

A few of my favorite things..

Envelope Accordion Book

This lesson is inspired by mixed media artists who use non-traditional art materials. One of our 2015-16 artists, Jon Lodge, used an unfolded milk carton as his surface. We will also be looking at artists that combine text and imagery. Jane Waggoner Deschner is a great example. She combines hand embroidered quotes to found photographs. See 2015-16 Artist List. In this lesson, students will combine text, non-traditional materials, and mixed media to create an accordion style book from envelopes. The content of their envelopes will include three of their “favorite things.” Students will be exploring the enduring idea of “Identity” and how family, place, friends, interests, etc. can shape who we are.

Length: 1 hour

Objectives:

1. Students will learn different the styles of books, including accordion
2. Students will create mixed media art using non-traditional material
3. Students will reflect on what is important to them
4. Students will respond to their own artwork, others, and the artists in the exhibit

MT Art Standards

- Content Standard 1—Students create, perform/exhibit, and respond in the Arts.
- Content Standard 2—Students apply and describe the concepts, structures, and processes in the Arts.
- Content Standard 3—Students develop and refine arts skills and techniques to express ideas, pose and solve problems, and discover meaning
- Content Standard 4—Students analyze characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.

Materials:

- pencils
- scrap paper/scrap magazines
- glue sticks
- color pencils
- markers
- envelopes (3 per/student) –office envelopes that come in bulk, work great!

Vocabulary:

- Identity
- The Art of Book Binding
- Accordion Book
- Mixed Media
- Collage
- Non-Traditional Art Materials

MT Artist Reference:

- Jennifer Combe
- Jon Lodge
- Jane Waggoner Deschner
- Beth Lo

Process

1. Discussion. Artists often make artwork based on where they come from, their own family backgrounds, and what interests them. Example: Artist Beth Lo creates artwork based around her Chinese American background. There is a term we use for this, “identity.”

MoMA Definition:

“Identity is the way we perceive and express ourselves. Factors and conditions that an individual is born with—such as ethnic heritage, sex, or one’s body—often play a role in defining one’s identity. However, many aspects of a person’s identity change throughout his or her life. People’s experiences can alter how they see themselves or are perceived by others. Conversely, their identities also influence the decisions they make: Individuals choose their friends, adopt certain fashions, and align themselves with political beliefs based on their identities. Many artists use their work to express, explore, and question ideas about identity.”

-moma.org

2. Notecards. Pass out three lined notecards to each student. Have each student write down one of their favorite things and why. Share with students some examples.. (family, favorite sport, animal, place, etc.) Each student should write one or two sentences on the notecard to describe each favorite thing and why they chose it.

3. Envelope Assembly. Ask students to set aside their notecards. Explain to students that they will be making a non-traditional book using envelopes. This book resembles an accordion book. Just like the name implies, accordion books fold like an accordion. Directions are quite simple. Take your first envelope. Using a glue stick, glue the inside triangle fold of the envelope. Place that triangle fold on the back of your second envelope. Do the same for the third envelope. You can choose to keep the top triangle fold, or you can cut it off with scissors. You should have three open envelopes facing you, and you should be able to place your notecards in each one.



4. Illustration. Students can now use color pencils, paint, or markers to illustrate each of their envelopes, along with a title page. I typically have students create a background with color pencils or marker, then I have students add collage, and finally I let them use stamps for final touches of emphasis. *if you let students use things like stamps right away, they might cover the entire book with stamps, before using another medium. I ask students to use stamps just for emphasis. Maybe a name or a pattern.

Extension: students can find or bring artifacts to place in their envelope, for example: a feather, a pressed flower, or maybe a letter.

5. Share & Reflection. After students have finished their books, everyone should walk around the room to see each other’s books. What were some of the things we had in common with each other, what did we not have in common, and do you think our identity will change?