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## Real Work: A Museum Studies Curriculum for Early Adolescent Learners

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**Real Work:  
A Museum Studies Curriculum  
for Early Adolescent Learners**

by

M. Lucinda B. Furlong

Mentor: Nina Jensen

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
degree of Master of Science in Education  
Elementary Education/Museum Education  
Bank Street College of Education  
2008

## ABSTRACT

### **Real Work: A Museum Studies Curriculum for Early Adolescent Learners**

By M. Lucinda B. Furlong

This Integrative Master's Project is a case study of a Museum Studies curriculum for seventh and eighth graders, created and piloted at the Montclair Cooperative School, Montclair, NJ, over a three-year period (2003-2006), in partnership with the Montclair Art Museum. The curriculum takes into account the specific needs and developmental tasks of early adolescent students—their need to separate, exercise choice and autonomy, and play leadership roles; and the need to explore big ideas and their identity.

Through regular visits to the museum throughout the school year, the students stepped into three roles—artist, docent, and curator. They looked at, discussed, and made art, and created their own art exhibits. They wrote interpretive wall labels for museum exhibitions; and they become docents for younger students.

This Independent Study considers a number of questions—about adolescents and how they learn; about teacher-directed vs. student-directed instruction and co-constructing curriculum organically; about the use of description and documentation for curriculum development and assessment; and about how to create effective museum-school partnerships.

“Human experience is made human through the existence of associations and recollections, which are strained through the mesh of imagination so as to suit the demands of the emotions.”

--John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*

“There is the effort to invent a situation in which there can be spaces for doing, spaces for attending, spaces for becoming.”

--Maxine Greene, *Variations on a Blue Guitar*

“The worth of a museum is in its use.”

--John Cotton Dana, *The New Museum*

## **Table of Contents**

**Acknowledgments p. 4**

**Introduction p. 7**

**Chapter 1: Setting and Circumstances: The Philosophy and Approach  
of the Montclair Cooperative School p. 9**

**Chapter 2: Developmental Issues of Adolescence and the  
Theoretical Underpinnings for a Museum Studies  
Curriculum p. 21**

**Chapter 3: The Development of a Museum-School Partnership and  
the Curriculum Planning Process p. 33**

**Chapter 4: The Pilot Year 2004-05 p. 46**

- **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Museum Studies Program Curriculum Overview**
- **Illustrated Chronology Year One p. 54**

**Chapter 5: Year Two: Creating an Art and Media Curriculum Cycle 2005-2006  
p. 81**

- **8<sup>th</sup>-Grade Media Studies Curriculum Overview**
- **Illustrated Chronology Year Two p. 88**

**Chapter 6: Real Work: Outcomes and Reflections p. 130**

**Bibliography p. 141**

## **Table of Contents**

(continued)

**Appendices p. 145**

**Appendix 1: Museum Studies Lesson Plan 1: A Special Place p. 146**

**Appendix 2: Poems from Field Trip to the Dia Beacon Museum p. 149**

**Appendix 3: Selected Interpretive Wall Labels,  
“Edward Weston: A Legacy” p. 153**

**Appendix 4: Media Studies Lesson Plan 1: Coming Up with Our Own  
Definition of Media p. 156**

**Appendix 5: Graduation Project Materials p. 157**

**Appendix 6: Curriculum Materials and Notes: “Anxious Objects: Willie  
Cole’s Favorite Brands” p. 160**

- **Teacher Notes**
- **Docent Tour Lesson Plans/Notes**
- **Student Docent Tour Planners**
- **Docent Tour Debrief Session Transcript**
- **Interpretive Wall Label Lesson Plans**

**Appendix 7: Selected Interpretive Wall Labels,  
“Anxious Objects: Willie Cole’s Favorite Brands” p. 184**

**Appendix 8: Permission Letters p. 189**

**Appendix 9: Seventh Grade Student Work: Year Two p. 193**

- **Fall-Winter 2005-06 Sketchbook Entries p. 194**
- **Fall 2005: Sketches/Drafts/Paintings Inspired by Roy  
Lichtenstein p. 199**
- **Second Semester Student Work p. 222**
- **Two 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Portfolios p. 235**

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Maxine Greene has said: “We know that the capacity to respond to metaphor has to be cultivated.” Thanks to my mother, Frances Johnson Furlong, for planting and cultivating those seeds in me. This Independent Study is dedicated to her, to my daughter, Halley Elisabeth Furlong-Mitchell, and to my husband, Peter Mitchell.

## **Introduction**

When I was in seventh and eighth grades, I took an art class at the home of a woman named Mrs. Craw. Once a week, I walked over to her house after school with a friend. Mrs. Craw had a small art studio in her basement, and there were about six or eight of us at any one time. Some of the students were in high school. I loved being with the older kids—it made me feel cool and more mature.

I learned about professional materials—canvas, brushes, and good paper—and I learned a lot of technique. I worked in pastel, oils, and acrylic, and did landscapes and portraits. I learned how to translate light into color and tone, how to create visual texture using various kinds of lines and strokes, and about how many different hues there actually are within a single color. I learned how to look with concentration and focus, and how to break down what I was seeing into lines, shapes, colors, and tones. With each picture, I knew I was finished when I could look at it and feel satisfied that I didn't need to do anything more. Through this conversation with myself, I was able to try things, see where they led, get help when needed, and achieve a degree of mastery over the materials that, in turn, fed my eagerness to do more. Most important of all, I had found a way to connect with and work through my feelings and ideas, and express myself—find myself—through my art.

While we were working, we listened to records on Mrs. Craw's record player. They were not what you'd expect teenagers to listen to—things like Orff's *Carmina Burana*. One time, she pulled out Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* and put it on, very excitedly telling us how incredibly controversial it had been in its time. It was as if she was letting us in on a big secret, or something so cool that we just had to know about it and hear it right that second. During those moments, Mrs. Craw's very big eyes would get even bigger. I was completely drawn in by her enthusiasm, her big floral print dresses, and her offbeat interests, like the I Ching. I felt like I was part of a club. As we worked at our easels, she came around and showed us certain techniques and helped us as we needed it. I loved how she made me feel—she was open and nonjudgmental—and I loved being part of a small, friendly group of student artists. She had created a welcoming place where each of us could work according to our own preference and process, where we could develop our own style in our own time. In being taken seriously, and being given a lot of breathing room, I took myself seriously. When, many years later, I had the opportunity to develop a class for students the same age as I had been, I wanted to be sure that the spirit of Mrs. Craw was in the room.

## **Chapter One**

### **Setting and Circumstances: The Philosophy and Approach of the Montclair Cooperative School**

#### **Beginnings**

The curriculum and museum-school partnership for early adolescent learners described in this Independent Study were created and piloted over the course of three years at the Montclair Cooperative School. The Co-op, as it is called, is a progressive, cooperative school in Montclair, New Jersey, founded in 1963. It is located in a diverse suburban community of 38,000 in northern New Jersey, 11 miles west of Manhattan. In 2003, the school decided to add a seventh and eighth grade. It is currently home to 200 students from Nursery to grade eight.

In thinking about the specific developmental needs and interests of early adolescents, the Head of School created a faculty curriculum planning committee, which also included parents. At the time, I was studying at Bank Street College Graduate School of Education in the Elementary Ed/Museum Education Program, focusing on early adolescence, and became a parent member of the committee. The group met weekly for five months to develop a curriculum that took into account: the school's approach to working with children; the need of 12- and 13-year olds to separate and move beyond their familiar school surroundings into the larger adult community; their hunger for

big ideas; and their quest for personal identity as they began thinking about who they are and where they might be heading. One idea that emerged from the discussions was to provide off-campus internships that would give students real experiences with professionals in the community, and real tasks that would allow them to take on adult roles. Among the possible venues considered were the local newspaper, animal shelter, hospital, horticultural center, and the Montclair Art Museum.

Based on my graduate work at Bank Street, and my prior experience as an art museum curator, I was asked to explore the possibility of developing a partnership with the Montclair Art Museum, and to create a museum-based art curriculum and internship for the new seventh grade. In 2004, I was hired by the school to teach it. In 2005, I expanded the curriculum to include a Media Studies component. This Independent Study documents the curriculum and the partnership, beginning with the planning year (2003-04), and its implementation over a two-year period spanning the 2004-05 and 2005-06 school years.

Although I am the principal author and teacher of the Museum Studies and Media Studies curricula, I worked in close collaboration with the Head of School, the Upper School Theme Teacher, the Art Teacher, and the museum's Director of Education.

## **The Montclair Cooperative School: Its History, Philosophy, and Culture**

The Montclair Cooperative School was begun in 1963 as an inter-racial, non-sectarian, cooperative nursery, by a group of women involved with the civil rights and peace movements. As the town's first integrated preschool, the Co-op's mandate was to provide a safe place where children of diverse backgrounds could learn together, and where the adults – parents and teachers – could come together and learn about children's learning. The teachers created classrooms with developmentally appropriate materials and real activities designed to promote children's continued questioning of their world. They built curricula around the interests and questions of the students and created an atmosphere of curiosity to foster the children's passion for learning. Working within the school's cooperative structure, parents provided support and assistance in the classrooms and the school. This arrangement gave parents the means to develop their own understanding of child development and their child's learning, and it allowed the school to keep tuition affordable relative to other independent schools. Most important, it created a school community in which the children were known well by their teachers, and in which the adults modeled for the children the value of healthy interdependence. Children experienced firsthand what happens when people rely on one another to participate responsibly and engage collaboratively and respectfully with others. Over the next decades, the

Co-op grew to a Nursery-Grade 6 elementary school, and in 2003, decided to add a seventh and eighth grade in order to extend its progressive philosophy to the early adolescent years.

Central to the creation of the new middle school curriculum was the belief that it should emerge from, and be consistent with, the school's culture and its way of working with children. Over its 40-year history, the school had developed a set of practices based on certain humanistic beliefs, values, and ethics, and identified itself in three ways—as a cooperative school, a progressive school, and a school whose daily interactions are shaped by a “social curriculum”. At Bank Street, I came to understand the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the school's progressive approach, which is rooted most strongly in the ideas of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky.

### **Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky: The Roots of the School's Philosophy and Approach**

In his 1938 book *Experience and Education*, the American philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey laid out a vision of schools and schooling as personally and socially transformative. For Dewey, education and democracy were intertwined: Education was the means by which individuals could develop their capacities and interests so that they could become full and constructive participants in a democratic society. He viewed schools as communities that played an essential role in advancing social progress. Indeed, Dewey believed that people *needed* communities in order to become fully human.

To learn to be human is to develop through the give-and-take of communication an effective sense of being an individually distinctive member of a community; one who understands and appreciates its beliefs, desires and methods, and who contributes to a further conversion of organic powers into human resources and values (Campbell, in Hickman, p. 24).

Dewey (1938) conceived of knowledge as limitless and ever-changing rather than a fixed set of facts and skills that can be transmitted from teacher to child. According to Dewey, learning is a life-long process; there is an “organic” connection between personal experience and education (p. 25). Children construct their own sense of the world by progressively building on their experiences and what they already understand. This theory of knowledge and how people learn is the basis for what has become known, in educational theory, as “constructivism” (Hein, 1991). It is also the basis of Dewey’s use of the term “progressive”.

The beauty of Dewey’s thinking is that it is both broad and deep, offering at once a theory of education rooted in philosophical ideas about human capacities and democratic principles, as well as specific ideas about educational practice. For example, he emphasizes the social dimensions of learning and the critical role that teachers must play in creating a learning environment in which children are encouraged to bring their interests into the classroom.



The plan, in other words, is a co-operative enterprise, not a dictation. The teacher's suggestion is not a mold for a cast-iron result but is a starting point to be developed into a plan through contributions from the experience of all engaged in the learning process. The development occurs through reciprocal give-and-take, the teacher taking but not being also afraid to give. The essential point is that the purpose grows and takes shape through the process of social intelligence (Dewey, 1938, p. 72).

This "social intelligence," the give-and-take that occurs in the classroom among teacher and students, makes children's questions and interests the impetus for continuous investigation. It aims to open up their interests so that they can ask questions, which then become the basis for their learning. This is what is meant by an "inquiry-based" curriculum.

Dewey places great importance on knowing the needs and interests of the individual child and how each child learns. He writes that teachers must take this into account when planning, and must strike a fine balance between creating a setting that engages an individual child's interests and providing the subject matter for experiences that develop children's understanding.

He [the teacher] must survey the capacities and needs of the particular set of individuals with whom he is dealing and must at the same time arrange the conditions which provide the subject-matter or content for experiences that satisfy these needs and develop these capacities. The planning must be flexible enough to permit free play for individuality of experience and yet firm enough to give direction towards continuous development of power (p. 58).

Dewey also addresses issues of motivation by viewing the learner as an active participant in developing the direction of study. He recognizes the

importance of how children learn—that not all activities are educative. They must arouse curiosity and be enjoyable. His idea of “collateral learning” is particularly insightful—that children form implicit ideas about the educational process from the way they are taught.

There is, I think, no point in the philosophy of progressive education which is sounder than its emphasis upon the importance of the participation of the learner in the formation of the purposes which direct his activities in the learning process, just as there is no defect in traditional education greater than its failure to secure the active co-operation of the pupil in construction of the purposes involved in his studying (p. 67).

Dewey conceived of the teacher’s role as facilitator and guide, rather than disseminator of knowledge. “When education is based upon experience and educative experience is seen to be a social process, the situation changes radically. The teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities” (p. 59).

With these ideas, Dewey lodged a critique of traditional education. For Dewey, personal experience is the cornerstone of learning, but not all experiences are educative. Teachers create the ideal circumstances for children to access prior knowledge; learning is a social process whose affective dimension is critical to motivation; and learning begins with children’s impulses. To transform those impulses into purposeful learning, we must give children the freedom to interact within a structure.

The Co-op's approach was also informed by the work of the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget. Through his cognitive experiments with children, in which he conducted clinical interviews designed to understand how children think and how their intellectual capacities develop, Piaget developed a theory of child development. According to Piaget, children's minds are not miniature versions of adult minds. Rather, children's intellectual and social development goes through clearly identifiable stages. Each child experiences those changes at a different age and rate, and there are variations among children in understanding, interest, and capacity. Piaget identified four stages of cognitive development, with age ranges for when children acquire different mental capacities, such as the ability to think abstractly. A curriculum that is developmentally appropriate takes these stages, capacities, and differences into account and is built around them.

As a parent at the Montclair Cooperative School, I had observed and experienced many of these ideas in action on a daily basis. Teachers developed curriculum designed to help each child discover a love for reading real literature, for thinking about mathematical problems, for exploring the many worlds of scientific and historical inquiry, and for expressing themselves through the work they produce. The curricula, organized around themes, enabled the children to look at things in depth, explore their complexity, and allow for many different

meanings. The content, although important on its own, was a vehicle for engaging the child so that s/he could think through ideas and gain confidence and direction as a learner. The goal was to open up the children's intellectual curiosity, and for them to be engaged in and excited about their learning in ways that allowed them to try things out.

### **A Social Curriculum**

What made this willingness to try things possible was the school's belief that creating relationships of trust is the foundation for learning. The school believes that children learn most powerfully when they feel known and regarded by others, and valued for their diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and individual interests. Teachers and parents support the children's efforts to find solutions to their problems, whether they are intellectual, creative, or social. Throughout the school, teachers see the experiences children have both in and out of the classroom as opportunities for them to learn about their own, and others', perspectives, feelings, and understandings. For example, children in the upper school participate in town meetings, which are structured to give them opportunities to offer compliments, concerns, and apologies, and to raise and resolve issues that come up. Younger children are given other structures and opportunities appropriate to their development. As they come to know that their ideas and feelings are respected, and feel safe enough to share their ideas openly,

they are more able to take risks in their learning, which fuels growth. And because children also learn from one another, teachers encourage children to be respectful and caring, and they create opportunities at all age levels for children to interact with one another.

Over the years, the Co-op has identified these practices as its “social curriculum”. The social curriculum acknowledges the importance of social interaction and emotional safety as a prerequisite for learning, and supports children’s learning in several ways. It helps them to develop language that enables them to explain their ideas and feelings so that they can take control of their own learning. It helps children learn about themselves through their interactions with others, and it helps them to learn things from one another. It is through the process of trying things out, taking a chance on failing, and regrouping that the children become better able to participate in social processes, engage with others, and grow.

The work of Russian developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky in the 1930s offers an explanation for how social interaction promotes learning and development, which he regarded as intertwined but sequentially distinct. Vygotsky observed that there are some things that children can do on their own, and some things they can do with adult assistance, and/or through imitation. The implication of this is that children learn in a social context: “Human learning

presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them” (Vygotsky, p. 88).

Vygotsky argued that learning precedes development. That is, when a child learns something new, with the help of a teacher, or by imitating what an adult or another child is doing, this leap sets in motion a set of mental processes that result in further cognitive development.

Our analysis alters the traditional view that at the moment a child assimilates the meaning of a word, or masters an operation such as addition or written language, her developmental processes are basically completed. In fact, they have only just begun at that moment (p. 90).

Settings that optimize the difference between where children are developmentally and where they are heading allow them to build on their prior knowledge and to stretch themselves to a new area of knowledge and competence. Vygotsky called this difference the “zone of proximal development”. He writes:

We propose that an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child’s independent developmental achievement (p. 90).

The teacher’s role is twofold: to figure out where the child is in his or her development, and to create experiences and interactions that challenge that child, with adult support, just above this level; and to create an environment that

promotes cooperation among peers. The Co-op's social curriculum is designed to do that, implicitly recognizing that learning and development take place in a social context. In Vygotsky's words, "learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human, psychological functions" (p. 90).

## Chapter 2

### **Developmental Issues of Adolescence and the Theoretical Underpinnings for a Museum Studies Curriculum**

My interest in creating a museum-school partnership for our new seventh grade was informed by my graduate studies at Bank Street. I was doing research into learning in museums and, specifically, in ways to support adolescents' needs and interests. During this time, I'd met with a group of high school students who were participants in a docent program at the Hudson River Museum. They were giving docent tours for middle school students, and were thoroughly integrated into the museum's education team. I was impressed by their knowledge, poise, and the sense of ownership they had about what they were doing. I was also studying the developmental issues of adolescence—the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes and growth that emerging adolescents typically undergo. As 12- and 13-year olds begin to experience the bodily changes associated with puberty—and the insecurity and self-consciousness that come with it—they also begin to embark on a search for who they are. Within Piaget's framework, they are entering the "formal operational" stage of development. Cognitively, they are beginning to think about big questions, are more able to consider and understand multiple perspectives and points of view, plan ahead, reason hypothetically, and to make personal connections to broader social



contexts (Ginsburg and Opper, 1979, p. 178). Most important, their ability to think about, and understand, their own thinking—known as metacognition—becomes increasingly more complex (Cole and Cole, p. 645).

David Elkind has described these abilities as “thinking in a new key” (1984, p. 23), and says that adolescents need to become accustomed to their new mental powers, just as they need to adjust to their new bodies. Changes in behavior that seem to occur overnight—including a newfound criticalness, argumentativeness, and self-consciousness—are an outgrowth of the developmental changes they are undergoing. For instance, they can now think about a range of possibilities, and imagine “ideal parents against whom his or her real parents suffer by comparison” (Elkind, p. 28). The irony is that while they are steadily moving out into the world, they are even more dependent upon positive relationships and interactions with adults for guidance and as a model for the person they will grow into (Beane, 2000, pp. 3-5).

Among the many questions that the curriculum planning committee grappled with was this: What happens when the school’s emphasis on community, caring, and showing that caring openly come face to face with the early adolescent’s need to separate and become independent? How does this developmental change express itself academically and socially? What kind of curriculum—that is, what kinds of experiences and interactions—might the

school develop that takes into account early adolescents' need for autonomy, their emerging powers of thought, and their striving for a sense of self?

The typical middle-school experience does not always meet emerging adolescents' developmental and cognitive needs. Learning in most middle schools is usually organized around subject areas, not students' individual interests and needs. Often, school curriculum emphasizes the mastery of a narrow set of skills, dominated by language and math, and does not afford students the time and opportunity to develop their interests deeply. Equally important, middle schools often have limited ability to address the critical social and emotional dimensions of learning. A middle-school experience that is attentive to the needs of adolescents provides: curriculum that is relevant and meaningful; instruction that is challenging and active; assessment that responds to diverse intelligences and learning styles; teachers who listen to students and who are respectful of their needs; adults who know them well and whom they can trust; opportunities to socialize and develop a healthy interdependence with peers; and a safe school environment. In short, the needs of middle school students are best served when their individual interests and strengths are understood and supported by adults who know them personally and across a wide range of activities, and where they are acknowledged for their growing intellectual and social capabilities.

In May 2004, after five months of weekly meetings, the curriculum committee, with faculty taking the lead, came up with a plan that included the following: an ethics-based social studies curriculum; a philosophy class taught in conjunction with a local university; an independent study project with a faculty mentor; a school store designed to bolster math skills; a wilderness experience designed to strengthen students' physical, mental, and social capacities; community service working with the school's nursery children; off-campus lunch privileges; and a year-long off-campus internship at the Montclair Art Museum. The schedule was structured so that we would have one big block on Friday afternoons. This gave us great flexibility: We could go to the Montclair Art Museum; stay at school and work in the art studio; or else use the whole day to take field trips to other museums.

As I began to think about what kinds of museum experiences might draw out the interests of our rising seventh graders, I was fortunate to get some timely input. While I was participating in the school's curriculum planning meetings, I was also working with two other Bank Street Museum Education graduate students designing and conducting a research study of adolescent learners. We ran focus groups with, and created surveys for, a group of eighth-grade students at a public middle school on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. The school had a longstanding partnership with the Lincoln Center Institute's (LCI) Aesthetic

Education program, and the students had participated in six LCI art, music, dance, and theater programs over three years. LCI was interested in finding out what the students would take with them as they entered high school—what had been most memorable for them, and how they might approach their learning having had these intensive and sustained arts experiences. In other words, what was LCI's impact?

Several themes emerged from the study that guided my thinking about how to structure our museum studies program. First, the students expressed strongly the wish to have the adults acknowledge their maturing capabilities. In the words of one student, "they kinda led us by the hand, like we didn't know what we were doing." The students did not want "to be treated like three-year olds". Second, they wanted to exercise more choice and control over what they were learning, and had a strong interest in programs that "related to real life for an eighth grader." Third, they wanted the programs to span a longer period of time in order to provide more opportunity for in-depth study and discussion. As one student put it: "Some people might want to learn more about it, and [would] probably really get into the subject if the sessions were longer." Fourth, the most memorable LCI experiences the students cited were the ones in which they had felt a strong emotional response, and made personal connections to.

The students' feedback reinforced what much museum research has shown. I found the work of John Falk and Lynn Dierking, George Hein, and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi particularly relevant. Csikszentmihalyi explored the two types of motivation--intrinsic and extrinsic—and asked the question: What motivates people to want to learn or do anything, and what deters them? In proposing an answer, he argues that learning begins in the affective realm:

It is often assumed that, for learning, cognitive processes are more important than affective processes. But as Schiele (1991) points out, it is likely that affective processes are at least as important for evoking broader conceptual understanding rather than simple fact retention. Because emotional factors may influence learning only indirectly by stimulating cognitive processes, their importance is easily underestimated (Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson, p. 71).

Csikszentmihalyi developed the concept of “flow” to explain the power of intrinsic motivation. When individuals who become engaged in something of intrinsic interest, they invest psychic and/or physical energy into it. As they become more deeply involved in an activity, they enter a state of “flow”—a process through which they are continually challenged in a satisfying way, just below their level of competence, endurance, or skill. They make connections, ask questions, come up with solutions, modify ideas, learn, and progress to a higher level.

Csikszentmihalyi argues that the most educationally meaningful experiences are those that are intrinsically motivated, and those in which

museum goers can make personal connections to what's on display. Thus, he says, museums should provide exhibits and experiences that arouse curiosity and sustain interest by allowing visitors to make personal connections to what they see, in order to inspire the "kind of deep absorption that leads to learning" (p. 73). The wish of the eighth-grade focus group participants to have programs that are relevant to their own experience, as well as their strong emotional responses to certain programs, made Csikszentmihalyi's work particularly relevant for me.

What's more, there are certain things that deter museum goers, such as physical distractions—crowds, noise, intimidating guards—and psychological barriers and rigid expectations (of one's own or that of others). Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson write:

People are more open to learning when they feel supported, when they are in a place where they can express themselves and explore their interests without fear of embarrassment or criticism, and when there are no predefined expectations constraining their behavior (p. 74.).

Falk and Dierking's museum audience research confirms the important role of the social and personal dimensions of learning laid out by both Dewey and Vygotsky. They concluded that the most memorable museum experiences—and the most effective in terms of learning—are those in which students discuss with each other what they are seeing and doing in personal terms:

Recognizing and accommodating children's social agendas can result in significant learning, and...when children have opportunities to explain their learning to other children or to adults, they remember their discoveries better and are also more likely to transfer the new insights to new situations (Falk and Dierking, 2000).

George Hein's application of constructivist learning theory to the museum setting, as well as studies of children's behavior in museums, also support this idea of learning as a social process, dependent on intrinsic motivation, in which knowledge is constructed by the individual (Hein, 1991). Drawing on the body of research of how children actually behave in museums, Hein (1985, pp. 7-9) offers the following observations and conclusions:

- Museum interactions tend to be verbal and social activities. Children often do not engage with the suggested activity, and they tend to wander around a lot. In other words, the museum experience is not at all like the school experience and educators should find ways to maximize the unique role that museums can play in a curriculum.
- Certain behaviors—such as moving around the galleries quickly—are typical and characteristic of how children explore a new environment.
- Children respond differently to a new setting depending on their background. The less a child feels accepted or comfortable, the more likely he or she will be to “act out their uncertainty and exploratory behavior by appearing ‘rowdy’” (p. 9). Once children become familiar

with the setting, their ability to concentrate increases as does their ability to participate in the planned activity.

- Children need time to get used to unfamiliar surroundings. We need to think about setting—is it imposing? Is it noisy and crowded? Are the guards and staff friendly, welcoming?

In much the same way as constructivist theory focuses on the individual child's process of knowledge building rather than content, Hein argues that museums, and the teachers who use them, must begin with the learner, not the exhibit. Planning museum curriculum must take into account the behavioral and attitudinal factors that shape a student's experience; it must recognize the important roles that familiarity, comfort, social interaction, and adequate time, play in promoting reflective engagement.

The typical museum-school experience is the one-shot field trip, in which students are given a docent-led tour of a particular exhibition or collection, often followed by a hands-on activity and/or a field-trip work sheet. While there can be tremendous value in any museum visit, Hein points out the limitations of this essentially teacher-directed format. He argues that giving children more time to interact with works of art, to come back to the same piece after having thought about it, and to raise their own questions and then study it with new eyes, allows



them to form deeper connections with their own thoughts, experiences, and feelings. According to Hein:

It takes time to learn; learning is not instantaneous. For significant learning, we need to revisit ideas, ponder them, try them out, play with them, and use them. This cannot happen in the five to ten minutes usually spent in a gallery (and certainly not in the few seconds usually spent contemplating a single museum object). If you reflect on anything you have learned, you soon realize that it is the product of repeated exposure and thought. Even, or especially, moments of profound insight, can be traced back to longer periods of preparation (1991, p. 8).

Based on this research, I concluded that museum learning is best supported through regular and multiple visits, tied to a curriculum that encourages each student to bring their personal connections to the work, and that affords them the time to develop their own view of art and its meaning. For early adolescents, who are eager to exercise greater autonomy and want to be acknowledged for that ability, I wanted to provide opportunities for them to ask their own questions, rather than being questioned by a docent looking for a specific answer. I wanted them to exercise choice about what displays to interact with, and to give them opportunities to socialize. If we could make the museum a second home for them, as familiar a place, as say, the library; if we could give them the gift of time—time to look, to draw, to talk, to think, and revisit their ideas and feelings—then they might discover their own creative process, as well

as a sense of who they are as learners. In reflecting on what I hoped to do, I wrote in the fall of 2003:

How can a child be engaged in a “flow” experience if s/he is uncomfortable, insecure, scared, anxious, or otherwise in a negative frame of mind? For me, this simple idea has big consequences. An important aspect to my teaching then, will be to consider how I can instill trust and security and create the circumstances for curiosity, engagement, and enthusiasm. To do this, I will remain mindful of the psychodynamic process of learning. As Csikszentmihalyi writes: ‘When we fully attend to something, we connect with life and thus fulfill the basic human need for relatedness. The flow experience...is symbolic because it brings together the psychic processes of the person and unites them with a set of objective stimuli in the environment. This is opposite from the state of alienation, in which one feels separated from oneself and from the elements of one’s life’ (Csikszentmihalyi, p. 71).

If the work of Hein, Csikszentmihalyi, and Falk and Dierking gave me a roadmap, it was the work of philosopher and educator Maxine Greene that gave me inspiration. As resident philosopher at the Lincoln Center Institute, Greene articulated a philosophy of aesthetic education that was rooted in the ideas of Dewey. Aesthetic education, according to Greene, posits that understanding a work of art takes place in the transaction between the viewer and the art work; meaning resides not solely in the object or in the mind of the viewer, but is constructed when the viewer brings his or her own experiences and perceptions to bear on its interpretation. The teacher’s role is to improve students’ capacity to derive meaning from a work of art by leading them to reflect self-critically, and by fostering fruitful interactions among artist, educator, and student; among the

artwork and perception. It isn't just the artist who makes art. The student also makes art as she/he engages with the piece of art and creates a personal response that sparks further thought and reflection. To quote Greene, "For us, education signifies an initiation into new ways of seeing, hearing, feeling, moving. It signifies the nurture of a special kind of reflectiveness and expressiveness, a reaching out for meanings, a learning to learn...." (Greene, 2001, p. 7).

It is through these experiences, according to Greene, that we become fully human; they open up our emotional and intellectual capacities, and allow us to tap into the realm of feelings. "It is through the imagination...the realm of pure possibility, that we freely make ourselves to be who or what we are, that we creatively and imaginatively become who or what we are...." (p. 163). Greene's writings reminded me of my own experience as a young art student—how I had been initiated into a way of seeing and making that stayed with me into adulthood. I was excited about how I might give our students the same opportunity to find themselves through art.

## Chapter 3

### **The Development of a Museum-School Partnership and the Curriculum Planning Process**

In a society that stresses discontinuity, disposability, change, and fragmentation, museums and their collections can be symbols of continuity, tradition, preservation, posterity, and human respect.

(Sullivan, in IMLS, p. 64)

Art museums, by their nature, are places that venerate beauty and that seek to create permanence. They present a view that supercedes the moment. When partnered with schools, they can provide a medium for adolescents to develop an appreciation for something more durable than they are, even as they are working out a sense of who they are as individuals. It is in this context of searching for permanence and beauty that each adolescent is able to discover – invent – for her/himself a sense of who they want to become. The art “experts” at the museum come together with the teaching “experts” from the school to look at the whole child in a cultural context. Together with the child, they can experience the art, pull out of that experience what is personally moving and important, and then decide with the child how to convey a deeper understanding. Supporting students in this way depends on knowing them well; it also necessitates a type of collaboration that makes space for them to develop their ideas and responses over time.

The Montclair Art Museum (MAM), located about a mile from the Co-op, in a Greek Neo-Classical--style building that befits its role as a "temple of culture," turned out to be an ideal collaborator for the Co-op. Founded in 1913, MAM has a world-class collection of 15,000 traditional and contemporary works of art and ethnographic objects by American and Native American artists, spanning 300 years. Its small size allows for the kind of relaxed interactions that promote contemplation and intimacy, and that would invite our students to feel at home. At the same time, the formality of its exhibition spaces, and the implicit respect accorded the works on view, and in the collection, conveys the sense that this is a professional institution doing serious work. What's more, unlike other art museums, MAM's mission is focused on serving its disparate audiences, especially students. It has an art school on the premises, and added new studio art classrooms and a student art gallery to a new wing, which opened in 2001. The current director has also made an effort to integrate educational programs into exhibition planning.

At our first meeting in the fall of 2003, MAM's director of education, the Coop's head of school, and I put many ideas on the table about how we might connect the Co-op's new middle school to the museum. We asked about the possibility of establishing an internship, and wondered what staff and/or resources might be available. The education director was interested in

developing closer ties with schools in the community, and shared an interest in the Co-op's approach to teaching. He was also interested in expanding the museum's adolescent programs, and had previously worked with a Montclair public middle school. (In that collaboration, students had written exhibition wall labels, which were displayed in the gallery alongside the curator-written labels. He wanted to develop that idea further, as well as the possibility of having our students give peer-guided tours on the museum's family days, and create gallery guides for other children.) We also discussed the possibility of having our students' work exhibited in the museum's student art gallery. This we were able to do in the second year of the program.

Beyond having the museum become a site for off-campus learning for the Co-op, the head of school was also interested in finding ways for MAM to be a venue in which parents and educators from different schools in the area could study children's development through their art; and where school teachers and museum educators could come together for mutual staff development. Finally, we all wanted the partnership to provide a rich environment in which we could develop curricula and projects that could be shared with other educators.

Instead of peer-guided tours, I wanted our students to give tours for younger children in the school. There were two reasons for this. First, when I'd interviewed the student docents at the Hudson River Museum, they had said

that it was sometimes difficult to get their peers to view them as knowledgeable, and to get their attention and respect. Second, and most important, was the Co-op's tradition of fostering interactions among older and younger children--such as reading buddies and assemblies--that allowed them to form strong bonds and learn from one another. Both older and younger children derive tremendous benefits from these relationships, which result in growth for all: The older children get to be the leaders and develop confidence based on their success as "teachers," while keeping one foot planted in their own childhood experiences. The younger children get to see where they are heading, and look up to the older children as their teachers. All the students would gain from their pre-existing personal relationships, and by the ways in which the older children could initiate the younger ones into what they'd learned and what interested them.

It is not always easy for art museums to deviate from traditional practices, or to cede territory that is the purview of experts. However, education departments in museums have increasingly becoming the locus for rethinking how their institutions can be more flexible and accessible, and become places where everyone can feel comfortable, not just elites. In their willingness to extend MAM's resources to the Co-op in new ways, MAM's education director, with the support of the museum's director, demonstrated that they were willing to engage in that kind of rethinking. We ended our first meeting with the

understanding that our collaboration would involve a year-long commitment, and that each partner would contribute resources to whatever extent possible given limited budgets and the time constraints of museum staff. The education director would find out what staff and resources were available; for our part, I would serve as the liaison, work with Co-op faculty to create a curriculum.

Back at school, I began to meet regularly with the Co-op's "theme" teacher, who was planning a two-year seventh- and eighth-grade social studies cycle that would alternate between "The American Experience" and "Global Studies, Ethics and Human Rights". There were several things I was very excited about. First, because of my experience as a curator, and background in contemporary and 20<sup>th</sup>-century American art, I wanted to give the students as many opportunities as possible to see the varied ideas and forms that contemporary art takes. Remembering the interest and excitement that I'd felt when I had encountered non-traditional art works as an adolescent, I thought that contemporary art might provide a spark for them as well. I also was interested in having them experience different kinds of museum spaces, and to see how an exhibition's setting and context shapes our interpretation and experience of an art work. Finally, because MAM has a compelling collection of Native American objects and art, I saw some possible connections between our museum studies work and the new social studies curriculum.



My colleague, the Co-op's upper grades theme teacher, is a master teacher and artist, with over 25 years of experience at the school. She has a deep understanding of early adolescents' social and emotional needs, and knows how to tap into their preoccupations and interests through experiential learning. She knows when to push and when to let things be—in other words, she instinctively senses when it's time to give them the mental space they need to think and reflect. She welcomed me as a full partner, and as we planned together, our excitement grew. A collector and recycler by nature, she had an endless supply of materials and tools, as well as lots of ideas about how to use them. She also served as a mentor, helping me to focus my ideas, and bring me back to nuts-and-bolts issues, such as time management. Most important, she extended to me her trust, and the space to make mistakes and work through my developing ideas about teaching.

In turn, I introduced her to some of the things I was learning at Bank Street, such as the Visual Thinking Strategies curriculum developed by Philip Yenawine (*Visual Understanding in Education*, 2008), which is rooted in the open-ended questioning techniques developed for social studies by Hilda Taba. Taba's approach makes a distinction between what she calls "mind-shrinking questions that tend to set students up to say exactly what the teacher wants them to say...and questions that provide a setting and a stimulus for a student's own

thinking” (Taba, Durkin, Fraenkel, and McNaughton, 1971, p. 123). According to Taba, asking good questions plays a key role in helping students learn “inductively”, by making generalizations and inferences and supporting them with evidence. This approach was also consistent with the questioning techniques of Montclair State University’s Philosophy for Children program, which the theme teacher was reintroducing at the school. I wanted to develop my own ability to facilitate our discussions by modeling open-ended questioning that, in turn, the students might internalize and use with the younger students.

The head of school had also introduced the faculty to the Prospect Descriptive Processes (Himley, 2002), an approach to teaching and learning developed over the past 30 years by Patricia Carini and others at the Prospect School in Vermont. Rooted in the humanist view that each of us has the capacity to learn, Prospect participants begin by taking the time to step back and look at children’s strengths rather than focusing on perceived weaknesses. Each of the processes—which include focused recollections, reflections on a word, descriptive observations of a child or an individual piece of work, or a body of one child’s work over time—involves practice in developing a non-judgmental stance. The goal is to suspend the tendency to label a child, or project our own interpretations onto his or her behavior or work, and practice the discipline of seeing the child through the lens of phenomenology. What is the child’s way of

working? What themes, motifs, and elements are present in his or her work?

What are his or her preferences and interests? (Himley and Carini, 2000). Starting from the assumption that, for all of us, learning is an ongoing process through which we are continually “becoming” — that is, developing our knowledge and understanding through our feelings and responses — how can we *describe* these modes of thinking and making without drawing definitive conclusions? How does the child become visible through their work? (Carini, 2001) How do these modes of observation help us to know the child, and to support them? In other words, how can our understanding of a child remain provisional enough for us to remain open to the ways that he or she may change and grow over time?

Beginning in the fall of 2003, I started participating in Prospect’s yearly conferences and summer institute, and began incorporating the Descriptive Processes into my teaching.

In the spring of 2004, the director of education, the theme teacher, and I had come up with a skeletal sequence of activities designed for students to step into three different roles — artists, curators, and docents. Both the director of education and the museum director committed MAM to providing, when possible, behind-the-scenes access to the work of the museum. The Education Department staff would make themselves available, to meet with our students to discuss how museums install exhibits (labels, frames, lighting, etc.), collect work,

and make other decisions. As a result of the museum education department's flexibility, willingness to try things, and give of their time, we could create a curriculum that was "organic". While the approach and some of the activities might stay the same from year to year—making art, writing interpretive wall labels, and becoming docents—the content would vary depending on the museum's temporary exhibitions. Most important of all, we could make changes as we went along. We weren't bound by a cafeteria-style or one-size-fits-all museum program already in place. Rather, we could plan and tailor our work in the manner the Co-op was accustomed to—around the interests, strengths, and needs of the students.

We also learned about what was possible, or not, given museum practices, and were fortunate that the museum bent some of its rules to accommodate our objectives. For instance, we were allowed to preview exhibits during installation, and were often permitted to take photographs and shoot video in the galleries as part of the documentation process. The director, in addition to meeting with us to talk about the museum, his role, and the artists on exhibit, took us into areas of the museum that are usually off-limits. Finally, as a way of making our students part of the museum's team, the education director gave them museum ID badges. (We decided as a group how they would be identified—they came up with the title, "Docent in Training", after "Junior Docent" and other terms were

deemed unacceptable.) In these and many other ways, MAM and the Co-op were able to create a lab for trying out ideas.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has, over the past 20 years, studied and supported, through federal grants, a diverse group of museum/school partnerships. In *True Needs, True Partners*, the IMLS describes a number of conditions that make such partnerships successful (Hirzy, 1996, p. 50). They include creating a shared vision for the partnership and setting clear expectations for what both partners hope to achieve; recognizing and accommodating the different organizational cultures and structures of museums and schools; understanding the school's needs in relation to curriculum; setting realistic, concrete goals through a careful planning process; encouraging flexibility, creativity, and experimentation; and integrating evaluation and ongoing planning into the partnership.

### **Documentation**

There was one additional element to the curriculum and partnership—documentation—that was crucial to our thinking and our work. Students and teachers who are in the midst of a project need help to see the overall process. This is especially important for adolescents who often get stuck in the immediacy of the moment and who see change very differently from adults. The head of school encouraged us to make documentation part of both the curriculum and

assessment, so that all participants (students, teachers, and museum staff) could use it to reflect on their learning and teaching along the way.

He believed that documentation could create a description of context:

What were the goals of the participants, what problems came up, how were these problems addressed, what reflection was done once a problem was dealt with to see how the solution might have furthered or impeded the articulated goals?

The idea was that documentation would serve all of us by helping us to think more deeply about our engagement. For people who are looking at the process from the outside, documentation would help them to see how this collaboration between a museum and a school developed to meet the needs of all of its participants, where it fell short, and what might be done to make other collaborations work even better.

The documentation process had another purpose—to teach technical skills to the students, and to involve them in articulating the scope of their work at the museum, and in developing ways to capture its significance through video, audio, photographs, and text. They would learn to videotape activities, take still photographs, do interviews, write introductions and summaries, speak in front of the camera, and edit.

As we met during the summer of 2004 to plan specifics, we welcomed yet another collaborator—the school’s art teacher. Previously, the school did not

have an art specialist; rather, art activities, which are an integral part of the school's philosophy and approach to teaching, emerged out of each classroom's theme curriculum. In the fall of 2003, the head of school created a part-time art teacher position to enhance the school's offerings, and hired an artist-parent to pilot an art program for the primary grades. Like me, she was also mentored by the theme teacher, who had previously also taught art in the upper grades.

We'd already decided that we would build part of our first semester's work around an exhibit by the contemporary artist Devorah Sperber, who had been commissioned by MAM's director to create a new work. It was to be exhibited in MAM's stairwell gallery beginning in October. The stipulation was that the piece had to be thematically connected in some way to the Permanent Collection. Sperber, who uses chenille pipe cleaners to create large-scale, pointillistic wall pieces that resemble elaborate, pixillated weavings, chose to reinterpret Edward Hopper's painting, *Coast Guard Station* (1929). We came up with a skeletal plan for the semester, which included field trips to the Dia Beacon and Metropolitan museums, in addition to our visits to MAM.

During the curriculum planning process, some parents expressed the concern that, unless carefully supervised, internships often translate into lots of down time for the students. An off-campus experience, they pointed out, can only be beneficial when the supervising adults can consistently give of their time.

When the adults have more pressing job responsibilities, they argued, student interns inevitably get pushed down the ladder of priorities. This was a legitimate concern, although it rarely became a problem. However, I planned all visits so that I would lead, or co-teach, our activities, and made back-up plans in case museum staff became unavailable. And even though we knew that our students would be engaged in substantive educational activities, I eventually decided to drop the word “internship” from curriculum documents, opting instead to call it a Museum Studies Program.



## **Chapter 4**

### **The Pilot Year 2004-05**

#### **Curriculum Overview**

The Museum Studies Program, which is now in its fourth year, is a year-long curriculum designed to give the Co-op's seventh graders the opportunity to personalize their learning through choice and autonomy, gain a sense of participation, and exercise leadership. Through regular visits to the Montclair Art Museum, as well as trips to other art museums, the students look at and talk about art. They observe, sketch, and take notes. They develop their own relationships with, and responses to, the art on view, and enter into a conversation with the artist through his or her work. Over the course of the year, they also enter into conversations with one another, with their teachers and with museum staff, and with younger children in the school. Most deeply, the seventh graders enter into an internal conversation with themselves, through which their thoughts and feelings drive the work they do, and the art they produce. They make art at school, and exhibit it both at the school, and at the museum. They become interpreters of the art on view by writing wall labels, which are displayed in the museum's galleries. They become docents for younger Co-op students, for whom they develop their own exhibition tours and related art activities at the museum.

## **Goals and Objectives**

### **Goals**

- To deepen student understanding and give them experiences that will build on their sense of self as learners.
- To devise an effective model, based in aesthetic education, for using the art museum as an ongoing learning resource that supports middle-school students' needs and the varied ways they learn.

### **Objectives**

Students will:

- Develop the ability to observe, describe, and reflect on a work of art or cultural artifact
- Develop skill and understanding of artistic practice through hands-on art-making
- Express their ideas lucidly and reflectively in a variety of modes—written, verbally, and artistically
- Develop understanding that the ways a person responds to a piece of art are often a result of a person's life experience
- Share their understandings of the art they have studied through a variety of social interactions

- Display leadership skills by assuming the roles of artist, docent, and curator

The curriculum is organized around a sequential cycle—Becoming Artists (Fall), Becoming Curators (Winter), Becoming Docents (Winter-Spring)—which concludes with a final exhibit at school in June. This allows the students to bring together and practice again the roles they'd assumed over the course of the year. The thinking behind this sequence was that our work early in the year—observing, discussing, responding to, and making art—would help the students to develop the skills they would need to become docents later on. During the first half of the year, they would practice critical and expressive skills by:

- Engaging in sustained looking
- Articulating their observations by sketching, writing, and discussion
- Posing questions
- Making connections
- Conducting research
- Preparing presentations and an archive of their process
- Engaging in reflective review and criticism
- Using artistic materials to create their own art

## **Accommodating Student Differences through Differentiated Instruction**

As in any group of students, there were a wide range of learning styles, strengths, needs, and interests within the first seventh-grade class. Among the many questions I asked myself was this: Does everyone have to do the same project? I wondered how I could nurture each student's creative process while addressing their varying needs and interests. If everyone was doing the same project, in what ways could each student make him or herself visible through the work they did? How could a balance be struck between "structured" vs. "open-ended" approaches, and when and under what circumstances might these different approaches serve different children? For instance, what happens when students are given a specific project to carry out vs. offering them materials to experiment with in response to what they see at the museum? A related question I grappled with was: How and when does a teacher offer help? What kind of help should be provided? What kinds of questions and assistance help students to work out their ideas on their own? At what point do we teach technique?

These questions emerged during the planning process and continued to inform the choices made throughout the two-year period of implementation. They are typical of the tension that exists within progressive education between teacher-directed and student-directed learning, and became central for me as I developed as a teacher. Similarly, within museum education, a dichotomy exists

between the “sage” and the “facilitator”—docents who lecture and ask questions having specific answers vs. docents who work more inductively.

I wanted our work to be driven by the students’ needs and styles as much as possible, and I hoped that differentiating instruction would help the students to develop their own sense of themselves as artists and learners. The following strategies would be used:

- The curriculum would grow organically, pacing would be flexible.
- We would develop together a set of criteria for our work, share our work with one another, and offer critiques based on the criteria we created.
- Students would be given multiple and varied opportunities for nonlinguistic creative output in a studio-based setting.
- Students would be encouraged to pursue ideas and projects that interested them.
- Writing assignments would be broken down into specific steps; students would work in pairs to offer help and feedback.
- In class discussions, students would be given ample time to complete and elaborate on their thoughts; ideas and thoughts would be repeated back to them.

- Discussions would be summarized using lists, graphic organizers, and other visuals.
- One-on-one conferencing would be used to ask specific questions, elicit from student his or her ideas; repeating them back to student orally, using student's own words, to validate what's been said. Write them out.

Finally, our approach to visual literacy would involve the use of open-ended questioning that begins with a simple query, such as: "What do you notice?" Following this line of questioning, students are guided in the practice of observation and description, and in making personal connections to a work of art. When a student offers a response that is interpretive or judgmental in nature, I would ask them to point out what in the picture they see that makes them draw that conclusion. In other words, they would be asked to support their responses with evidence from the "text", which in this case, is a work of art. Since there are no single correct or incorrect answers, no judgments would be made about the students' responses. The goal is to help them to develop respect for the point of view of others; to consider and debate possibilities; and to nurture problem-solving abilities, curiosity, and openness about the unfamiliar (Visual Understanding in Education, 2008). Rather than seeking a single meaning, this approach to looking at art implicitly recognizes that visual art, like books, music,

and other art forms, holds a complexity of meanings, which vary from one person to another (Burnham, 2004). Constructing meaning in this way becomes a collaborative, social process through which students can develop rigorous thinking skills, reason with evidence, and cultivate a point of view.

As a teacher, I felt my job was not to give answers, but to facilitate their responses, and to help them probe more deeply. However, despite being armed with lots of good theory, I had become habituated as a curator to assuming the role of expert—of telling rather than eliciting. I was unsure about how I could develop my own facilitating and questioning skills. I needed to develop the confidence not to jump in, or ask leading questions that signaled to the students that I was fishing for a right answer. During the first year, this often meant that we had some long pauses in our conversations, and gradually I began to trust myself—and the students—enough to allow for those pauses, to give them time to think.

This sense of trust—of being willing to give up a degree of control—also extended to our time making art. As we began the year, I conceived of our work in the museum—the looking and talking, sketching and responding—as the equivalent of “charging the brush”. Just as an artist prepares to paint by moving the brush around in the pigment, working it back and forth in order to obtain a

rich and full brush-load of color, I saw our conversations, our observations, and the gathering of images in our sketchbooks, as similar acts of artistic practice.



# **ILLUSTRATED CHRONOLOGY**

## **YEAR 1**

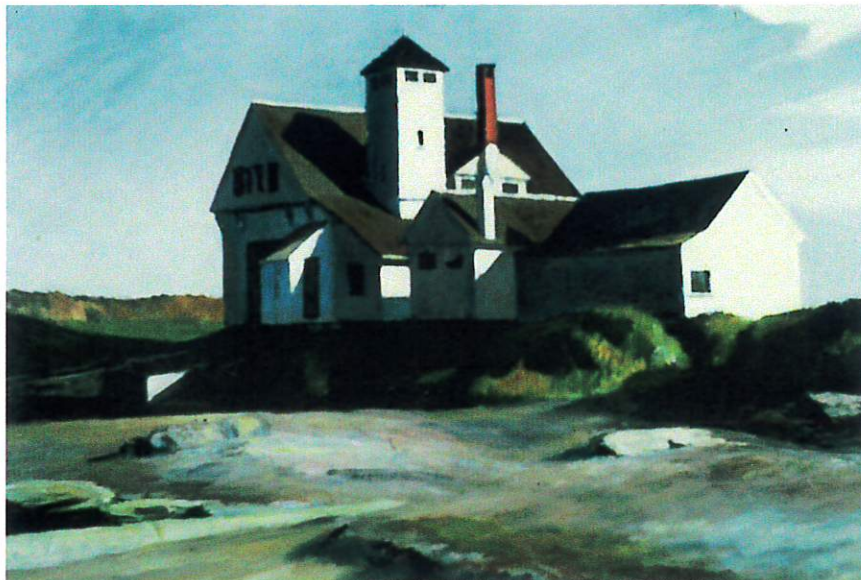
### **SEPTEMBER 2004 – JUNE 2005**

#### **A Note to the Reader**

I've written this chronology, and the one documenting Year Two on p. 88, in the present tense, in order to capture the immediacy of the work we did at particular moments in time. Since this curriculum was co-constructed with the students, I have interwoven excerpts from their voices throughout. These excerpts appear in grey text boxes like the one you see here. For many of the activities, additional documentation is provided in the Appendices, as noted.

## [September] Charging the Brush: Special Places

- We begin at school with a recollection of a special place. We look at and discuss a slide of Edward Hopper's *Coast Guard Station*. We make sketches of landscapes that are personally memorable. Underlying our discussions are the questions: Where do artists get their ideas and inspiration from? How do they express themselves through the use of different materials? How do they draw on the past to create their own expressions?



Edward Hopper, *Coast Guard Station* (1929), MAM Permanent Collection

**Students:** "We started in early October by looking at a slide of *Coast Guard Station* by Edward Hopper. *Coast Guard Station* is a painting of a white house that looks scary and is on the beach. We described what we saw and saw the shapes and different strokes of color. Also, we talked about what the painting brought to mind and what words described the way we felt—foreboding, scary, isolation, shadowy, mysterious. When you first look at the painting, all you see is a house. When dissecting the painting, looking at it over time, you start to see the individual shapes and colors."

--Excerpt from the label for "Ripped Paper Hopper", written by three students. See finished student work, p. 63.

[See Lesson Plan, Appendix 1, p. 146]

## [October] Charging the Brush: Visiting MAM



- We make our first visit to MAM, and spend time looking at the exhibit “Jan Matulka: Global Modernist”. Matulka’s paintings, drawings, and watercolors, made between 1915 and 1940, were inspired by disparate artistic sources.
- We make sketches and respond to art works in the Permanent Collection.

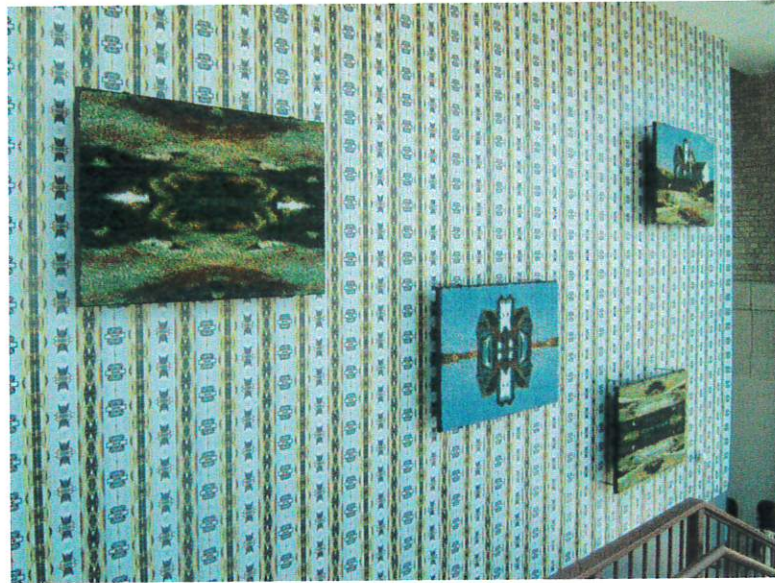
## [October] Visiting MAM: Looking at Hopper



- We meet with the museum's Director of Education and discuss the Hopper painting.

**Students:** "We saw different versions of the painting—a slide, a postcard, then the real painting at the Montclair Art Museum. We noticed that the color and the background was different depending. When we saw the actual painting, we noticed the texture and the strokes. We were surprised that some of the shadows had blue and not as much red as in the slide. The slide made the lines seem more precise; the painting showed us more texture, movement, and was busier."

## [October] Visiting MAM: Looking at Sperber

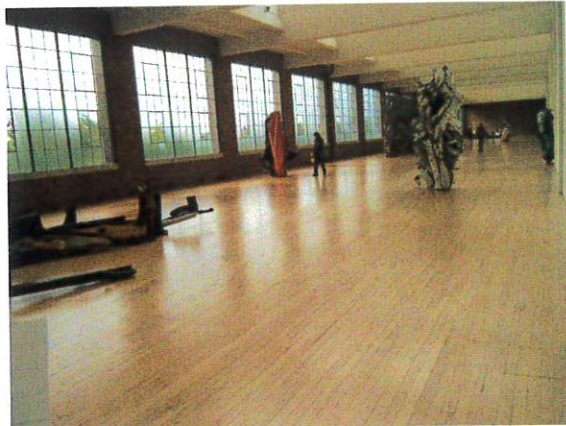


Devorah Sperber, *Coast Guard Station Quartered, Flipped, and Rotated* (2004)

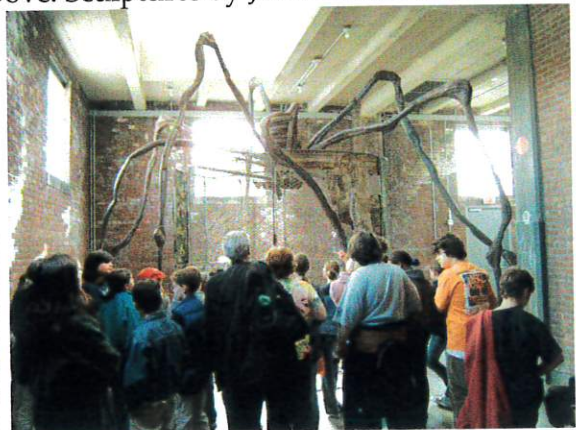
- We meet with Patterson Sims, the museum's director, who gives us a behind-the-scenes preview of a large-scale wall installation by Devorah Sperber, which opens in early October. Sims had commissioned Sperber, who creates large-scale wall pieces out of pipe cleaners, that resemble weavings, to develop a new art work inspired the museum's collection. Sperber chose to make an abstracted version of the Edward Hopper painting *Coast Guard Station*.

**Students:** "She quartered the painting—she made four sections of one quarter of the painting and flipped it so that each corner was pointing toward the center... She decided to use pixels and she used pipe cleaner tips to create each pixel... The background was a special kind of wallpaper that the artist made. She took her re-creation of the Hopper painting, shrunk it, and multiplied it so it became a pattern... Although we liked the idea of pixelating the Hopper painting, we thought all of it together was too busy, and we'd appreciate it more if the wallpaper and the pipe cleaner versions of the Hopper were separate."

## [October] Field Trip: Dia Beacon Museum, Beacon, NY



- We visit the Dia Beacon Museum. Above: Sculptures by John Chamberlain.



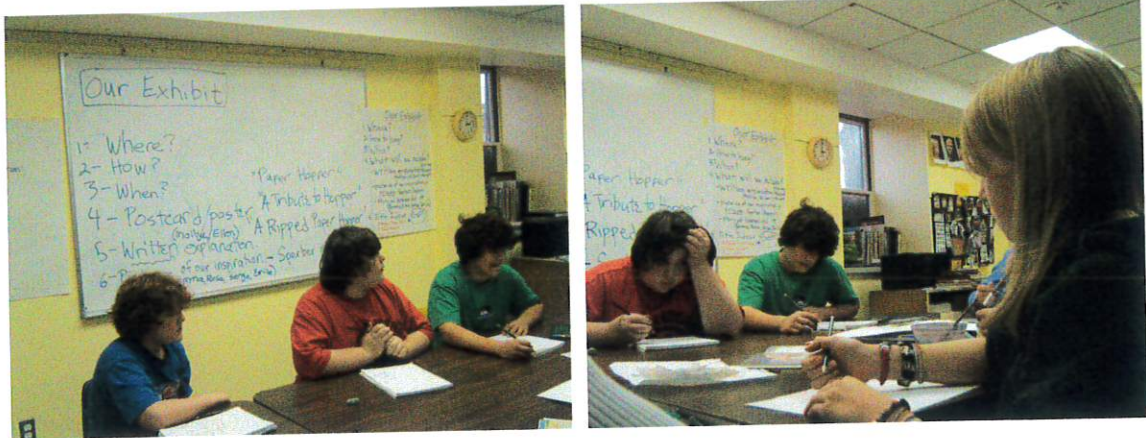
Louise Bourgeois's *Spider*, 1989



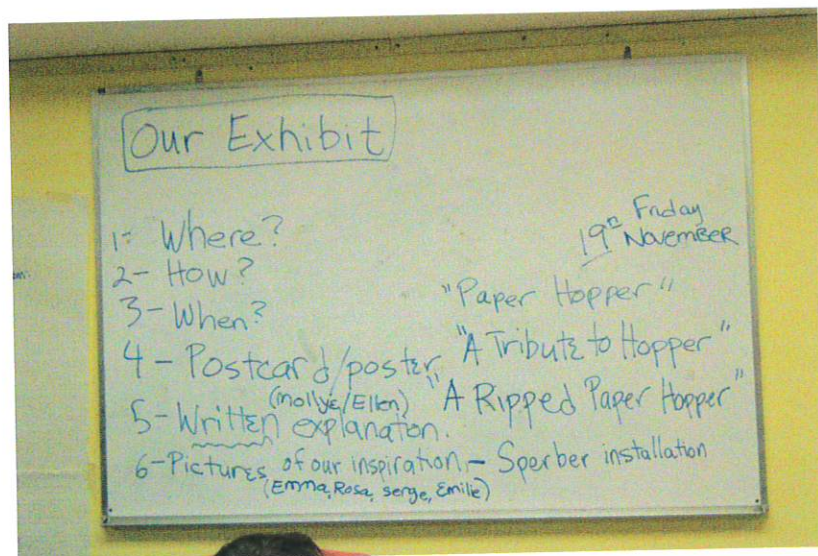
Robert Smithson's *Map of Broken Glass (Atlantis)*, 196

- Back at school, we write poems inspired by our trip.  
[See Appendix 2, Poems from the Dia Beacon, p. 149]

## [November] Reflecting on Our Museum Experiences, Planning Our Exhibit



- We have visited the Dia Beacon and Metropolitan Museums, and have made several trips to the Montclair Art Museum. We compare our experiences, and recall which art, and which museums, were most memorable. We talk about how light and space, wall labels, and the building itself, affects our experience of the art, and we make lists of ideas for individual projects and exhibition ideas. (All of the students like the Dia Beacon Museum and want to go back there. We return to the Dia Beacon at the end of the following school year.)



- We brainstorm ideas for our first exhibit.

## [November] Becoming Artists: Responding to Hopper



**Students:** “We were talking about doing a collage of different materials put together, but we jumped ahead. We didn’t end up going with our original plan of using a lot of different materials. Instead, we agreed that we would use ripped magazine paper.”



**Students:** “We used old copies of National Geographic magazines—some as old as the 1960s. We started out using the magazines to make the art work, but they became the art work.”



**[December]** "In-sperberation": Responding to Hopper



**Students:** "When the sections are separate they look nice, but when you have them all together they look eight times as good. It was pretty cool. When we looked down at our recreation, we saw the shapes just as we had seen them when we looked at the original Hopper painting."



"It was amazing to see how we were looking at an eighth of an eighth when creating it, but when we put all the pieces together, it became the painting."

## [January] Exhibit Opening: “Ripped Paper Hopper”



January 6, 2005: Our culminating event is the opening of the 7th graders’ exhibit “Ripped Paper Hopper” at Montclair Cooperative School. The school community—parents, students, faculty and staff members—are invited to attend.



*Ripped Paper Hopper (2004), by the 7<sup>th</sup> graders*

**Students:** “We were inspired by Sperber because she was inspired by Hopper. We were inspired by Sperber’s inspiration from Hopper. We call it “In-sperberation”.

**[January]** Previewing “Edward Weston: A Legacy”



- We begin our second semester work as docents and curators by previewing MAM’s upcoming exhibition “Edward Weston: A Legacy.” At school, we look at slides of Weston’s photographs. Each student selects an image they want to write a wall label for.



## [January] Wall Labels: “Edward Weston: A Legacy”

- At MAM, we meet with an Education Department staff member, who discusses different types of museum wall labels.



- Students begin working on first drafts, and, perhaps because of the school’s strong poetry curriculum, all choose to write poems.



## [January] Wall Labels: Critiquing Our First Drafts



- Students meet with MAM Education Dept. staff to critique their drafts.



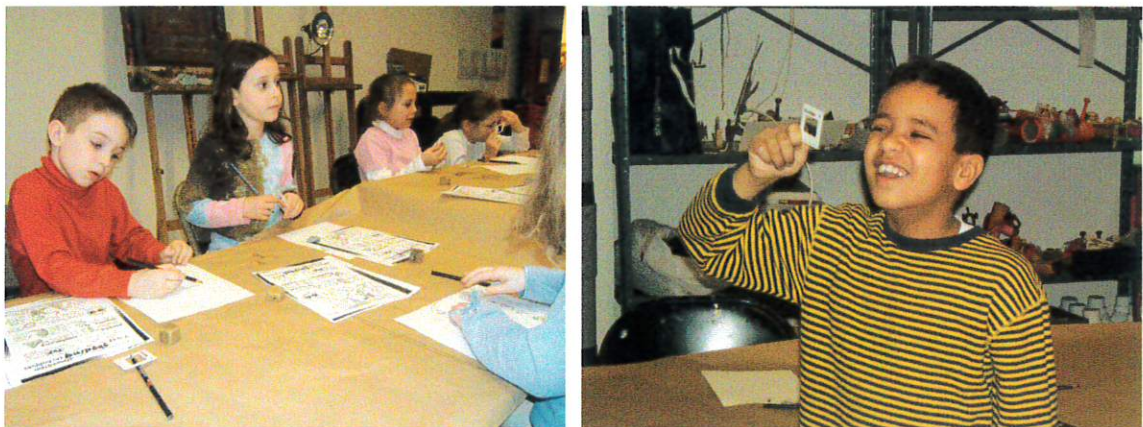
- Just like museum professionals, the students must undergo an editing and approval process, and their labels must conform to the museum's word count and formatting standards.

## [February] Becoming Docents for 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders at MAM

- “Edward Weston: A Legacy” opens, and we begin planning our docent tours for the school’s second graders. Two students decide to be the documenters, to shoot video of the tours. The other students decide to work in pairs or alone. We brainstorm ideas for how to lead our groups, and come up with a list of questions and ideas. We weigh the pros and cons of tripsheets, and the students agree that they do not want to use them.



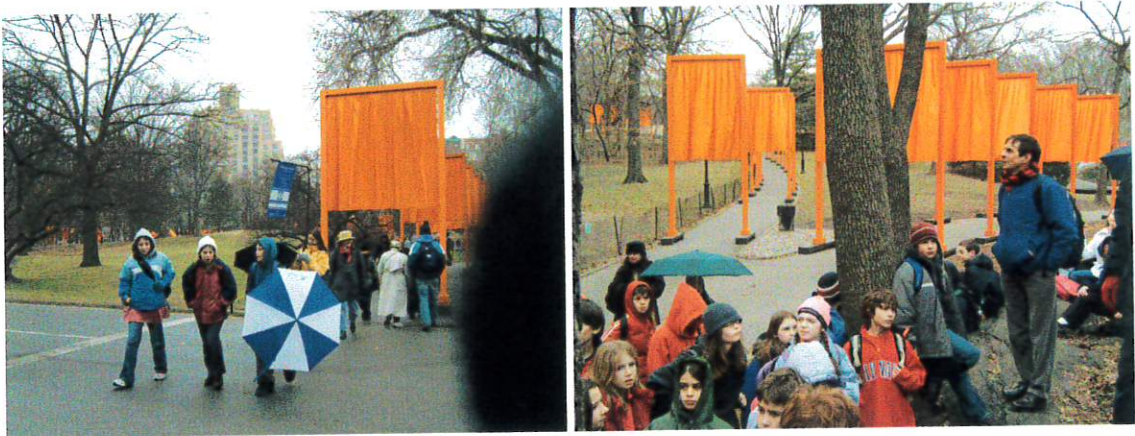
7<sup>th</sup> grade docents with their 2<sup>nd</sup> grader tour groups.



2<sup>nd</sup> Graders working in MAM's art studio.

- After the tour, the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders go to MAM's art studio, and work with a museum art teacher there. In Year 2, the next class of 7<sup>th</sup> graders plan an art activity related to their tour, and, with adult help, become the teachers for the younger students.

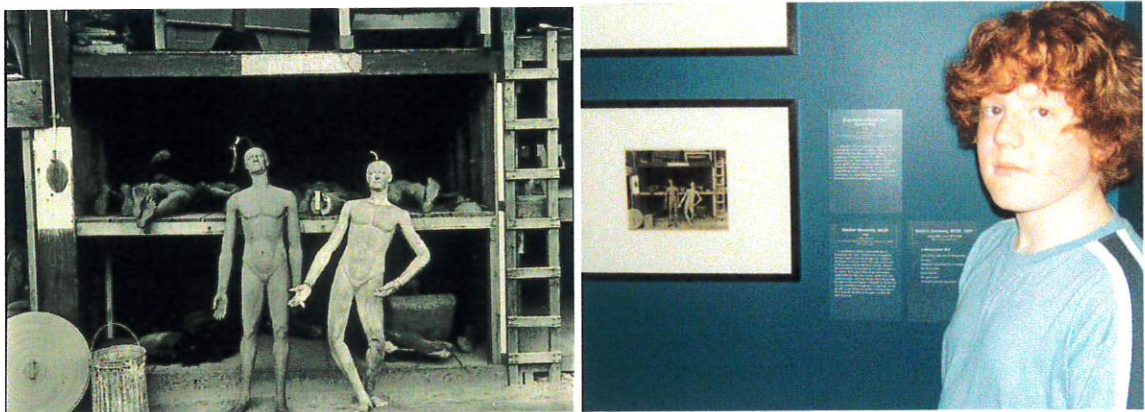
## [February] Field Trip: "The Gates", Central Park, NYC



- The Co-op's art teacher plans a trip for grades 5 -6 to "The Gates," a temporary outdoor exhibit in Central Park, by the artists Christo and Jean-Claude. We take a break from our work at MAM and join them.

## **[March] Weston Wall Labels Displayed at MAM**

- The students' wall labels are displayed alongside the museum curator's labels. They have been given the opportunity to step into the role of a museum professional.



### **A Mannequin's Ball**

**A desperate suitor and an exasperated  
Woman**

**Exhausted mannequins in the background**

**On the top floor**

**Up the ladder**

**The party rages**

**To the beat of a rocking pianist.**

[See Appendix 3, for more interpretive wall labels, p. 153]



## **[March]** Weston Wall Labels Displayed at MAM

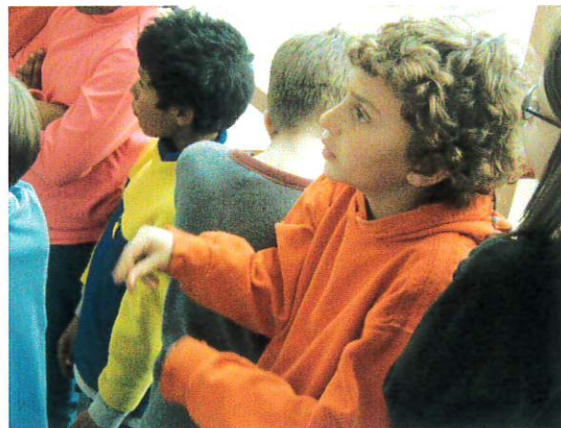
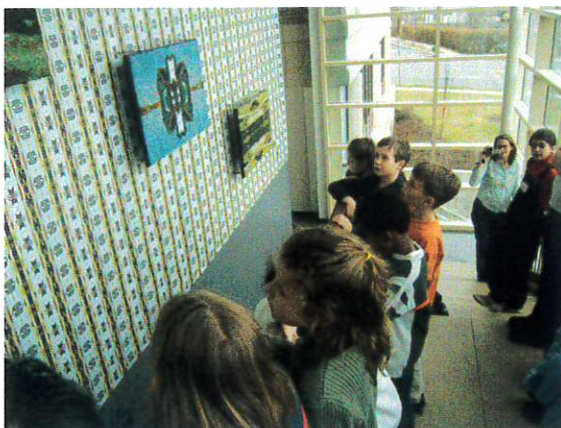
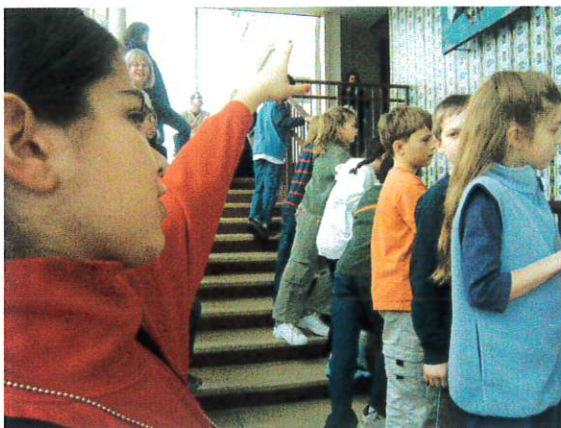


### **Hiding**

**Secrets wait within  
The darkness conceals all sin  
Evasive of light  
They step into shadows  
Roots run deep into the ground  
No one knows why for nothing was found  
Lies rest here  
For they do not fear  
The dread and pain of the night.**

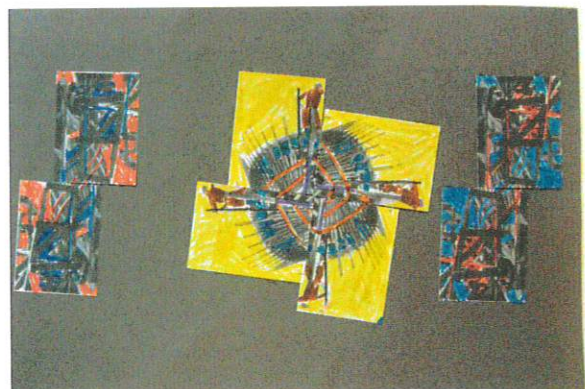
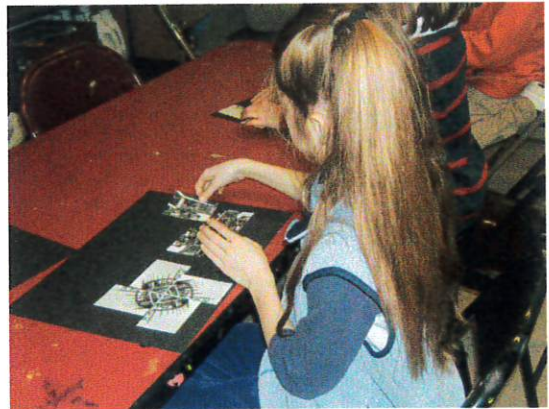
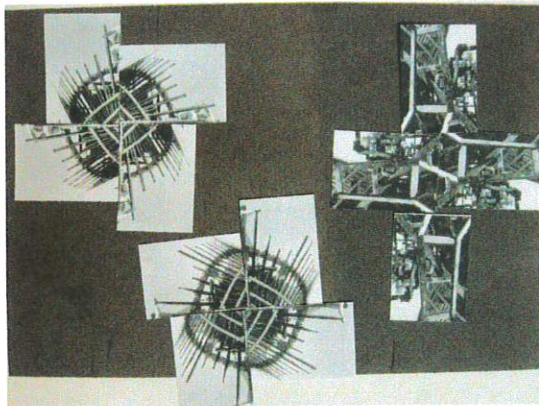
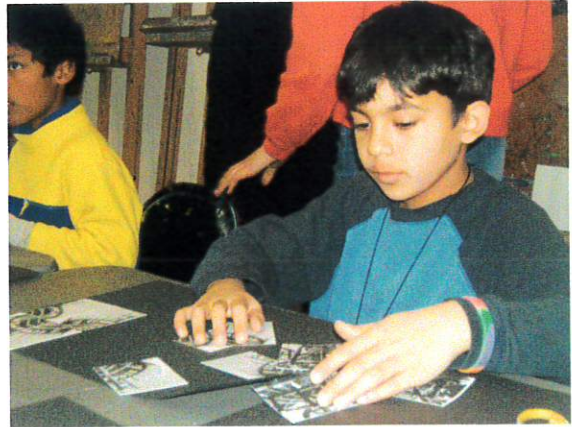
[See Appendix 3, for more interpretive wall labels, p. 153]

**[March] 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Math Curriculum Connection:  
Rotation and Symmetry in Math and Art**



- The Co-op's 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are studying rotation and symmetry in math, and their teacher asks us to plan a visit to the museum related to their study.
- Our lesson plan is focused on symmetry in art, and we use the Hopper and Sperber pieces, as well as a photograph by Edward Weston.
- A 7<sup>th</sup> grader guides the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders through the museum, and engages them in a discussion of the Hopper and Sperber pieces.

**[March] 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Math Curriculum Connection:  
Rotation and Symmetry in Math and Art**



- After our tour in MAM's galleries, we use an Edward Weston photograph to experiment with rotation and symmetry.

## [March] Using Video to Critique Our Work



- Since some students were docents, and some were videographers, we use our video documentation to critique our work. Together, the students come up with the following list of criteria to assess their performance, and compare the list with the video documentation.

### DOCENT TOUR CHECKLIST: HOW TO TELL IF WE DID A GOOD JOB

1. "Look at the body language of the kids."
2. "Was I talking too fast? Too softly?"
3. "Did the kids seem interested?"
4. "Did I talk so much that kids couldn't talk? Did I stumble over words?"
5. "Did I make eye contact?"
6. "Did the partners work well together? Did they interrupt, or let each other talk? Did they take turns? Did one person dominate the discussion?"
7. "Was the camera shaky or steady?"
8. "Did the videographer stay with the group long enough to record their discussion, or did he move around too much?"

## [March] Making Art, Planning Our Final Exhibit



- After completing our docent tours and wall labels at MAM, we return to our own art-making, beginning with outdoor sketches.
- We brainstorm ideas for our final exhibit, and consider many options. The students select a theme of self-portraits, and decide to name their final exhibit “Get Inside Our Heads”
- We look at slides and overheads of a variety of self-portraits by artists who use many different kinds of media and materials.

**[April]** Field Trip: The Nomadic Museum, NYC



- We visit The Nomadic Museum, a temporary structure made from shipping containers, on Manhattan's West Side waterfront.

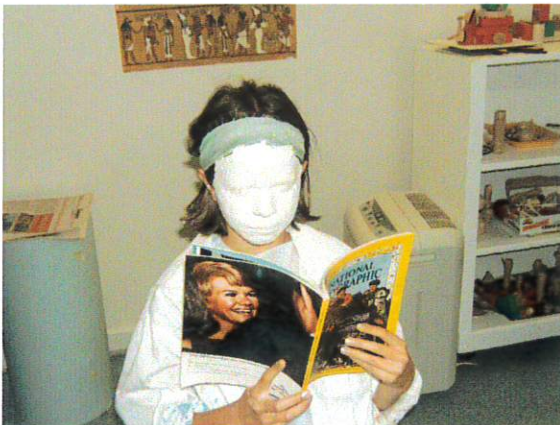
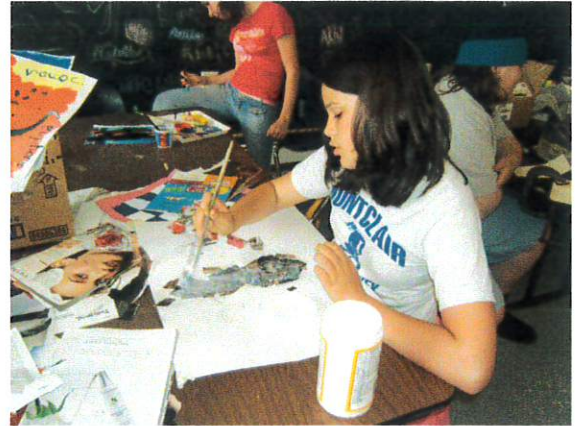


- The Nomadic Museum is designed to house "Ashes and Snow", a traveling photo exhibit by Canadian artist Gregory Colbert.



- The structure is disassembled at the close of the exhibition.

## [May] Making Self-Portraits for “Get Inside Our Heads”



- The 7<sup>th</sup> graders experiment with different materials—wire, wood, paint, plaster, metal, and collage--to come up with self-portraits that reflect how they want to represent themselves.

[See pp. 79-80, for installation views of completed work.]

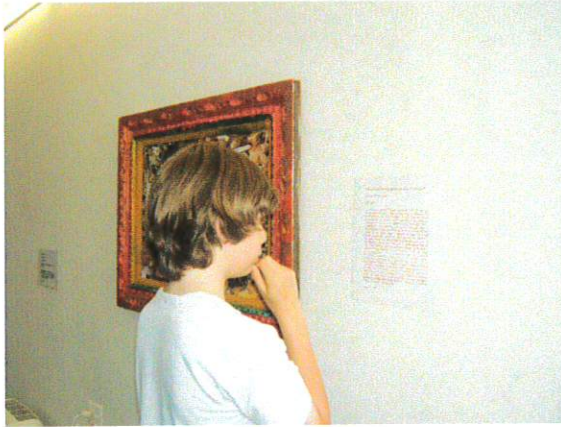
## [June] "Get Inside Our Heads" Opens



- The final exhibit, "Get Inside Our Heads," opens in the Co-op's new storefront art studio, and the 7<sup>th</sup> graders invite students from the younger grades to the opening. They discuss their work and the process of creating the exhibit.



## [June] "Get Inside Our Heads" Opening



- The 7<sup>th</sup> graders include a large drawing area in the exhibit, and invite younger students to add their drawings and comments.

**[June]** "Get Inside Our Heads" Installation Views



**"hidden glamour"**

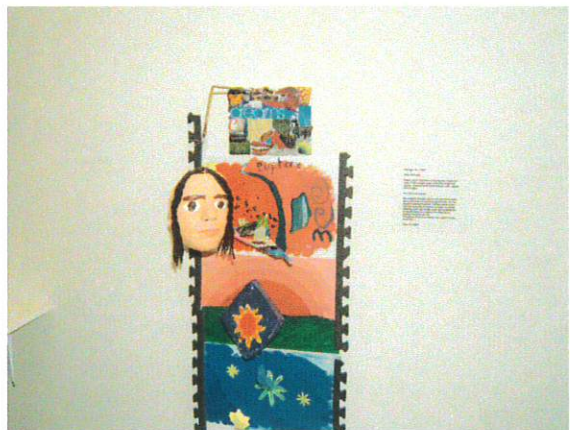
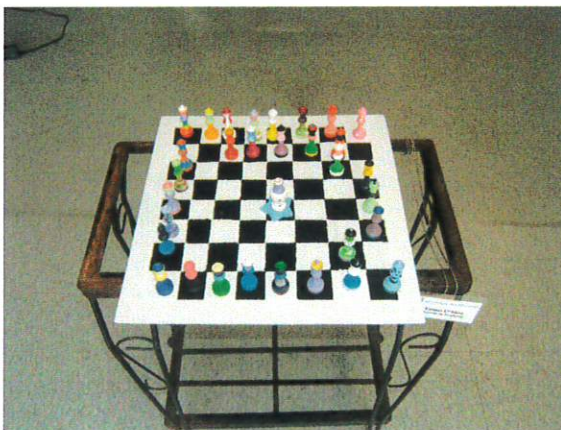
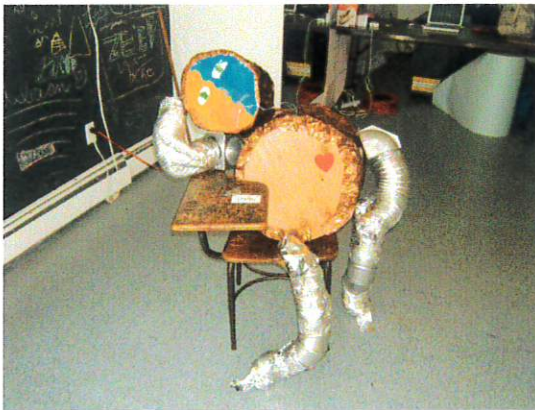
Wall label: Fake ivy, plywood, Vogue magazine, thin wire, mod podge, hot glue, and a little pinch of pixie dust 9x11; 15 x 15

**Tall tower,  
Where one waits  
One that was  
One that has been  
One that is forgotten  
Perhaps lost inside,  
Cobwebs and dust  
Collect beneath her,  
And her smooth skin is interrupted  
By sharp slashes  
And ivy grows around her body, her  
And she stays, and fantasizes about  
What used to be  
Perhaps she has spent years existing,  
Just being  
Not really living  
Just a fabrication of a life  
That keeps her going  
Look closely and you can  
The fair face of a maiden  
She once was,  
A masquerade of glamour  
Left within her hollow being**

**[June]** "Get Inside Our Heads" Installation Views



*Was There Beauty Before Beauty Products?*



## Chapter 5

### Year Two: Creating an Art and Media Curriculum Cycle 2005-2006

In the middle of the school year, the theme teacher and I began to look ahead to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. How could we build on the Museum Studies program? My curatorial specialty had been independent film and artists' video, and I also had a background in black-and-white darkroom photography and media literacy.

Drawing on this experience, we decided to create a Media Studies curriculum for the rising 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

Both art and media are powerful cultural forms through which we express ourselves individually and as a society. The two curricula would be separate, but overlapping. Our 7<sup>th</sup> grade Museum Studies curriculum would continue; the 8<sup>th</sup> graders would move into media, and study the history and aesthetics of different media forms, as well as video production and black-and-white darkroom photography. As they did as 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders the previous year with our trip to the Dia Beacon Museum, the two classes would share some field trips. And since the theme teacher was developing a new social studies curriculum, entitled "The American Experience", for both the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, we saw opportunities to integrate our work. She was planning a train trip to Cincinnati for a week-long, museum-based exploration of American history. We would draw upon the city's

rich cultural resources—including the recently-opened Freedom Center Underground Railroad Museum, the Cincinnati Museum Center, which houses a unique set of exhibits on American history and natural history, the Contemporary Arts Center, the Baseball Museum, and aquarium. The Math teacher and Language Arts teacher (who went as well) also planned lessons and activities related to the trip.

Both the Museum Studies and Media Studies curricula would be rooted in similar questions: How do we interpret and appreciate visual culture? How do visual experience and intellectual understanding come together? How can we understand a work in the perspective of time? For example, we studied the 1918 film, *Birth of a Nation*, D.W. Griffith's racist depiction of the Civil War and Reconstruction, and considered the question: How could a work of art also be a work of propaganda?

Like they did in 7<sup>th</sup> grade with art at the museum, the 8<sup>th</sup> graders would look at, discuss, and make various kinds of media. They would be offered a choice of materials and processes to work in—black-and-white darkroom photography, digital photography, animation, and video production. The emphasis would be on self-direction and self-expression, culminating in a final project that they would present at graduation.

In addition to our collaborative team—myself, the theme teacher, the art teacher, and the technology teacher—the 8<sup>th</sup> graders would have faculty mentors. In a reversal of typical practice, each student would choose the adult with whom he or she would work. For some of the students, it was a chance to reconnect with a teacher they'd had when they were much younger; for those teachers, they were able to see what that child had become as an adolescent. For other students, it was a chance to bounce ideas off a teacher they didn't know so well, but felt comfortable talking with. And for still others, it meant having one last chance to share their ideas with a teacher with whom they already had a close bond. In all cases, the mentor was there to give them feedback and support along the way. **[See Appendix 5, p. 157, for graduation project assignment.]**

Over the summer, two parents converted a dirt-floor storage area in back of the Art Studio into a small darkroom for black-and-white film processing and printing. We put out a call to parents, asking for donations of old film cameras, and we got everything from Polaroids and plastic cameras to 35mm SLR cameras. We bought a few additional digital still and video cameras, and we were ready to go.

During our three-hour Friday morning block, we had time for both group activities and discussions and open studio time during which students worked independently. I wanted them to pursue their own projects and ideas, to

experience blind alleys and false starts, and to work through them. I wanted them to develop what Ron Berger has called “an ethic of excellence” (2003), by creating projects in a workshop setting that arose from hard work, individual effort, and a sense of pride within the group.

## **8<sup>th</sup>-Grade Media Studies Curriculum Overview**

### **Rationale**

Why media as a topic of study? Each of us has experienced a memorable work of art or movie. As art forms and as forms of persuasion, media have a significant impact on people’s lives. They influence the way we spend our time, the way we perceive ourselves and others, and the way we understand the world around us. The media entertain, educate, inform, and, most important, provide channels of communication and self-expression. All media construct images of the world and “represent” the world in a way that is different from our direct experience. In making sense of media images (as with works of art), different people bring their own experience, feelings, and knowledge to the process of interpretation, and construct their own meaning.

Adolescents are obsessed with all kinds of media; it is the water they swim in. At a time when they are highly attuned to their peers, and are trying to define and situate themselves beyond their families, the study of media gives

them the means to connect their personal interests and preoccupations with larger social and cultural issues.

### **Curriculum Overview**

The Media Studies curriculum integrates art, technology, and media literacy, and also extends the class's "theme" or social studies curriculum. This curriculum uses media as texts for student investigation, inquiry, and self expression. In connecting to the upper school theme curriculum, it is designed to help students consider the ways that different media construct our knowledge of the world and of ourselves—both historically and in the present—how it impacts the personal and public decisions we make as members of a democratic society, and how we can use media for citizen action and artistic expression.

We approach our study of our media environment in much the same way we might study the natural environment. We use the skills developed during our year-long museum study by close looking, asking questions, making interpretations, testing them, revising them, and coming up with conclusions that then serve as the basis for interpretation, decision-making, and our own work. We make field trips to museums and other sites. We also explore different kinds of media materials and develop proficiency with related skills—with an emphasis on black-and-white photography and video production—in order to create our own media messages and artistic expressions.



## **Key Questions**

Underlying the eighth graders' study of the media are the following questions:

- How do the media influence and shape our perception of ourselves, others, and the world around us?

## **Sub-questions:**

- How do we "know" about things through the media?
- What values are transmitted through the media and how?
- Whose interests do the media serve?
- How do media affect us and how can we use media?

## **Objectives**

At the completion of this study, students will be able to:

### Knowledge

- describe the construction of specific media representations and explain how the process of media construction reproduces the world differently from our direct experience of it
- demonstrate understanding of the history of media including photography and film, radio, television, and digital forms including the internet

## Skills

- operate media technology and use materials to create media representations
- observe and make critical judgments about a variety of media messages
- show the different uses of codes and conventions—e.g., close-up vs. wide shot, tracking shot vs. stationary camera, etc.

## Attitudes and values

- demonstrate understanding of how a particular point of view or perspective is represented within a media message
- demonstrate understanding of how economic forces shape media messages

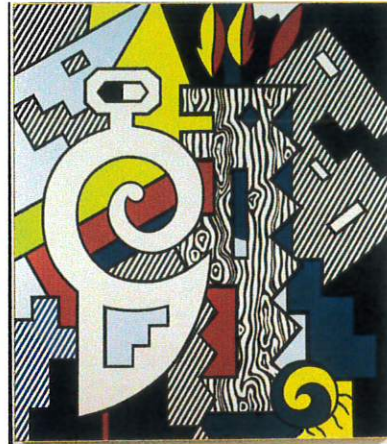
**ILLUSTRATED CHRONOLOGY**  
**YEAR 2**  
**SEPTEMBER 2005- JUNE 2006**

**A Note to the Reader**

**This chronology of Year Two documents the activities and experiences of both the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders as they engaged in their respective Museum Studies and Media Studies curricula. It weaves together the lessons and trips that the two groups shared, and shows how, although the approach and overall structure remained the same, some things changed, depending on student interests and needs, and what exhibitions were on view at the Montclair Art Museum and elsewhere.**

## [September] 7<sup>TH</sup> Graders Begin Their Museum Study

- We begin at school by previewing the exhibition, “Roy Lichtenstein: American Indian Encounters”, which includes works inspired by Native American imagery by the well-known Pop artist.



## [September] 8<sup>TH</sup> Graders Begin Their Media Study

- We begin with a recollection. Each student recalls a movie or other media experience that has affected them in some way, and shares it. We make a list of our memorable media experiences, and the feelings they evoke.
- I share one of my most memorable movie experiences, François Truffaut's 1966 movie, *Fahrenheit 451*, by showing them the opening sequence from the film. We look at it several times and try to decipher its meaning.



*Fahrenheit 451* is set in a future police state in which books are banned, and citizens get all their information from state-controlled TV. The main character is a "fireman", whose job it is to seek out and burn all books, and arrest anyone who reads or owns books. An underground group is working to keep reading and books alive. One day, the fireman becomes curious, and starts reading the books he's found, and begins to doubt his role. The film provides a starting point for our discussion of media. We spend the next weeks studying and discussing the film's formal elements and its themes.

### Coming Up With Our Own Definition of Media

- At the end of our discussion, we come up with several definitions of media, and narrow them down to the one below. This becomes our a working definition and a reference point that we return to throughout the year, as we further explore different kinds of media and how they shape our experience.

**"Media is the power to affect your opinion through someone else's interpretation or point of view."**

--The 8<sup>th</sup> graders

[See Appendix 4, p. 156, for lesson plan.]

[September] “The American Experience”  
7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Graders Travel to Cincinnati



- The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders travel by train to Cincinnati as part of their study of American history. We visit several museums there during the five-day trip—the Contemporary Arts Center, the Cincinnati Museum Center, two days at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, as well as the Baseball Museum and aquarium.



Right: Slave pen at the Underground Railroad Freedom Center. Students write in journals and debrief in the evening.

## [September] 7<sup>th</sup> Graders Make Their First Visit to MAM

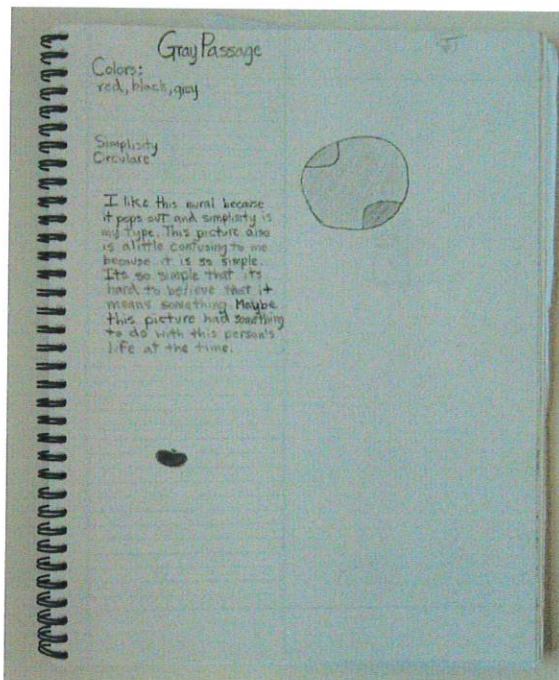
- We make our first visit to MAM and begin in the museum's 20<sup>th</sup> century gallery. We observe and discuss "*Trap*," a work by contemporary artist Whitfield Lovell. I choose Lovell's work as a way to build on our experience at the Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, and to consider the questions: Where do artists get their inspiration from? How do they express their ideas and feelings through their art? How do we bring our individual experience and prior knowledge to a work of art? At first, the students think the metal pieces are slave shackles. The more we look at *Trap*, the more questions and speculations we come up with. It turns out the metal shackle is an animal trap. We consider why Lovell might make the analogy to an animal trap.



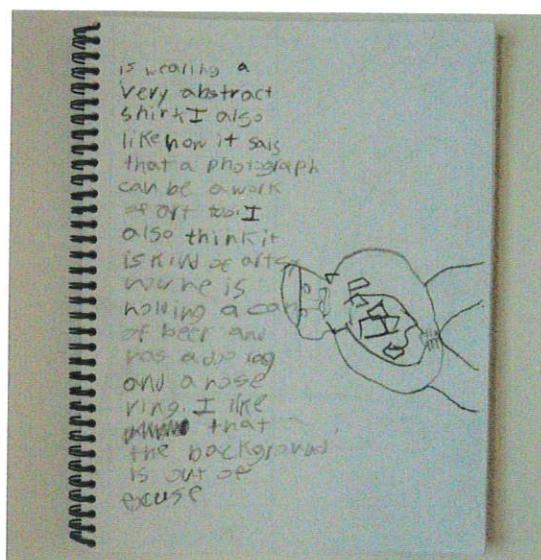
Whitfield Lovell, *Trap* (2000)

## [September] 7<sup>th</sup> Graders Make Their First Visit to MAM (continued)

- Students are then given time to begin their artist's sketchbook. They choose art works they are interested in, make sketches and notes. We reconvene to share observations and work.



"I like this mural because it pops out and simplicity is my type. This picture also is a little confusing to me because it is so simple. It's so simple that it's hard to believe that it means something. Maybe this picture had something to do with this person's life at the time."

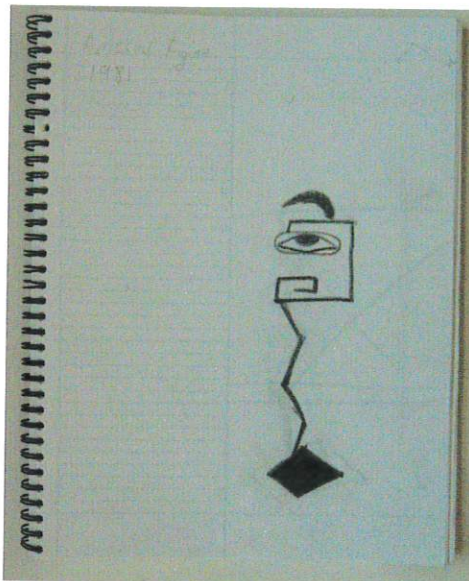


"is wearing a very abstract shirt. I also like how it says that a photograph can be a work of art. I also think it is kind of artsy how he is holding a can of beer and has a do-rag and a nose ring. I like that the background is out of focus."



## [October] 7<sup>th</sup> Graders: “Roy Lichtenstein: American Indian Encounters” Opens at MAM

- MAM’s Director of Education has an opening in his schedule for the museum’s Arcade Gallery, which is where MAM exhibits student work. He invites the students to exhibit there. The only requirements are that the work must fit into a 20 x 24-inch frame, and must be completed by late November. We discuss whether we can meet the deadline. The students decide they can, and get to work.

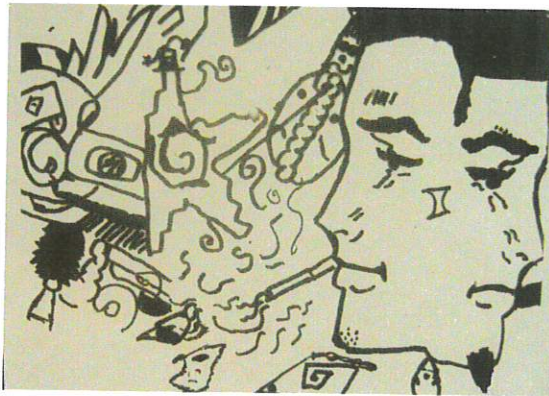


- We visit the exhibition and talk about Lichtenstein’s work and the exhibit. We observe, sketch, and take notes.
- In this way, we begin the year with a more teacher-directed approach, and a specific assignment, that allows the students to step into the world of a professional museum. Later in the year, we take a different approach to instruction: Their work is self-directed, based on their explorations of materials, and their interests, and our studio time is more open-ended.

## [October] 7<sup>th</sup> Graders Begin Their Lichtenstein Projects



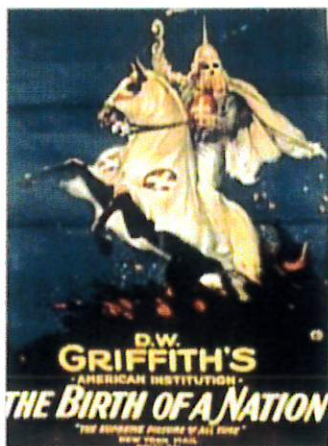
- Back at school, the students develop their responses to Lichtenstein's work by using the same working method as the artist. They select and juxtapose images and create a series of visual drafts. They use these studies to come up with a composition, which they transfer to acetate, and, using an overhead projector, project onto canvas board.



- While all the students work on the same project, there is variation in the way each student comes up with their own composition and color palette based on their sensibility and way of working.

[See Appendix 9, p. 199, for more illustrations of students' Lichtenstein drafts.]

## [November] Social Studies Connection: *The Birth of a Nation*



A perniciously racist film, D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) was also the most technically advanced movie of its time. With its sophisticated editing techniques and sweeping narrative set in the Reconstruction era, *Birth of a Nation* was the first "blockbuster". Because of its hateful stereotypes and its sympathetic portrayal of the Ku Klux Klan, rioting occurred in Los Angeles and other cities. The newly formed National Association for the Advancement of Colored People campaigned against its continued distribution. The film prompts the question: How can a work of art also be propaganda?

- The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders are studying the Civil War and have already looked at *Glory*, a film about the famous all-black, Union Army unit. As an extension of this study, we look at segments of *The Birth of a Nation*. As we view the movie, I ask them to think about how they can tell what's happening in the story even though it's a silent film. I ask them to raise their hand when they see something they think is mocking or insulting.
- We share our observations and questions as a group, and make a Venn diagram comparing *Glory* and *Birth of a Nation*. What story is each film telling? What is each film saying about blacks? What techniques do they use?
- We break into groups and each group focuses on one element of the film—shots, editing, titles, sound, etc. We share with the whole group.

"The titles replace dialogue; the shots stay on the titles for awhile"

"There should be serious music, since there are people dying at every moment."

"They used the close-up shots to show something important."

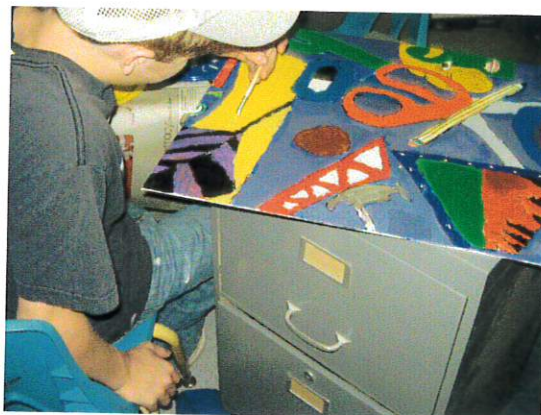
"There is a weird perspective on the Confederate side, saying it was so heroic; the director probably favored that side, trying to show good side to Confederacy."

- We consider the questions: "Whose experience does Griffith represent in the film? Whose point of view? What evidence can you find to support your response?" I read aloud from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*. We compare his experience with Griffith's depiction.
- We make a timeline, and discuss: "Why would D.W. Griffith make such a film 50 years after the Civil War?"

## [November] 7<sup>th</sup> Graders: Becoming Artists



- The 7<sup>th</sup> graders use acrylic paint, and experiment with different combinations of color and texture.



- They continue working on their paintings and finish them in time for the exhibition deadline.

## [November] Installing the Exhibit in MAM's Arcade Gallery



- At the museum, MAM's director of education explains how museum curators make choices about where to place art work in the gallery, and the nuts-and-bolts of how the museum installs exhibits. We participate in the installation of our exhibit.



- MAM's director of education and I decide to exhibit the drawings in addition to the finished paintings, in order to illustrate the student's process.
- Back at school, we brainstorm ideas for titles for our show. The students decide on the title, "Lichtenstein Through Our Eyes," to reflect their interpretations of the artist's work. They come up with titles for their paintings, and write wall labels describing their artistic process.

[See Appendix 9, pp. 210-221, 240, 252 for more illustrations of finished paintings.]

[December] "Lichtenstein Through Our Eyes" Opens at MAM



At the opening, one student interviews other students about their work.

## [October - December] 8<sup>th</sup> Graders Study Early Cinema and Photography

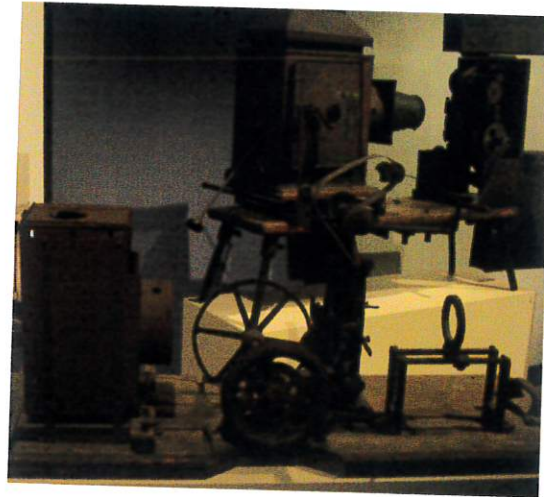
- We look at examples of the earliest movies—by the Lumières and Méliès brothers, and by Thomas Edison. Many of them use simple principles of stop-frame animation, and are called “trick films”.
- We learn darkroom basics, beginning with photograms, and about how light and chemicals interact to create images. [In Science, several students make pinhole cameras as part of their study of light.]



- As the semester progresses, we experiment with composition using Polaroid cameras. [Each student gets a small frame the size of a Polaroid picture, and practices composing pictures; they each get 3 shots.]
- We learn about depth of field and shutter speed by using manual cameras. We learn basic printing techniques.
- We make flipbooks to understand the concepts behind how a still image becomes a moving image. We learn about the relationship between the still and moving image in the work of Eadward Muybridge.
- Students make simple animations.

## [January] Field Trip: American Museum of the Moving Image

- Both the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> eighth grades visit the American Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria, NY. For the 8<sup>th</sup> graders, it's an opportunity to learn more about the things we've been studying at school, such as early cinema, animation, and how the moving image works. For the 7<sup>th</sup> graders, it's a chance to compare this museum to the others we've visited.



"This museum is more hands-on. The MAM is just views." --7<sup>th</sup> grader



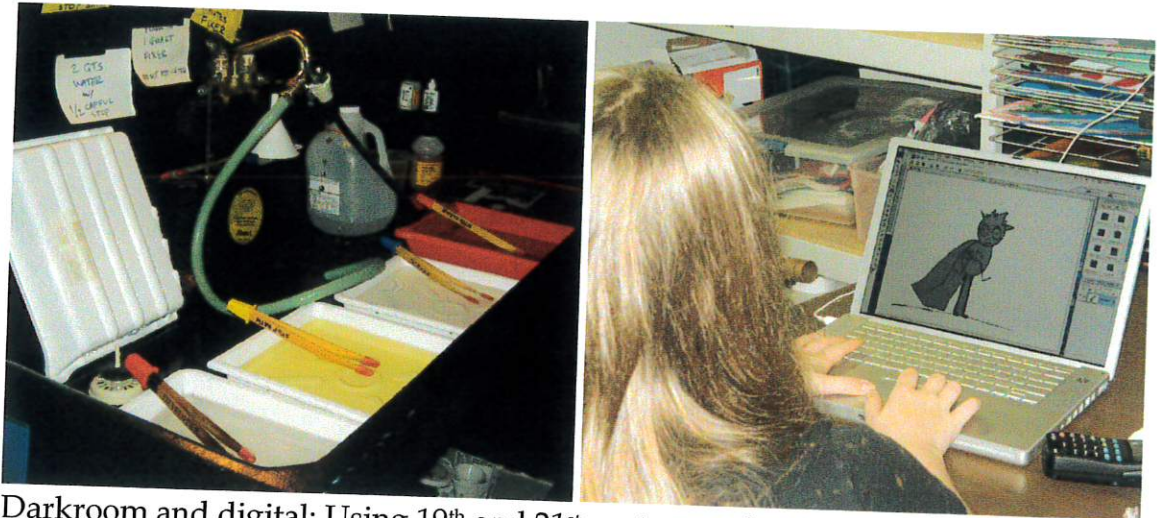
"I never knew there were so many steps involved in making movies."  
---7<sup>th</sup> grader

"I think the *TV Lounge* is cool because the place in which you view the art is also art." --8<sup>th</sup> grader



## [February] 8<sup>th</sup> Graders Begin Their Media Projects

- The 8th graders begin working on ideas for their final graduation projects. Some choose to work in black-and-white darkroom photography, others in digital still photography, documentary, and animation.



Darkroom and digital: Using 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies

- Some ideas for media projects include:

“Black-and-white photos of everyday things that are there in front of you, but you don’t always see.”

A stop-frame animation: “Dance and movement—what can be dance? Everyday movements that can become a dance.”

“A series of photographs, a self-portrait, but not of me; photos of the things and people who define who I am.”

A “drawing animation”.

“A documentary about the Co-op.”

“A claymation video with the theme of the “fallen angel.”

“A series of black-and-white candid portraits of classmates.”

[See pp. 109, 123-129 for photographs of selected final projects.



[February] 7<sup>th</sup> Graders: Open Studio Time



## [February-March] 7<sup>th</sup> Graders: Writing Interpretive Wall Labels

- We visit MAM while the Willie Cole exhibit is being installed
- We brainstorm strategies for writing a wall label. We come up with the following list:
  1. "Look at art work."
  2. "Describe it."
  3. "Write down words—what feelings, memories, thoughts come to mind?"
  4. "Make a list of questions about it."
  5. "Research it."
  6. "Wonder about it—what's it made of?"
  7. "Write a poem."
  8. "Write a very short story."
- Each student chooses the Cole art work they want to write their label about
- Back at school, we write first drafts; share them with our classmates; make revisions.
- March 6: Willie Cole exhibit opens



Installation view of "Anxious Objects: Willie Cole's Favorite Brands" at MAM

[See Appendix 6, pp. 179-183, for Wall Label Lesson Plans and Notes.]

## [March] 7<sup>th</sup> Graders: Interpretive Wall Labels

- Students meet with director of education to present their drafts and get feedback, going through the same process professionals do.
- Students make revisions and submit final drafts.
- Printed wall labels are installed in Willie Cole exhibit gallery.



Left: Museum wall label with student label below. Right: Willie Cole, *Rosa Parks*

Cole made several mask-like pieces dedicated to strong black women in history, including Harriet Tubman and Joanne Chesimard. The masks were based on the African *Gela* mask (shown above), whose distinctive feature is facial ferocity.

### Thoughts

Evil red eyes so shiny and devilish  
Edges black and red  
Teeth so very sharp  
Bright colored circular face  
Mysteriously lonely.

[See Appendix 7, pp. 184-188, for additional student labels.]

## [March] 7<sup>th</sup> Graders: Interpretive Wall Labels



Willie Cole, *Sole Protector*

### Household Statue

Hello. I am here. Do you see me? I'm glancing right at you.

Yes, you.

I am not your ordinary household "perfect David" statue.

I am superior. Do you love me? Do you want me?

I am an exotic dragon surrounded by a multi-colored arch of genie shoes.

Numerous shoes. So many of them. What do you see in them?

This one to my right is orange, and this one above me is crimson.

And look at that one, to my left, electric blue. Look at my golden crown.

Doesn't it bring out my lovely eyes? And how can I forget about my pudgy jet-black body. Do you see these magnificent splashes of gold winding up my torso?

I love gold. I want gold. I'm living my life like it's golden.....golden.

[See Appendix 7, pp. 184-188, for additional student labels.]

## [March] Willie Cole: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies Connection

- Slavery is a prominent theme in Willie Coles' work, and has been part of the "American Experience" social studies curriculum.



Willie Cole, *House and Field*

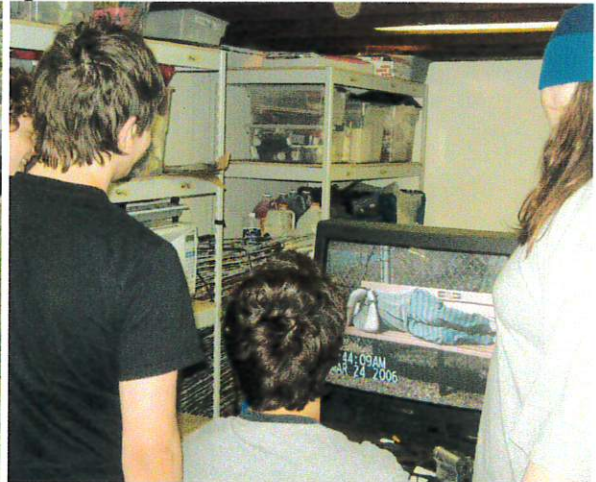
- During one of our visits to the Cole exhibit, we consider the possible meanings of Willie Cole's sculpture, *House and Field*. The 7<sup>th</sup> graders are unfamiliar with yard ornaments, and their racist history. I ask them to start by sharing their observations and questions about the sculpture. What is the significance of the lantern one figure is holding? What about the knife and the nails protruding from other figure's body? Why does he wear a grass skirt? Why does Cole juxtapose the two? The students consider many possibilities and draw inferences from what they see. We conclude by reading the wall label and revising our initial interpretations.

[See Appendix 6, pp. 160-163, for teacher notes on our discussion.]

**[March] 8<sup>th</sup> Graders: Works in Progress**



Hand-tinting black-and-white photographs



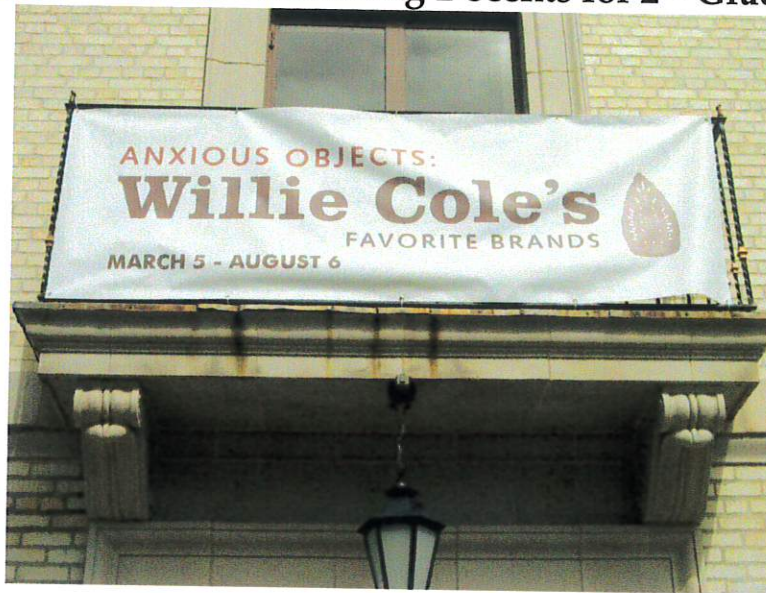
Making a documentary about fellow classmates and their projects.



*The Great McMullen Heist*, a claymation inspired by heist movies, in which the student and his classmates become characters in the plot. [See photos, p. 127]



## [March 2006] 7<sup>th</sup> Graders: Becoming Docents for 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders



- We begin planning our docent tours for the Co-op's 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. Thinking about what might interest second graders, and how to engage them, we brainstorm ideas for the tour and follow-up art activity. Then, we go to the gallery, and students work in pairs to plan their tours. Students use "docent tour planner" sheets to create their tour, and make notes about what information they want to share about Willie Cole and his work. They draw a map of their tour route through the gallery.
- We talk about what makes a good docent. Students make a list of qualities:

### The Seventh Graders' Guide to a Good Docent

1. "Know what you're saying. Have information ready."
  2. "Speak clearly and loudly."
  3. "Make sure kids don't touch the art work."
  4. "Make sure they listen---and make it fun."
  5. "Don't talk like a boring docent...include them...ask questions."
  6. "Don't let them wander off."
  7. "Have fun!"
- The following week, we practice our tours on camera, play back the video, and give one another suggestions and constructive feedback.

[See Docent Tour Planner and Notes, in Appendix 6, pp. 164-173.]

## [March 31] 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Docent Tour Day at MAM

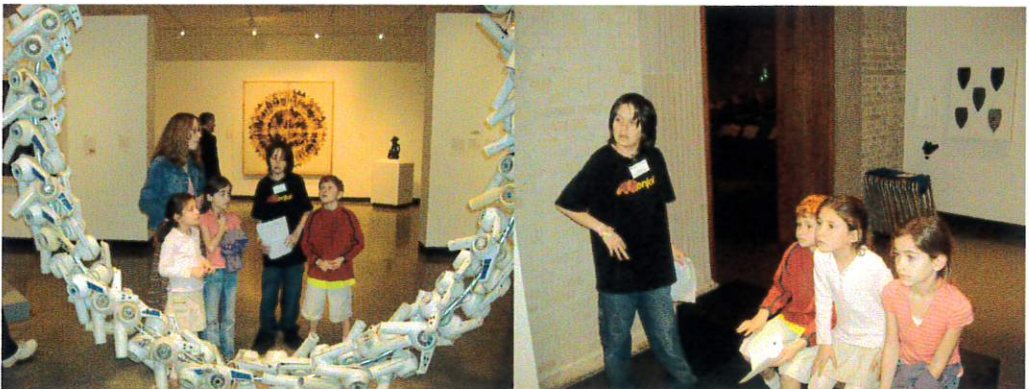
- We gather in Leir Hall for an introduction to our tour of the Willie Cole exhibit.



- We break into groups and the second graders go upstairs to the exhibit with their seventh-grade docents.

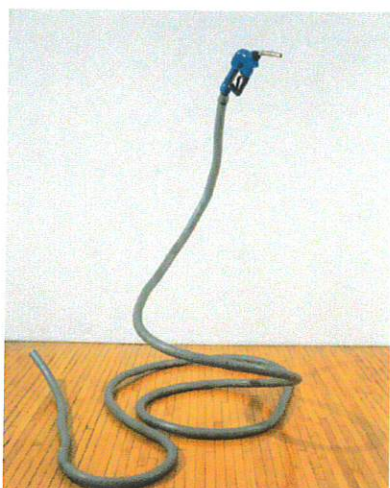


[March 31] 7<sup>th</sup> Graders: Docent Tour Day at MAM



## [March 31] Docent Tour Day at MAM: In the Art Studio

- The seventh graders take the second graders to the museum's art studio, where (inspired by Willie Cole) they showed them how to make prints using paint and the soles of shoes.



- As we are leaving, the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders want to return to the gallery for one last look at Willie Cole's art. We gather as a group and talk about the show. Looking at *Gas Snake with Blue Nozzle* (left), a second grader wonders: "How did he [Cole] get the nozzle to stand up?" We discuss the possibilities, and how we might find the answer.

## [April] 7<sup>th</sup> Graders: Docent Tour Debrief



- Back at school the following week, we do a debrief on their experience as docents for the second graders. We talk about what we did to prepare that was most helpful, and what things surprised them.

A sampling of their comments:

“It was easier than I thought it would be. It was fun.”

“The good thing was that they had time to *look* at what *they* wanted to see. They could see what they wanted.”

**Q: Were there any surprises?”**

“How interested they were in the art.”

“The questions and answers they had.”

“They kept wanting to see more and to ask more questions and to talk about the work.”

“They treated me like a teacher, they respected me as a teacher. They got used to me and I got used to them and they were comfortable.”

[See Appendix 6, pp. 174-178, for complete transcript.]

[April - May] 8<sup>th</sup> Graders: Works in Progress



*"Heaven and Hell":* A claymation exploring the theme of the fallen angel.



A stop-frame animation about everyday movements that can become a dance.

## [April – May] 7<sup>th</sup> Graders: Exploring Their Interests

- The students have looked at and engaged deeply with a lot of art work over the course of the school year. In April, both the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades return to the Dia Beacon Museum in Beacon, NY, where they'd visited previously as 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders. They wanted to go back.
- The balance of the year is devoted to making art in preparation for a culminating art exhibit at the Co-op. Unlike the more structured painting project inspired by MAM's Lichtenstein exhibit, students are given open studio time to work with materials of their choosing. Some ask permission to work during lunchtime in addition to their regular studio time.



## [Spring] Exploring Their Interests, Finding Their Own Solutions

- As the students are given time to develop their work further, they expand their explorations, some returning to Pop art—inspired by Lichtenstein and Warhol—others making Conceptually-based works inspired by last fall’s visit to Cincinnati’s Contemporary Arts Center, others interested in the kinds of unconventional sculptural materials they saw at the Dia Beacon, and still others continuing to mine the art of Willie Cole for further inspiration.





[May] Exploring Their Interests, Finding Their Own Solutions



## [April – June] Exploring Their Interests: Jackson Pollock

- The students want to make their own Jackson Pollock-style painting. Over several weeks, they discover what that entails. They explore color, gesture, and the physics of applying paint to canvas. They are surprised at how much paint is required, and what happens to the surface of the canvas as layer upon layer of paint is added.



*Splatter (in progress)*

## [June 14, 2006] 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Final Exhibit: Bringing It All Together

- The 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Art Exhibit opens, and the students invite the entire school to visit. Drawing on their experiences as docents, teachers, and artists, they lead the younger students and their teachers through their exhibit, answer questions, and discuss their work. They have another opportunity to share their work publicly, as they had done in December with their exhibit at MAM.



**[June 14, 2006] 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Final Exhibit: Bringing It All Together**



**[June 14, 2006] 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Final Exhibit: Bringing It All Together**

**Art Meets Physics**

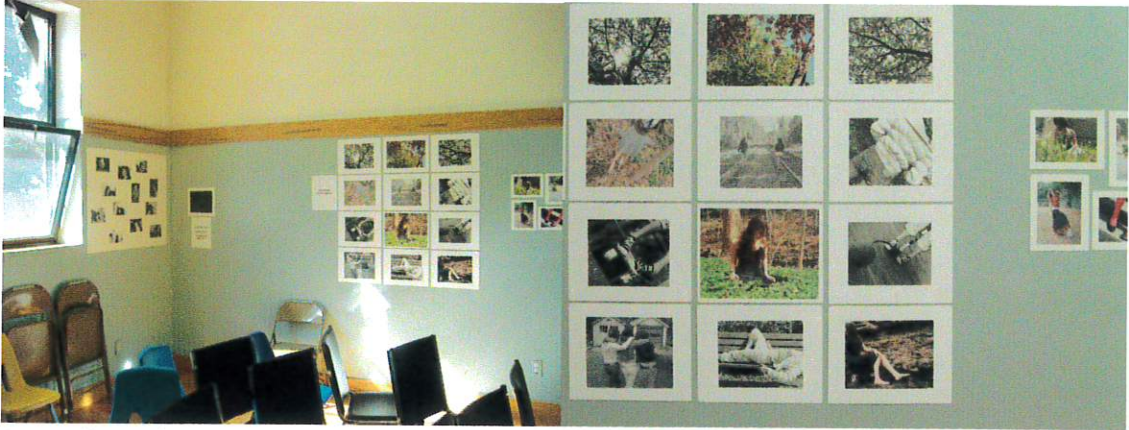
At the opening, a student demonstrates *Wild Fire*, his performance installation piece inspired by the large-scale cause-and-effect work, *The Way Things Go*, by the contemporary Swiss artist team, Fishli and Weiss. We had seen this piece at the Contemporary Arts Center in September during our trip to Cincinnati, and one student decided to create his own version.

[See Appendix 9, pp. 248-257, for student portfolio.]



## [June 15, 2006] 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Media Graduation Projects

- The 8<sup>th</sup> graders present their media projects at graduation.



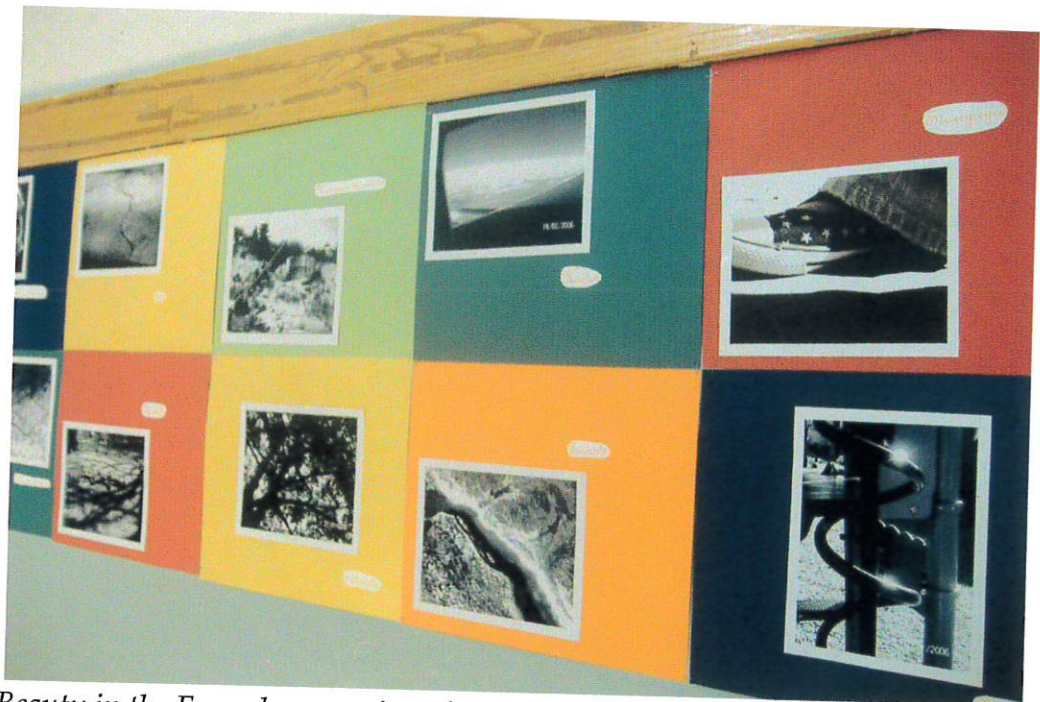
Installation view



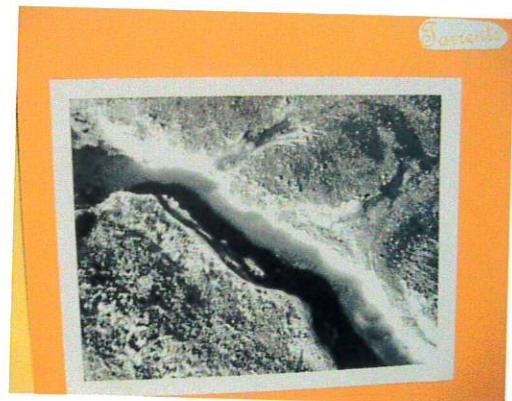
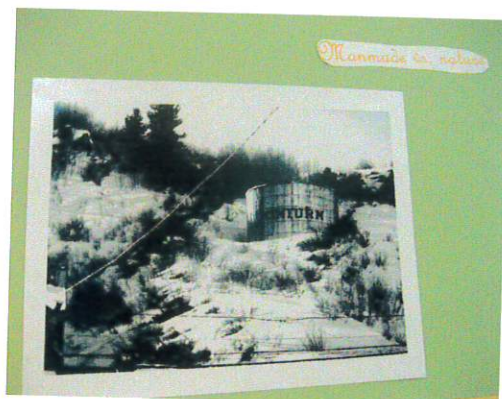
*Turn Around and Smile*, a series of candid of 8<sup>th</sup> graders (gelatin silver prints)

- At the beginning of the second semester, the 8<sup>th</sup> graders were given this assignment: You are graduating from the Co-op. What kind of statement do you want to make? What medium will you choose? How will you present it? What will your project say about the kind of learner you've become at the Co-op?

## [June 15, 2006] 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Media Graduation Projects



*Beauty in the Everyday, a series of digital photographs.*



[June 15, 2006] 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Media Graduation Projects



Photograms series using everyday objects



*10 Ways to Look at a Horse*, inspired by the Wallace Stevens poem, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird", gelatin silver prints.



## [June 15, 2006] 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Media Graduation Projects



*Me in a Photographic Nutshell, digital and gelatin silver prints*

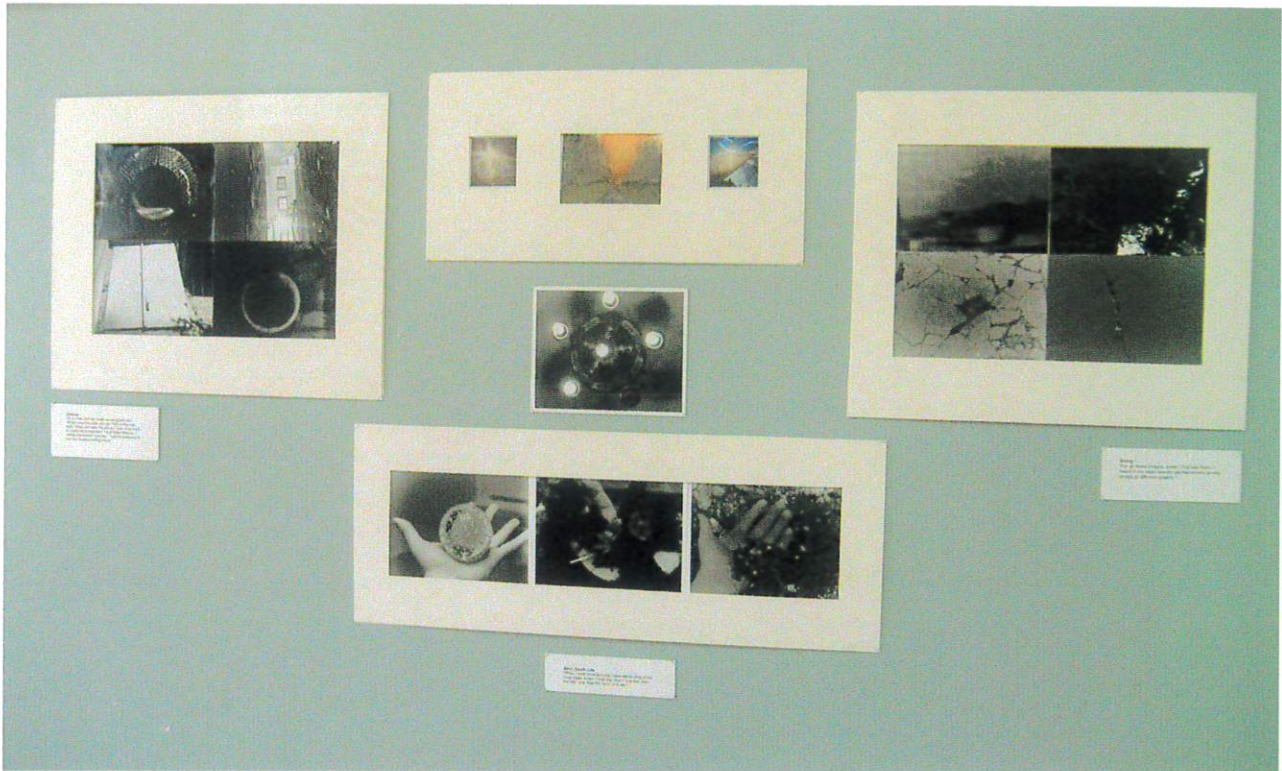
[June 15, 2006] 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Media Graduation Projects



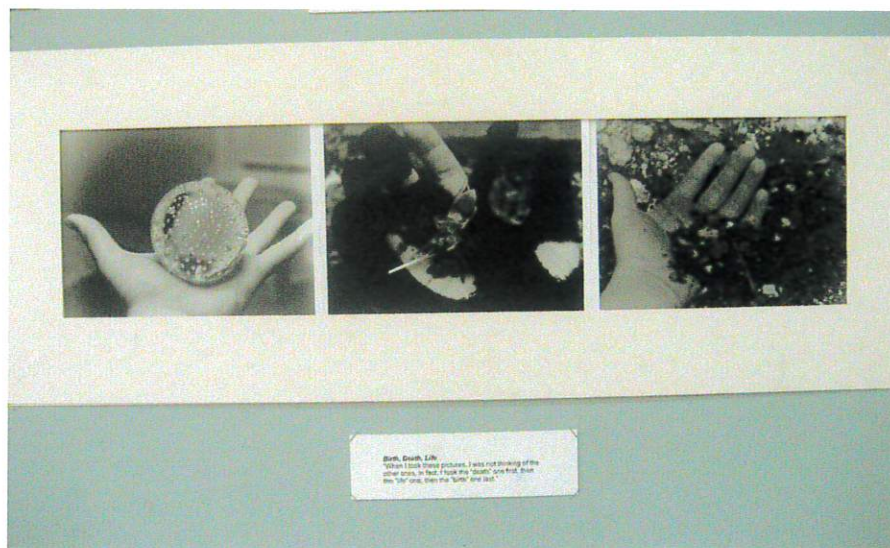
A set and characters from video, *The Great McMullen Heist*

Each of the characters (above) is modeled after a different 8<sup>th</sup> grade boy. The artist's character (on far left, in black suit), has two interchangeable heads—one for the hero, the other for his alter-ego.

## [June 15, 2006] 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Media Graduation Projects



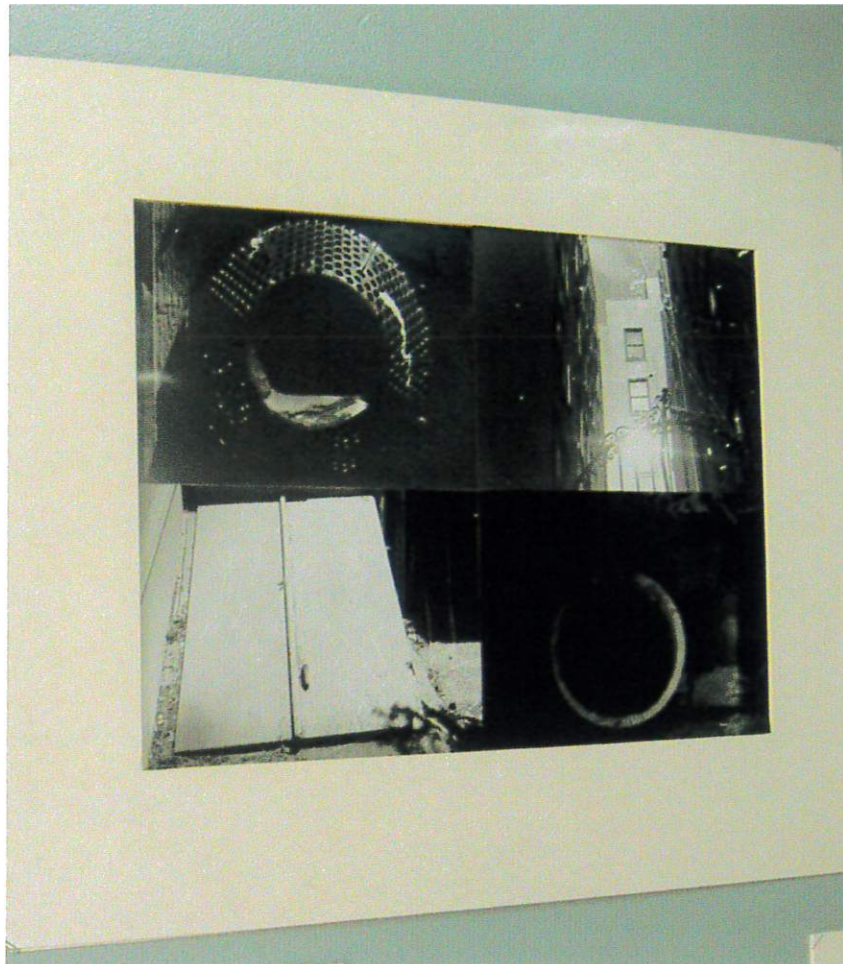
Series of gelatin silver prints, hand-tinted, and Polaroid prints



### *Birth, Death, Life*

Caption: "When I took these pictures, I was not thinking of the other ones, in fact, I took the "death" one first, then the "life" one, then the "birth" one last."

**[June 15, 2006] 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Media Graduation Projects**



*Gateway*

Caption: "All of these pictures made me ask questions, where does this cellar door go, why is this hole here, when did I take this picture? How come there is a gate into a dead end? For all these reasons I named this group of pictures "Gateway". They are gateways into our own question-asking nature."

## Chapter 6

### Real Work: Outcomes and Reflections

By becoming artists, docents, and curators, and engaging in real experiences with professionals in the community, the Co-op's emerging adolescents stepped into adult roles, and undertook real tasks. This is one kind of "real work" referred to in the title of this independent study. However, there is another kind of learning, that is, in the words of Greene, "learning stimulated by the desire to explore, to find out, to go in search" (2001, p. 47). This is the more profound kind of "real work," which adolescents must undertake in order to grow into themselves--to reach beyond what is familiar and to move out into the real world, and the world of abstract thought. Sparked by their own individual searches and rooted in the affective realm, Greene calls this the "learning that goes beyond teaching—the only significant learning, I believe. It is self-initiated, at some point, permeated by wonder, studded by moments of questioning, always with the sense that there is something out there, something worthwhile beyond" (p. 47).

In June 2006, at the end of the two-year museum and media studies cycle, the first eighth-grade class graduated. (Also in the Spring of 2006, the school received a foundation grant to document the partnership.) In reflecting on my own learning, I encounter a problem that mirrors, in a way, some of the problems the children faced. I was so much in the middle of the curriculum that

we adults and students had co-constructed, that it's very hard even two years later to step back and assess its overall impact.

What the seventh and eighth graders had to deal with was how to translate personal responses and big ideas into expressive forms, and how to step into adult roles. They had to struggle with using the materials and experiences they knew, and ones that were unfamiliar. Sometimes the art materials they chose just couldn't quite express the idea they had envisioned. Then, they had to struggle some more. Or sometimes, they didn't have a clear idea or vision, but one emerged as they worked with the materials. This is when the real learning happened. Were they going to compromise an idea? Were they going to give up and start over? Could they adapt the idea, the technology, or the material? What did they have to learn in order to express their vision? This deep engagement in the artistic process—being able to persist until they got their projects to a place that felt just right—fueled growth, and that was their great accomplishment.

Patricia Carini (2001), a founder of the Prospect School who developed with others the practice of descriptive inquiry, speaks of how our works—our stories, dreams, poems, music, art, dance, writing, cooking, constructions, etc.—make us “expressibly accessible” to ourselves and to one another.

Indeed, it is through each other and each other's works that we leap beyond the confines of our own time, place, culture, self, and are expanded imaginatively, spiritually—exponentially. *This is important about us: that we have selves, that we are active in the pursuit of meaning and value,*

*that in that pursuit we are each uniquely situated, yet understandable to each other.* [italics in original] The recognition of that self in others is, for me, the cornerstone of educating, and is what distinguishes educating from training and schooling (p. 167).

The students' work, then, was the product of their thinking and feeling, of the impulse to try things out, to make things, and to be open-minded about their own work and that of others. The creative process was not just about making art; rather it was a vehicle for learning and understanding itself, for the process of becoming who they are, and for moving toward developing their ability to see the humanity in others.

#### **Documentation as Assessment**

How then, can we, in Carini's words, "value the immeasurable"? (2001, p. 165). How can we see the child in the work? How can we assess the growth of each student by using the child as the starting point, rather than imposing external standards, such as rubrics, or other measurements? In planning the Museum Studies curriculum, I wrote the following about assessment: "A series of alternative assessments will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program: Evidence of students' progress will be collected through portfolio review of art work and written work; students will keep a journal of reflections, to be used as the basis of their self-assessment; they will make presentations and create a final exhibit. Teachers will prepare progress reports."

While we did do these things, what was most vital on hindsight was the documentation, in the form of photographs, videotapes, and the extensive notes I took throughout the process. Drawing on my experiences with Prospect's descriptive inquiry, I wanted to apply a phenomenological lens to my observations, and use documentation as the basis of assessment. I wanted to develop further my ability to describe without judgment. I was particularly interested in documenting the sketches, scribbles, and notes—to see, for example, which artists and art works they were drawn to and why—and what evidence could be found in the work of how each child went about making it. This documentation provided not only a description of the context in which we were working, but also helped me to see patterns that emerged over time. As one student put it: "simplicity is my style", and, in his work, there was evidence of that.

Each week, I wrote about what we had done, what I and the other teachers observed, what issues came up and what questions were raised, about each student, about my role as a teacher, and what I might want to do differently. It was in this context that the central question emerged for me about teacher-directed vs. student-directed work. For example, at the end of year one, I wrote that I wanted to "set things up so that the work is more student-driven.



Create a studio environment in which materials are available; students come in; pull their projects out, and work.”

My notes also helped me to see what changed for different students. For example, at the beginning of the year, one student continually asked me: “What do I do? What do I do? What should I do now?” There was an urgency and tentativeness in her voice. I did not want to tell her what to do, because, I felt, that would undermine her ability to follow her own leads, which, would interfere with her learning process. Later in the semester, her questions changed. They were more about materials and *how* to do certain things, not *what* she should do. She no longer asked me for advice on what to do. She had found her way, and was able to answer those questions for herself.

Greene (2001) argues that an aesthetic education curriculum that allows individual students to make choices, and develop their own direction, must, necessarily, be an emergent one. She writes:

The question of curriculum relates to all of this. We want to create situations in classrooms that will release our students for live and informed encounters. We want to make the richest sorts of experiences possible; we want choices to be made. The ordinary planning we have been taught to do probably has to be reconceived. The orientation to predetermined objectives has to be set aside....For all that, what happens must be conceived of as an emergent, as a realized possibility. It cannot be preplanned or predicted, no matter how carefully wrought are the occasions created, no matter how much we take into account. A curriculum in aesthetic education, then, *is always in process, as we who are teachers try to make possible a continuing enlargement of experience* (italics added) (pp.27-28).

Building on Greene, here, then, are some ideas for how to deepen the

Museum Studies curriculum:

- Keep the curriculum “organic,” and continue to involve the students in co-constructing it.
- Move further toward an “emergent” curriculum, where work and study flows from the interests of students.
- Continue to practice descriptive inquiry to inform curriculum and assessment.
- Expanding on the idea of “real work” in the real world, explore the possibility of developing the original idea of an “internship” as a kind of “cognitive apprenticeship”. This would involve matching students who have a continuing interest in the work of the museum with a museum staff member, who would serve as a mentor.
- Have students do more of the documentation, and continue to incorporate it into their self-assessment.
- Deepen the meta-cognitive dimension of the experience by continuing to have them document and present their process as well as their work

## **Role and Stance of the Teacher**

Throughout the two years of teaching this curriculum, I had many questions about my role and stance as a teacher. I tried things, made mistakes, and experienced moments of tremendous excitement and enthusiasm, along with a lot of uncertainty and doubt. I also had the great fortune of having a group of inspiring and supportive teachers and mentors. By the end of the second year, I was able to assemble for myself a set of assumptions and aspirations that have stayed with me since:

- The teacher engages in his or her own active process of perceiving, and engaging with, works of art, through the imagination.
- The teacher models for the students a way of asking open-ended questions, and talking about art, that the students internalize and use when they become docents and art instructors for younger children.
- The teacher involves the students in developing activities and criteria for evaluation.
- The teacher creates a shared sense of experience and empathy by maintaining a stance of curiosity, investigation, and openness to multiple points of view.
- The teacher creates a process and provides materials through which the child can explore his or her own ideas rather than presenting a project

with a set of instructions. The end product reflects the individual child's ways of working, interests, enthusiasms, and ability to persist.

- The teacher allows each child to go about her or his artistic process without judging, comparing, interfering with, or projecting the teacher's solutions, suggestions, or personal preferences onto the child's process.
- The teacher offers instruction in technique when an individual child is ready for that technique.
- The teacher "helps" the child not by giving solutions to problems, but by asking questions that facilitate the child's own solutions.

### **Collaborations**

The work produced by the seventh and eighth graders, which was but one part of the Co-op's new middle school curriculum, was the fruit of several collaborations. There was the collaboration between the museum and the school. There was the collaboration among the teachers. And there was the collaboration that flowed from the relationships between the adults and the students.

The success of the first two collaborations—between the museum and the school, and among the teachers—resulted from a number of factors, among them:

- Early and careful planning that built on the strengths, needs, and interests of the school and museum, as well as the individual adult collaborators.
- A sustained and ongoing relationship with the museum, with regular visits—not one-shot field trips—over the course of the school year.
- MAM Education Department Director’s shared interest in the school’s teaching approach, which enabled the Co-op to extend the kind of teaching it does beyond its walls.
- Flexibility among all parties and a willingness to develop the program organically.
- The museum became a place where the students could take on roles in the adult world, and explore their ideas and questions, at a time when they are hungry for big ideas. It also gave them a larger arena within which to work safely off-campus.
- Through direct engagement with quality art, accessible within the community, and through their interactions with museum staff members, students knew they were doing real work, and could exercise leadership and autonomy appropriate to their age and development.
- Students retained a connection to art and culture at a time when they often turn away from it in favor of mass media.

The third collaboration—between the teachers and students—is the most significant, and most difficult to quantify. It was made possible because the adults tried to provide a scaffold, while trusting the students to come up with their own solutions as they went about their respective learning processes. Because the students were able to explore art through three different kinds of activities, each was able to discover new strengths within him or herself.

For example, one student, whose voice is often barely audible, was more comfortable playing a supporting part when it was time to become a docent for the second graders. But she discovered a strength in the art-making process. Her partner, who also tended to be quiet, found that he was able to extend himself in ways that he had not before. Another boy, who struggled with written language skills, found that he could be a real leader, drawing on his social skills to connect with, and draw in, his second-grade tour group. Another student had difficulties with attention and grapho-motor skills, which made it very hard for him to complete projects. He revealed a great capacity for expressive language. His challenge was to stay with his writing process, and, with support, complete his interpretive wall label, which he did.

*In Starting Strong: A Different Look at Children, Schools, and Standards (2001),*

Patricia Carini poses a series of questions for us to consider—“not answerable questions, but educationally important questions” (p. 181). Among them are these: “What inspires this child to wonder and question? What does she care about deeply? What holds, sustains, and furthers his interests?...What does this child call to *my* attention?” In trying to come up with some answers, however provisional they may be, we might succeed in knowing each child well enough to support them in the way my art teacher Mrs. Craw supported me so many years ago.

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## Appendices



Untitled photograph by an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, 2006

## **Appendix 1**

### **Museum Studies Lesson 1: A Special Place: Where Do Artists Get Their Inspiration?**

#### **Objectives**

Students will begin to develop their observation skills and to make connections between what they see, how an art work was made, and the feeling created by the art work.

--Students will develop their drawing skills by exploring the expressive possibilities of line, contour, shadow

#### **Materials/Space**

--Slide or overhead transparency of Edward Hopper's painting *Coast Guard Station*.

--Slide projector or overhead projector

--Artist's notebook/sketchbook and/or assorted sizes drawing paper

--An assortment of good artists' drawing pencils, from hard to soft, 5 for each student; U-Knead-it erasers, one for each student

--Books about Edward Hopper (see below)

#### **Procedure/Motivation**

##### **Part 1**

Project image of Edward Hopper's *Coast Guard Station* on wall, as large as possible, but to allow for good color saturation. Begin by telling the students that this is an image of a painting by an American artist named Edward Hopper.

--Ask the students for their initial reaction: "What do you see?" Go around and give each student a chance to give an immediate response.

--Let's do that again, but this time, let's try to notice everything we see and to describe what we see in the painting: "What do you notice?"

--Let's do it one more time. When they begin to make statements that are interpretive rather than descriptive, ask: "What do you see that makes you say that?" Bring it back to the painting itself.

--What kinds of choices do you think that Hopper made when he made this painting?

--How does this painting make you feel? What do you see that might create the feeling?

## **Part 2**

Ask the students why they think Hopper might have chosen to paint this place.

Was there something special about it for Hopper? Can they think of a special place that they might choose to draw, paint, or take a picture of? Or, can they imagine places that might be special to an artist?

Talk about how drawing is the starting point for many artists when they are creating art works. And that artists respond in many different ways to ideas, feelings, what they see, hear, and experience. Provide a selection of materials and resources for students to choose from and ask them: What do you want to do with it? What questions do you have about this art work, or about the artist? Give them choices about what they can do. Be available to give support and to guide them to resources, materials.

**Assessment/Evaluation:**

--In what ways did students engage and participate in discussion? What kinds of observations did they make?

--What kinds of materials did they choose to work with?

--How did they use line, contour and shadow, or other materials to express their ideas/feelings about a "special place"?

--In what ways did they describe what they were doing?

--What choices did each student make about what activity to do? Did they draw, write a poem, read and take notes, copy from one of the Hopper books?

**Books:**

*Hopper's Places*, Gail Levin

*Edward Hopper and the American Imagination*, Deborah Lyons

*Hopper Drawings: 44 Works from the Permanent Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art*

*Edward Hopper: A Journal of His Work*

*Edward Hopper: The Art and the Artist*, Gail Levin

**Appendix 2: Poems: Field Trip to the Dia Beacon Museum,  
Beacon, NY**

**By a seventh grader**

**Inspired by Robert Smithson's *Map of Broken Glass (Atlantis)***



We raced through the streets of Newark  
And into the abandoned lot,  
Waited for the neighboring gang.  
Everyone, glass bottle in hand  
They came  
And no diplomatic measures  
Were taken.

(continued on next page)



The glass was everywhere.  
Smashed bottles  
Pricked the soles of my feet.  
A chaotic world whirled  
Around me.  
We fought  
Until all that was left was  
A pile of glass  
We sprinted back  
Into the night.  
The police arrived, but all that was left  
Was a pile of rubble  
In actuality  
Art.

## Poems Inspired by Field Trip to the Dia Beacon Museum



### **The Keeper**

**By a seventh grader**

**Inspired by Louise Bourgeois's *Spider***

Lonely it waits,

Chiseled black features and traits

Keeper of the cell and room

Brings to all a certain doom.

The final wisp of innocence sits in the chair,

Soft green eyes and golden hair.

She looks up and meets your eyes.

To convey a message, she always tries

If only we could set her free

And also her companions three

(continued on next page)

Peace and joy stand by her side  
And to her loft love resides  
Prisoners to such a harsh fate,  
The end is near, they sit and wait.  
She sees men come, and try and fail,  
To release them from this lonesome jail  
They have no freedom, this is our end,  
Everyone's survival on them depends  
Their jail guard calls, respond they must  
They grasp the bars, layered with rust  
He gives them orders and they obey  
If they wise to argue they dare not say  
Fear and confinement this story is of,  
A tale of peace, joy, innocence, and love.

### Appendix 3: Year One Selected Interpretive Wall Labels:

#### *“Edward Weston: A Legacy”*

## **Montclair Cooperative School Seventh Grade Students’ Labels *Edward Weston: A Legacy***

Eight seventh-grade students at the Montclair Cooperative School have created wall labels for *Edward Weston: A Legacy*. Since last fall, the students have made regular visits to the Montclair Art Museum on Friday afternoons as part of a new museum-school partnership between the Montclair Cooperative School’s Museum Studies program and the Museum’s Education Department. The theme of their study is: “Where do artists get their ideas and inspiration from? What kinds of choices do artists and museums make in creating and exhibiting art work?” The students have been looking at and making art, pulling out from those experiences what is personally moving and important, reflecting on the work and their responses to it, learning about how museums select, assemble, and install exhibitions, and developing their critical thinking skills. In the spring they will develop their own docent tours for other students.

**Appendix 3: Year One Selected Interpretive Wall Labels:  
"Edward Weston: A Legacy"**

***Pepper, 1929***

**[REDACTED] Seventh Grade**

MONTCLAIR COOPERATIVE SCHOOL

Smooth, calm, something about it seems  
mysterious,  
and it looks as though something is happening  
right where you can't see it. This structure is  
sitting quietly, observing everything, but saying  
nothing.

Like a rock, sitting  
It's waiting for nobody,  
Staring at nothing.  
Light is shining down,  
It looks dry and wet at once  
With many creases.

Appendix 3: Year One Selected Interpretive Wall Labels:  
"Edward Weston: A Legacy"

## *Death Valley, 1938*

*Located on the wall to your left*

**Seventh Grade**

MONTCLAIR COOPERATIVE SCHOOL

### *Untitled*

Sharp lines

Dark cracks are where

The sun doesn't

Shine

And casts a

Shadow on the

Rubble and rocks

When a tall

Wall of stone

Creates a mountain range

In the shadow

Of

The sun

## **Appendix 4: Media Studies Lesson 1: Co-Constructing Our Own Definition of Media**

**Media Studies Curriculum Introductory Activity: What is media? Coming up with our own definition.**

**Materials:** White board or big pad and markers

### **Motivation:**

1. I want for all of us to take a few minutes and to think about a book, a movie, a video, a news story or something in the newspaper, or a TV show that really moved you, that left you with a strong feeling. Something that you've thought about or that comes back to you. What was it? What do you remember? What were the feelings you experienced? Where was it? Just think quietly for a minute.
2. **Pair Share.** Now, I'd like you to turn to the person next to you and just tell each other what it was. What feeling did you have? Why do you think it has stayed with you? Spend a few minutes sharing.
3. **Whole Group Share.** Do a go-round. Make a list in two columns—in column one, list the experiences; in column two, what kinds of feelings they elicited.
4. Look at the list. Do the examples have anything in common? Talk about the words used to describe the different feelings and experiences and how we have strong feelings and reactions when we experience different kinds of media. So, what are the different kinds of media? Make a list.
5. So, how would we define media? What's media? What does it do? Talk about a medium and media. Look at other definitions. Make a list on a big pad. Discuss the difference between a media form and a media technology.

## Appendix 5: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation Media Project Materials

### Media Portfolio Graduation Project

Dear Eighth Graders,

**“Media is the power to affect your opinion through someone else’s interpretation, or point of view.”**

That is the definition of media we came up with as a group last September. Now you are graduating from the Co-op. What kind of statement do you want to make? How will you present it? You will create a visual project that uses some form of media to demonstrate something you’ve learned here and that expresses who you are now. You will present this as part of your graduation.

#### WHAT TO DO

- Choose a medium.
- Develop a message
- Document your process in your notebook/project binder—with photos, writing, lists, research gathered, handouts from class, anything that will help you to see your progress.
- Choose your advisor from the attached list.
- Choose your committee members (see page 2). Meet twice with your portfolio project committee. They are there to talk with you about your project and ideas.
- Reflect on your project every Friday at the beginning of class—how it’s going, what you’ve done, what you’ve learned, things you’ve come across, and what you plan to do next, etc.
- Meet with your advisor. This is a teacher or staff member who you will choose from the list of names attached. They are there to listen to your ideas, see how things are going, and help you along the way.
- Meet with your committee twice—once in March and once in April
- In May, present it to your committee and your class.
- At graduation, share it with the Co-op community
- Make two copies of your portfolio project—one for you and one for the Co-op.



**Here are some possibilities (you can present it in more than one way):**

1. Black and white photography or darkroom printing.
2. Animation.
3. A hand-made book.
4. Video
5. Digital slide show

## Media Portfolio Graduation Project

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe your project with as much detail as possible:**

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**Your advisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Media Portfolio Project Committee:**

Your advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Student (for example, a 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grader you think can give you good advice about your project): \_\_\_\_\_

**What do you need to do your project?**

Equipment/supplies/materials/tools: \_\_\_\_\_

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What do you need to know/research: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix 6: Curriculum Materials and Notes: “Anxious Objects: Willie Cole’s Favorite Brands”

- **Teacher Notes**
- **Docent Tour Lesson Plans/Notes**
- **Student Docent Tour Planners**
- **Docent Tour Debrief Session Transcript**
- **Interpretive Wall Label Lesson Plans**

### **Museum Studies Notes** **March 10, 2006**

**Present:** Seven students, Debbie, Judy, me

**Absent:** Three students

**Problem:** The piece S chose to write about—the chicken made from match sticks—does not appear to be in the show!

We went to the museum today to see the Cole show. The original plan was to get feedback on their wall label first drafts. But we were not able to do that today, so we had more time to spend with the Cole show. Also, it was really warm and beautiful, so we brought oil pastels so they could spend time outside with their sketchbooks.

As we were going in, someone, I think it was A, asked if we were going to be meeting with Patterson, the director, to talk about our wall labels? (I think she was eager, maybe a little nervous about that idea. I said, No, not today.)

We went upstairs via the stairwell piece—a new version of *America*. They walked in and said—“Whoa, that’s really different from what we saw last week.” They were excited to see it, and spent time looking at the configuration of the letters. It was a floor-to-ceiling piece of canvas, on which had been painted in blue block-type letters the work *America*, like so: R I C A M E R etc. etc.

After about 5 minutes, J and T were still looking and talking. H and A were at the top of the stairwell looking and talking. But R, I, and G were sitting on the bench. After a few more minutes, H said she wanted to go into the gallery. I told her we would soon.

T noticed that the word AMERICA had been spelled out horizontally in the middle of the canvas, and then vertically in the center. So, he said, “that’s how he figured out the other letters and where they should go.” J and T spent a lot of time talking about and looking at it. I and G were not engaged as they sat on the bench looking out the window. They both acted as if they were very tired, G had a hard time keeping his eyes open. (They also had been tired on Wednesday.) I asked them if they were tired. G said yes. I asked them if

they'd stayed out late. They both said yes. I said—"How late?" G said 11:30. I nodded my head.

We went into the Cole exhibition. My first plan was to have them take a quick look around the show just to gather their impressions, and then we'd talk about *House and Field*. But they were excited and wanted to go to their pieces, the ones they are writing the wall labels for. So I decided to let them just spend time with their pieces and looking at the show first. I'd brought their sketch/notebooks and different kinds of pencils. As they dispersed to look at the show, they went and got out the canvas gallery stools (I didn't tell them to) and seated themselves in front of "their" art work. I liked that—they seemed so comfortable, they knew exactly what to do—there was a real sense of ownership and purpose. I think J did that first, he sat in front of his piece. I asked him how it was different for him from seeing it in a picture. He said it wasn't that different, but it was kind of "shocking". I asked him how was it shocking. He talked about how shiny it was, he could not quite articulate it beyond that. He was thinking and looking.

T decided to do the piece "Air in Remission" (it's the big circular piece made from beat-up white hair dryers) and had written a "rambling response" (he didn't know the title till we got into the gallery). He sat in front of it. I went over and we talked for a bit. He said that he just wanted to look at it; he didn't want to write about it. Looking at it and thinking about it was better than writing about it for him, he said. He wondered how Cole had gotten so many identical hair dryers that all looked like that. He also wondered if they were glued together, and if they were, what kind of glue he used. I think he liked the piece. He had originally wanted to do the "chicken" piece. He's the one who pointed out to me that the chicken piece was not in the show.

R, the guard, came over to me after a little while and smiled and said—"Your kids are so different from what we've been dealing with." They go and look at the art work, we don't have to worry about them touching it." He went on to describe several experiences he'd had with children, AND ADULTS, touching the art work and how stressful it was having to protect it.

H said to me: "I'm going to work on rewriting my label." She sat down in front of the "America" painting (the original one, not the new one in the stairwell). She noticed that it was different from the version she'd used to write her first draft. We tried to figure out if there was more than one version.

A was sitting in front of her piece—the table with shoes arranged to look like some kind of figure with a face. H came and joined her, and they sat talking about it—she wondered how he put it together. Was it glued? What kind of glue was used? Someone pointed out that they were nailed together. They were noticing the teeth made from the narrow shoe heels. After awhile, J joined them.

G's metal jacket piece is in the entry gallery. He went and sat in front of his, *Executive Security Jacket*. He made a drawing not of it, but inspired by it. It was classic G—beautifully drawn curving lines, a clear vision, lovely design sense.

\_\_\_ spent time looking at other pieces in the show. He sat and looked, quietly.

After awhile, I told them to bring their stools over to the *House and Field* piece, which is in a vitrine. First, I'd already told them as they walked around the show to be thinking about which pieces they might choose for the second graders' tour, which they would be the docents for. So when we gathered, I began by asking what kinds of things might the second graders want to know about—we would make a list.

Here's what we came up with:

--What materials did Willie Cole use?

--How did he make the hose stand up?

--Did he use glue or nails?

--Why did he place the art work where he did in the gallery? [I commented that I wondered if he did that or if Patterson did. I asked them to think about what kinds of decisions the ARTIST made, and what kinds of decisions the curator (Patterson) made.]

--Where did he get his materials from? The shoes? The hairdryers? How did he get so many of one thing?

When we got done with our list I told them I wanted us to spend some time looking at this piece because no one had selected it and it had really grabbed my attention when I came to the opening. I said: "So, what do you make of this?"

The very first thing T noticed were the eyes in the "field" jockey—they were made from mirrors.

--African power figure—feathers on head, and grass skirt

--savage, how the one figure looked "bestly", like a "savage". How maybe other people saw him that way, but maybe he didn't. Maybe it was some kind of nobleman, the chest covered in nails a kind of medieval shield or some kind of shield.

--One was holding a knife in his hand, the other was holding a cross made of wood.

--Had he made himself look like that or had others done it "to him"?

--H said it reminds her of a "conscience—like in a cartoon with the angel and the devil; two sides of one person. So maybe this piece is about a conscience, two different sides to a person."

--Field jockey—the grass skirt was covering up what he "really was", almost like a disguise.

--T noticed the cowrie shells on the "house" jockey. He said they used to be used as money in certain parts of Africa, and were considered good luck. So, he said, the two different sets of eyes represented "good luck" and "bad luck". [I'm now thinking of when they were in second grade and they studied Africa with Chris.]

--Q: Was the cross he was holding supposed to be related to Christians? And was the knife the other one was holding supposed to represent "savages"?

I think it was T who made the first connection to slavery, or maybe A. And J started talking about badly the one covered in nails might have been treated, and how it felt to have nails in him. T asked if there was a wall label for this piece. I said there was. I read them the name of the piece, *House and Field*. Someone asked if PS [museum director] had named it. I said that Willie Cole had given all the pieces their titles. I asked them what they thought Cole might mean by calling this piece *House and Field*. This led to a discussion about what the two figures might represent—the cap and white suit the one on the left was wearing looked like a jockey, but he also looked like “the man of the house”; maybe the straw skirt the other one was wearing was supposed to represent a field, or nature, also the feather coming out of the top of his head was a reference to nature. B said the wooden cross could be a reference to a house; the knife a reference to a field, like maybe it was a machete.

I summarized what had been said so far and when I mentioned the jockey was when I said there was a history of these figures. I told them how they were called “lawn jockeys”. I asked them what they thought that might mean. We got to the idea that this figure might be outside a house and how different people might react seeing a figure like that outside—the one on the left, wearing the white suit and red and white cap and holding the cross, as well as the one on the right, wearing the straw skirt and chest of nails and holding the knife. That the one may be welcoming, the other threatening. I asked them how people might react to these figures. A comment was made about the fact that they were black. I read the first sentence of the wall label, which talked about how when Cole was a child, his father told him if he ever saw a lawn jockey outside a house, that racists lived inside. I explained that these figures have been seen by some people in the past as racist. I asked them if they had any idea why. They started to make the connection to blacks having been slaves and servants.

Finally, I said I wanted them to listen carefully. I told them we were going to do a kind of “perceptual exercise”: I wanted them to stand up so that they were facing the “field” lawn jockey in such a way as they could see the hole in the figure’s chest, that had a small mirror in it. I told them to focus their eyes on that one part of the sculpture, and then I said, rapidly and repeatedly: “House and field, house and field, house and field, house and field, house and field, house and field.” I asked them what they noticed. \_\_\_ said: “How’s it feel?” I asked if anyone else thought it sounded like that. What did they think Cole was saying to us as the viewer?

After our discussion, we went outside on the grass. We told them to take the oil pastels and to visualize in their mind something they’d seen in the Cole show that stuck in their mind. And to use the pastels to respond to it—what kinds of feelings did they get? What kinds of images and ideas? I told them to use color to express what they thought Willie Cole’s work was about. I reminded them that when we are in the gallery, we can only use pencils, but today, outside, we could use color oil pastels. There was a big range of responses, but they worked very hastily. I think they were tired, done.

**Friday, March 24, 2006**  
**At MAM**

**Present:** 10 students

Today, we planned our docent tours for next Friday for the second graders. We began in the conference room. They had lots of questions. Here are some:

1. Do we have to dress formally?
2. Do we have to memorize info about sculptures?
3. Can I partner with another person? We spent time discussing this. They all wanted to partner, but T said he would do it either way.
4. Backpacks? Coats? Where do they go?
5. How many groups will there be? How many kids in each group? \_\_\_ was concerned that boys would not listen to him. We talked about that. He and G said they wanted to have only girls in their groups. T said he was fine having boys, because he knows a lot of them, because of his brother being in the class. I told them that the groups would probably be mixed—boys and girls—and that Chris would make up the groups. But that I would let her know.

We then organized ourselves into groups. H and R immediately paired off; so did J and T. I thought that was fine, I would not have allowed J and T2 to partner. G and \_\_\_ then said they'd work together, and that left A, T, G, and S. I suggested A and T work together, and that G and S also. They all seemed OK with these pairs. So it worked out.

I think some of them were a little nervous at first about leading a tour. I had told them they would have adults with them, and that it would not be their job to discipline the younger kids, that the teachers were in charge and would help with that.

Then, we brainstormed ideas for art projects in the studio. Here's what they came up with:

1. Painting—"free painting"
2. Scorching with irons. e talked about how it would be hard to do that with second graders.
3. Working with your hands.
4. Making your favorite Willie Cole, your way.
5. Interpret Willie Cole.
6. Using shoes and objects.
7. African masks.
8. Clay
9. Make stamps in the shape of an iron---I added to that idea that Willie Cole made PATTERNS. Maybe we could make patterns.
10. Car tracks.
11. Someone had the idea to do more than one activity, to make stations, and give them a choice.

We all liked this last idea a lot, and I told them I'd talk with Chris [2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher] about this and what she thought would work best with her class.

I then suggested we make a schedule for the visit. I asked them to visualize where our tour would begin. We said that it would start at 1 o'clock, right after lunch, and that we'd meet the second graders in the big hall. I told them I'd welcome them and introduce them to their docent tour and talk about the rules. Then, we'd go upstairs. I asked them how long they thought this would take. \_\_\_ said about 15 minutes. So, I asked them how long the tour itself should be—how long did they think second graders would like the tour to be? Samantha said about a half hour; she said she gets tired after that. The other agreed.

So here is what we came up with:

1 pm: Arrive, welcome, and the rules

1:15-1:45: Docent tour

1:45-2:30: Studio art project (Originally, we had it for one hour, but Ian suggested we stop at 2:30 to have enough time for cleanup. So we changed it.)

2:30: Clean up

2:45: Second graders leave and 7<sup>th</sup> graders go to Starbucks!

3 pm: Seventh graders return to Co-op

We then talked about our tours. How will we choose which art works for our tour? T said he thought we should choose African-based works because they are studying Africa. Some asked if they could choose the ones they wrote labels for. I said I thought both of those were good ways to choose works. To help them plan, I gave them a sheet that I called "Willie Cole Docent Tour Planner". I explained what was on the sheet and what we were going to do upstairs in the gallery. We went upstairs and broke into our groups. On the planner, I included space for them to draw a map of their docent tour. We also noticed that the museum had added a new, very prominent sign at the entry telling people not to touch the art work. I explained that there had been some trouble with very young children touching things and that the guards were worried the art work would get damaged. So they all incorporated this into practice for their tours!

They got stools and spent time planning their tours. They took this work seriously and went about it with purpose. (They always conduct themselves well in the gallery; they sit down and get to work.) J and T told me they chose certain works because they had African imagery, and certain ones because they thought they would be "fun" for the second graders. (The fun one J came up with was the Gas Nozzle piece.)

The only challenges were that T and J rushed through their planning, and they finished before everyone else. This didn't surprise me. When they came to me, and said they were "done," I told them to now go and practice together. I also spent some time with I and G, as I wanted to see how they would organize what they would say. When I got to them, they were busy writing notes; G had written down a bunch of questions. They each picked the art work they'd made their labels for. I thought that was really great. In fact, most of the kids picked their "favorites"—the pieces that they'd written about.



I think the planner I came up with was very helpful for them. I always hesitate about using these trip sheet type things because in some cases, the kids get very turned off, and it can actually interfere with their interactions with the art. So I like to keep them very simple, with a minimal number of questions and “tasks” to do. I also make them in large type with lots of spaces between the lines, so that it’s manageable for the ones with grapho-motor or organizational difficulties. The rest of them like that too.

In this case, since it was a planning tool, I think it did help them organize what they would do. A number of kids in this group really need this and it certainly seemed to help all of them.

### **PRACTICE**

Then we practiced. This was a bit rushed, which made me feel bad, and the results were mixed. I didn’t think they were quite ready, but I realized that we’d have next Thursday to do another practice, so it would be fine. Some of them got a little goofy: they were pretending to be “little kids”, talking baby talk. But I would stop them and ask them to really put themselves in the shoes of the other kids, and not just do baby talk. I think the goofiness resulted from their feeling self-conscious about playing this role—of leader, docent—in front of their peers. The same thing went on with last year’s seventh graders, and they rose to the occasion beautifully when they actually gave their tours.

T2 surprised me. He spoke clearly and loudly, and asked open ended questions, like: “What are your first thoughts when you see this piece? What are your observations?” T1’s questions were not as open ended or “meaty”. We’ll see what happens tomorrow. Today (Thursday), he said something really great when I was talking with him one on one—I suggested he cut the number of works on his tour from five to three. He said he would see how the kids were responding. “I’ll play it by ear, and see if they get restless”, he said, “and if they do, I’ll bring them to another piece” I told him I thought it was very wise to be responsive to his audience and to be able to be flexible enough to go to a new piece. I said that in order to do that, he needed to plan it very carefully which pieces he would show them. He agreed. He showed me his map of his tour and showed which pieces he’d do first and which were his back-pieces.

### **Wall labels update:**

I sent all the labels to Gary last Friday night. He passed them along to Anne-Marie. She’s working on them. But T was absent last Wednesday, when we made the final revisions. He made some edits, but it was still too long. Megan was able to work with him this morning (Thursday) and I need to retype it and get it to A-M [museum staffer].

## **Museum Studies Notes**

**Thursday, March 30, 2006, 1:30-3 pm**

**(at Co-op); and Friday, March 24 (at MAM 1-3 pm)**

**Present:** 8 students

**Absent:** 2 students

Today, I got some extra time with the 7<sup>th</sup> graders to prep for our docent tours tomorrow. Marie took the 6<sup>th</sup> graders on a field trip to Sandy Hook. I also had the 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the morning.

Today was our final practice and prep day for our second grade MAM visit. I had the video camera. I'd met with Chris on Tuesday to go over our plan and to discuss the studio project ideas the 7<sup>th</sup> graders had come up with.

### **Here's what we did today:**

1. I wrote on the board the names of each group of docent pairs and second graders.

They were very eager to know who would be in their group. I thought it was important for them to know this beforehand, so that they could be thinking about the children in their group, and not be surprised.

2. I had them spend time with their docent tour planners. I asked them to think about their first rehearsal at the museum last Friday and how they might want to change their tour.

--Do they want to reduce the number of art works they will visit on their tour? (Some of them had 5; I told them they may want to cut it to three, seeing as we have 30 minutes for the tour.)

--Do they want to change the order? There are two groups who had picked the same art work as their starting point.

--Finalize the questions they want to ask.

I also read a few excerpts from the *New York Times* article about Willie Cole, that had information about how he got all the shoes and a bit about his background and interests. We made a list of a few facts:

--He was born in 1955 in Somerville, NJ

--He's 55 years old

--He got the shoes from a Salvation Army thrift shop in Paterson, NJ and paid 50 cents a pound for them.

--He likes kick-boxing and he goes to the local YMCA to kick box.

--Her grew up poor in Newark, in a neighborhood, where, he said, "people were always throwing things out the windows"—like appliances.

said that if he got them at the Salvation Army, what about all the poor people who weren't able to get shoes as a result of Cole having bought up all the shoes?

I also asked if anyone wanted to read their wall label as part of their tour. R and H said they did. No one else did. I'll bring them tomorrow just in case. T wanted to know if he could bring his planner sheet and use it during the tour. I said I thought that was a good idea. T2 wanted to know if he could wear a jacket. I said sure. I told them they should be dressed neatly. R pointed out that they might get paint on their clothing. I told them we'd be using tempera, which washes out, but that they might want to take that into consideration when dressing.

3. I asked them how they will know if they've been a successful docent. We made a list together. At the end of this, I asked them: "What shall we call this list?" They said "Guide to a Good Docent". Here's the list they came up with:

### **Guide to a Good Docent**

1. Know what you're saying. Have information ready.
2. Speak clearly and loudly.
3. Make sure kids don't touch art work.
4. Make sure they listen—make it fun. I asked them how they might do those things. They said: "Don't talk like a boring docent....Include them....Ask questions."
5. Don't let them wander off.
6. HAVE FUN!

4. We then videotaped each group. I wanted them to see themselves on tape so they could refer to their list and make suggestions to one another. They wanted to get silly; when they did that, I stopped the taping, and talked about how it can be uncomfortable to see yourself on video, but that we were here to practice and use it to help us, not to ham it up.

T2's questions were the most open-ended. He asked: "What are your first thoughts looking at this? What observations to you have?"

--From my POV, the two most interesting discussions that began to happen were around the *Rosa Parks* piece and *America*. When G asked about what they saw and their feelings, the responses were: "angry, sharp teeth, vicious". H asked: "Why would he name that piece *Rosa Parks*, when she was a person who did a good thing. She was a good person. Was she angry? Or vicious?"

We didn't have enough time to get into a deeper discussion because I was trying to make sure everyone had a chance to tape a segment and for all of us to view it and critique it.

The biggest concern I have is that I hope they will find a way to connect with the second graders on a personal level and share their enthusiasm and knowledge of Cole's work, and not get too focused on the details of what they want to say.

5. After we videotaped, we had about 25 minutes to watch the video. Due to tech delays (wrong cable), this time was reduced to about 15 minutes. R asked if she really sounded like that in real life. T and G didn't want to see themselves. But they all enjoyed it actually. I put up the list and told them to refer to it when watching the video and to think

about whether they were able to do what they'd suggested. And we gave each other feedback. It was a truncated discussion. But I think this was helpful. I asked them if they felt ready to give their tours. They said yes, and I think they are. I'm worried, though, that \_\_\_ was absent. And J won't be here at all. But I think T will do fine on his own.

While we were waiting for the cable, I started to make a list with them of everything we need to bring tomorrow. They wanted to know if they'll get decent name tags. I told them I'd check with Gary.

## Willie Cole Docent Tour Planner

Your tour will be 30 minutes long. Your audience: Second Graders!

1. What have you learned about Willie Cole and his art that you'd like to share? What do you think second graders want to know?

Materials, Time period, inspiration,

2. Pick 3 or 4 Willie Cole art works that you really like or that you think the second graders will like. These will be on your tour.

① Pretty In Pink ② Gas Snake with Blue Nozzle,  
③ Sole Protector ④ America ⑤ Wind Mask East

3. Make a list of questions you will ask. Be sure they are questions that don't have a yes or no answer.

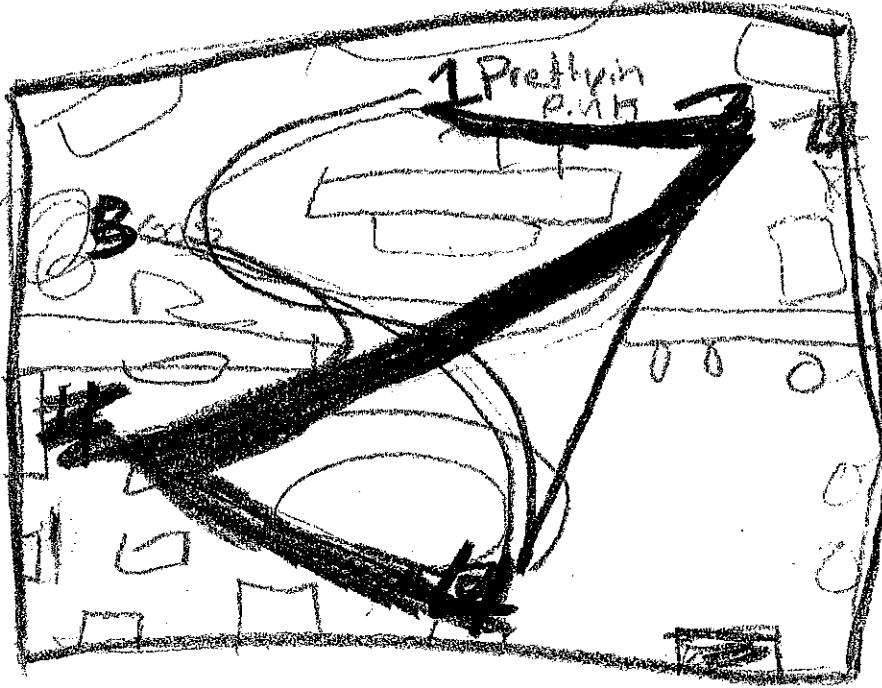
What do you see? Do you like it, why?

What materials do you think were used out of?

How long did you think it took?

Why do you think W.C. choose the objects that he did?  
History behind \_\_\_\_\_

4. Make a map showing your route through the exhibit.



5. Plan an art activity in the art studio. What kind of art project could you do with second graders? Think of Willie's Cole's work.

~~Paint~~ Paint your favorite piece, make it your own.

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## Willie Cole Docent Tour Planner

Your tour will be 30 minutes long. Your audience: Second Graders!

**1. What have you learned about Willie Cole and his art that you'd like to share? What do you think second graders want to know?**

• how he made them?

• where he got supplies?

• when did he make it?

• why he made it?

• what bit?

• did he burn himself?

**2. Pick 3 or 4 Willie Cole art works that you really like or that you think the second graders will like. These will be on your tour.**

3. shoe chair - "made in philippines"

10. hand dryer face - "wind masterpiece"

21. circle of hair dryers - "air in remission"

4. gas snake with blue nozzle

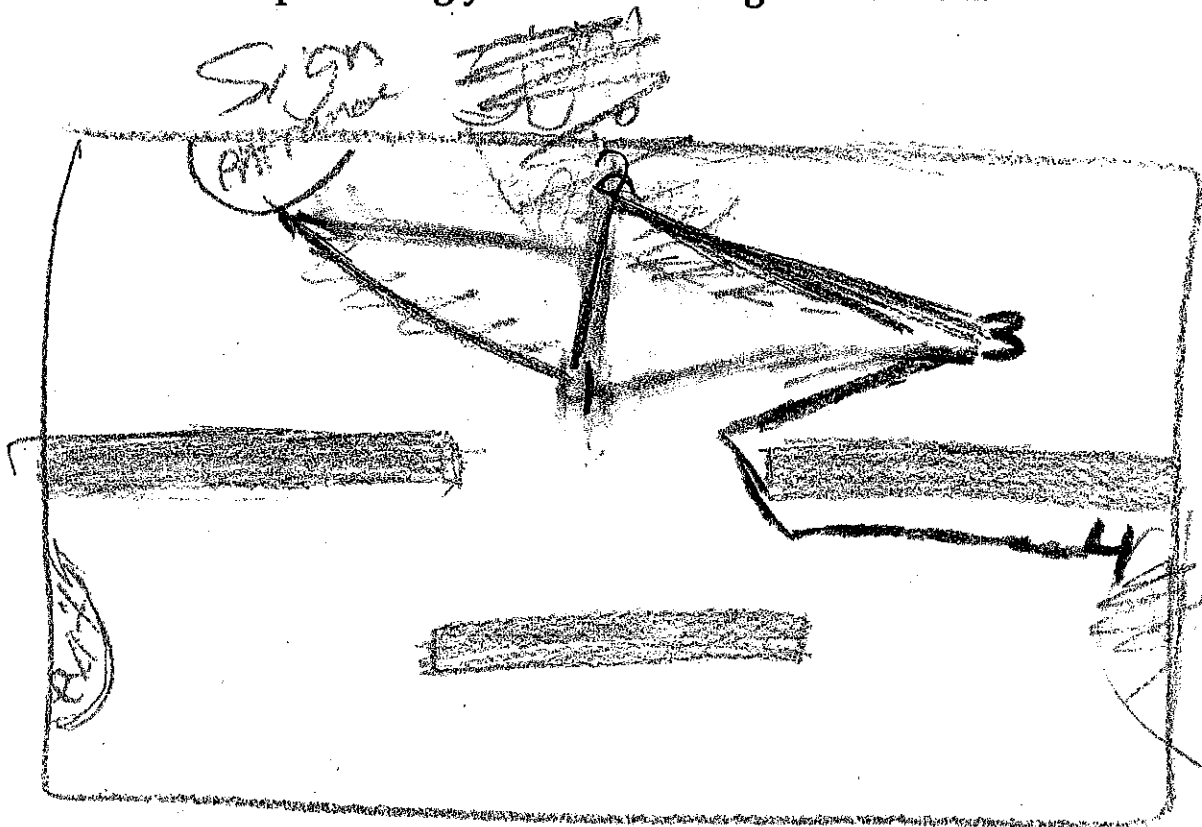
**3. Make a list of questions you will ask. Be sure they are questions that don't have a yes or no answer.**

• what do you think of the art work?

• what do you think it looks like?

• what do you think it's made of?

4. Make a map showing your route through the exhibit.



5. Plan an art activity in the art studio. What kind of art project could you do with second graders? Think of Willie's Cole's work.

- iron shaped stamps
- draw from memory
- clay
- sculptures



## Museum Studies Notes

Wed. 4/5/06

### Debrief of Docent Tour on 3/31/06 with Second Grade

**Present:** 10 students, JB [Theme Teacher], Me

Today, because of Terra Nova testing in the morning, I had an extra block of time with the 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Here's what we did:

1:30-2: Debrief from last Friday's docent tour with 2<sup>nd</sup> graders

2-3: Art room—I showed a video of Fischli and Weiss's *The Way Things Go*. [We'd seen it in Cincinnati.] Then, we continued work on our constructions.

#### DOCENT TOUR DEBRIEF

I began by saying that I told CP [second-grade teacher] that we'd give her some feedback on how we thought the docent tour had gone last Friday, and that I also wanted to get their observations and ideas about how it went too. How did they think it went? Was it different from how they thought it would go? Did anything surprise them? What might they do differently? I told them I was going to take some notes.

**Girl 1:** "My group had short attention spans."

**Me:** "Did anyone else find their groups had short attention spans?"  
Some say yes, some say no.

**Boy 1:** "My group kept forcing me to raise my hand to answer questions."

**Me:** "When was that? When we were sitting in the gallery as a whole group at the end?"

**Boy 1:** "Yeah".

[Others agree that their kids wanted them to raise their hands too.]

**Me:** "So why do you think they were so eager to have you answer the question?"

**Boy 1:** "Because they thought we'd know the answer."

**Girl 2:** "SS [second grade girl] kept raising my hand for me too."

We discuss the reasons why they might do that—that they felt proud of their tour guide, that they looked up to them as someone who did know the answers, like a teacher. [Girls 1 & 3]

**Boy 2:** “My group did the whole show. We had lots of time. You told us to pick three art works, but we got through it fast. We could have looked at more. I ended up showing them the whole show.”

**Boy 3:** “They got bored with a piece.”

**Boy 1:** “They asked to go to another one, one that we had not prepared for.”

**JB [Theme teacher]:** What was that like?

**Boy 4:** “We’d [he and G] ask a question and while they answered, we’d read the labels so we’d have things to say.”

**Me:** “Did you find the labels were helpful? Did they give you information?”

**Boys 4 and 3:** “Oh yeah. Definitely.”

**Boy 2:** “The good thing was that they had time to *look* at what *they* wanted to see. They could see what *they* wanted.”

**Girl 2:** “They liked everything they saw that we picked. CP [second-grade teacher] asked to see the shields [referring to the art works made out of old ironing boards, that Willie Cole had made patterns on by scorching them]. So we did, but the kids thought they were boring, and do did we.”

**Me:** “So, CP, the teacher, suggested you look at pieces that turned out to be less interesting to the kids than to the teacher?”

**Girl 2:** “Yeah. I would not recommend the shield pieces.”

**Boy 2:** “I would, because they were studying Africa.”

**Girl 2:** “Our group was quiet. K [second-grader] raised his hand, he always had a lot to say, but AS [second grader] didn’t talk a lot.”

**Boy 1:** “D [second grader] was good until he sat down.”

**Boys 1, 2, and 4:** Agree that it was easier for them to keep the second graders interested when they were moving around the gallery in small groups; they seemed to have difficulty when they sat down in the big circle at the end with everyone.

**Girl 2:** "It was the opposite for us [referring to her and Girl 3's group]. When we were walking around, K kept going other places and talking and raising his hand a lot."

**Boy 5:** "He doesn't know how to control his interests."

**Me:** "Boy 5, do you have any ideas about how to help K control his interests?"

**Boy 5:** "Get them tired first. Let them run around outside."

**Boy 2:** "Do what they like *first*."

**Me:** "How would that work?"

**Boy 2:** "Let them see the pieces they like first."

**Boy 4:** "I noticed that when we sat in the circle [at the end], my group really didn't like it."

**Me:** "How could you tell?"

**Boy 4:** "They were talking and looking around at the work."

**Boy 3:** "Yeah, they were looking at the art work."

**Me:** "So, would you say that looking at the art is important?"

**Boys 2, 3, 4:** "Yeah, very important."

**Me:** "And would you say that giving them free choice is important?"

**Boy 2:** "Yes."

**Me:** "When we planned the tour, we decided to spend about a half-hour in the gallery in our groups. Then we went down to the art studio. Do you think that was the right amount of time? How much time is right?"

**Boy 2:** "It took 10 minutes to complete our tour, and then we looked around. I think we should see what they want to see first, and then take them on our own tour."

**Boy 5:** "No, do what they want last; otherwise, they'll lose interest."

**Me:** "So, you're suggesting that you give them a reward, an incentive, that they'll get to see what they like after?"

**Boy 5:** "Yeah."

**Me:** "Is there anything we might want to do differently?"

**Boy 2:** "I think it went very well. No change, except not to have any big groups. Small groups work better."

**Boy 1:** "Me and [Girl 4] did our tour in about 15 minutes. On the way [from one art work to another] they wanted to see something else. So we showed them what they wanted to see along the way."

**Me:** "So there's a strategy—start with a plan and then know when to change the plan. Be flexible. I think that's a good strategy you came up with."

**Me:** Were there any surprises?

--"How quiet they were."

--"How interested they were in the art."

**Girl 3:** "The questions and answers they had."

--"They kept wanting to see more and to ask more questions and to talk about the work."

**Me:** "As far as what we did to prepare for the tours, what things did we do that you found helpful?"

**Girl 2:** "The videotaping" [of them practicing their tours].

**Girl 4:** "The outline [Docent Tour Planner] helped. **Girl 3, and Boys 3 and 4** agree.

**Boy 4:** [Making] "the map. Only the map part of the planner."

**Girl 3:** "Writing down what questions to ask" [on the planner].

**Me:** "Was it helpful that we got to see the show as many times as we did beforehand?"

**Boy 2:** "Yeah, we got to know it more. We had enough time."

**Cindy:** "So how did it feel to you to be the docent?"

**Boy 3:** "Fun."

**Boy 2:** "Comfortable."

**Boy 1:** "It felt good because we weren't totally being bossy. They were listening."

**Girl 2:** "I had a lot of control. They treated me like a teacher, respected me as a teacher. They got used to me and I got used to them and they were comfortable."

**Boy 4:** "They treated me respectfully, like a teacher."

## **Lesson Plan: Writing Interpretive Wall Labels**

### **Museum Studies**

**3/3/06**

**MAM**

#### **Set up:**

- digital projector and images from Cole
- bring overhead projector, transparencies, and sharpies
- bring their sketchbooks, pencils, and pens
- bring camera and video camera, tape
- bring chart paper/masking tape—Put up sheet for names of works

#### **Reminders:**

- Invitations to the opening?

#### **Motivation:**

Last semester, we had an opportunity to exhibit our paintings in the museum's Arcade Gallery. Now we have another professional opportunity—to write wall labels for the Willie Cole exhibit. So we're going to work with Gary on this, and he's going to explain the whole process that the museum staff go through when they prepare labels for their exhibitions.

Gary discusses process.

**What questions do we have?**

**Read some sample labels.**

**What are some qualities of wall labels we noticed?**

**Make a list:**

**Let's make a list of some strategies we might use to start writing a wall label:**

- make a list of words that come to mind
- describe the art work in detail—what do we see? Tell us about it.
- describe the feelings I have looking at it
- make a list of questions

- write a poem
- write a story
- what does it remind us of?

**SLIDE SHOW:** Each image is numbered. Each student writes down the number of Cole art work they are interested in writing about. You can write down more than one.

**REPEAT SLIDE SHOW  
LOOK AT PRINT-OUTS OF IMAGES.  
CHOOSE**

**Let's do one together. Show an image.**

**Use the list of strategies to start writing our label.**

**Make a web—using the list of strategies we came up, let's write down all the thoughts, feelings, and words we can to describe this art work.**

**Developing Their Label Idea—What Kind of Label Are You Going to Write?**

--Hand out the image they picked.

--Write down some responses.

--PAIR SHARE—what did you come up with? What more would you like to know about this image?

--GROUP SHARE—what are you going to do with this? A poem? Story? A description? Questions?

**LANGUAGE ARTS**

**Composing a first draft:**

--Create a rubric

--Use it to go over what you've written

--From your notes, and from your image, write a first draft.

## **OUR STRATEGIES FOR WRITING A WALL LABEL**

1. Look at art work.
2. Describe it.
3. Write down words: What feelings, memories, thoughts come to mind?
  - Brainstorm
  - Rambling response
4. Make a list of questions about it
5. Research it.
6. Wonder about it—what's it made of?
7. Write a poem.
8. Write a very short story.



## **Museum Studies**

**Wed., 3/8/06**

**8 – 9:30 am**

**Label writing: 1<sup>st</sup> drafts**

**Language Arts**

**10 minutes:**

**8:05- 8:15: Motivation:** I went to the opening on Saturday night, and guess what? Willie Cole stayed up until 3 in the morning finishing the piece in the stairwell! And it made him late for the opening. We're going on Friday to see the show.

Last Friday, we met with Gary at the museum and we talked about the process the museum goes through for the wall labels. And today is March 8—we have a deadline; if we want our labels to be up in time for the second graders' visit on March 31, we need to get our labels written and to Gary by next week. **CAN WE MEET OUR DEADLINE?**

So, this morning we're going to write our first draft.

1. On Friday, we made a list of strategies we might use to start writing a wall label. And I typed them up and I'm going to hand them out. Also, they are in your sketchbooks, which I have here, along with your pictures. **GO OVER STRATEGIES AND HAND OUT SHEETS TO WORK WITH.**

I also wrote them on the board.

**8:20-8:30:**

**2. Before we start writing, let's make a list of things we want to check for.**

**--What are some questions we'll ask ourselves about our label and what we've written:**

- 1. Am I using vivid language?**
- 2. Does it reflect my personal voice?**
- 3. Is everything spelled correctly?**
- 4. Am I being clear in what I want to say?**
- 5. Did I use wonderful words? Unusual words?**

**WRITE THEM ON THE BOARD. SO ASK YOURSELVES THESE QUESTIONS.**

--8:30-8:45: Hand out images and writing sheet template.

Spend 15 minutes writing

--PAIR SHARE (5 minutes)

--GROUP SHARE (15 minutes)

## Notes on First-Draft Label Writing 3/8/06

Suzanne and Megan [language arts teacher and assistant teacher] helped with this lesson, and the individual follow-up help. Also, I had met with Elaine [learning specialist], who gave me some guidance on how to help the students who needed it. When the kids came in, they all looked pretty sleepy, but four of the boys were especially so. They all looked really wiped out. They had gone to a concert the night before and didn't get home till 11:30. Suzanne handed out Hershey kisses and some Teddy grahams and tangerines.

I reminded them that, at the museum last Friday, we'd come up with a list of strategies they could use to write their label. I went over the strategies and told them I'd typed it up. I handed it out.

Then, I asked them what they would be looking for in their writing: How would they know if what they'd written worked as a first draft? We came up with our list. I asked them if they'd ever heard of a "rubric" before. They said no. I said it was kind of a guide or a checklist that they would create for themselves to check their writing. I asked them for some ideas about what they should check for. G said "spelling". We made a list:

- am I using wonderful words?
- am I using unusual words?
- am I using "vivid" language?
- punctuation
- spelling

### Writing and "Pair share"

They got work writing. After a while—15 to 20 minutes—H said she was done. So did A. At Suzanne's suggestion, I had them pair up to read one another's draft and to write down for each other, on 2 columns: "4 strengths" and "4 ways to improve it". T wrote a stream-of-consciousness list of phrases. G wrote two haikus. G2 worked on his laptop by himself. He wrote down a list of words. J wrote in sentences, more prose than poetry. H wrote a piece that began "I am America. Hear me roar."

**Appendix 7: Selected Interpretive Wall Labels**  
**“Anxious Objects: Willie Cole’s Favorite Brands”**



*Willie Cole, High Security Jacket for Executives Only*

**Metal Blazer**

Whoa! Very shiny  
Wondering why it's metal  
Twisted and bent  
Looks like a knight in armor  
Seems heavy to wear  
Weaving under and over  
Never ending  
A complex Cadillac broche  
And an invisible man

## Appendix 7: Selected Interpretive Wall Labels, "Anxious Objects"



Willie Cole, *How Do You Spell America?*

### Our America

I am America.

Hear me roar.

America is money, Wall Street, banks

To some, America can be hot dogs or peanuts  
at a Yankees game

America can be as simple as where you live,

Or as complex as freedom or

Personal rights

America can be Wal-Mart or a corrupt government

America can be shopping, chain stores, Burger King,

Obesity, coffee

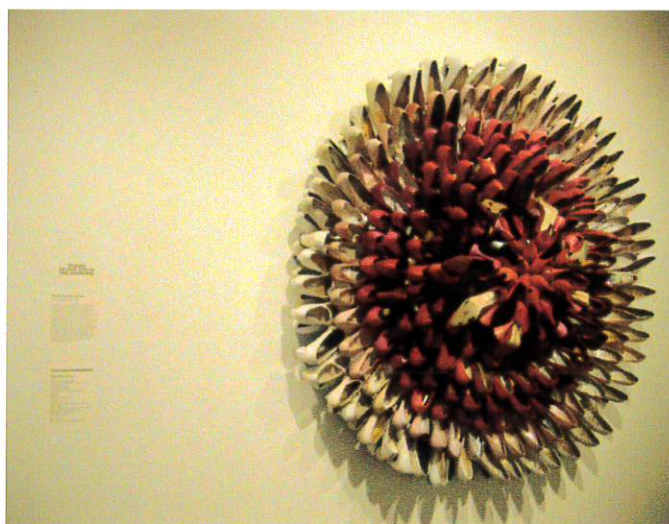
To me, America is every personal thing that I love

And see everyday

Our beautiful America

What's your America?

## Appendix 7: Selected Interpretive Wall Labels, “Anxious Objects”



Willie Cole, *Pretty in Pink*

### **The Heel Gang**

The shoes are coming together!

They're going to attack the evil colorless boots

With their heels!

The red ones are feisty,

The white ones are shy.

They build up their courage, color, and their

Strength

Starting out

Weak and un-pigmented

To being

Burly and cherry red

High-up, the red shoes are ready to go with their

Fighter heels!

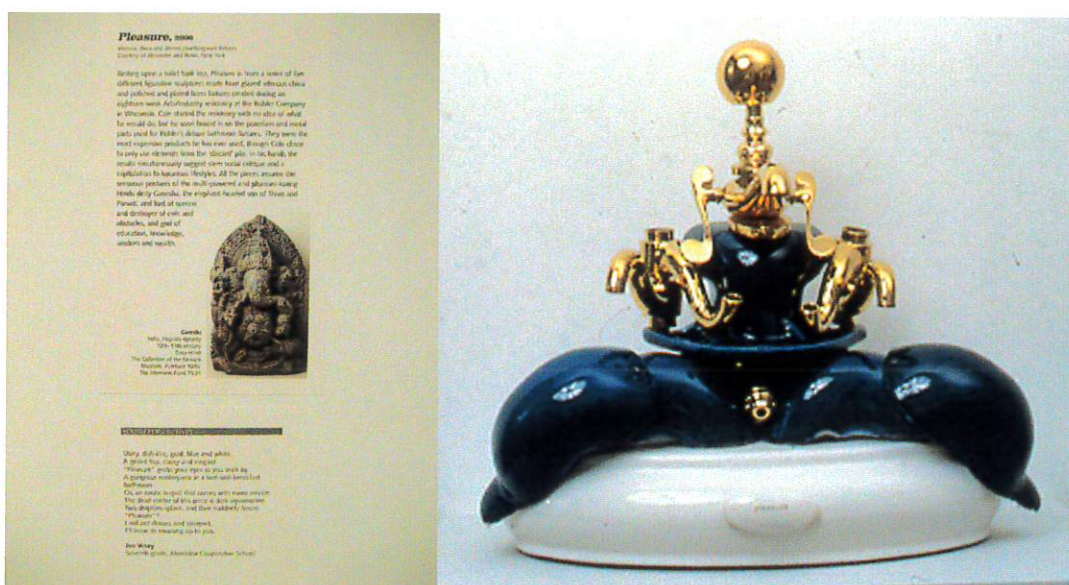
They're carried by the timorous white-heeled shoes,

Which walk, walk, walk, any which way,

For the fighter heels at the top.

Those red barbaric heels.

## Appendix 7: Selected Interpretive Wall Labels, “Anxious Objects”



Left: Museum label with student label below. Right: Willie Cole, *Pleasure*

Cole made *Pleasure* while an artist in residence at the Kohler Company, where he used pieces of discarded porcelain luxury bathroom fixtures to craft the sculpture. According to the museum’s wall label, Cole was inspired by the sensuous postures of the Hindu deity Ganesha (shown above left on wall label), who was “multi-powered and pleasure-loving”.

### Pleasure

Shiny, dish-like, gold, blue and white.

A gilded top, classy and elegant.

“*Pleasure*” grabs your eyes as you walk by.

A gorgeous centerpiece in a bed-and-breakfast bathroom

Or, an exotic tea pot that comes with room service.

The dead center of this piece is dark aquamarine.

Two dolphins splash, and then suddenly freeze.

“*Pleasure*”?

I will not discuss and interpret.

I’ll leave its meaning up to you.

## Appendix 7: Selected Interpretive Wall Labels, “Anxious Objects”



Willie Cole, *Water Window Female Iron Figure*

Robot standing still, but  
Looks like he is waiting.  
Evil smile  
Sinister in some way  
Short stubby little arms?  
Those silver eyes looking at me.  
Cords around its neck like a leash.  
More cords around its body,  
Hope there's someone  
Holding on to them.  
Legs bending:  
It's going to spring up just like a trampoline,  
Ready to pounce.

**Appendix 8: Permissions**  
**Permission Letter: Parents**

Cindy Furlong  
4 The Fairway  
Montclair, NJ 07043  
783-5504

March 13, 2006

Dear parents,

As some of you may know, I am completing an M.S. degree at Bank Street College of Education in Childhood Education and Museum Education. The Museum Studies Program we created at the Co-op is my thesis.

I'm writing to ask your permission to include photographs of your child, and possibly excerpts from videos, I have shot to document my thesis project.

I am required to submit a copy of my thesis to the Bank Street Library, where it will be available as a permanent reference document for educators and graduate students. I would like to include pictures to illustrate the projects the students worked on as part of the curriculum I developed. The pictures will not be used by Bank Street College. I'm enclosing a permission form and a stamped, self-addressed envelop. I'd appreciate it if you could return it to me as soon as possible. Please get in touch with me if you have any questions.

It's been a real pleasure working with your children.

Thanks very much,

Cindy  
783-5504



## **PARENT PERMISSION FORM**

I hereby give Lucinda B. Furlong permission to use photographs and video excerpts of my child, \_\_\_\_\_ taken as part of the The Montclair Cooperative School's Museum Studies Program. This permission is granted for use in the thesis document of Lucinda Furlong, which is being submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for an M.S. degree in Childhood Education/Museum Education at Bank Street College. The thesis will be housed as a reference document at the Bank Street College Library. My child's name will not be included.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent of: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



65 Chestnut Street  
Montclair, New Jersey 07042  
Tel. 973-783-4955  
Fax 973-783-1316  
[www.montclaircoop.org](http://www.montclaircoop.org)

Bruce Kanze, Head of School

### PERMISSION FORM

I understand that Lucinda Furlong, Master's Degree Candidate at Bank Street College of Education, is completing, for her Integrative Master's Project, a case study of the Museum Studies program she created at the Montclair Cooperative School in partnership with the Montclair Art Museum.

I hereby give permission for the name of the **Montclair Cooperative School** to be included in the study;

I understand that Lucinda Furlong has taken photographs and videotapes of Montclair Cooperative School students participating in the Museum Studies program, both at the museum and at the Montclair Cooperative School, from 2004 through 2006; and that she has obtained permission from the parents of the students to include them in the study.

I understand that these photographs/videos are to be included in her Master's Thesis at Bank Street College, and that the document that results from this project will be housed at the Bank Street College Library. It will have a catalogue number and will be available to students and faculty at Bank Street and on Inter-Library loan.

Bruce Kanze

Signed  
Bruce Kanze  
Head of School  
Montclair Cooperative School

1-9-08  
Date



# Montclair Art Museum

3 South Mountain Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07042-1747  
Phone 973-746-5555 / Fax 973-746-9118  
www.montclairartmuseum.org

## PERMISSION FORM

I understand that Lucinda Furlong, Master's Degree Candidate at Bank Street College of Education, ~~is completing, for her Integrative Master's Project,~~ a case study of the Museum Studies program she created at the Montclair Cooperative School in partnership with the Montclair Art Museum.

I hereby give permission for the name of the Montclair Art Museum to be included in the study;

I also give permission for Lucinda Furlong to use photographs and videos of students of the Montclair Cooperative School, taken by her and other Co-op staff members at the Montclair Art Museum, while they were participating in the school's Museum Studies Program, from 2004 through 2006.

I understand that these photographs/videos are to be included in her Master's Thesis at Bank Street College, and that the document that results from this project will be housed at the Bank Street College Library. It will have a catalogue number and will be available to students and faculty at Bank Street and on Inter-Library loan.

G. Schneider  
Signed

APRIL 28 2008  
Date

GARY SCHNEIDER  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
Title  
Montclair Art Museum

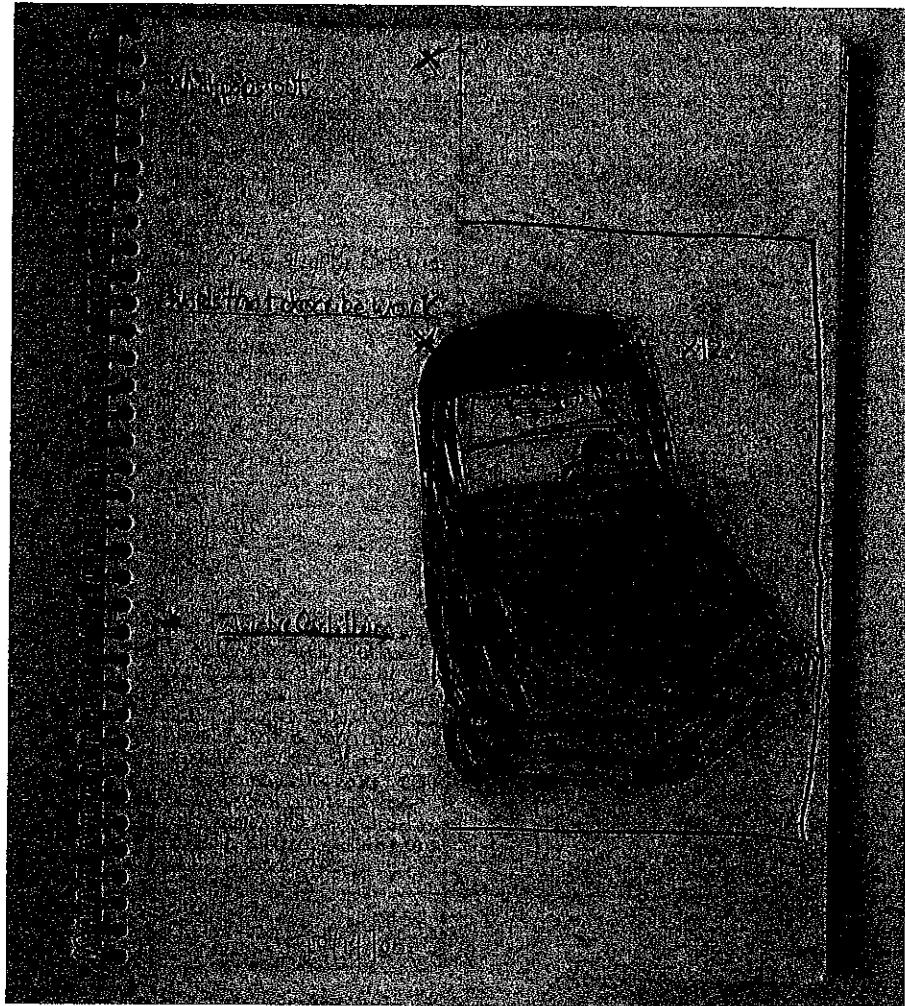
## **Appendix 9: Student Work: Year Two**

- **Fall-Winter 2005-06 Sketchbook Entries p. 194**
- **Fall 2005: Sketches, Drafts, and Paintings  
Inspired by Roy Lichtenstein p. 199**
- **Semester Two Student-Directed Art Work p. 224**
- **Two 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Portfolios p. 236**

**FALL-WINTER 2005-06**  
**SKETCHBOOK ENTRIES**



**MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM**  
**20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY GALLERY**

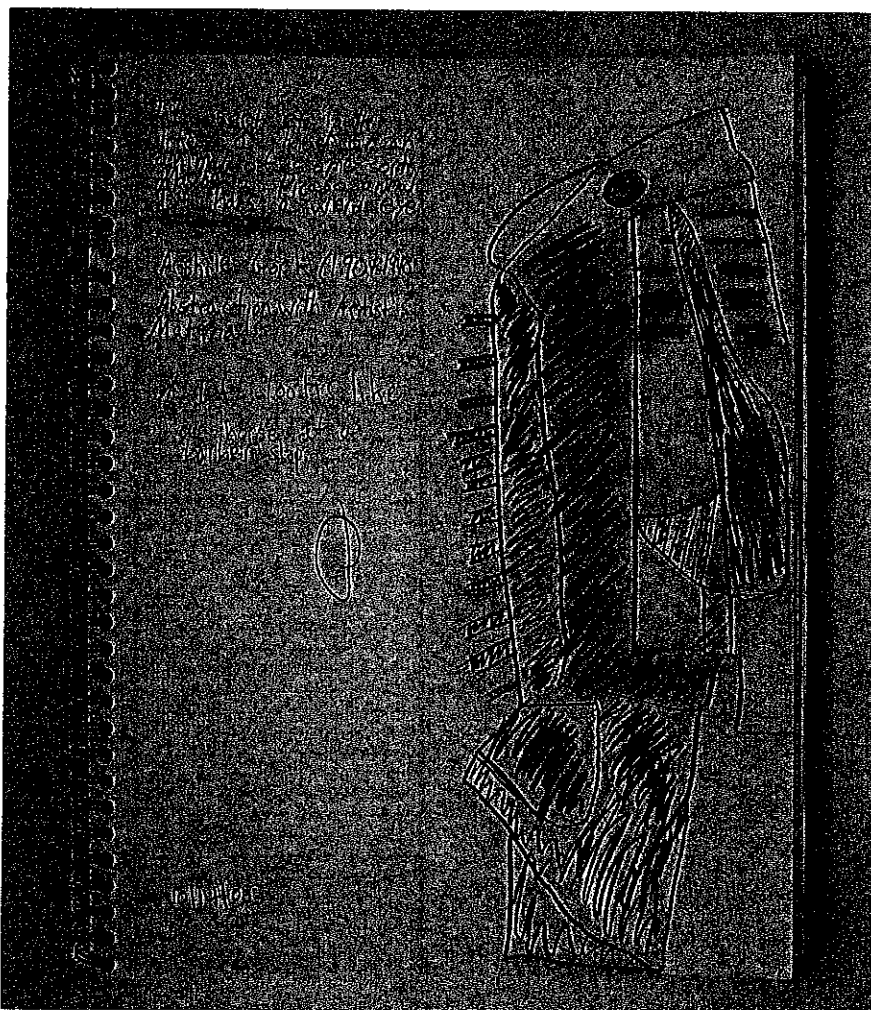


Response to Andy Warhol's *Twelve Cadillacs* (1962)

**What pops out:** Black and white; cars; 12 cadillacs; sleekness of car; distinct; different; each one is slightly different; wild.

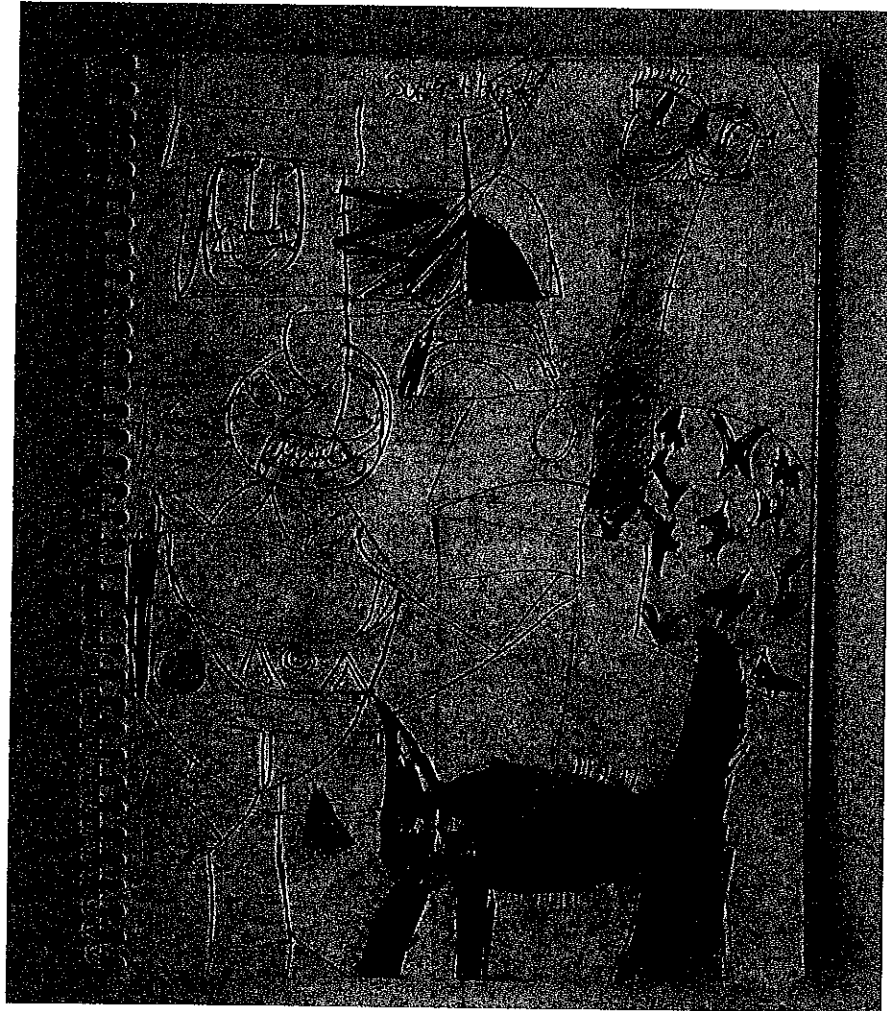
**Words that describe work:** wild, crazy cars, different, sleek, black, white, copies, ride, mix, duplicate, thrill, hidden.

"I really like Andy Warhol's work, especially this one. It sort of gives me the thrill to go buy a car. What I notice about Andy Warhol's work is that he likes to have the same images look different in one piece. I really admire that Andy tried to make the differences in the cars subtle, but noticeable."

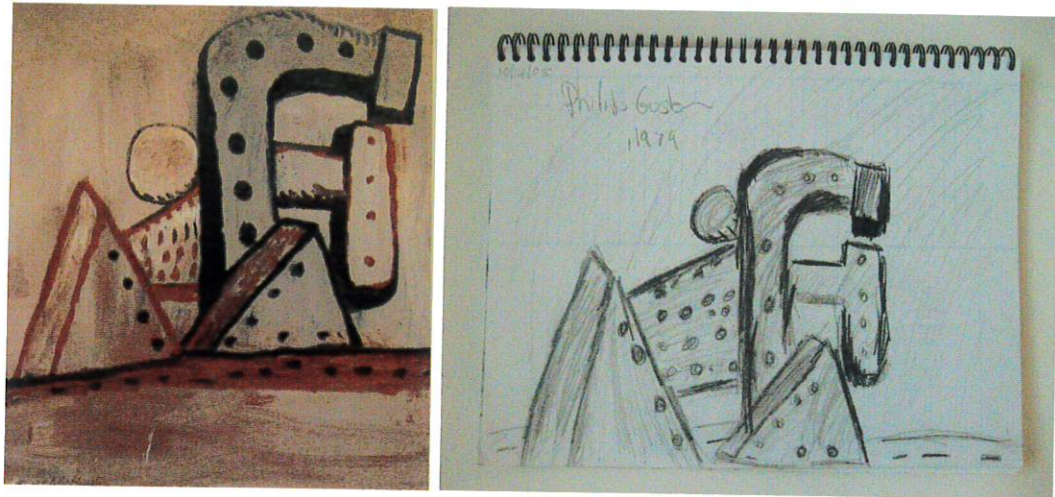


Response to Arshile Gorky's *Abstraction with Artist's Materials* (ca. 1934-35)

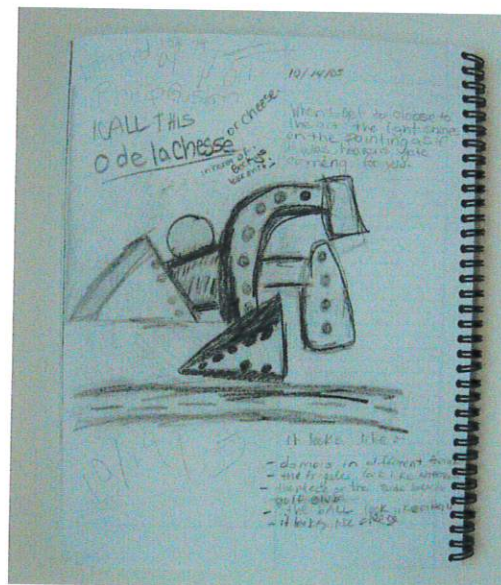
"It sort of looks like a horse or an animal of some sort. Maybe a Picasso animal. It has a weird eye. It looks like a horse at a barber shop."







Two responses to Philip Guston's *Untitled* (1979)



"I call this "O de la chesse, or cheese, in honor of \_\_\_\_\_'s take on it. When I get close to the art, the light shines on the painting as if it was heaven's gate coming for you."

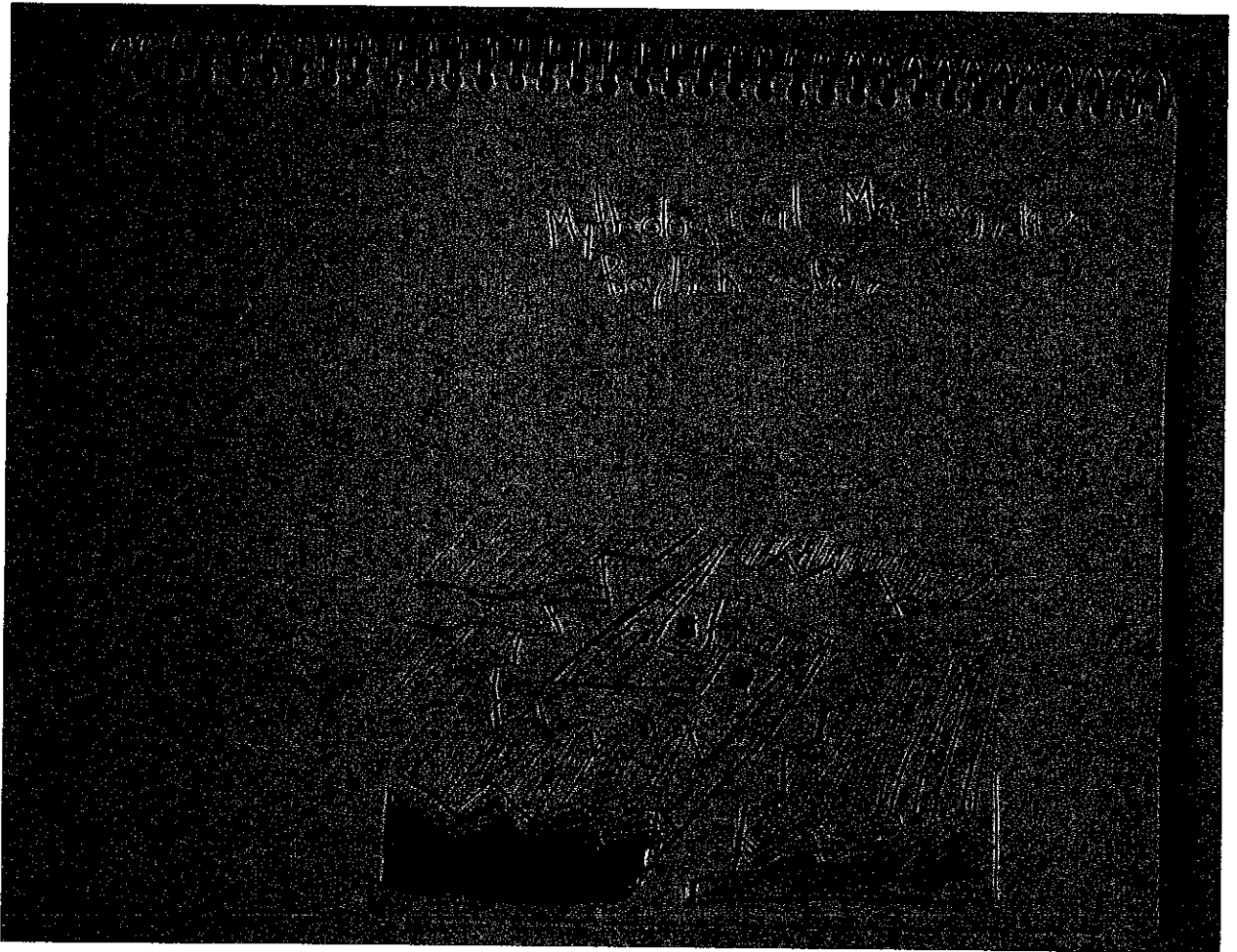
**FALL 2005**  
**SKETCHES, DRAFTS  
AND PAINTINGS**

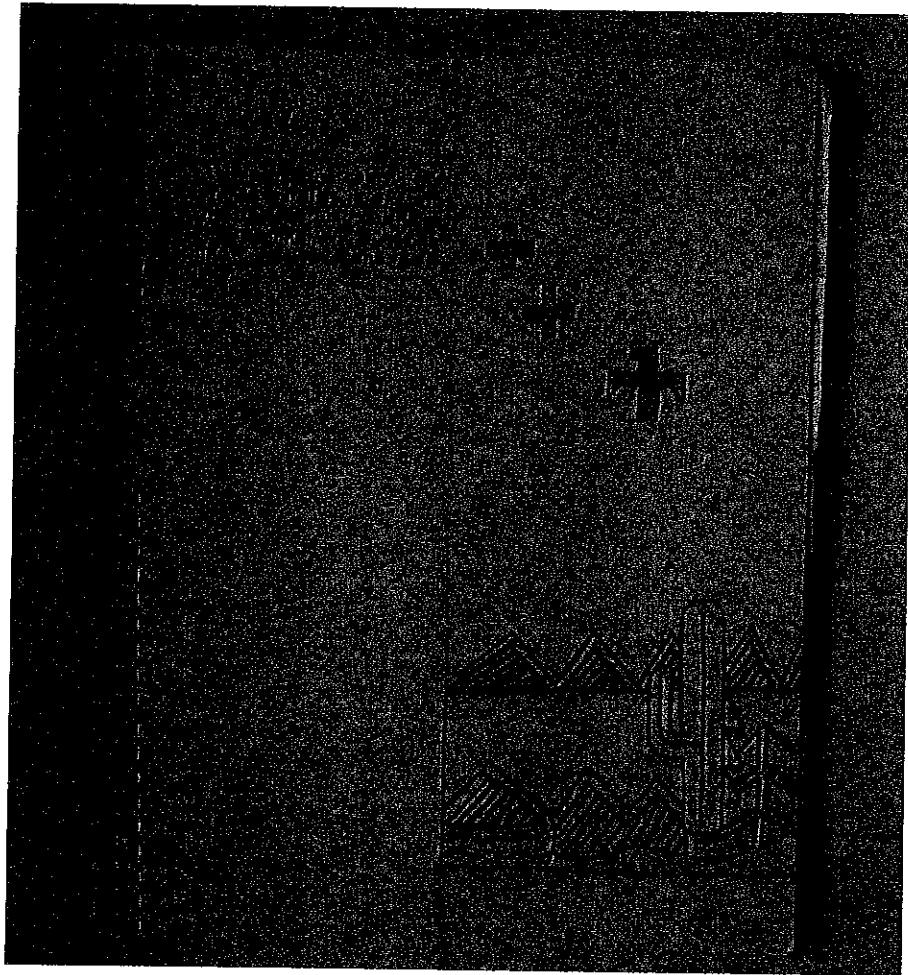


**INSPIRED BY**  
*“Roy Lichtenstein:  
American Indian Encounters”*  
**MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM**

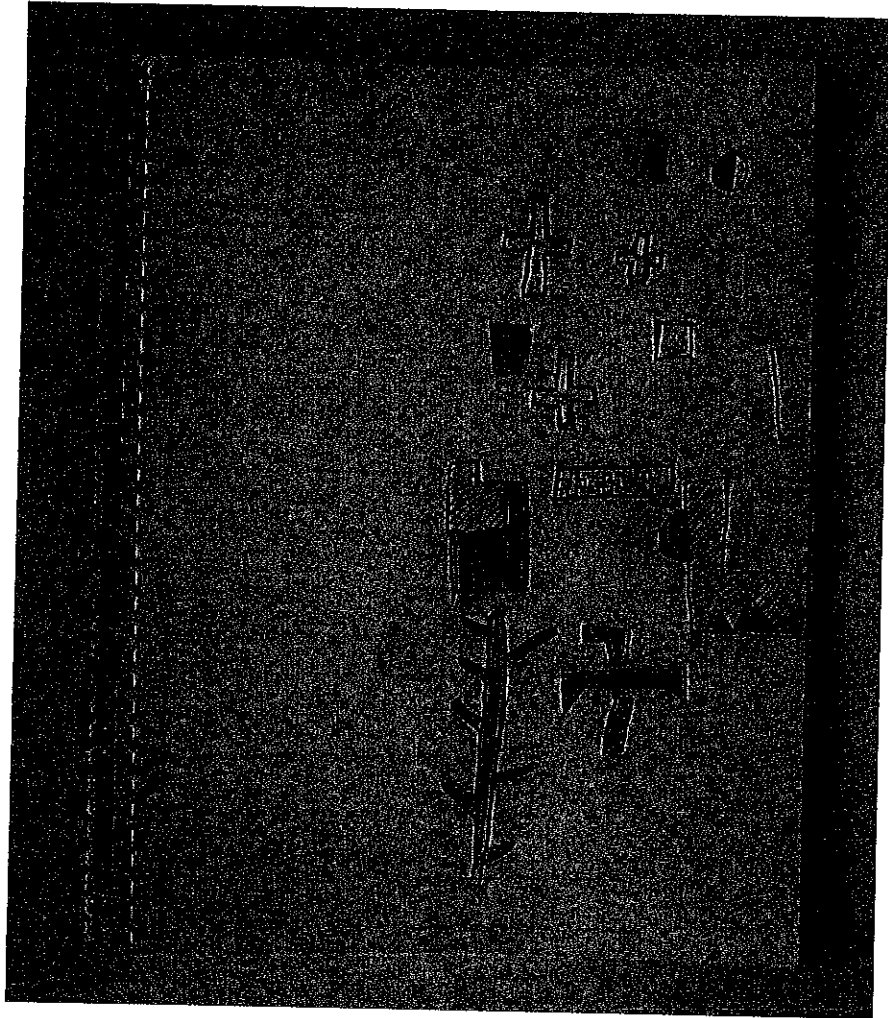
## Activity One: Observing, Sketching, Taking Notes

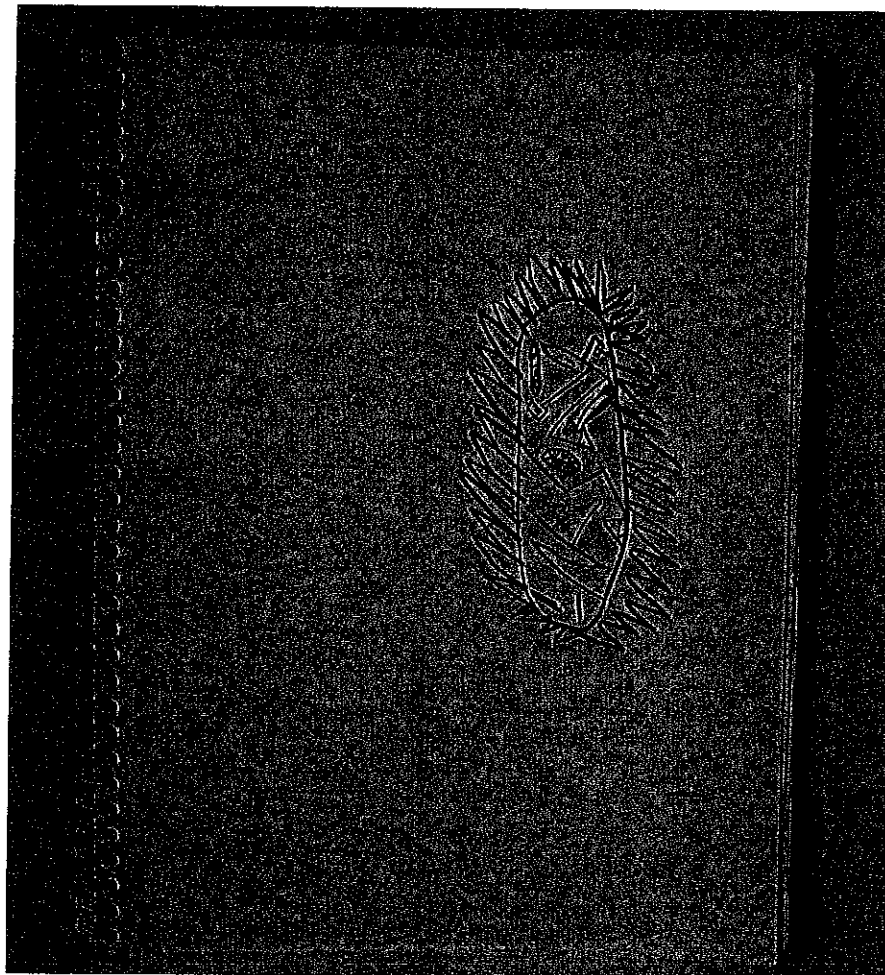
- Students spend time in the gallery selecting images they are interested in, drawing fragments, gathering imagery.

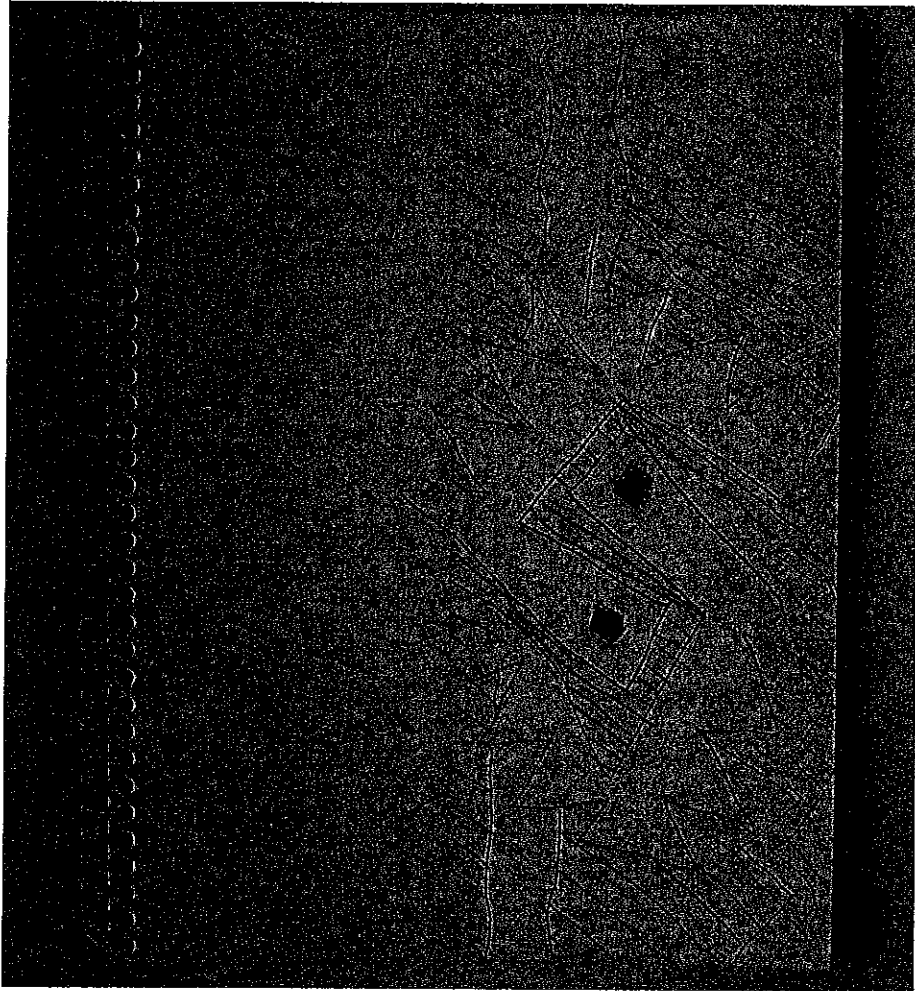


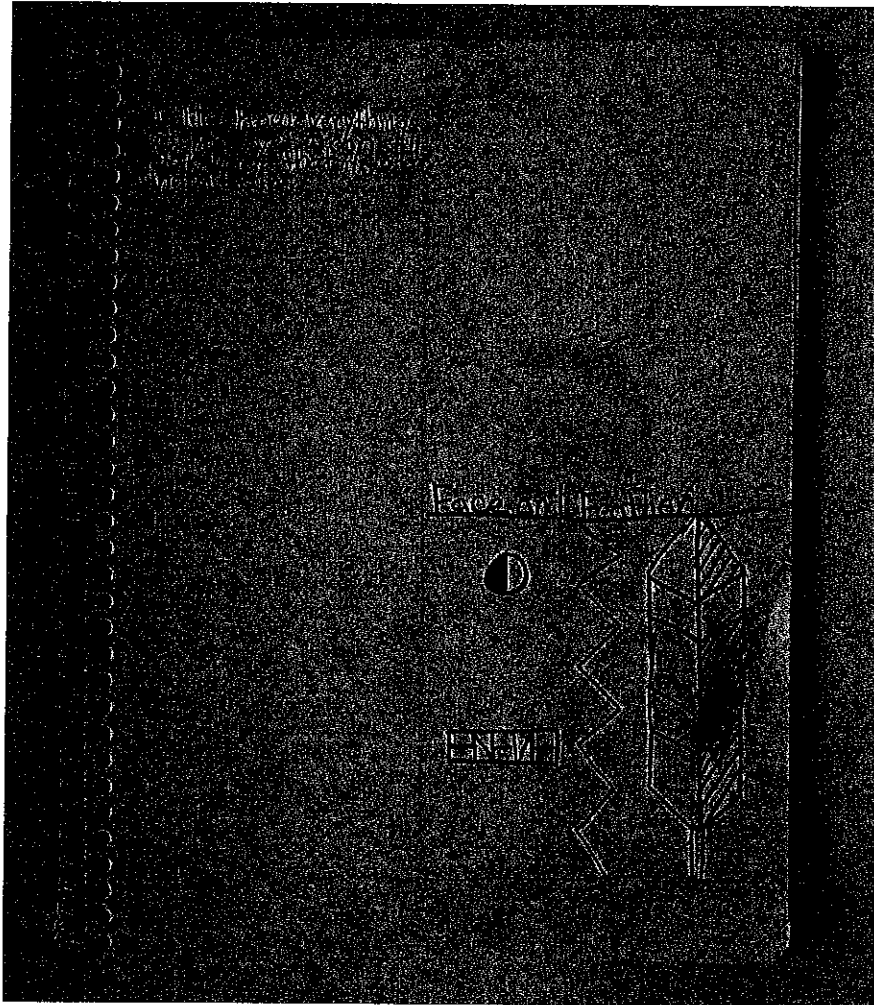


"This painting is colorful and stands out. This is one of the reasons why I like this painting, but I also like it because of the dark lines."



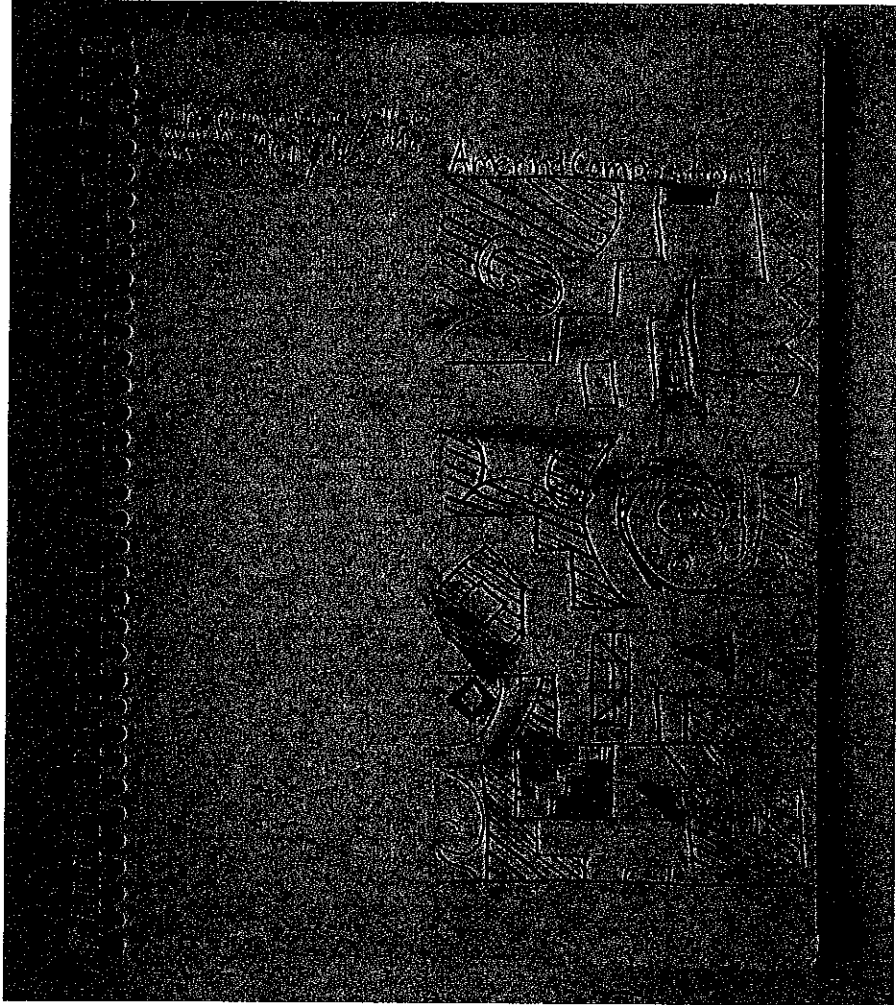






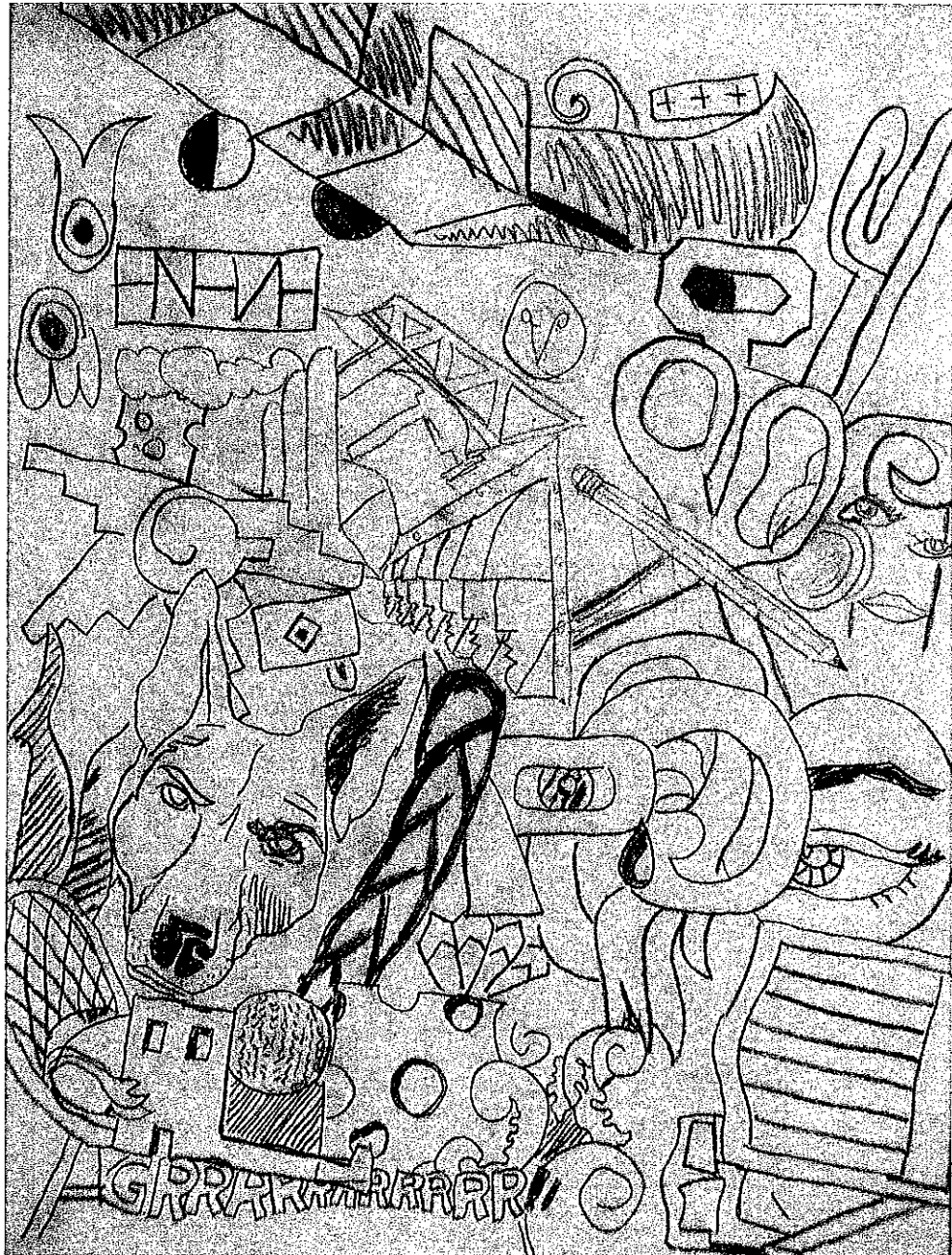
"I like how everything is so simple, but I can still make out that it is a face and a feather."



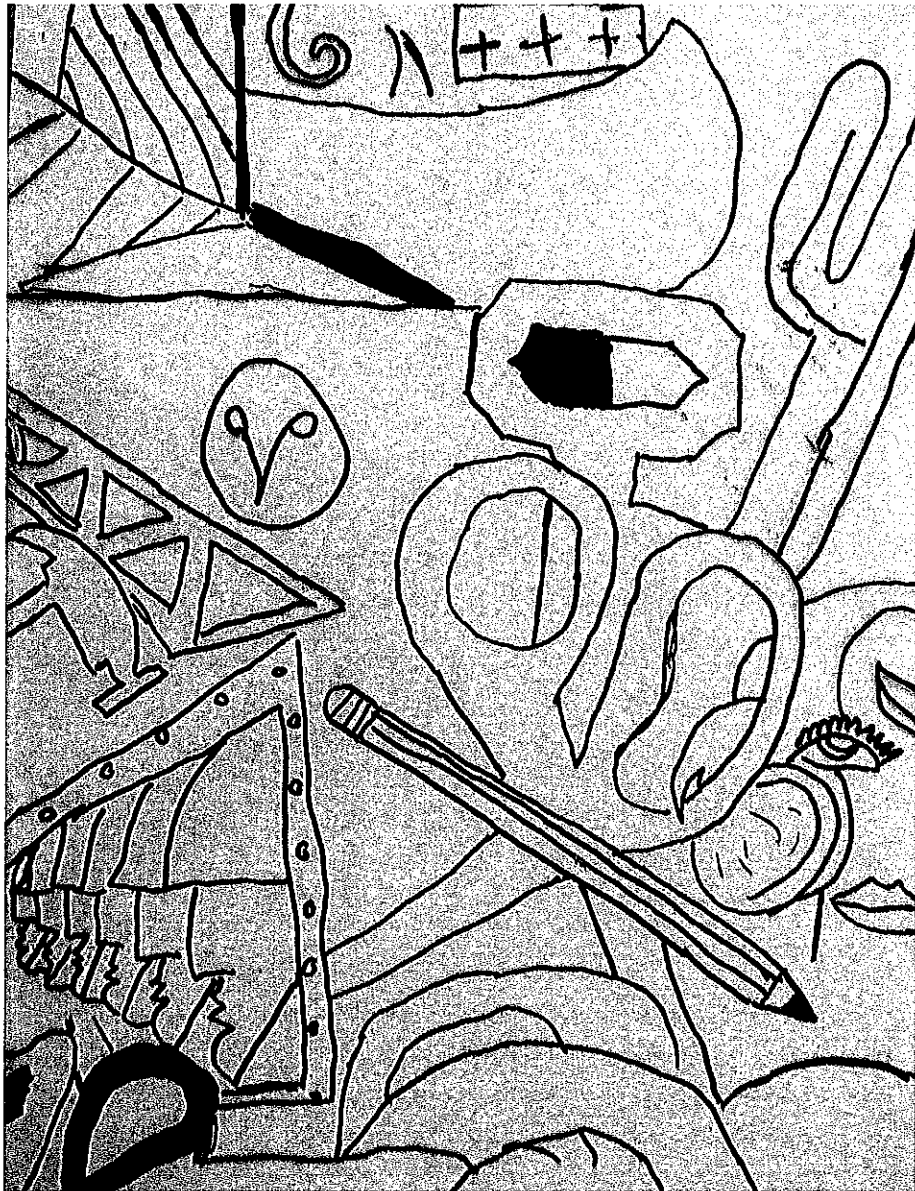


"The main color is yellow., which isn't so bright. This one is a dull yellow."

**Activity Two: Drafting their compositions, revising.**



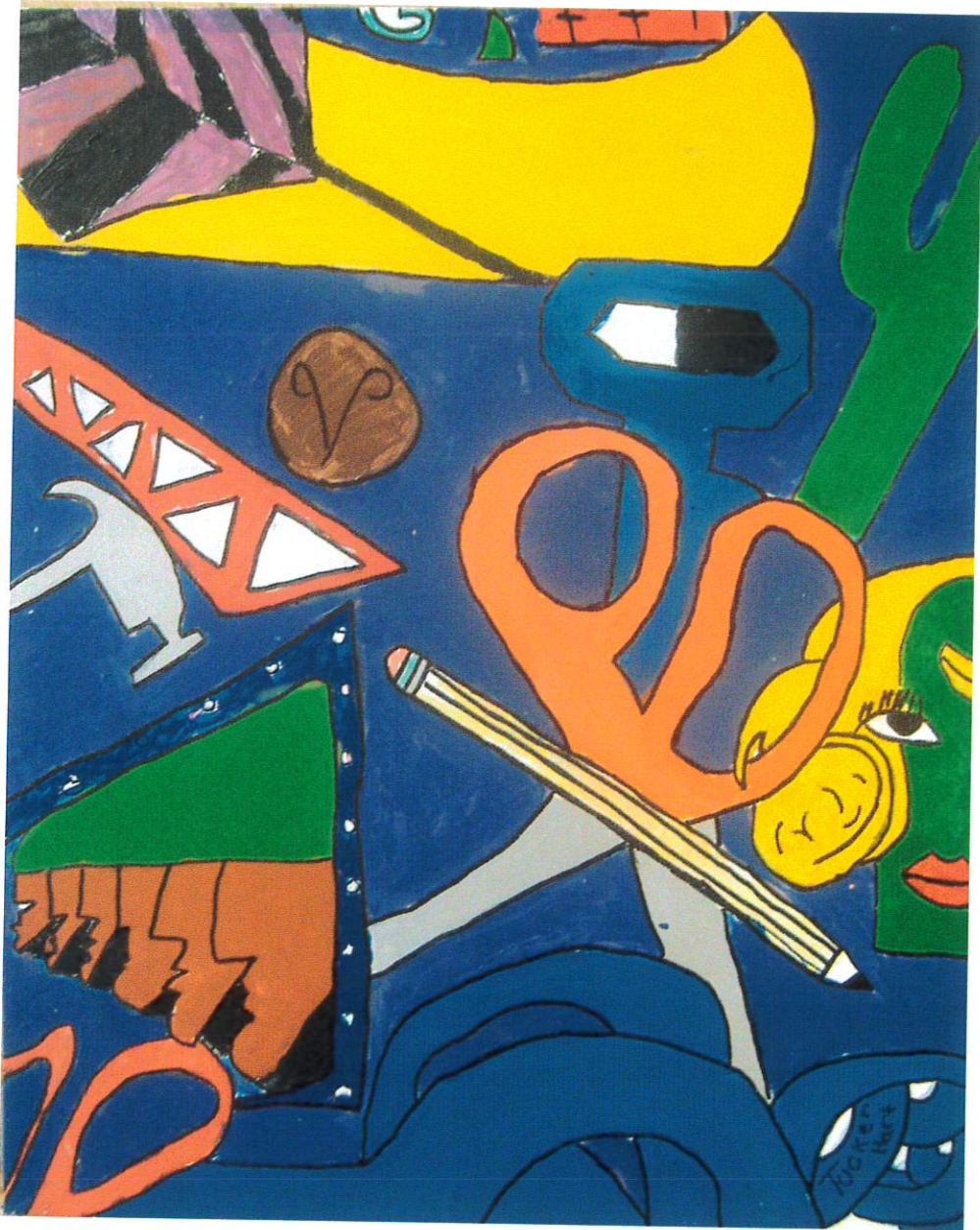
First Draft : Students compose drafts by juxtaposing and tracing imagery from Lichtenstein.



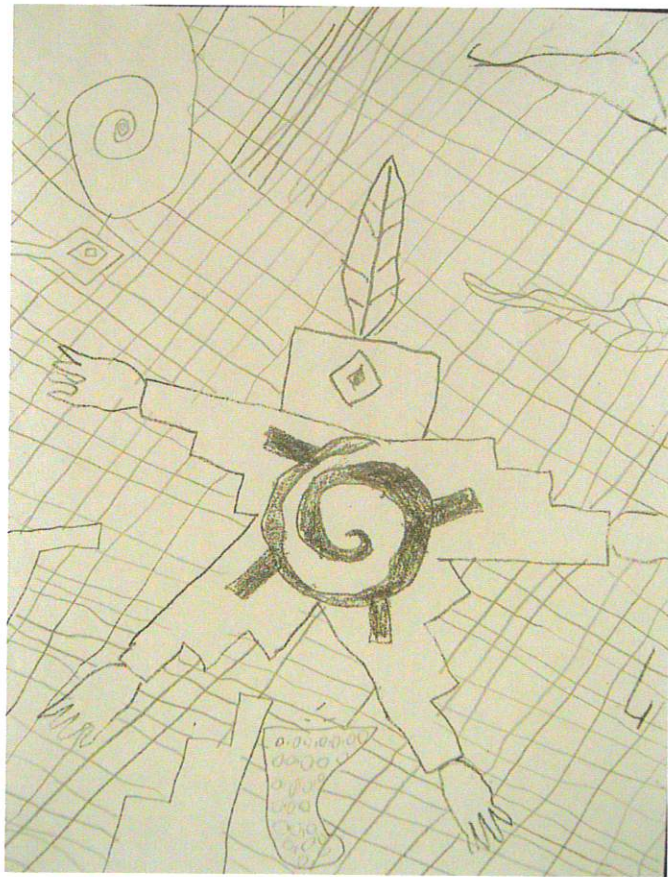
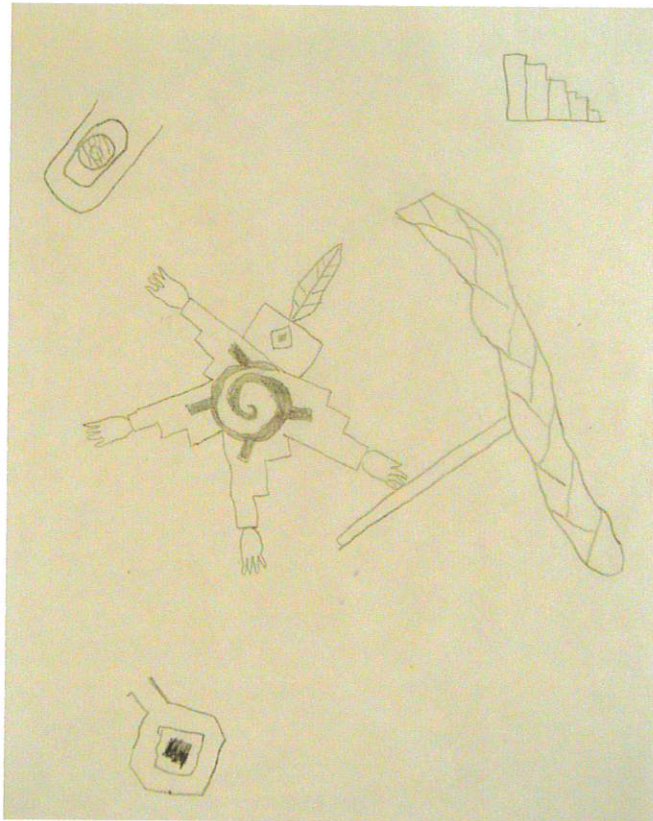
Second draft: Detail from upper right corner of first draft, enlarged



The image is traced onto an 8 x 10" piece of transparent acetate. Then, using a technique that Lichtenstein employed for his large-scale paintings, the image is enlarged and projected with an overhead projector onto a 20 x 24" canvas. Students experiment with color.



*Sharp But Dull*







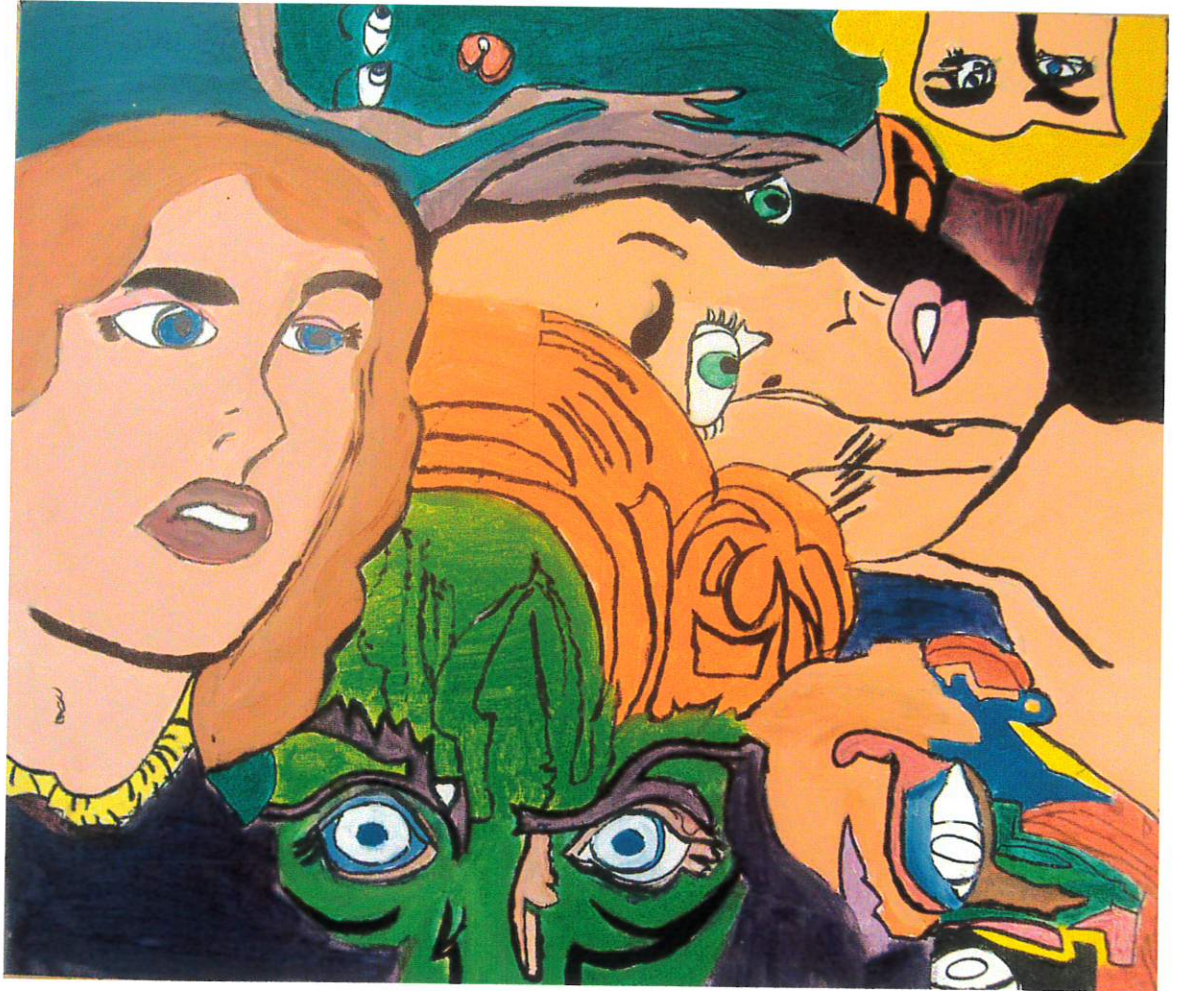
*Down We Fall (detail)*

"I like how Lichtenstein wasn't afraid to draw outside the lines in his early work. He didn't have to make the lines perfect to make a really good picture. With this painting, I wanted to try something different. It represents some sort of figurehead, a powerful person of high importance, falling down into nature without the distractions or flashing lights."









*Faces*



*Abstract Chess Board*



*Perfect Couple*



*Secrets Behind the Picture*



*Bubbling Up*



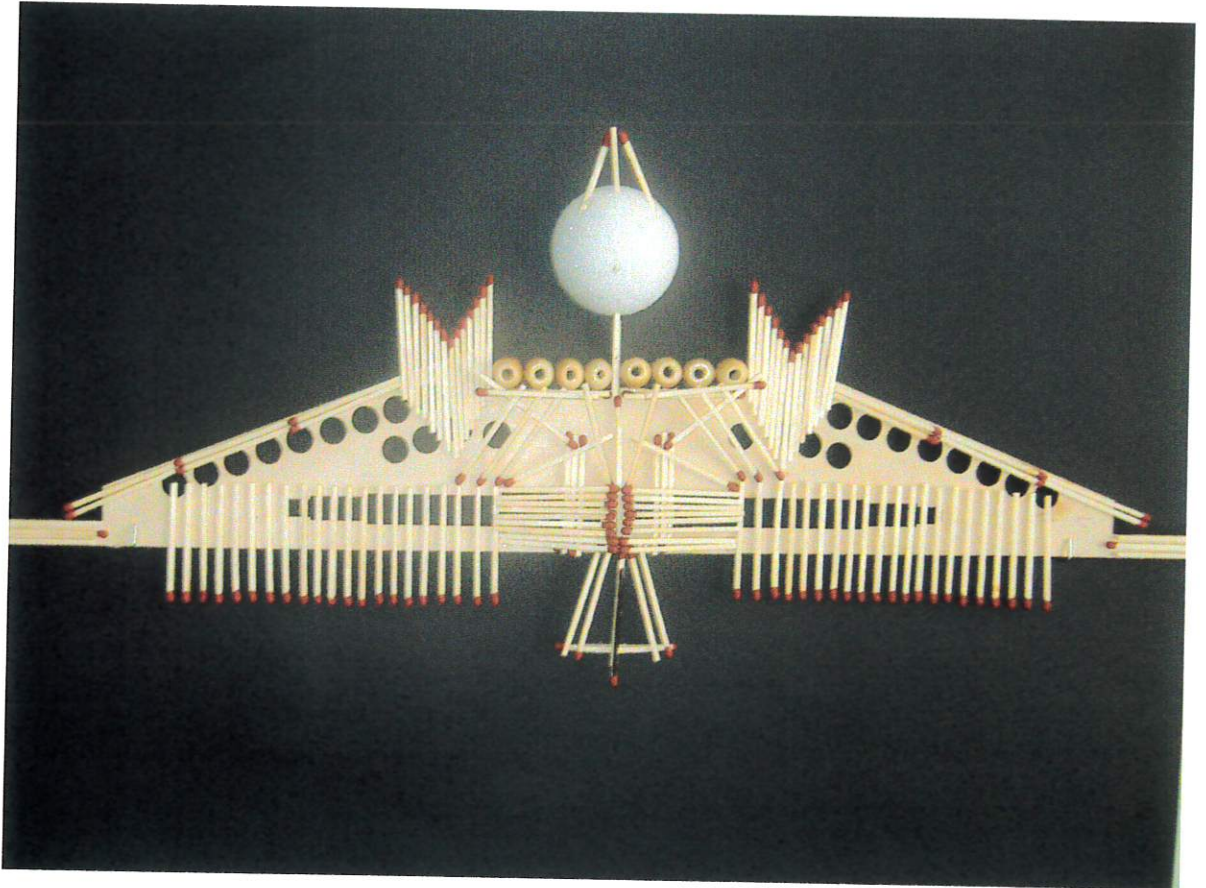
*Unsure Eyes*



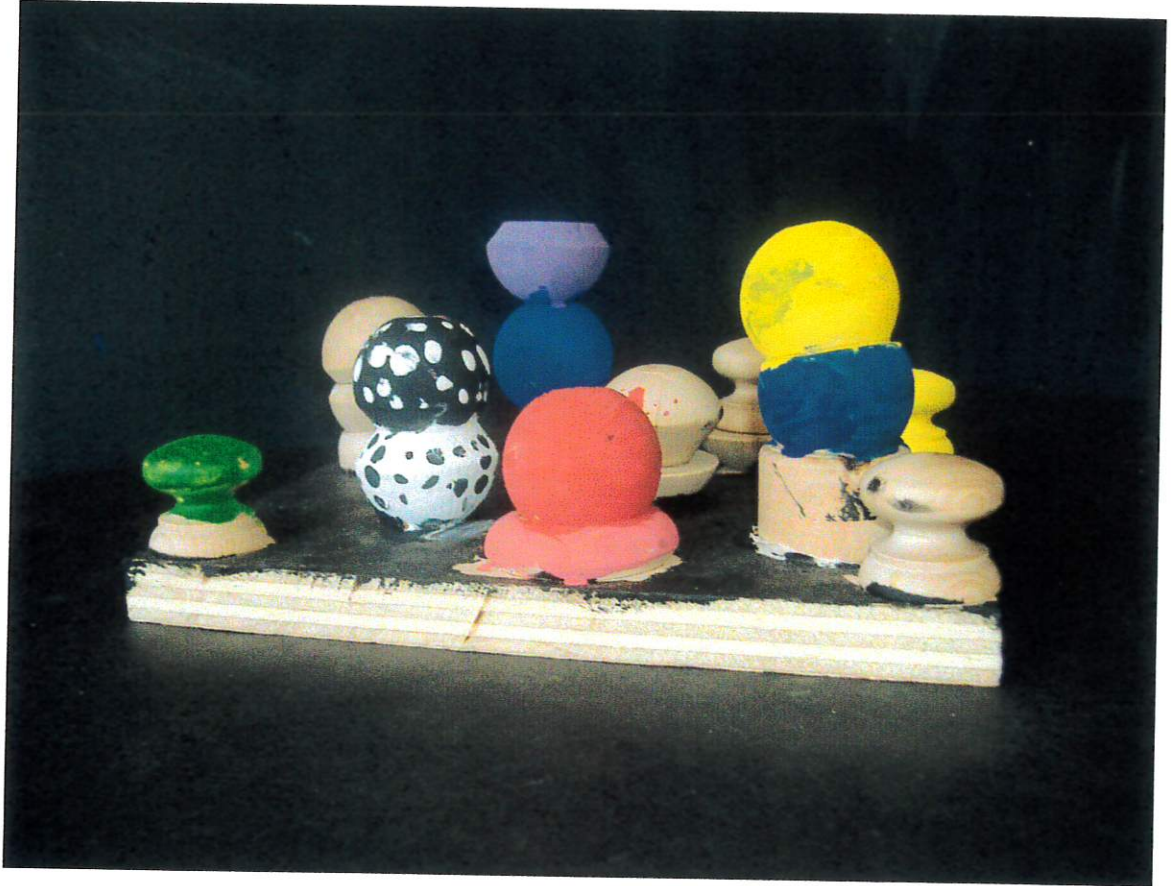
## SEMESTER TWO

### 7<sup>th</sup> GRADE ARTWORK

**Note to the Reader:** The 7<sup>th</sup> graders spent the first half of the second semester, from January through March 2006, engaged intensively with the work of contemporary artist Willie Cole. They guided the second graders through docent tours of Cole's exhibit at MAM, and wrote interpretive wall labels. The remainder of the year was devoted to making art in preparation for a culminating art exhibit at the Co-op in June. Unlike the more teacher-directed painting project inspired by MAM's Lichtenstein exhibit in semester one, students were given open studio time to work with materials on projects of their choosing. Drawing on the different experiences they had had, they created constructions, paintings, drawings, and sculptural performance pieces. The work that follows is a sample of the work they produced.



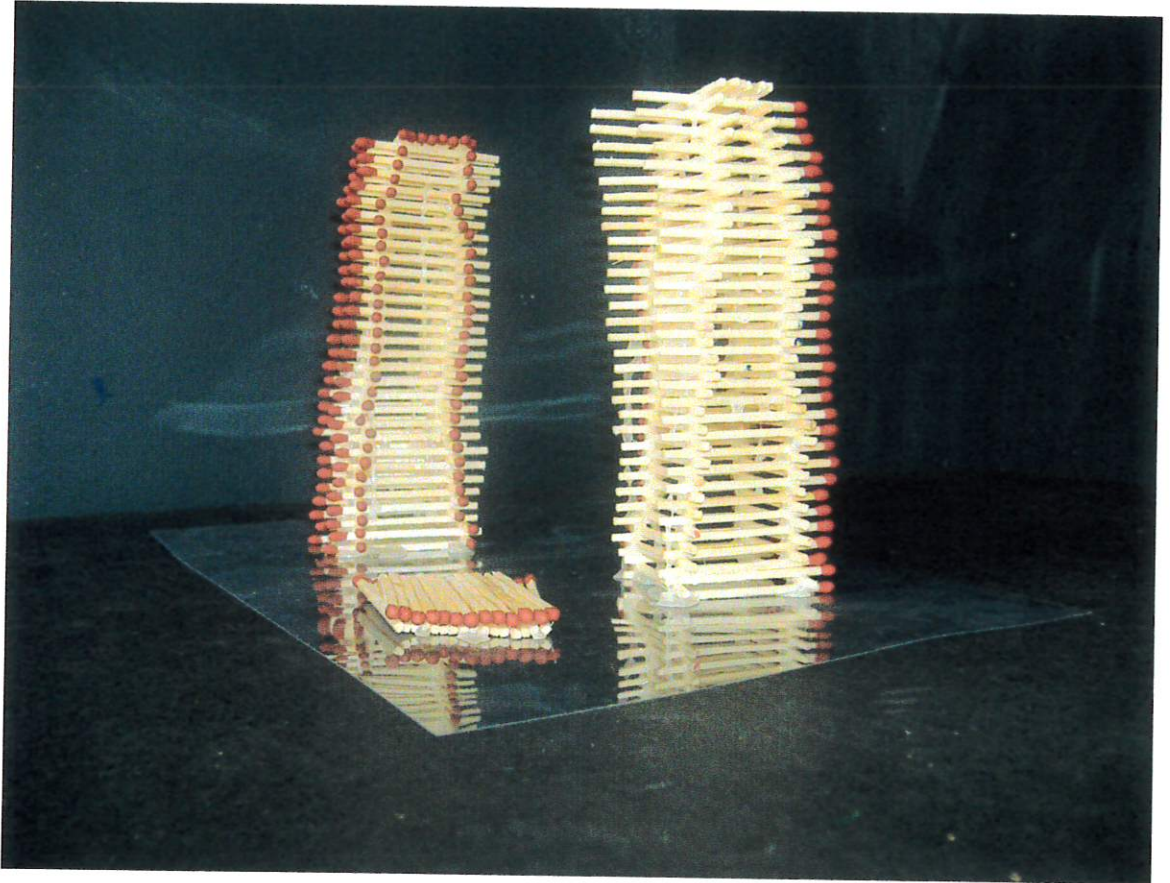
*Phoenix*



*Untitled Construction*



*Feather and Star*



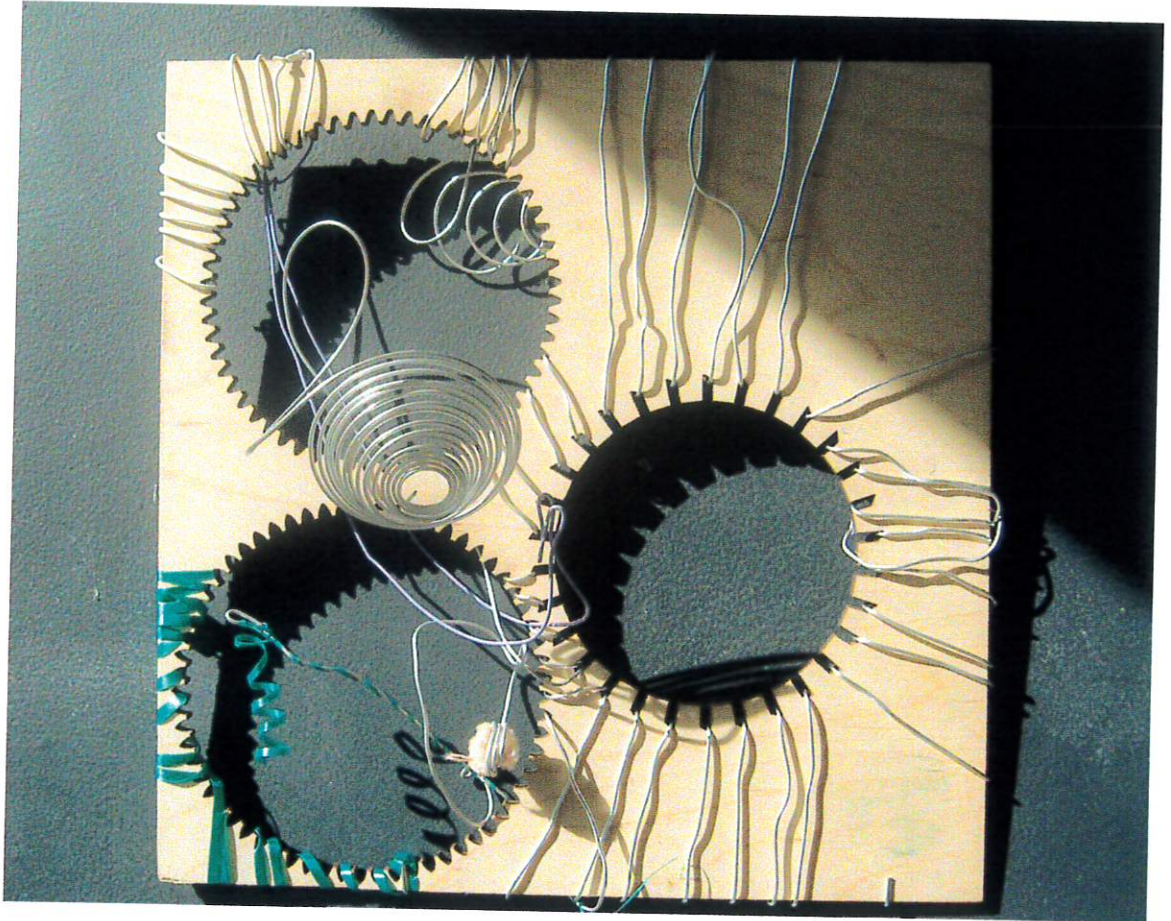
*Two Towers*



*Andy Warhol Moments*

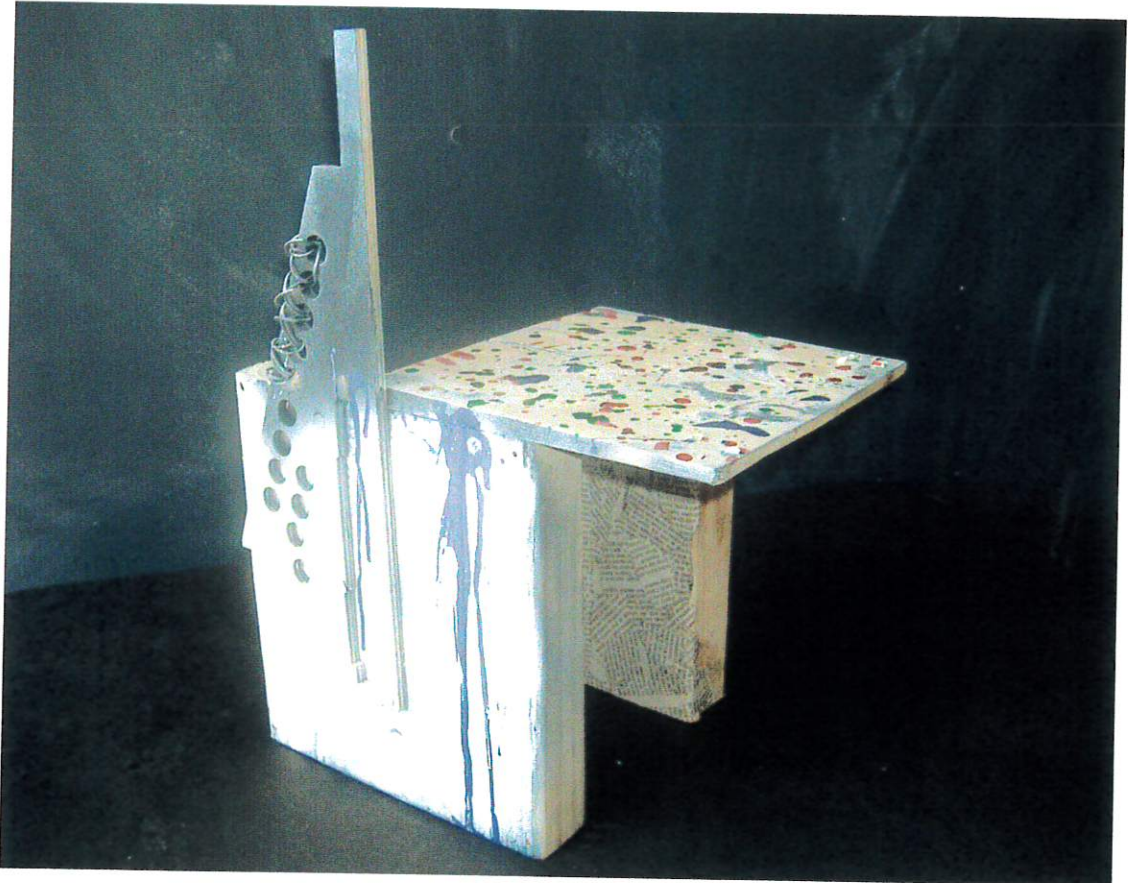


*Spider Web*



*Wired Up*

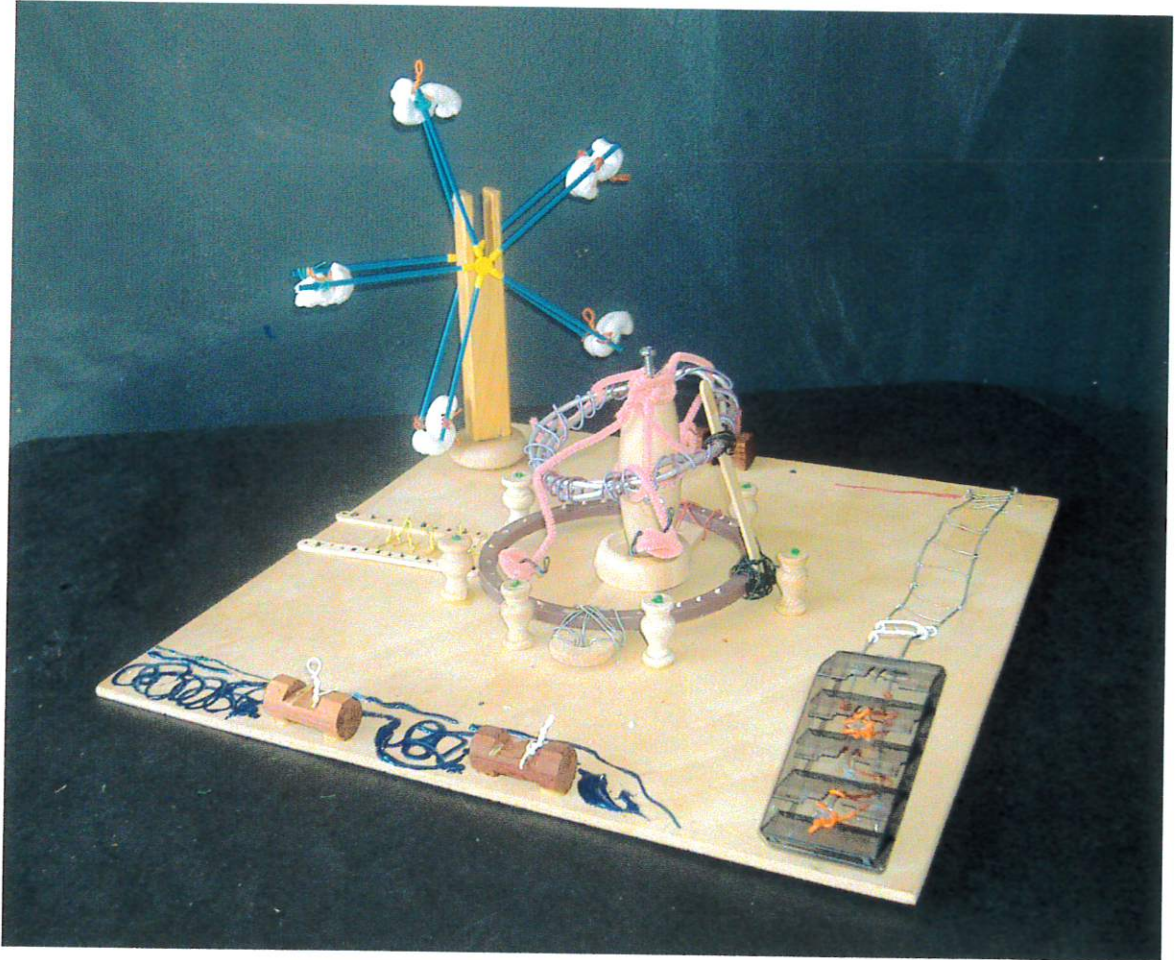




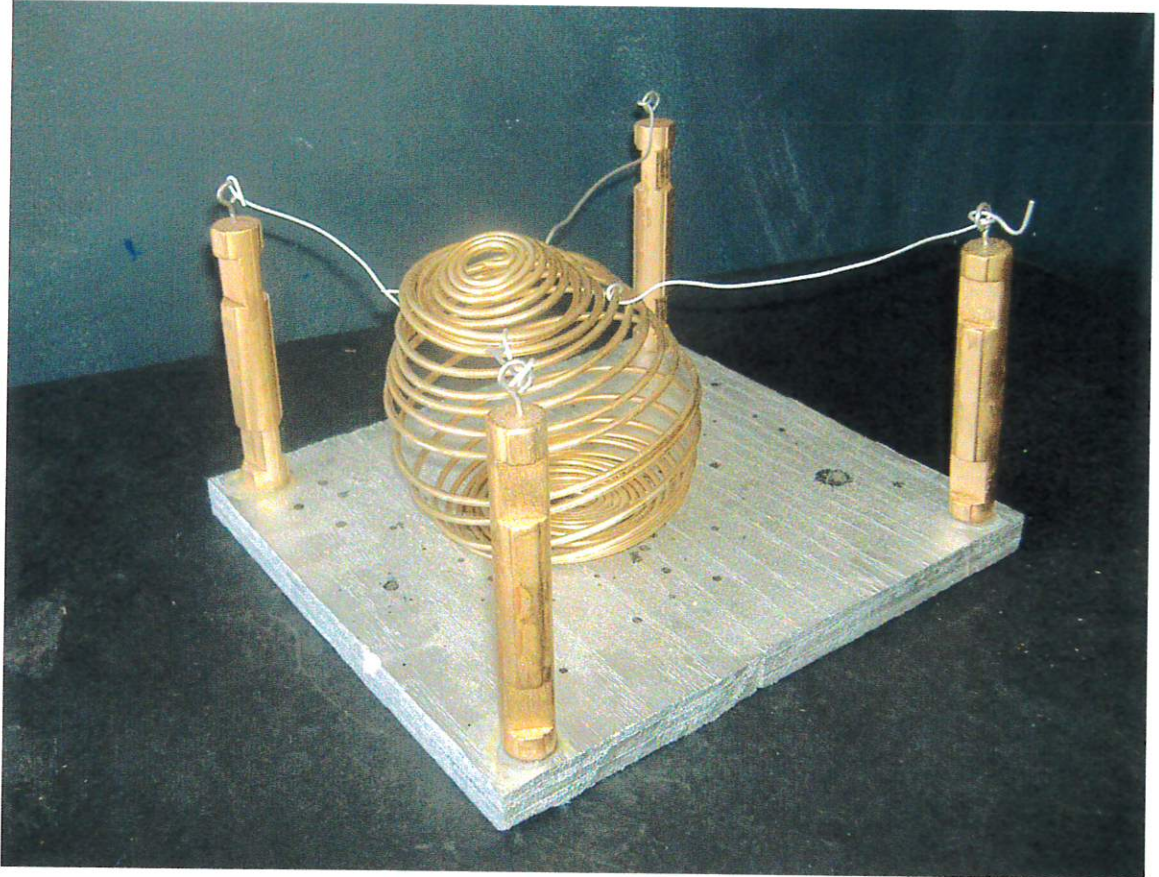
*Chaotic Loft*



*Two Sides of the Door*



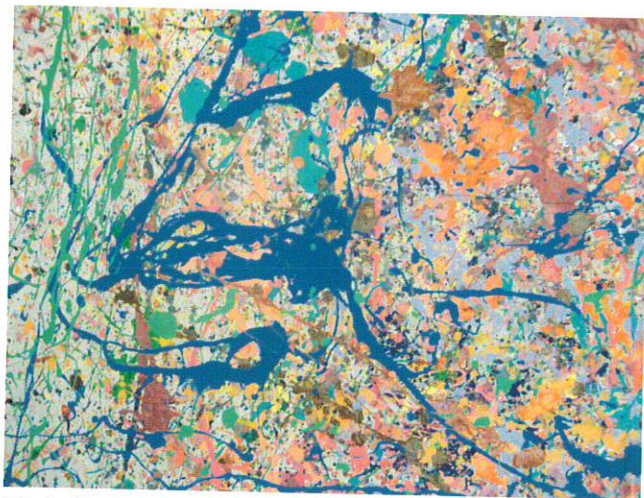
*Carnival*



*Untitled Construction*

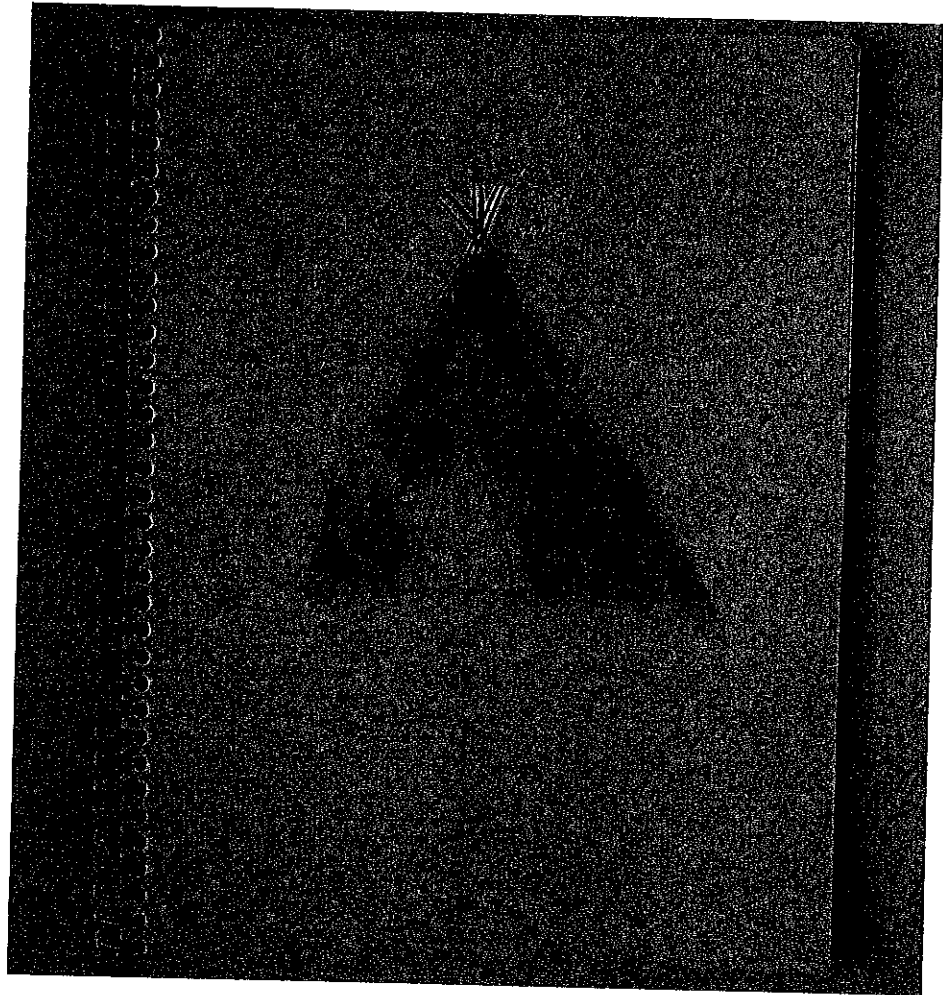


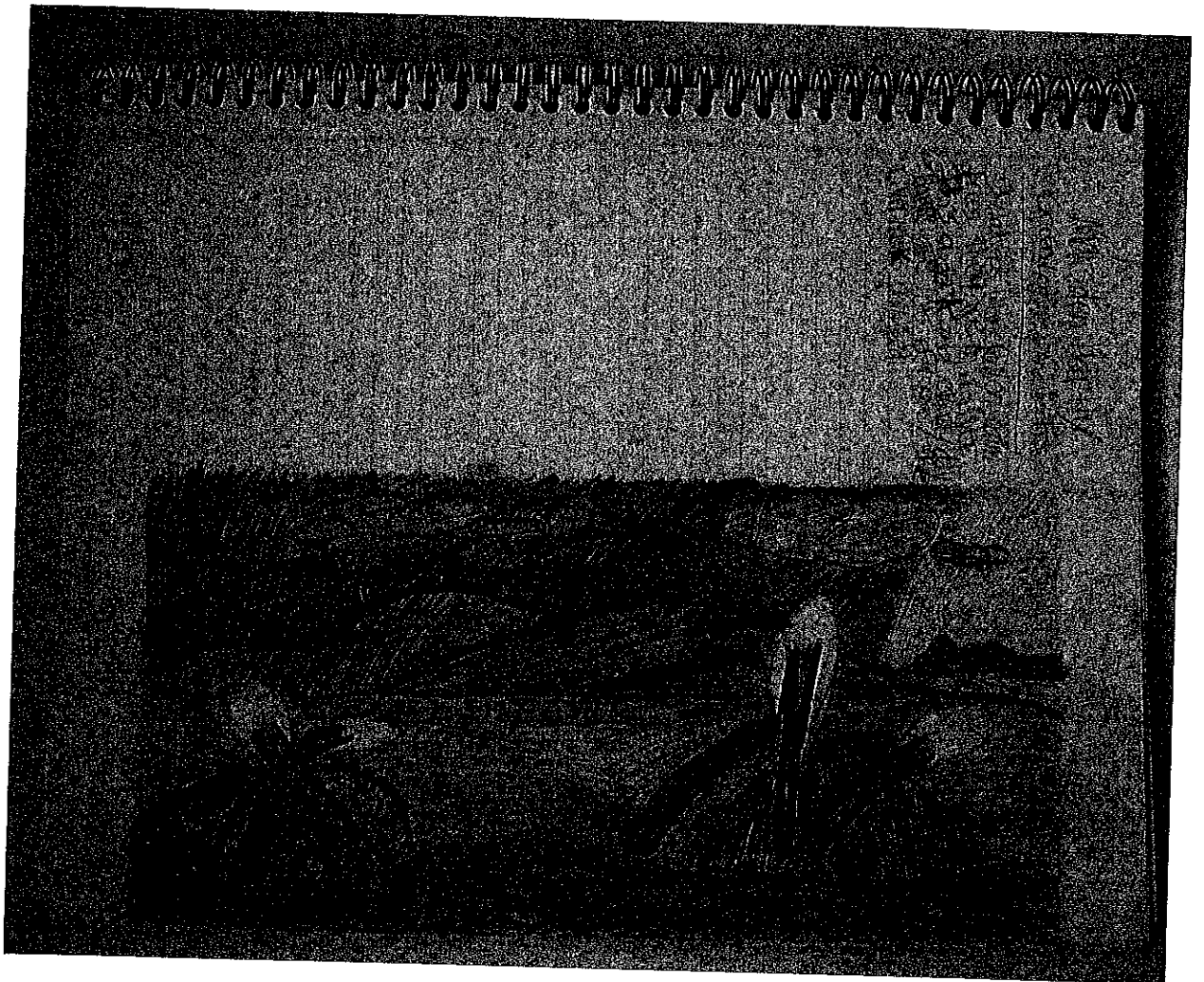
Group Project: *Splatter* (inspired by Jackson Pollock)



Detail

**7<sup>th</sup> GRADE STUDENT #1  
PORTFOLIO 2005-2006**

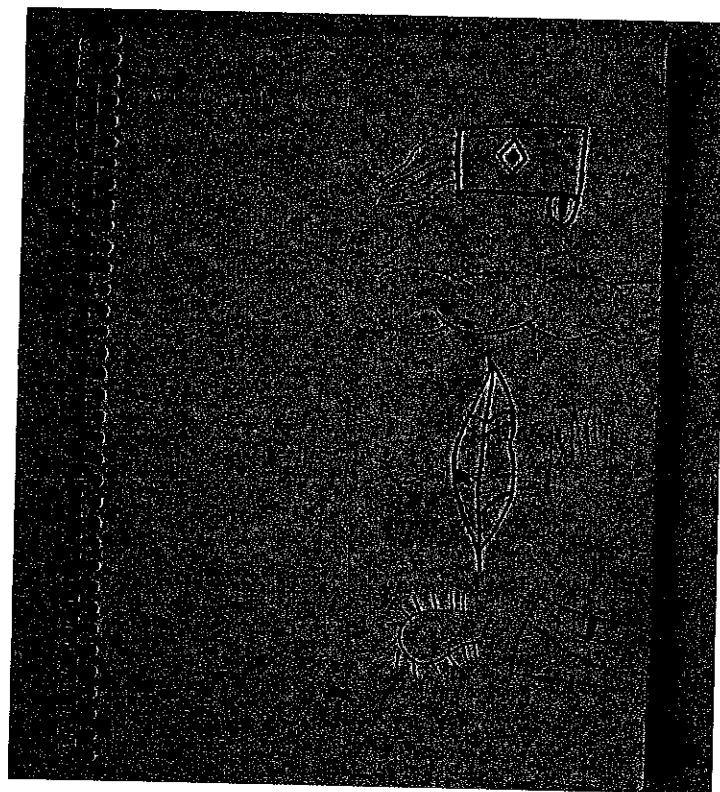
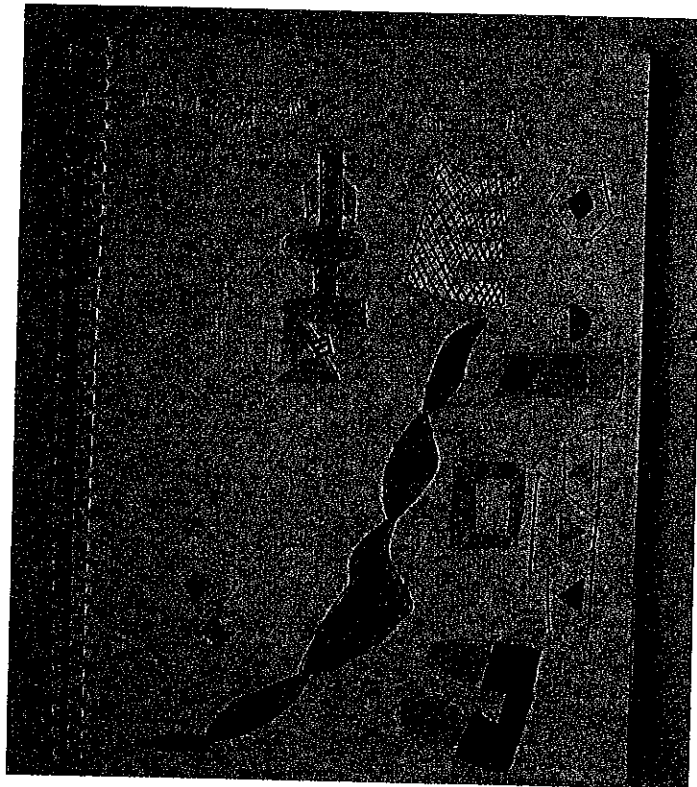




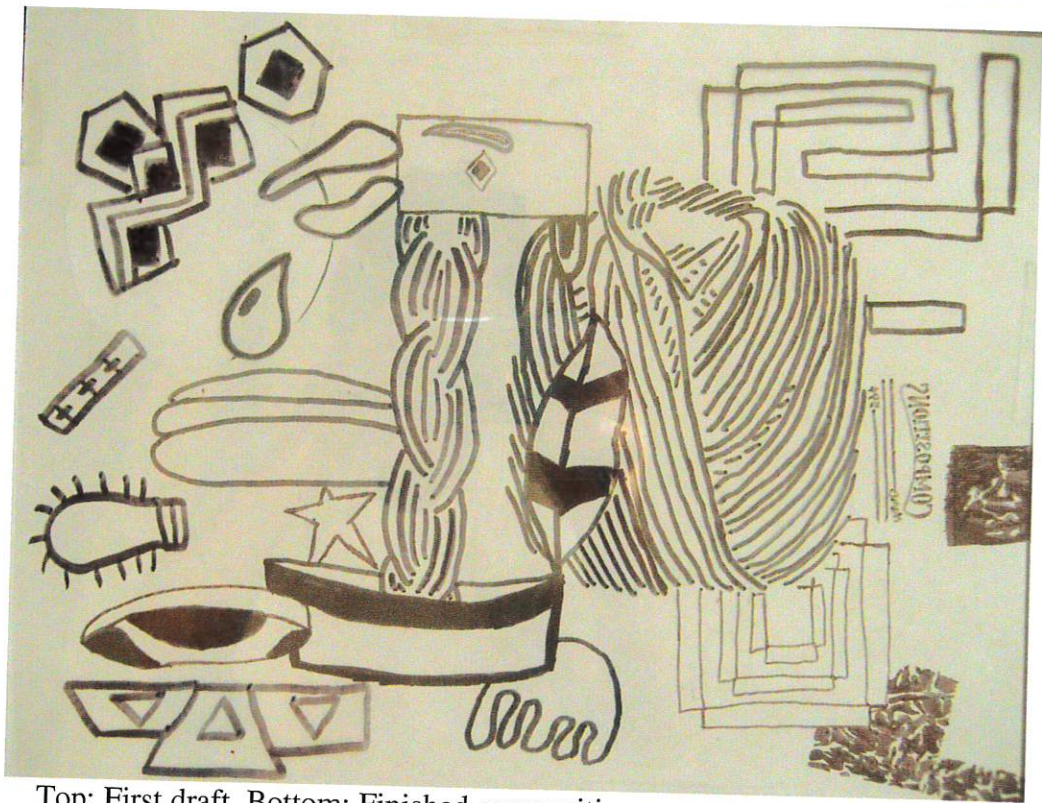
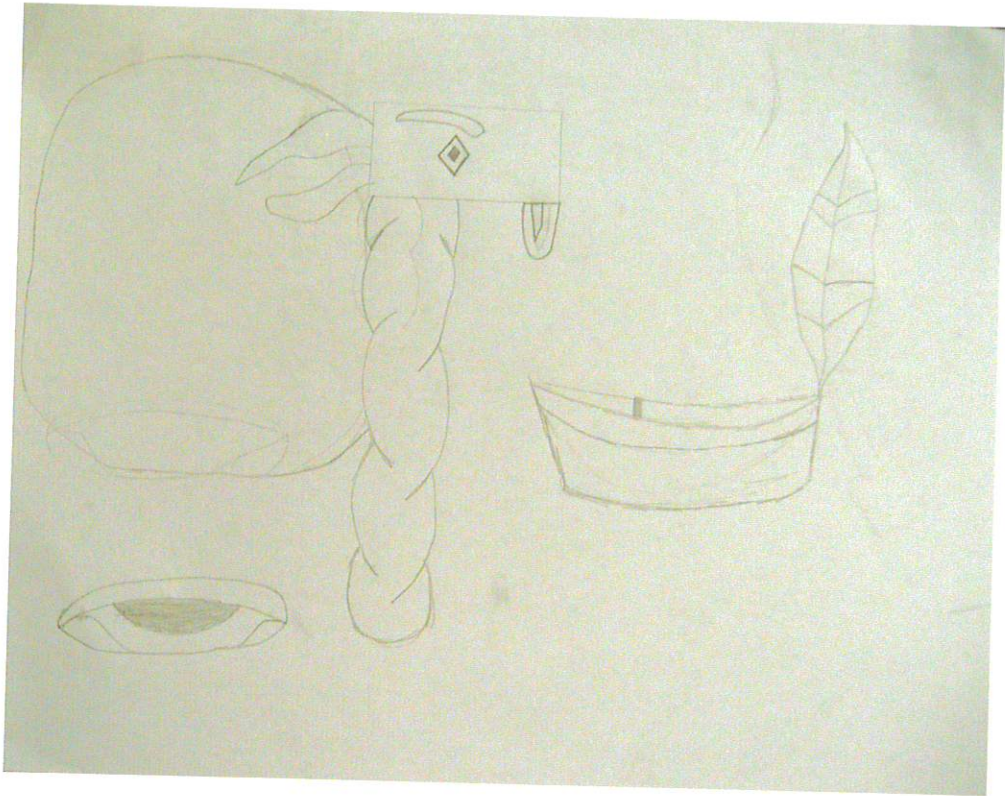
Response to Marsden Hartley's *Green Leaves and Rocks*, 1923

"It looked like fallen palm trees. They are in a river. It is a dark and cloudy day. There are lots of rocks. The river looks polluted."





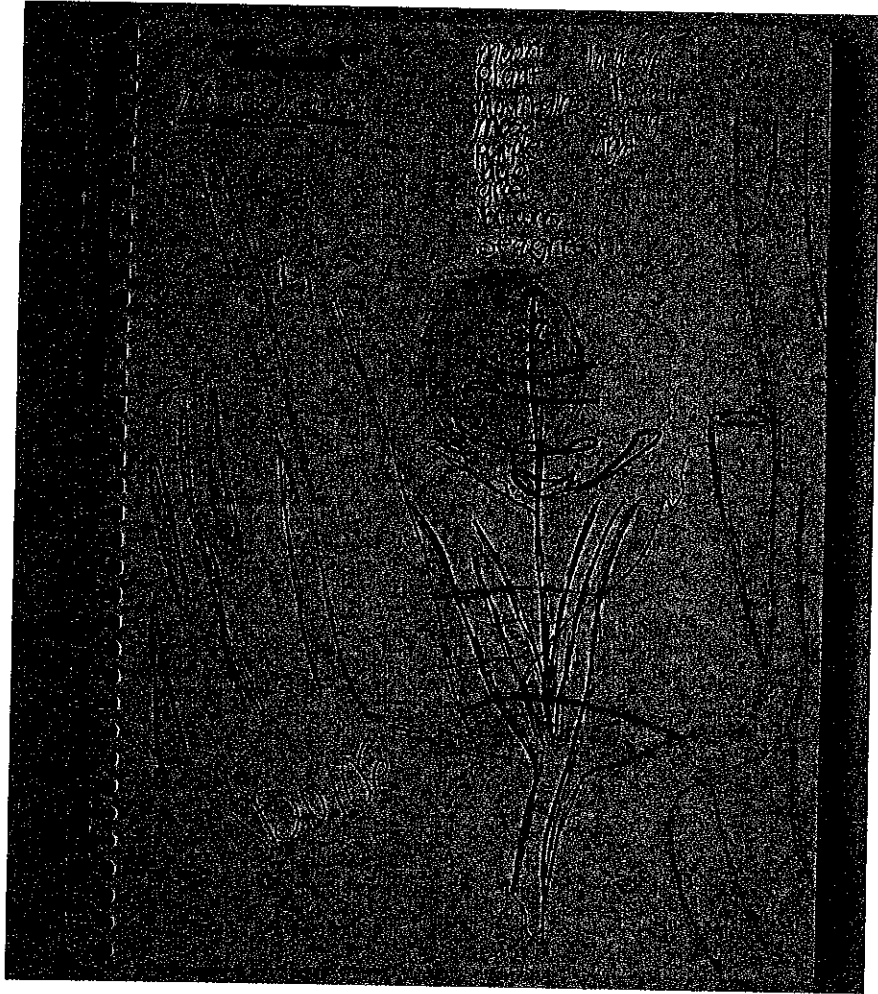
Sketchbook entries: "Roy Lichtenstein's Native American Encounters"



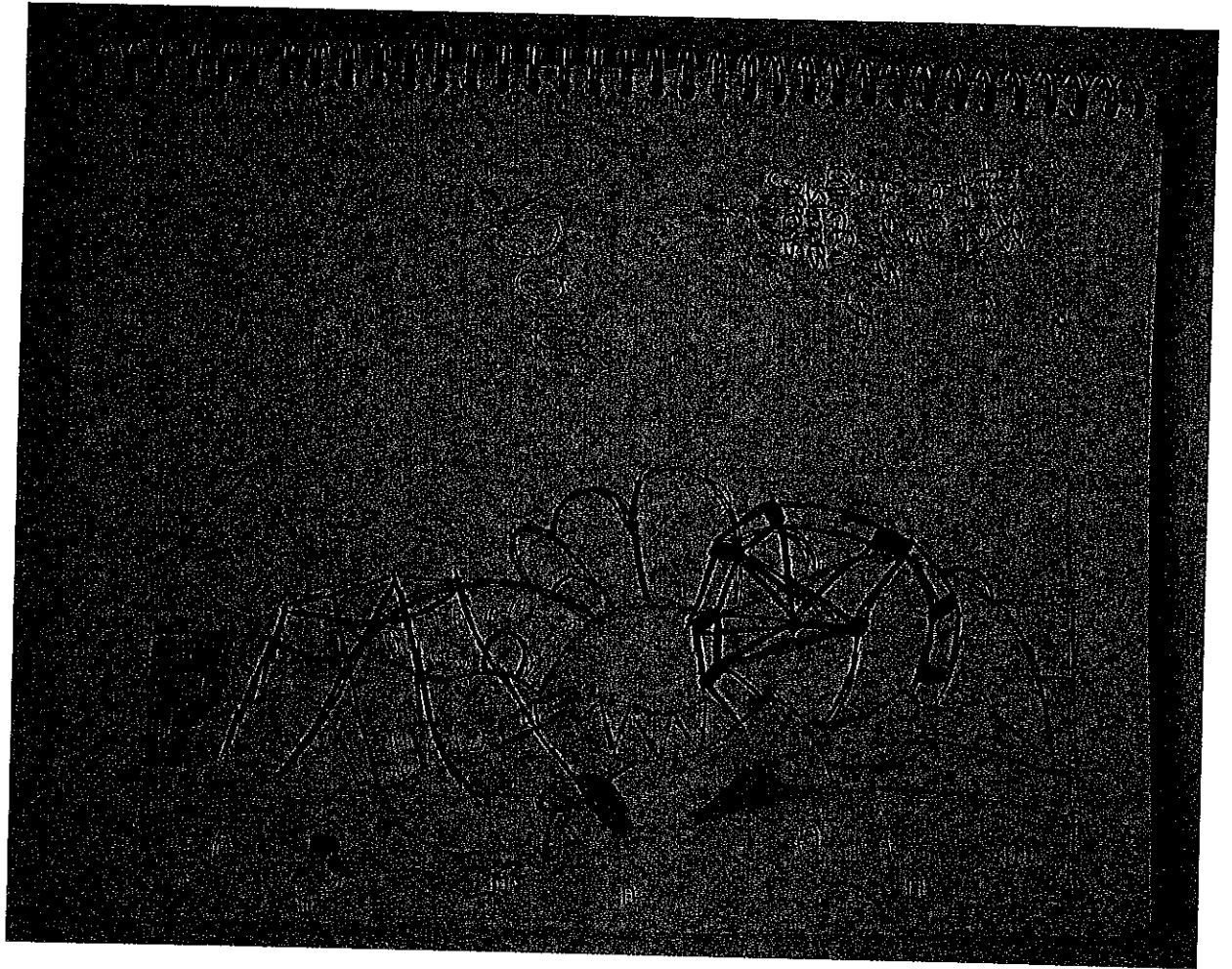
Top: First draft. Bottom: Finished composition on acetate



*Creature in Boat with Feather (and Hot Dog)*



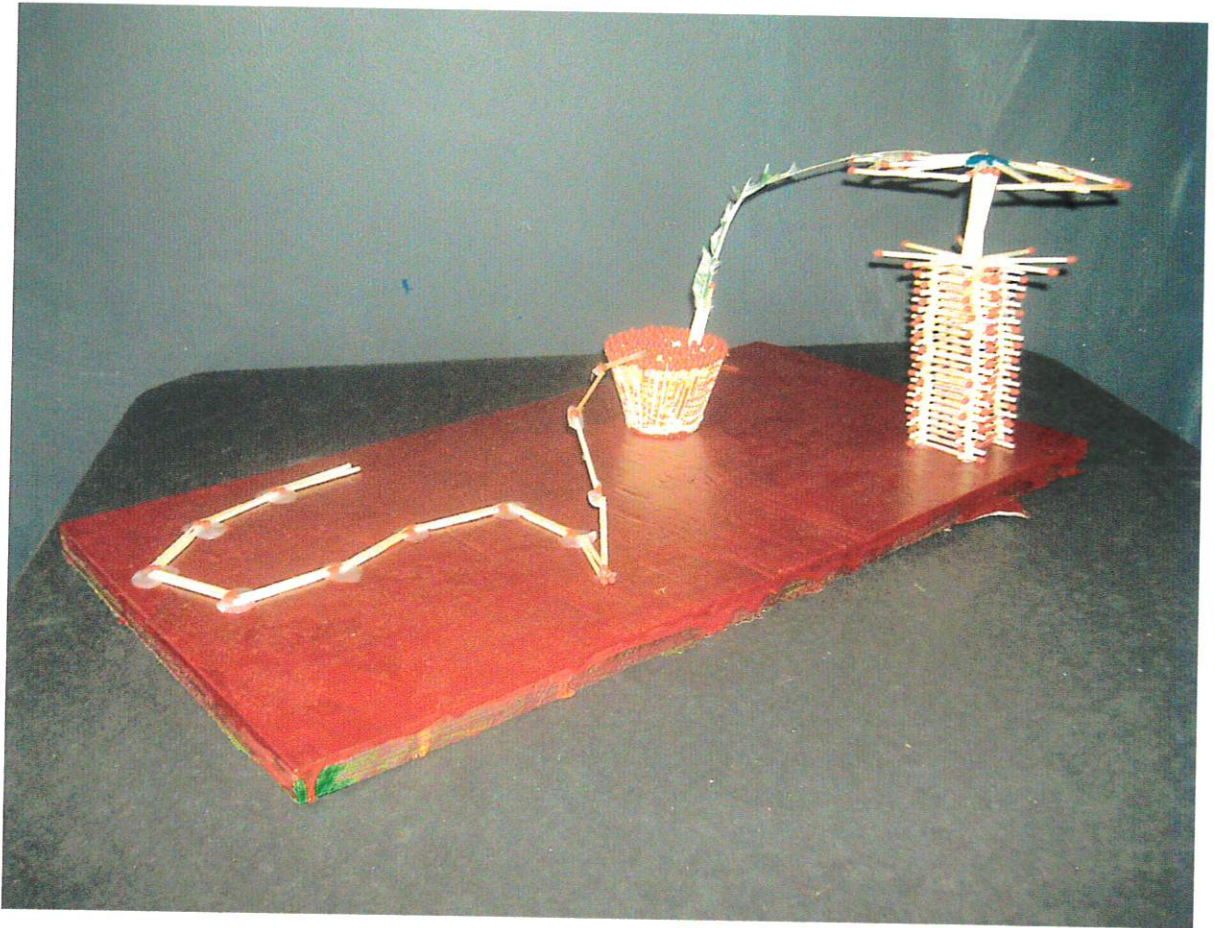
Response to Joseph Stella's *The Little Lake*, ca. 1927



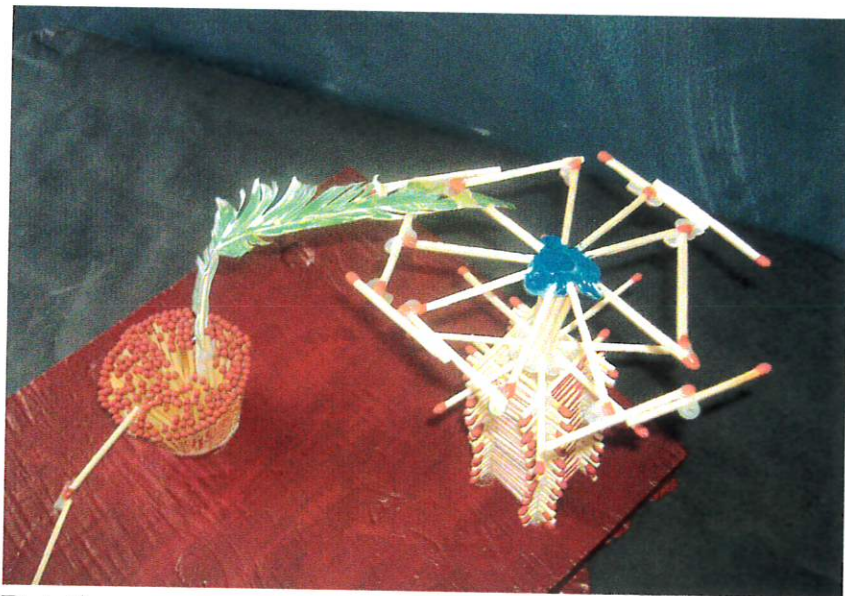
Response to Arthur Dove's *Carnival*, 1935



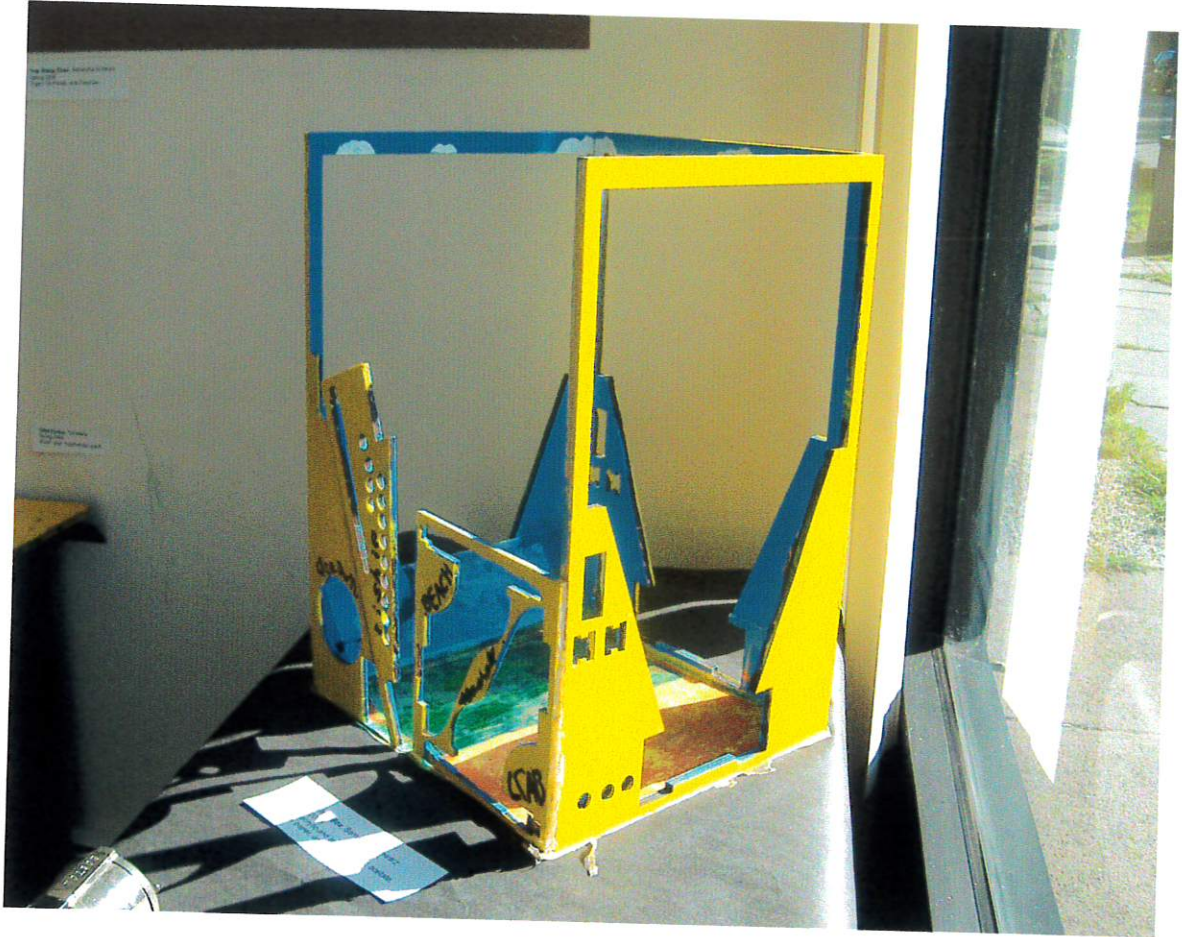
*Girl in a Room*



*Matchstick Fire*



Detail



*Ocean in a Box*





*Exotic Shoe*

## Interpretive Wall Label: Willie Cole Exhibit

### *Youth Perspectives*



Willie Cole, *Dog Eat Dog*

Burly dog, average dog, minute dog, smaller dog.

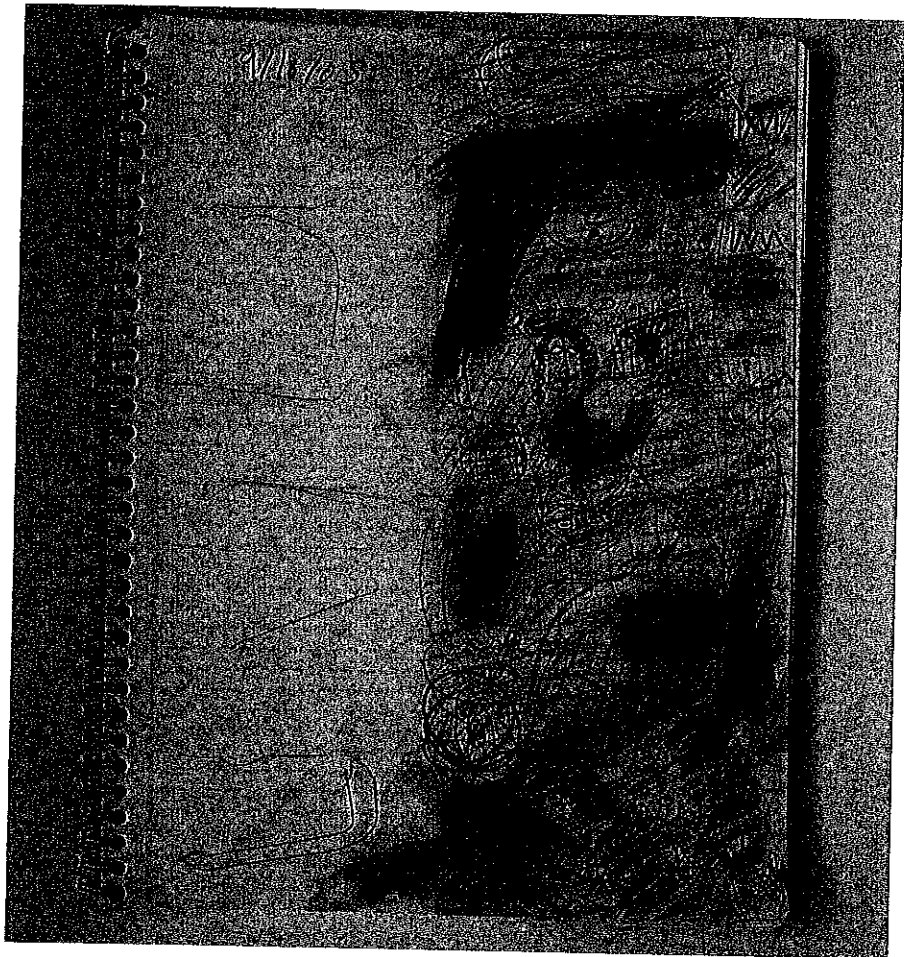
Dog eat dog devour dog eat dog.

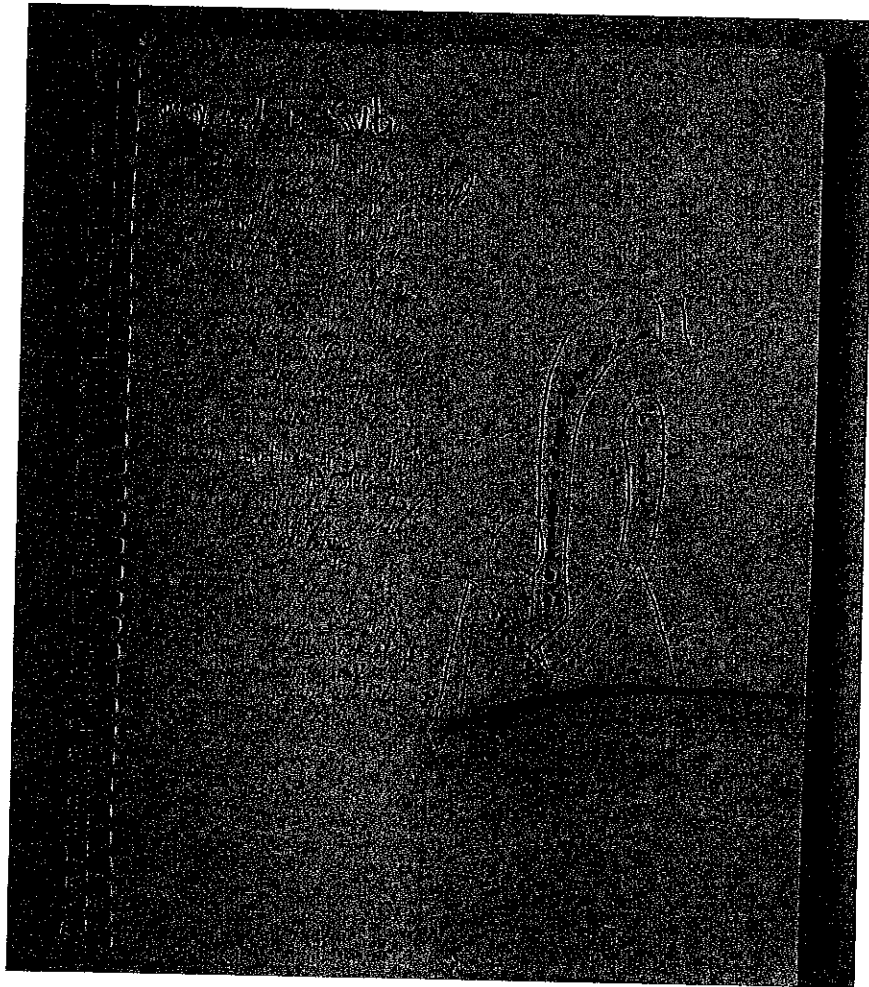
It's a dog gobble dog kind of world.

Rise to the top or get consumed by the mighty.

Dog munch dog chew dog swallow dog.

**7<sup>th</sup> GRADE STUDENT #2  
PORTFOLIO 2005-2006**





*"Psychedelic Sub"*

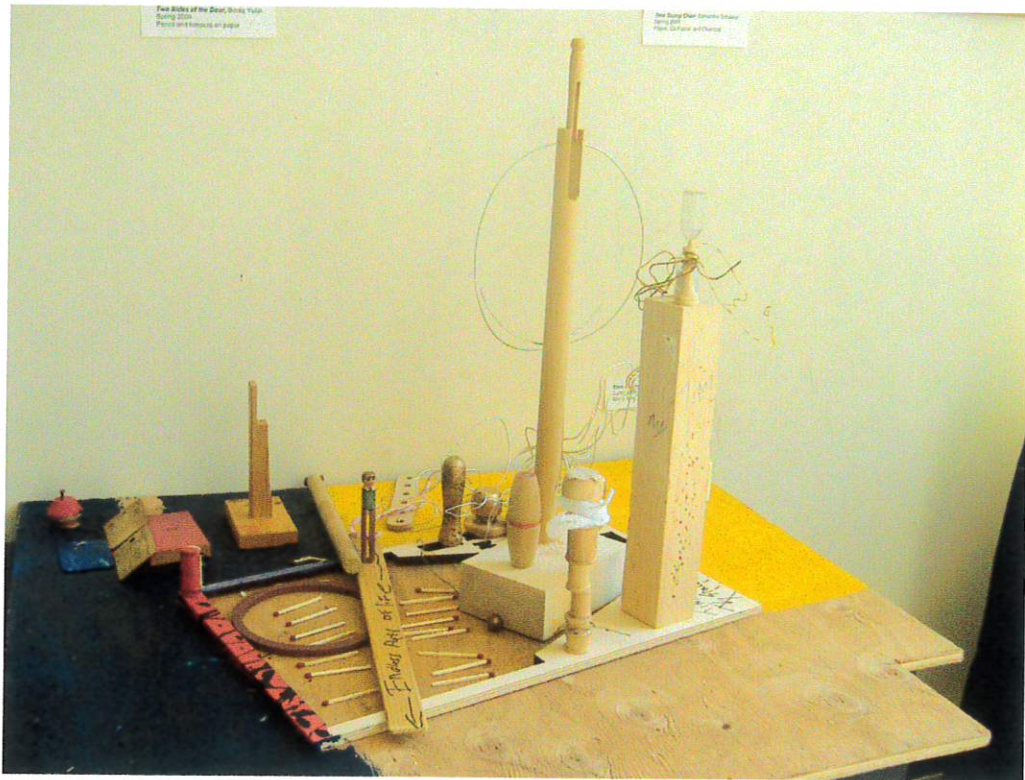
"The artist used big brush strokes for the background color. His work looked sort of sloppy but it made it stand out. The colors are mostly the same pink shade except for the black dots and lines. He didn't have perfect circles or lines. It seems kind of depressing all one color or like one set of shapes. I think it looks like a strange submarine in the sunset. It's dull but has bright colors but only one color. The dots weren't straight and they were sloppy, scattered and out of proportion. It seems the artist was trying to get a point across. It makes me sad because the dullness makes me think about sad things. I like how he made it like this. It's different. It makes me think."





*Dublz*

“Roy Lichtenstein’s work really inspired me in making this painting. I liked Lichtenstein’s male face from his pop art paintings. I based one of my main figures on the male faces in his pop art work and then added in the concept of double faces. I added many more double faces into my painting after that, which inspired the name of my painting “DUBLZ”. I didn’t want it spelled correctly because I wanted to have an original name. I also used a few more of Lichtenstein’s concepts in my painting because I was really inspired, but most of it was an original.”



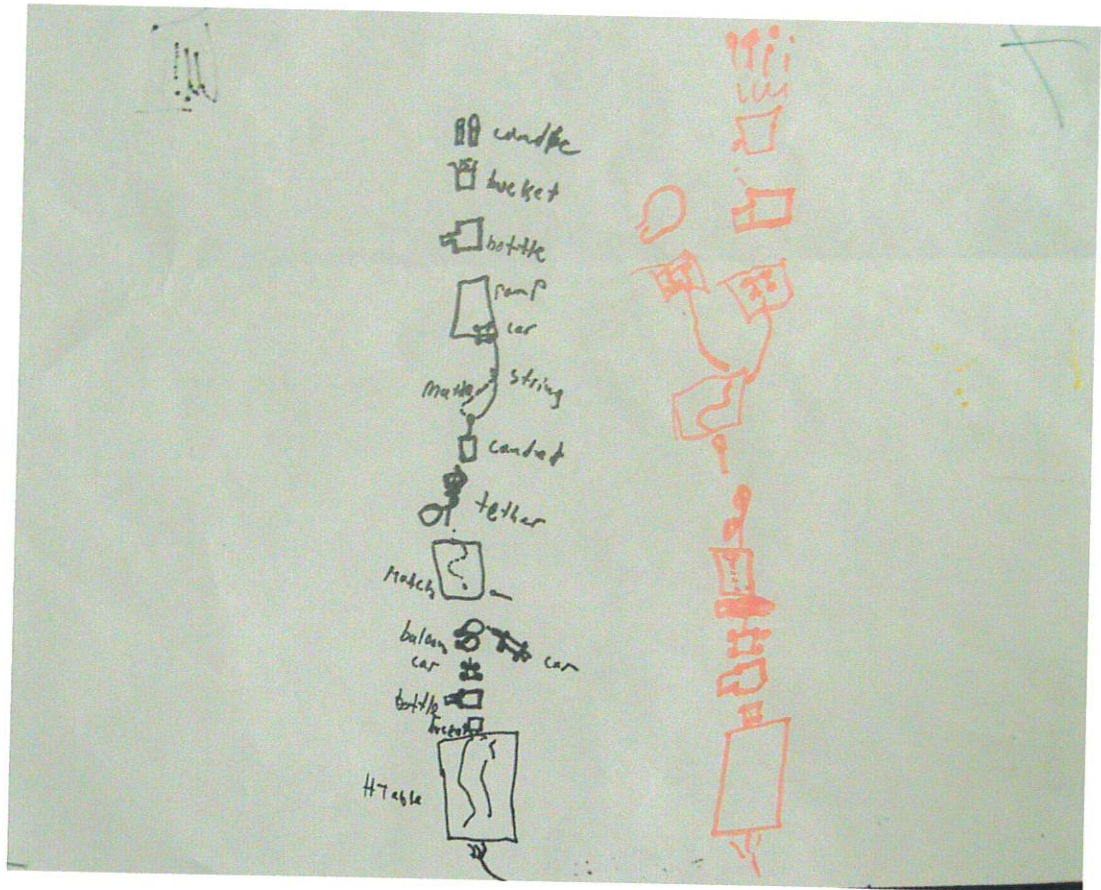
*Time Circus*



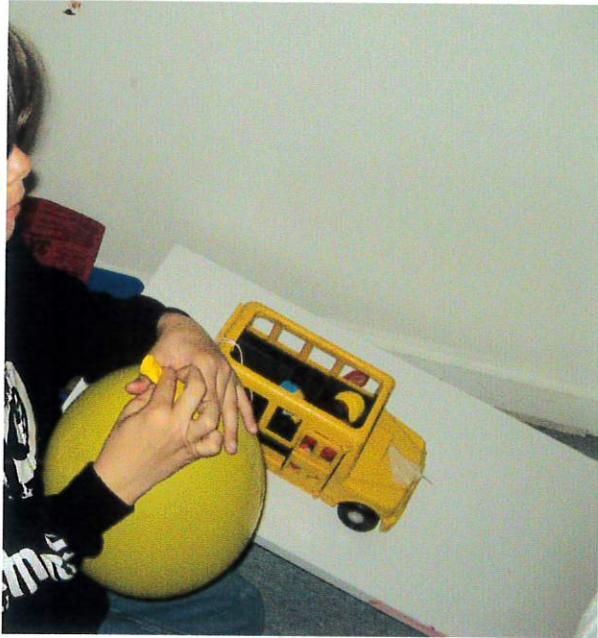
Detail

“It started with the idea of having everything revolve around time, endlessness, space, and circles and lines. I made lots of things with clocks and things that tell time. Circles and lines were big because they are never-ending. I made a path that was life and never-ending.”





Drawing for *Wild Fire* (work in progress). Inspired by Fischli and Weiss's *The Way Things Go*



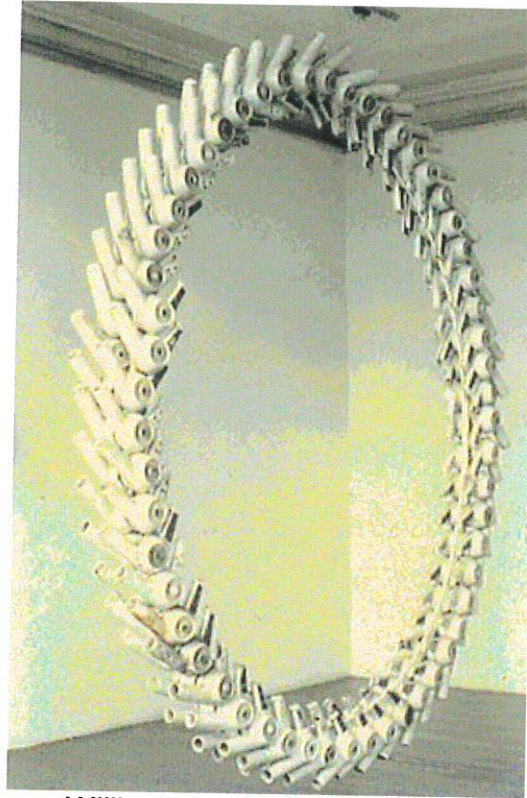
*Wild Fire*



*Wild Fire*

## Interpretive Wall Label: Willie Cole Exhibit

### *Youth Perspectives*



Willie Cole, *Air in Remission*

Endlessness,  
Circular wonder, heat  
Pointing, path, message, cleansing, hole  
Wind, rolling, destroying everything  
Flying, fan, power, ruling,  
Destructive, spinning, danger  
White mass, humming  
Complicated, yet dull  
New, futuristic, old and worn  
Up, down, which way, surrounding  
Floating in midair  
Great creation, magic, mystic, many thoughts  
Falling, circles, connect, spacing  
Larger than life, high, low, touching, ceiling,

Endless white spinning mass  
Of mysterious floating objects  
Destroying everything in its path.

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- All pages are numbered, including the pages of any appendices. If the thesis includes an unpaginated picture book or other unnumbered inserts, pagination accounts for these pages and resumes on the correct number.
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- All of the pages are in the correct order and face right side-up.
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5/5/08  
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