



LIVE Arts with Laura St.Pierre

Collage Selfies

Visual Arts

Grade 7/8

45 minute broadcast + hands-on activity

Overview

This session will give students the opportunity to participate in a live broadcast with professional artist Laura St.Pierre. They will explore the history of collage and discuss the different roles that images play in today's society. They will create a "selfie" using photocopies and paper.

About the Artist

Laura St. Pierre comes from a long line of scavengers, tinkerers and makers. As a kid, she made things out of whatever she could find. In the last decade, she has returned to using found objects in her sculptures, installations, and photographs.

St.Pierre grew up in Regina and Saskatoon. As an adult, she has lived all over Canada, earning undergraduate degrees at UBC and the U of A and a Master of Fine Arts degree at Concordia University in Montreal. After graduate school, Laura taught sculpture and photography at the Grande Prairie Regional College. She has recently moved back to Saskatoon with her husband and son to be closer to family.

In addition to teaching, Laura has maintained an active art practice. She has received arts grants from the Conseil des Arts et Lettres du Quebec, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and the Canada Council. Recent exhibitions include Saskatchewan (London, England and Bilbao, Spain), Landslide/ Possible Futures (Markham), the 2013 Alberta Biennial (Art Gallery of Alberta), and Constructing Space (Gallery 44, Toronto).

For more info and images, please go to Laura's website: laurastpierre.com.

Curriculum Aims & Goals

Creative/Productive:

Students will create a self-portrait using the medium of collage. They will consider the use of repetition and balance in two-dimensional design.

Critical/Responsive:

Students will consider what selfies say about them and their lives. They will consider what is meant by the term "identity", and how they might represent their identity through self-portraiture ("selfies") and what images of the self reveal about the larger world around them.

Cultural/Historical:

Students will learn about the history of portraiture, photography and collage, and how the creation of self-portraits has changed with the advent of digital media.

Sample Inquiry Questions

Grade 7 Focus: Place. How might the “place” that a person grows up in influence his or her identity?

Grade 8 Focus: Social Issues. In what ways might an artist’s identity or sense of place influence the content of his/her work?

Materials and resources for broadcast:

Each student will need a pen or pencil and piece of paper.

Broadcast Program (45 min)

Presentation 1 (5 minutes)

Collage/assemblage and personal imagery

- discussion of Laura’s art practice with an emphasis on how objects are used to tell a story
- how she uses found objects
- why she uses photography, importance of “place” in images *CR7.2, CH7.1, CR8.2
- how she uses collage in Photoshop *CH8.3

Activity 1 (5 minutes) One minute sculpture using our bodies, pencil, and paper.

Presentation 2 (3 minutes)

Mass-produced images in historical context

- images before photography *CH7.3
- the revolution of photography and its basis in portraiture
- the careful construction of early portraits, including references to socio-economic status and place *CH7.1
- the mass production and prevalence of images/ photos

Activity 2 (5 minutes)

Contest! List all of the images you have seen today.

Presentation 3 (4 minutes)

- Hannah Hoch collages and self-portraits in historical context (WWI and Dada/Surrealism). - -
- How Hoch used images to talk about herself *
and the political climate of her time *CH7.3, CR7.3, CR8.3, CH8.1
- How Hannah Hoch uses repetition and balance in her collages.

Activity 3 (10 minutes)

- Students create scenes in groups of three (protest march, harvest time, bank robbery, etc.). How do body language, facial expressions, and surroundings tell a story? *CP7.11, CR8.3

Collage Demonstration (5 minutes)

- What kinds of images to use
- Careful cutting
- Adding and subtracting

- How to play with composition
- When to use repetition
- How to use plain paper shapes and silhouettes to create balance and emphasis
- Dealing effectively with the “background”, break it up with shapes
- The magic of layers
- Gluing as a last step
- *CP7.12, CP8.12
- Show 10 images of previous student collages

Question Period (2-3 minutes)

Curriculum Outcomes: www.curriculum.gov.sk.ca

Creative/Productive:

- CP7.12 Use image-making skills, tools, techniques, and problem-solving abilities in a variety of visual art media.
- CP8.12 Solve visual art problems using a variety of processes and media.
- CP7.11 Investigate and use various visual art forms, images, and art-making processes to express ideas about place.

Critical/Responsive:

- CR7.2 Investigate and identify ways that the arts can communicate a sense of place.
- CR8.2 Investigate and identify ways that today’s arts expressions often reflect concern for social issues.
- CR8.3 Investigate and identify how arts expressions can reflect diverse worldviews.

Cultural/Historical:

- CH7.1 Investigate how artists’ relationship to place may be reflected in their work.
- CH7.3 Investigate and identify a variety of factors that influence artists, their work, and careers.
- CH8.1 Research and share insights about arts expressions that incorporate social commentary.
- CH8.3 Demonstrate understanding of how contemporary artists use and incorporate new technology into their work.

Teacher Guided Hands-On Activity (45 minutes)

Prepare students to participate in an inquiry related to the visual representation of identity.

Look at various self-portraits or “selfies”, for example, and talk about the way each person or artist has represented himself/herself. Discuss the different materials and techniques that the artists used and the effects that were created. Look at the various ways that the elements of art, principles of design and incorporation of other objects or images were manipulated to achieve different effects.

Sample inquiry questions:

Grade 7 Focus: Place. How might the “place” that a person grows up in influence his or her identity?

Grade 8 Focus: Social Issues. In what ways might an artist’s identity or sense of place influence the content of his/her work?

Activity

Students will create a collage “selfie” using black and white photocopies of photographs, newspaper images, and black, white and gray paper.

Space: Each student requires enough space to lay out three pieces of paper. Easy access to a recycling bin/ garbage can and a broom are helpful.

Start the activity by reminding your students about the demonstration that Laura provided on the LIVE Broadcast. Help your students make a quick list of some of the approaches Laura used in her collage creation example (post on wipe board). This list could include-

Materials and resources for hands-on activity:

Option 1:

Teachers may photograph each student (shoulders up) and print in black and white on a printer or photocopier. Make at least four copies of each photo at roughly 8.5 x 11”.

Other materials needed are:

- Black, gray and white construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue Sticks
- erasers
- pencils

Option 2:

Ask students to bring in a recent school photo. Make at least four copies of each photo at roughly 8.5 x 11”.

Other materials needed are:

- Black, gray and white construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue Sticks
- erasers
- pencils

Option 3:

Print attached pdfs. Make at least 4 copies of the same image for each student.

Other materials needed are:

- Black, gray and white construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue Sticks
- erasers
- pencils

- Careful cutting
- Adding and subtracting
- How to play with composition
- When to use repetition
- How to use plain paper shapes and silhouettes to create balance and emphasis
- Dealing effectively with the "background", break it up with shapes
- The magic of layers

1. Each student should have:

- 4 copies of the same photo
- at least one piece of black, white and gray construction paper
- scissors
- glue stick
- eraser
- pencil

2. Students should begin by deciding which feature they would like to repeat, and begin cutting out several copies of this feature (eyes, mouths, etc). Encourage them to use the time while they are cutting to imagine possible outcomes. At this stage they should be placing things on a background paper and moving things around as they add more features, but not gluing anything down.

3. Once students have cut the desired features from their photocopies, ask them to consider what paper shapes will complement or balance the photographic composition. Some shapes should be complex and represent objects or a place or that adds to the narrative of the collage. As they begin cutting out shapes from black, white and gray paper, students should add to their composition, again without gluing elements down. Students can experiment with tearing, shredding, poking holes, etc, to create different textures and effects.

4. Once students have a good number of features, shapes and objects to work with, they can begin adding or subtracting to achieve a balanced composition. If a student has too many shapes or features, one option is to begin a second collage with the surplus.

4. Try to do one or more "walk abouts" so that students can see what others are working on. This is especially effective when students become restless or stuck.

5. As the project progresses, students can be encouraged to share "offcuts". One option is to have an "offcut" pile on a separate table: when students are stuck they can peruse the offcut pile for inspiration or new material.

6. As the central figures and forms of the collages develop, ask students to consider the backgrounds. You might encourage students to use a large rectangle in the foreground to create a floor, or on the sides to create curtains. Stripes can allude to trees or wallpaper, torn shapes can become clouds. Students can create borders or areas of pattern. It is ok if elements go off the edge of the page.

7. As the compositions become resolved, ask students to begin gluing pieces down. Remind them that they will have to start with the background first and glue down the top layers last.

8. Once collages are complete, hang them on the wall or bulletin board. Conclude with a reflective activity/discussion. Have students discuss the strengths of their completed works observing how each student used the elements of art, principles of design, and placement of various images within the composition to create a unified whole. Ask students to identify the aspects of the background that influence our interpretation of the collage. Ask the class to highlight some effective examples of repetition and balance. Note what is particularly effective in each piece. As a follow-up activity, you may ask students to tell or write a story about each other's collages.

Tips and tricks

- The collages will be largely monochromatic. The use of black and white photocopies along with black, white and gray paper will allow students to discern balance in their composition more easily.
- Encourage students to use repetition. Giving them 4 (or more) photocopies of the same photo will encourage this. It is also great if students can request additional copies while they work, in case they make mistakes cutting or want more repetition.
- Encourage students to think "surreal". The final collage should not necessary look like them or be beautiful: instead it is more important to convey a story or an emotion, to be intriguing.
- Encourage students to use shapes cut out of paper. Large shapes of a contrasting tone can break up the background. Shapes can be generic (squares, circles, etc.) or specific (a silhouette of an eye, or of a significant object/animal/thing). Students can create their own shapes with paper (an explosion, a vehicle, etc.).
- Encourage layering and complexity.
- Encourage students to wait until the end to glue things down. The more they move things around and have flexibility to add and subtract elements, the stronger their compositions will be.