

the warhol: resources & lessons

Unit Lesson Plans / Critical Thinking / Aesthetics / Lesson 5

Great Debates about Art



Overview:

Using artworks as springboards for philosophical discussion, students debate the three big questions posed in this lesson: What makes that art? What choices do artists make to create value in art? What makes art original or creative? Group Dialogue prompts and historical cultural context help move students to higher-level philosophical thinking as well as application of knowledge, reasoning, and logic.

Grades: 6-12

Subjects: Philosophy, Language Arts, Art History, Visual Arts

Learning Objectives and Cognitive Skills:

- Students debate philosophical questions about beauty and the nature of art using observations, personal experience, historical theories, and additional research to support their arguments.
- Students listen to differing opinions and present new questions as a result of their dialogue.

Pennsylvania State Standards:

Dialogue 5.1: Artistic Choices and Processes

Arts and Humanities

Production, Performance, and Exhibition

9.1.8. C. Communicate a unifying theme or point of view through the production of works in the arts.

Aesthetic Response

9.4.5. D. Explain choices made regarding media, technique, form, subject matter, and themes that communicate the artist's philosophy within a work in the arts and humanities.

9.4.12. B. Describe and analyze the effects that works in the arts have on groups, individuals, and the culture.

Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening

Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening

Speaking and Listening

16.8. C. Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.

- Use complete sentences.
- Pronounce words correctly.
- Adjust volume to purpose and audience.

Dialogue 5.2: What is Art?

Arts and Humanities

Historical and Cultural Contexts

9.2. E. Analyze how historical events and culture impact forms, techniques, and purposes of works in the arts

Aesthetic Response

9.4.8. C. Describe how the attributes of the audience's environment influence aesthetic

Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening

Speaking and Listening

1.6.11. D. Contribute to discussions.

- Ask relevant, probing questions.
- Respond with relevant information, ideas, or reasons in support of opinions expressed.
- Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of others.
- Adjust tone and involvement to encourage equitable participation.
- Clarify, illustrate, or expand on a response when asked.
- Present support for opinions. Paraphrase and sum-

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marize, when prompted.

Pennsylvania State Standards:

Dialogue 5.3: Originality and Creativity

Arts and Humanities

Historical and Cultural Contexts

9.2. A. Explain the historical, cultural, and social context of an individual work in the arts.

Aesthetic Response

9.4.5. D. Explain choices made regarding media, technique, form, subject matter, and themes that communicate the artist's philosophy within a work in the arts and humanities.

9.4.12. D. Analyze and interpret a philosophical position identified in works in the arts and humanities.

Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening

Reading Critically in All Content Areas

1.2.11. A. Read and understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas.

Civics and Government

Principles and Documents of Government

5.1.12. J. Analyze how the law promotes the common good and protects individual rights.

Procedure for all three dialogues:

1. Choose a dialogue that fits your students' interests or curriculum needs.
 - Aesthetics Dialogue 5.1: Artist's Choices and Process in Art
 - Aesthetics Dialogue 5.2: What Makes Something a Work of Art?
 - Aesthetics Dialogue 5.3: Originality and Creativity in Art
2. Present and post the guidelines for good dialogue:
 - Respond and/or build upon to what others have said.
 - Give reasons for your views.
 - Respect other people's opinions and ideas.
 - Share the floor; do not monopolize the conversation.
3. Prior to group dialogue students should use Handout 3.1 to write down their aesthetic experience with the artwork.
4. Use the Group Dialogue prompts and allow time for students to feel comfortable answering and conversing with one another.

Assessment:

After all three dialogues, students can assess their participation using Dialogue Assessment Handout 5.1

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Dialogue 5.1: Artist's Choices and Process

Show the hand-drawn and photographic silkscreen painting self-portraits by Andy Warhol.



Andy Warhol, *Self-Portrait*, 1986, acrylic on HMP paper, 40 1/8 x 30 1/4 in. ©AWF



Andy Warhol, *Self-Portrait*, 1964, acrylic, metallic paint, and silk-screen ink on linen, 20 1/8 x 16 1/8 x 3/4 in. ©AWF

Students should complete Handout 3.1 looking at the self-portrait that they like best.

Group Dialogue Prompts:

- Discuss which image is a better portrait. Explain why you think so.
- What results does Warhol achieve by choosing to draw by hand? How do his choices affect the artwork and its value?
- What results does Warhol achieve by choosing a photomechanical process? How do his choices affect the artwork and its value?
- Are some materials and techniques used in making art better than others?
- Do artists have to take a lot of time to make good art? Why or why not?
- Can any person who enjoys making things call him/herself an artist? Why or why not? Where do we get our standards for who is considered an artist?

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Aesthetics Dialogue 5.2: What Makes Something a Work of Art?

Students complete the Handout 3.1 while looking at the *Brillo* box.

After the students have finished the handout above, provide them with the following information:

Historical and Cultural Context information:

In the mid-1960s Warhol carried his consumer-product imagery into the realm of sculpture. Calling to mind a factory assembly line, Warhol employed carpenters to construct numerous plywood boxes identical in size and shape to supermarket cartons. Then, with assistance from Gerard Malanga and Billy Linich, he painted and silkscreened the boxes with logos of different consumer products: Kellogg's corn flakes, Brillo soap pads, Mott's apple juice, Del Monte peaches, and Heinz ketchup. The finished sculptures were virtually indistinguishable from their cardboard supermarket counterparts. Warhol first exhibited them at the Stable Gallery in 1964, cramming the space with piled-high boxes that recalled a cramped grocery warehouse. He invited collectors to buy them by the stack, and though they did not sell well, the boxes caused much controversy. In reference to his boxes, Warhol later said that he "wanted something ordinary," and it was this mundane, commercial subject matter that infuriated the critics. The perfectly blank, "machine-made" look of Warhol's boxes contrasted sharply with the gestural brushstrokes of the popular Abstract Expressionist paintings.

Group Dialogue Prompts:

- Describe how Warhol's *Brillo* is like other art and how it is not like other art.
- Describe the function of the cardboard Brillo package bought by consumers in a grocery store.
- Describe the function of Warhol's *Brillo* boxes.
- Does every artwork have a purpose?
- Should every artwork have a purpose?
- Is it possible to dislike an artwork, but to judge it as good?
- If we don't experience "joy" when looking at this work and it is not beautiful, what is its value?
- If we can't understand its moral purpose, is it art?

Extension: Read the newspaper article found in Lesson 4 / Handout 4.4 for further historical and contextual information.



Andy Warhol, Installation, *Brillo*, 1964, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA, silkscreen ink and house paint on plywood. 17x 17 x 14 in. each.

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Aesthetics Dialogue 5.3: Originality and Creativity in Art

Students should complete Handout 3.1 while viewing *Mona Lisa* or *Last Supper*.

Review definitions for:

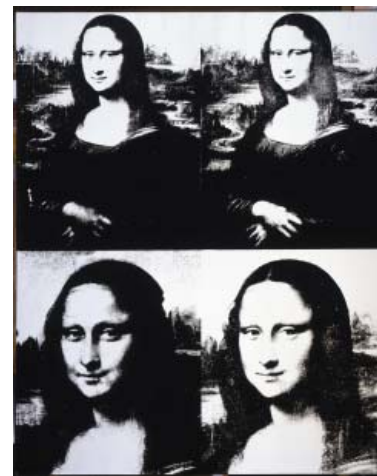
- Originality
- Creativity
- Derivative
- Appropriation
- Copy



Andy Warhol, *Last Supper*, 1986, acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas, 78 x 306 in. ©AWF

Group Dialogue Prompts:

- Is Warhol's *Mona Lisa* or *Last Supper* original? Is the work creative?
- Should artists be familiar with artworks made by others? If so, how should artists use this knowledge?
- Is it okay to copy when making an artwork? When is it not okay?
- How do artworks show originality?
- Is anything truly original?
- Where do artists' ideas come from?
- Are there rules for appropriation?



Andy Warhol, *Mona Lisa*, ca. 1979, acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas, 50 x 40 in. ©AWF

While looking at Warhol's *Flower* prints provide the following Historical and Cultural Context information:

In November 1966, Patricia Caulfield sued Andy Warhol for his use of her photograph of flowers, which had been published in a magazine. He used the published photograph as source material for his silkscreen paintings and prints. Warhol's *Flowers* paintings were exhibited at Leo Castelli's New York gallery in 1964. Caulfield became aware of the artwork only after seeing a poster for Warhol's versions in a public place. Caulfield sued to maintain ownership of the image. Warhol settled with Caulfield by agreeing to give her several paintings and a share in the published prints' future royalties.

Civics Connection Extension: Research Copyright and Intellectual Property laws in relation to art.

Comprehension and Analysis Questions:

1. How and when does a work become "original" or creative when using existing materials?
2. In copyright law what is the real test of originality for works that use existing source material?
3. What are some legal arguments held by artists and curators that disagree with the legal definition of originality?
4. What do you think the architect, Le Corbusier meant when he said "all artists steal; but the truly original artist repays a thousand fold"?
5. Research artists whose work is derived from others' source material. Find an example that you think transforms the source material in an original way. Find an example that you think does not transform the source material. Justify your selections using aesthetic criteria and critical judgment.

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Aesthetic Handout 5.1: Dialogue Assessment

Adapted from *Thinking Through Aesthetics*, Marilyn Stewart, 1997, Davis Publications, Inc.,
Worcester, Massachusetts.

Dialogue Topic: _____

Date: _____

Question or Quote Discussed:

A statement made with which you agree:

Why you agree:

A statement made with which you disagree:

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Why you disagree:

Did you participate in the dialogue:

Are you satisfied with your participation? Why or why not:

An idea or statement raised that you would like think more about:

Questions you have about the topic:

Other comments:
