

Dia:

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

Maps, History, Document: Responding to *Derrotero*

Lesson Plan - Mapping, Interviewed
Grade Level: Elementary and Middle School
Class Length: 50 Min.
No. Of Classes: Varies

Summary:

Students will visit the Hispanic Society of America in Washington Heights, NYC, to view and discuss Zoe Leonard's *Derrotero*. After visiting the museum students will return to the classroom to create a response to *Derrotero*, based on the notion of movement and migration. The project will involve students interviewing a person within their neighborhood, e.g. a family member, schoolteacher or shopkeeper, who has migrated to the local area from another country. The student will be asked to translate an answer to one of their interview questions into a drawing. This will then be pinned to an enlarged world map in the position of their interviewee's place of origin.

This project will allow students to develop their writing skills through the process of an interview and will help them to comprehend the relationship many people in their neighborhood have with international locations.

It will also encourage students to identify with different places on a global scale and to understand the links that these places have with their own location on social, geographic and historical levels.

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.

For this two-part presentation, which remains on view through April 12, 2009, Leonard has contextualized her monumental photographic work *Analogue* (1998-2007) with a selection of portolans and atlases from the Hispanic Society's exceptional library.

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 also implies a return to its city of origin; 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.

In adjacent galleries in the Hispanic Society's Main Building, Leonard will tease out key aspects of *Analogue* by presenting a selection of rare maps and navigational charts dating back to the fifteenth century. To showcase the breadth of the Society's collection, and to protect these fragile works, Leonard will rotate a second group of artifacts into the installation in February 2009. Used to define and construct terrain unknown to explorers, many of these cartographic devices foreshadow Leonard's use of photography in *Analogue*.

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.

Learning Objectives:

- To expose students to contemporary artistic projects and historical documents which relate to an artists' concerns to preserve and display historical imagery and information for posterity.
- To further understanding of the concepts of archive, history, document and maps as applicable concepts to the installation and its different subject matters.
- To help students personally relate to the notions of archive, document, history, mapping and heritage by conducting their own personal research and creating a text and image based project.

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 society and culture, using research, documentation and writing skills.

Subjects: Art, Applied Sciences, History, English Writing, Geography.

LESSON PLAN

Field Trip

Students will examine the installation of Zoe Leonard's *Derrotero*.

After viewing the exhibition student and educator will discuss the work, learning relevant vocabulary to address the artwork.

Interview and Map Project

Vocabulary/Discussion questions:

How has the artist addressed the topic of tracing places of origin, as well as movement of people and objects?

How do the images and objects displayed evoke the idea of memory?

Cartography - the science or art of making maps

Cartographer - person who makes maps

Navigation - the science of getting ships, aircraft, or spacecraft from place to place; *especially*: the method of determining position, course, and distance traveled

Portolan - is a European navigation chart, dating from the thirteenth century or later.

Origin - the beginning of a source

Neighborhood - the people living near one another: a section lived in by neighbors and usually having distinguishing characteristics.

Cartography and navigation are generally regarded as applied sciences with the practical aim of directing the voyager from point of origin to point of destination in the most efficient manner.

The Portolan charts or sailing charts, show how the Old and New Worlds were linked when Europeans discovered new lands.

Maps can reveal more than geographical information and discoveries, they can be used to find out about societies. They also illustrate personal information about the cartographer.

Classroom

The teacher should discuss the topic of socio-geographical origins of people.

This can be addressed through the topic of neighborhoods.

Students should be encouraged to exchange ideas about what a neighborhood is and how he/she can define their own. Teachers could highlight the unique, divergent and similar aspects of different neighborhoods within the city, and within other nations or regions of the world.

Whilst Zoe Leonard's exhibition concentrates on found objects, the maps and artifacts she has displayed address networks and the interaction of people in relation to specific locations.

Students can think about the changing relationship people have with his/her own country when they journey to new locations.

Students can do this through their own experience and through interviewing a member of their family or a notable person within their neighborhood who has migrated from another country.

Task

Each student should interview a person within their family or neighborhood who has moved to the area from a distant location.

Interviewee candidates could be:

A family member, a friend, a local shopkeeper or a school teacher, who has migrated from another country to live in the student's neighborhood.

The teacher could give examples of appropriate ways to record interview questions and answers.

E.g. Using initials of the student and interviewee before writing down each question and answer on separate lines.

The teacher should discuss the key themes and questions that the students might want to ask their interviewee.

Themes:

The interview should hold the aim of documenting and tracing the interviewee's socio-geographical origins.

The focus should be on the reasons why the person migrated from one country to the USA as well as the memories that they have brought with them

Example Questions for a shopkeeper:

- Q. What is your native country?
- Q. When did you move to your present location?
- Q. Why did you move to this area to set up your business?
- Q. What do you sell?
- Q. Where do you import your goods from?

Example Questions for a family member:

- Q. What is your native country?
- Q. Why did you move to this country, neighborhood?
- Q. When did you move here?
- Q. Do you work within the local area? If so what is your job?

These questions can be followed by more personal questions for example:

- Q. What memories do you have of places you visited after school when you were a child?
- Q. What did your family often cook for dinner?

Translation/Drawing

The student should translate an answer given by the interviewee into a drawing. This can be done by imagining the place/object/memory/person that the interviewee has recalled in an answer through verbal description. The student's visual interpretation of the verbal answer can be drawn on to a small card issued by the teacher.

Mapping

A large global map should be pinned to a wall by the teacher. Students should be encouraged to find the locations of the places they have recorded in their interviews on the map. The drawing that each student has created by imagining his/her interviewee's memory of an aspect of their origin should be pinned in the appropriate geographical location upon the map.

This will allow the children to visually compare each other's research and will help them to comprehend the diversity of international links that people have.

Students should be encouraged to recognize the differences and similarities of their individual interviews through the drawings as well as the aspects that reveal the unifying and diverging components of different neighborhoods.

The outcome will be a collective archive of global neighborhoods using visual and text based methods of research and documentation.

Resources:

- Interviewee.
- Small blank card
- Writing paper, pens, crayons, pencils

- Pins or sticky pads/glue
- Global map (could be photocopied and enlarged)

Assessment

- Criteria: The student should recognize the varying geographical and social components of neighborhoods and understand that neighborhoods consist of people from varying origins.
- Strategy: Within Zoe Leonard's exhibition, journeys from distant locations to the USA should be identified.
- Criteria: The student should become aware of local and global maps and learn how to find and mark places on them.
- Strategy: By looking at Zoe Leonard's collection of maps and finding the locations mentioned by their interviewee and by finding their own location on a local and global scale with help from teachers.
- Criteria: Have the children learnt how to conduct an interview and how to ask questions?
- Strategy: Through demonstration of example interview formats and a group discussion of what issues should be addressed and why they are important.
- Criteria: Do the students recognize the significance of what people bring to new locations when they migrate, including business, skills, memories and diversity?
- Strategy: Whilst reviewing the map and the applied drawings, a group discussion can be held on how questions and answers reveal similarities between people and how their memories of native countries travel with them.

Product:

Each student will have produced an interpretation of the examples from Zoe Leonard's exhibition by relating them to their personal neighborhood, and to familiar people and familiar places.

Each student's creation will have involved research and documentation by interacting with people, using language and writing skills and translating words and memories into drawing.

The work will convey their personal engagement to a community, a neighborhood, thus reflecting their own interests. The pieces will be exhibited collectively. The students should identify the unifying and separating elements of places through a discussion and reflection of the collective presentation.

The project will foster a sense of self worth, while highlighting their relation to a specific person being implicitly recognized in the interview and resulting drawing. Each student and their interviewee will be represented in the documentation of a specified subject, while being displayed as part of a collective.