formative and summative assessments. Evidence of progression may be demonstrated in divergent ways through the Artistic Process of Creating, Presenting/Producing, Connecting, and Responding.

Tasks will include:

- Preview/Answer essential questions
- Meaningfully and appropriately participate in class critique and discussions
- Complete class projects including weekly critique assignments
- Complete self-assessment rubrics
- Participate in assessment discussions with teacher
- Complete final exam

Learning Plan

- Introduce Influential Photographers: Present a curated overview of notable photographers across various genres (portrait, landscape, documentary, fine art), highlighting their unique styles and contributions to the field.
- Theme & Context Exploration: Examine key themes, techniques, and the cultural or social contexts surrounding each artist's work through class discussions and visual analysis.
- *Suggested Activity:*
    - *Artist Selection: Students select a photographer whose work aligns with their interests, style, or artistic goals for deeper individual exploration.*
    - *Artist Analysis Assignment: Students research their chosen photographer's background, signature techniques, subject matter, and influence on the photography world.*
- Inspiration vs. Imitation Discussion: Facilitate a class conversation about the difference between being inspired by an artist and directly imitating their work, emphasizing originality and interpretation.
- Technique Exploration Activities: Students practice specific techniques or stylistic elements used by their chosen artist (e.g., use of natural light, framing, subject interaction, or post-processing effects).
- Technical Skill Application: Discuss and explore the technical tools and camera settings needed to emulate or adapt the photographer's style in a hands-on, guided practice session.
- *Suggested Activity:*
    - *Create an Inspired Photo Series: Students develop a cohesive photo series (3–6 images) that*

reflects inspiration from their chosen artist while incorporating their own creative perspective.

- Reflection & Artist Statement: Each student writes an artist statement explaining how they were inspired by the photographer, what techniques they used, and how they added their personal voice.

- Group Critique & Feedback Session: Host a class critique where students present their series, explain their creative process, and give/receive peer feedback on artistic interpretation and execution.

Suggested Lessons Plans:

- Photograph Like Cindy Sherman: Exploring Identity and Self-Portraiture
  Students will study the work of Cindy Sherman, focusing on her use of costumes, settings, and personas to explore identity. They will plan and photograph a series of self-portraits that reflect different aspects of themselves or imagined characters.

- Minimalism and Space: Inspired by Hiroshi Sugimoto
  Students will examine the minimalist and conceptual photography of Hiroshi Sugimoto. They will experiment with long exposure, simplicity, and atmospheric imagery to create a photo series that explores time, stillness, or abstraction.

- Everyday Objects and Pop Culture: Inspired by Andy Warhol
  Students will analyze Andy Warhol's influence on visual culture and photography, especially his repetition and commercial imagery. They will photograph everyday objects or pop culture icons, then manipulate them using editing tools to create a bold, graphic series.

- Street Photography with a Social Message: Inspired by Gordon Parks
  Students will explore Gordon Parks' approach to photography as a tool for social justice and storytelling. They will document their community, capturing candid moments or highlighting social issues through photojournalistic techniques.

- Surreal Worlds: Inspired by Man Ray
  Students will dive into surrealism in photography by studying Man Ray's experimental work. They will create dreamlike or abstract photographic compositions using double exposure, shadows, or creative editing techniques.

Materials

The materials used in this course allow for integration of a variety of instructional, supplemental, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available.

Handouts, writing samples, Digital Cameras, Sketchbook, Various Pencils, Sharpies, Markers, Various Papers, Various Erasers, Mirrors, Blending Sticks, Charcoal, Graphite, Sharpeners, Colored Pencils, Oil Pastel, Chalk Pastels, YouTube Videos, Value Scales, magazines, glue, scissors, Watercolor, Watercolor paper, paint brush, ink, printing materials, chromebooks, ipads, Paint, Color Wheels, Drawing Pen, Rulers

Websites:

- Cindy Sherman
  https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/267133 (The Met's collection and overview)
  https://gagosian.com/artists/cindy-sherman/ (Her representing gallery with a biography and portfolio)

- Hiroshi Sugimoto
  https://www.sugimotohiroshi.com (Official artist website with images, exhibitions, and statements)
  https://www.pacegallery.com/artists/hiroshi-sugimoto/ (Gallery page with selected works)

- Andy Warhol
  https://www.warhol.org (The Andy Warhol Museum — official and comprehensive resource)
  https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/andy-warhol-2121 (Tate Museum artist page)

- Gordon Parks
  https://www.gordonparksfoundation.org (Official foundation website with galleries, essays, and educational resources)
  https://www.moma.org/artists/4502 (MoMA artist page)

- Man Ray
  https://www.manraytrust.com (Official site by the Man Ray Trust with works and biography)
  https://www.artic.edu/artists/36911/man-ray (Art Institute of Chicago collection page)

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

Suggested Strategies for Modifications:

This link includes content specific accommodations and modifications for all populations:

Fine Arts Accommodations & Modifications

- Hands on activities to support unit objectives.
- Individualized instruction.
- Mini lessons in addition to large group instruction.
- Multi-media presentations.
- Outline of tasks to accomplish posted throughout the room.
- Peer critique of photographic work.
- Sticker chart so students may monitor individual success.
- Use of rubric as self-evaluation tool.
- Videos to enhance instruction where needed.
- Visual Aids and writing samples.