

Dia:

Dia at The Hispanic Society of America
Education Program - Zoe Leonard

Archive, History, Document: Responding to *Analogue*

Lesson Plan: Layering Negatives

Grade Level: Elementary and Middle School

Class Length: 50 Min.

No. Of Classes: 3 including field trip to Hispanic Society of America

Summary:

Students will visit the Hispanic Society of America in Washington Heights, NYC, to view and discuss Zoe Leonard's *Analogue*. After visiting the museum students will return to the classroom and create their own images by layering together images drawn on transparencies. The final pieces will be exhibited as a composite arrangement to be installed over a window.

The project will involve drawing on transparencies and layering them together. Through the making of each image, the student can account for his/her own sense of community, of neighborhood, and of identity. By means of the visual juxtaposition (of the various transparencies to be made), the project addresses the idea of landscape and urban transformation, creating a personal register, while suggesting the additive character of diversity. Also, working with transparencies allows considering the history of the photographic medium, by analogy to photographic film.

These acetate sheets will be installed together, in a grid-like formation, layering them to create the effect of visual overlay. The project will be hung preferably on a window, to maximize the transparent quality of the material.

The project can also be crossed with other subjects besides art such as Social Sciences, English, Mathematics, or Science.

Learning Objectives:

- To expose students to contemporary artistic projects, engaging Zoe Leonard's work in photography, discussing the photographic process and the uses of transparencies through the study of her installation *Analogue*.
- To further understanding of the concepts of archive, history and document, as applicable concepts to the installation and its different subject matters.
- To help students personally relate to the notions of archive, document and history, by creating their own archive.
- To aid in the discussion of urban and social change and of the additive nature of diversity.

Applicable National Standards of Art Education:

- Content Standard 1: Understanding and Applying media, techniques, and process.
- Content Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.
- Content Standard 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and culture.

Dia:Beacon

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About the exhibition:

American artist Zoe Leonard will create art installations for Dia Art Foundation in the fall of 2008 at the Hispanic Society of America, and another simultaneous project at Dia:Beacon, in Beacon, NY.

The exhibition at the Hispanic Society of America will be a two-part project. The first piece will be the installation of her monumental work, *Analogue* (1998-2007), which has never been shown in full in New York City. *Analogue* consists of nearly 400 photographs shot on a vintage 1940s Rolleiflex camera over nearly ten years. Many of the individual images depict a variety of storefronts, shop window displays, and consumer goods in various New York neighborhoods. Originally a document of disappearing and displaced urban textures, the project expanded in scope as Leonard became interested in tracing the circulation of everyday commodities as they are sold and re-sold in far flung destinations. The final compilation of photographs includes images captured on the streets of Mexico City, Kampala, Uganda and Warsaw, Poland. This exhibition implies also a return to its city of origin, given that some of *Analogue's* earliest photographs were taken in the northern Manhattan neighborhood near the HSA.

Analogue has been presented as separate photos, as sets of images, and as a book. For Dia, Leonard will install the entire suite of photographs, a mix of black and white and color 11"x11" prints, in a series of carefully sequenced grids.

Leonard's second installation has been commissioned by Dia to further explore the connections between her career-long interest in documentary conventions and the collections and spaces of the HSA. The artist will develop a layered, multi-media installation in which she treats archival selections from the HSA's holdings as found objects. Working in collaboration with several curators and librarians at the Society she will select objects from its collections including historical maps and photographs.

Leonard's exhibition will open November 5, 2008, and remain on view through Spring 2009, at The Hispanic Society of America, Audubon Terrace, Broadway between 155th and 156th streets, New York City.

LESSON PLAN

Field Trip

Students will examine the installation of Zoe Leonard's *Analogue*. After walking around the exhibition student and educator will discuss the work, learning relevant vocabulary to address the artwork.

Discussion questions:

- Photographs. What are these photographs of? What do they have in common? Do the students relate to similar shop fronts? Which images are more striking or meaningful to them?
- Installation. Why are the photographs arranged in a grid? Why are there so many of them? Is this installation an *archive*? What is an *archive*? If it is what does it *document*?
- Analogue. Define the word Analogue and ask what the idea of this Analogue might refer to, in this context. Is there a function to it?
- Composition and framing. Why is everything square? What has the artist chosen to put in the picture and what has the artist left out? Why?

Vocabulary

- Archive: A collection of documents such as letters, official papers, photographs, or recorded material, kept for their historical interest.
- Document: Something that provides information or acts as a record of events or arrangements
- Composition: the way in which the parts of something are arranged, for instance, the parts of a visual image.
- Framing: the way that something is displayed or arranged so that a given image can be seen in a particular way.
- Curation: The organization and choosing of the items in an exhibition at a given venue such as a museum or gallery.
- Global: relating to or happening throughout the whole world.
- Analogue: a thing, idea or institution that is similar to or has the same function as another.
- Negative: a photographic image or the film containing it that shows black and white tones reversed and each color as its complementary.

Classroom

The teacher should lead a discussion about Zoe Leonard's *Analogue*, reviewing the vocabulary learned at the museum.

The teacher should demonstrate different ways of using the transparencies (square sheets of acetate), from tracing a photograph or picture to free hand drawing using permanent markers.

The teacher must also explain the process of overlaying and show a completed example of the project which will include three or more layers of acetate hung together.

Students will brainstorm what kind of images could they make in order to address their own experience of community, of neighborhood, and their sense of identity (the emphasis on which would depend on the teacher's specific curricular interest). The teacher would guide the discussion, and see that the proposals are written down in list form.

The students should bring images that they deem relevant to the class topic, and also look through a variety of images from newspapers and magazines (the teacher should bring some in advance) that could be used for the project.

These source images can be traced, outlined or filled in completely, according to the students' own artistic judgment. The students will use more than one picture for source material and combine them to their liking, using different colors and layers to make their final piece.

The completed work should be installed and exhibited during class, with the assistance of the teacher, using a grid like format, in a previously designated space in the school, preferably on a window.

Materials:

- 3-5 sheets of square acetate per student
- Colored permanent markers
- Tape

- Source pictures (magazines, newspapers, comics, photographs, etc.).
- Vocabulary visual
- Student Gallery Area

Assessment:

- Criteria: Did the students learn who Zoe Leonard is and what she made for the installation *Analogue*?
- Strategy: In the exhibition space the educator will tell the students about Zoe Leonard and give them a printed out version of the information which is appropriate for the age level. In the classroom this information should be reviewed twice.
- Criteria: Did the students learn how photographs are made and what negatives are?
- Strategy: During this project it would be good to show some real negatives, and explain different uses of transparency (film, slides, photographic negatives, stained glass, etc.). As students layer their drawings together they will see how images build on top of each other.
- Criteria: Do the student express and identify a theme in their images? Did they properly trace parts from images and improve hand eye coordination. Can they discuss what makes their piece individual and what makes it part of a larger collection?
- Strategy: When the project is complete there will be a class discussion of the project so that students can share with each other what they have made, talking about what the images have in common, and about what makes them different and special to each one of them.

Product:

Each student will have a composite image, made of several layers, juxtaposing various photographic referents. The works will allude to their experience of urban landscape, taking its cue from Zoe Leonard's *Analogue* installation.

Each student's creation will be unique, conveying their understanding of community, of neighborhood and reflecting their own interests. The pieces will hang together in a group exhibition where there will be a final discussion of the project. The group exhibition will reflect the changing ideas of each student.

The project will foster a sense of self worth in the students as they look at their project and exhibition. Each student will be implicitly represented in the documentation of a specified subject, while being displayed as part of a collective.