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Miller Middle School
6th Grade, World History
Kingston, New York

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Unit Focus: The art of the East Side Gallery of the Berlin Wall as a reflection of society's views.
(This activity would be at the conclusion of a study of the Division/Reunification of Germany)

Big Concepts:

- Social and political change reflected in the art of the Berlin wall
- The Berlin Wall as a piece of living history

Essential Understanding:

- Artists reflect society's many views of the division and reunification of East and West Germany.
- The Berlin Wall, particularly the East Side Gallery, allowed artists to express views and opinions of the political and social conditions of the division and reunification.

Essential Questions:

- What message was the artist trying to convey through their art?
- How did the artists portray their view of the division/reunification of Germany?

State Standards: New York State:

Standard 2: World History-

Key idea 1 –use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

Key Idea 3 –view history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments in world history by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents

Activities:

Lesson 1 –

- 1. Divide students into heterogonous learning groups.**
- 2. Give each group a picture of a painting from the East Side Gallery (see attached slides).**
- 3. Give each group Hypothesis Guiding Questions (see attached).**
- 4. Each group is to hypothesize what the painting represents and what they believe the artist was trying to convey through the painting.**
- 5. Each group will write a 2 minute speech as if they are the artist explaining their painting.**

Lesson 2

- 1. Project each picture on the screen and have the presenter from each group read their speech to the audience.**
- 2. Allow for questions and insights from the audience (keeping in mind students are still only hypothesizing at this point).**

Lesson 3

- 1. Each group will research in the (library/computer lab) the artist and their assigned painting (see Research Guiding Questions).**
- 2. Each group will write a revision of their speech based on the research.**

Lesson 4

- 1. For each group, project the picture on the screen and have the presenter read the revised speech to the audience.**
- 2. Allow for insights and questions from the audience.**

Lesson 5

Each individual student will choose one of the following activities to complete and present to their group and/or entire class:

- 1. Write a reflective essay about the painting, the artist and what the painting means to you personally. Include five questions you would ask the artist.**
- 2. Imagine you live in East Berlin during the separation of East and West Germany. Draw a panel representing your view of life in East Berlin.**
- 3. Research and present another form of graffiti art. (Example – 1980's artists for AIDS)**
- 4. Draw a panel for the Hudson River wall (retaining wall in our town along the river). What statements would you make about life in Kingston, NY today? How will you represent it through your art?**

Painting Slides

Painting #1 Artist: Susanne Kunjappu-Jellinek



(c) Foto: Heiko Burkhardt, Dailysoft.com

Painting #2 Artist: Birgit Kinder



(c) Foto: Heiko Burkhardt, Dailysoft.com

Painting #3 Artist: Rosemarie Schinzler



Painting #4 Artist: Gerhard Lahr



Painting #5 Artist: Dmitri Vruble



Hypothesis Guiding Questions

- 1. What is happening in the picture?**
- 2. Who are the people or important objects in the picture?**
- 3. Why were these people or objects important? What are they doing?**
- 4. Are there any numbers in the picture? What might they represent?**
- 5. Are there any strong or important colors in the picture?**

Research Guiding Questions

- 1. Who is the artist?**
- 2. When and where did he or she live?**
- 3. When was the painting originally painted?**
- 4. Was the painting ‘restored’? Was there a different, original version of the painting?**
- 5. Did the artist make any statements about the painting?**
- 6. What is the significance of the objects or people in the painting?**
- 7. How has your hypothesis changed?**

Resources

Kuzdas, Heinz J., Berliner Mauer Kunst, Elefantent Press, 1990

Verlag, Jaron, The Berlin Wall

<http://www.eastsidegallery.com/historyesg.htm>

<http://www.dailysoft.com/berlinwall/photographs/eastsidegallery.htm>

http://www.berlin.de/foto/_bin/index.php/Sehensw%FCrdigkeiten/east-side_-gallery

<http://www.berlinwallart.com/>

<http://www.german-way.com/east-side-gallery-berlin.html>

<http://www.berlin101.com/?p=204>

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,615900,00.html>

http://www.boston.com/bigpicture/2009/11/the_berlin_wall_20_years_gone.html