LAYERED PORTRAITS

Photo Credit: Andrea Reising, 2015

REAL School & MECA MAT
Workshop @ SPACE Gallery

Workshop by: Chloe Beaven, Shea Brook, Katelyn Drake, Kylie Ellis, Jason Farson, Margaret Mountcastle, Maranda Parent, Carver Rapp, Andrea Reising, Hannah Twombly, and Angela Zukowski

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

In October of 2015 the Maine College of Art teacher candidates were asked to collaborate with the REAL School on a project at the Space Gallery. The REAL School is a STEM focused system located on Mackworth Island in Maine, and is part of the Windham School District. It works with high school aged children who were not performing well in surrounding school

systems. The teacher candidates decided to work with the theme of *Portraiture: Beyond the Face* with provoking questions like how do we express ourselves, how do we view ourselves, and how can we portray ourselves? Actual portraits of the students at the REAL School were incorporated into the artwork itself, and acetate was used to build layers upon the portraits. The layers were prompted by the student's location, current events, timelines and interests, and were either enhanced or redacted. Artists like Jenny Saville, Kehinde Wiley, Rene Cox and Akio Takamori were chosen as an art history representations for the workshop. An exhibition of student work was curated and hung at the REAL school by teacher candidates.

What is Discipline-Based Art Education?

Discipline-Based Art Education is a program or classroom framework that is based on four premises: art aesthetics, art history, art production and art criticism. It is an integrated curriculum that focuses on questioning how and why art is created. By incorporating four approaches, the students of the REAL School explored the many facets of the art world, and were pushed to think critically and analytically about their own work and the work of others.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW
This workshop allows participants to visually and metaphorically explore the complexities of identity. Drawing from the themes "what lies beneath" and "alter egos" of the Whoop Dee Doo performance, participants create multi-layered self-portraits. The workshop uses the DBAE framework of art criticism, art history, art production and aesthetics.

Participants have the option to use simple black and white photographs of themselves as base layers. Participants overlay their base with altered, mixed-media acetate or vellum layers. The lesson begins with a gallery game, which leads into a discussion on art criticism and aesthetics. This discussion continues with a brief presentation of contemporary artists who work with portraiture. The lesson culminates in an exhibition of participant work displayed at the REAL School.

Age: High School (15 - 19)	*Time Span:* 10:30AM - 2:00PM
Essential Question: What is identity or self, and how do we show it through art?	*Provoking Questions and Prompts:* - How do we express identity? - How can we make art with multiple layers? - This is how I will be in the future... - This is what I was in the past... - A persona that lies beneath my surface is/looks like... - If I had an alter ego, it would be…

Maine Learning Results:	*Vocabulary & Visual Provocation:*
B1 Media Skills Students use a variety of media, tools, techniques and processes to create original art works. B3 *Making Meaning* Students create artworks that communicate ideas, feelings, and meanings, and demonstrate skill in the use of media, tools, techniques, and processes. *B4 Exhibition* Students help with selection and preparation of art works for display in their school.	- Identity - Alter ego - Aestheticism - Aesthetic - Theme - Metaphor *See Appendix 1 for visual provocation.*
Lesson Objectives:	*Assessments:*
- Students create original mixed-media portraits. - The relationship between artistic identity and art making is explored. - Contemporary artists relevant to the lesson objectives are introduced and discussed. - The participants 'muck about' with a variety of art mediums.	Assessment for this workshop is holistic and based upon the participants' complete experience rather than a project outcome. Students are commencing an exploration with art making and aesthetics; self-guided written assessments at the beginning and end of the workshop reflect this.

Workshop Schedule:

10:30-10:45 Workshop participants arrive at SPACE gallery and enter through the annex where the Whoop Dee Doo exhibition is displayed. Participants make name tags and fill out the "Take a Selfie" assessment form as a warm-up and introduction to the gallery space. Teachers welcome participants and provide one-to-one assistance.

10:45-11:15 Group-wide introduction and preference-based gallery game. The gallery game transitions into a discussion about aesthetics, identity, and the Whoop Dee Doo exhibition. Focus is placed on the alter egos of Soda Pop and Werewolf. The discussion places an emphasis on group participation. *See Appendix 3 for more information.*

11:15-11:25 Using the either/or prompt introduced in the gallery game, participants divide into two groups based on the choice of "Werewolf or Soda Pop". Within each group, teachers share their own portrait examples, making connections with the gallery game and discussion of aesthetics and identity, and examining the experimentation with materials in their portraits. The teachers conclude by pointing out the work areas and materials tables.

11:25-11:55 Students commence work on their own projects or begin experimenting with materials. Any photos that the participants would like to use in their projects are printed out at this point, but it is stressed that using a photo is not a requirement. Teachers provide one-to-one instruction.

11:55-12:10 Students and teachers gather on the benches for the slideshow. Three teachers present various examples of portraiture by contemporary artists. The examples show a variety of art mediums; teachers engage in dialogue with the students as the slides are presented.

12:10-12:20 Using the either/or prompt, participants *either* continue working *or* watch a materials and techniques demonstration. For the participants who choose the demonstration, two teachers outline ways to use different materials and how to combine and experiment with different layers.

12:20-12:50 Students work on their art. Teachers provide one-to-one instruction and encourage participants to experiment with a variety of materials.
12:50-1:00 Again using the either/or prompt, participants *either* continue working for ten minutes *or* take a tour of MECA. Students who would like to take a tour return any materials they are done working with to the appropriate areas and clean their workspace.

1:00-1:30 Students and teachers eat lunch in the MECA classroom. Students are informed there will be time to put in about ten more minutes of work after lunch.

1:30-1:45 Students put finishing touches on their work. Teachers walk around and pass out the exhibition and evaluation forms. Teachers provide one-to-one assistance with the forms where necessary. Any participant who finishes early is asked to do a specific cleaning task (e.g. “Please pick up the paper from the floor.”).

1:45-1:50 Students clean their work areas and put away materials. One teacher collects and collates the participant work into a folder.

1:50-2:00 As requested by REAL School, participants are ready to depart by 1:50. Teachers wait with the participants and thank them for their participation in the workshop.

Modifications for Students with Exceptionalities:

The *Layered Portraits* workshop is designed to accommodate students with multiple behavioral and learning disorders. The workshop models the REAL School format of “challenge by choice” and each section of the workshop lasts no longer than thirty minutes. Direct instruction from the teachers is never longer than ten minutes and is punctuated with discussions, games, or work time. No dangerous materials are used.

Materials List:

- Photograph Portraits
- Acetate
- Vellum
- Aluminum Foil
- Wax Paper
- Cardstock
- Colored Paper
- Glue
- Glue Guns & Glue Sticks
- Tape, including double-stick for exhibition
- Sharpies
- Pens
- Pencils/Pencil Sharpener
- Oil Pastels
- Fabric Scraps
- Pom-poms
- Cotton Balls

<table>
<tr>
<td>Additional modifications include:
- Participants who struggle with writing can use simple answers or number scales for the assessment forms.
- Participants who are resistant to art making are encouraged to experiment with materials.
- Participants who struggle staying focused on art-making can work with another participant.
- Participants who are uncomfortable with photography can work directly with other materials.</td>
<td>- Feathers
- Toothpicks
- Popsicle Sticks
- Organic Material: Dirt, Mulch, Sticks, Leaves, Stones
- Calligraphy Pens & India Ink
- Paintbrushes
Materials List (Continued):
- Water Buckets
- Scissors
- Knives
- Rulers
- Cutting Mats
- Hole punch
- Whiteboard with Markers
- Clipboards
- Table Coverings (Butcher Paper)
- Extension cords
- Nametags
- Exhibition labels</td>
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<td>Clean Up:

After participants complete their artwork, and fill out the exhibition form, and the evaluation form, they begin to assist in clean up. Materials are returned to the materials table and organized, and all trash is put in the bin. A teacher cleans up the calligraphy pens and paintbrushes. Before the participants leave, the work tables should be clear of materials. After the participants depart, the teachers will remove the butcher paper from the work tables, return materials to the MAT closet, break down tables, turn off lights and the projector, and return the SPACE gallery to its original configuration.</td>
<td>Technology:

Internet-based research is utilized to gather visual provocation and information for the art history presentation.

An overhead projector and a Google Slideshow are used to display the art history presentation.

The Space Gallery has a continuously playing video that documents Whoop Dee Doo’s earlier performance. This video is referenced during the gallery game.</td>
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<tr>
<td colspan="2">Instructional Resources:
http://whoopdeedoo.tv/
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_criticism
http://www.reneecox.org/
http://akiotakamori.com/
www.kehindewiley.com</td>
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REAL school SPACE gallery evaluation:

Age:

Date:

Please evaluate your experiences today at SPACE Gallery. This assessment is meant to gain a better understanding of your experiences and ways for the MAT candidates to improve the lesson.

Scale	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Feeling coming to SPACE Gallery	4	3	2	1
Understanding project expectations	4	3	2	1
MAT participants' presentation, demonstration, and artwork	4	3	2	1
Your experience making your self-portrait	4	3	2	1
Your final self-portrait	4	3	2	1
Additional Comments				

Please answer to the best of your abilities.

What did you think of your experience working at SPACE gallery?

What type of projects would you like to do with the MAT participants next year?

GALLERY GAME

Topics addressed:

- Personal Preferences
- Aesthetics
- Art Criticism
- Whoop Dee Doo
- Character and Costume
- Everyday Portrayal of Self
- Inner Self or What Lies Beneath
- Ideal or Magnified Self

Outline of the Activity:

Students gather in a circle to learn the game. The game is demonstrated by two MAT teacher candidates. One at a time, students choose prompt papers from a bowl and state the prompt as they point to one side of the space for one option, and the other side for the other. People who are undecided or do not want to answer can go in the middle. Students can pick from the prompt bowl or make up their own prompts (this has potential for inappropriate prompts, but guidelines can be set ahead of time to keep things G-rated).

The last two prompt pairs are fine art images. A conversation is prompted by the teacher candidates about why each group chose one image over the other. Participants and teachers point out specific details from the images and why they do or do not like them. The group then talks about how looking at art can be like a game of preferences; everyone views and values art in different ways and it is interesting to come to our own observations and evaluations, and to share with others.

Examples of simple prompts are:

Butter or margarine? Coffee or tea? Coke or Pepsi? Summer or winter? Skateboard or bike? Chocolate or vanilla? Cookies or cake? Movie or concert? Beach or mall? Jeans or sweatpants? Basketball or soccer? Running or swimming? Truck or compact car? Quiet or loud? Rap or country? Born in Maine or not born in Maine? Sibling or no siblings? Work in a group or work as an individual? Family connections? Talents? Hopes? Morning person or night person?

Discussion of Aesthetics and Art Criticism:

Questions like “What is art?” “What is beautiful?” “Must all art be beautiful?” “Must art provide knowledge?” and “Is it possible for a great work of art to be ugly?” fall into a practice called

aesthetics. Aesthetics is a way of thinking about art that asks philosophical/overarching questions: questions that cannot always be answered with certainty.

Aesthetics are:

1. The branch of philosophy dealing with such notions as the beautiful, the ugly, the sublime, the comic, etc., as applicable to the fine arts, with a view to establishing the meaning and validity of critical judgments concerning works of art, and the principles underlying or justifying such judgments.
2. The study of the mind and emotions in relation to the sense of beauty.
3. A philosophical theory or set of principles governing the idea of beauty at a given time and place.
4. Concerned with the study of the mind and emotions in relation to the sense of beauty.
5. Having a sense of the beautiful; characterized by a love of beauty.

Art criticism deals with evaluating and making judgments, comparisons, contrasts with other artwork--observing and talking about what we see, how the form is organized, how the art makes us feel, what we like best about it, what we like least, how it compares with other art we know. Art criticism deals with qualities and quality.

More detailed information: Art critics usually criticize art in the context of aesthetics or the theory of beauty. A goal of art criticism is the pursuit of a rational basis for art appreciation but it is questionable whether such criticism can transcend socio-political circumstances. Art criticism has many and often numerous subjective viewpoints. It may include art history within its framework.
Art criticism includes a descriptive aspect, where the work of art is sufficiently described to allow a case to be made. The evaluation of a work of art that follows the description (or is interspersed with it) depends as much on the artist's output as on the experience of the critic. While some favor simply remarking on the immediate impressions caused by an artistic object, others prefer a more systematic approach calling on technical knowledge, favored aesthetic theory and the known sociocultural context the artist is immersed in and his/her interpreted intent. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_criticism)

Relating Aesthetics and Art Criticism discussion to the SPACE show:

- Introduce/ talk about the Whoop Dee Doo set, explain the show.
- Ask for observations.
- Ask about likes/dislikes, questions, judgments/evaluations, ideas, inspirations, emotional impressions, etc.
- Ask: “Is this art? What is art? Is this beautiful? Does this have to be beautiful to be art? Does this spark ideas? Emotions? How does being in the space make you feel? What does it inspire in your imagination?

- Show two more sets of images of Jaimie Warren and Matt Roche with and without their costumes. Have groups go to one side or the other depending on which image they prefer for each- the individual with or without costume. Show the clip of the PBS video where Jaimie and Matt are talking about how they chose their costumes based on magnified aspects of their personalities.

Transition from Game to the Project:
Teacher candidates prompt a discussion about external self and how we represent ourselves in everyday life versus our inner self/what lies beneath versus our magnified/alternate/costumed self. Discuss other layers that can be ascribed to the self: past/current/future, ideal/real. Today's art project is a chance to think about and create layers of self in our artwork.

Exploring Identity and Alter Ego through Mixed Media Self-Portraiture:

The gallery game lays an important foundation for a day of art-making. At this point participants are aware of the Whoop Dee Doo show and have made connections between sense of self and identity, and metaphorical, visual representations of identity. The gallery game ends with:

Werewolf

--or--

Soda Pop

Photos this page: Hannah Twombly, MAT 2015

In order to keep momentum going and connect the conclusion of the gallery game to the start of art-making, a teacher says, "Werewolf or Soda Pop" and divides the participants into two groups. This time, the Werewolf group moves to one side of the adjacent room, and the Soda Pop group to the other side of that room.

Now that everyone is in the art-making space, a teacher goes to each group with a previously-made example of a layered self-portrait.

Artwork by Shea Brook

Artwork by Hannah Twombly

Photos this page: Hannah Twombly, MAT 2015

These teachers briefly describe their work, emphasizing the use of layers to represent inner and outer selves, and the use of imagery and metaphor to create alternative identities. Layers that show portrayals of alter-ego are pointed out. It is important to highlight the accessibility and flexibility of this project. Some example layers are left unattached to show how participants are free to experiment with layers and options as they work. Teachers demonstrate how one artist may draw a layer, but another might glue wood or fabric to the layer, and may not draw at all. Teachers point out that participants may start with a photograph and a piece of acetate, or no photograph at all, and encourage experimentation with materials.

At this point, the work area and materials tables are available to participants, and an opportunity will be specifically provided for participants to ask questions. Teachers explain that there will be materials demonstrations offered at a later point and that participants may now go gather supplies and get started.

As the students work, teachers give 1-1 attention and join in the art-making when possible.

Prompts that teachers may use to help participants find a starting place include:

- In Whoop Dee Doo, Jamie exaggerates her personality as Soda Pop and Matt accentuates his persona as Werewolf. Do you feel more like a soda pop or a werewolf today? What else might capture and exaggerate that identity?
- What do the werewolf and soda pop personify? As in… a soda pop might be happy, social, giddy, etc. whereas a werewolf only comes out at night, or is apathetic.
- What are a few words you would use to describe yourself? How could you represent one of those qualities metaphorically?

REAL SCHOOL

@ SPACE Gallery

with the MECA MAT program

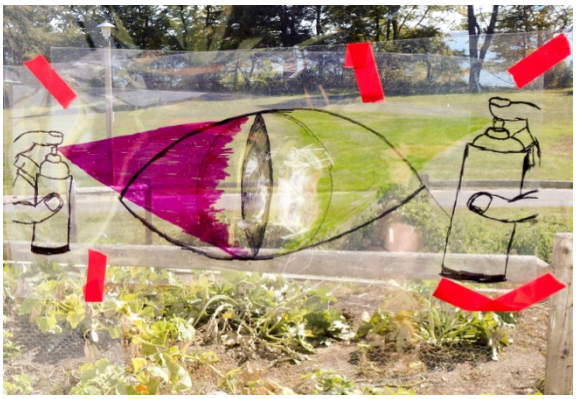
Welcome!

- nametags + gathering in the SPACE annex
  with Katelyn
- quick check in with Jason
- gallery game in SPACE annex
  with Andrea + Kylie
- the first layer
- a quick history in art in the main SPACE Gallery
  with Chloe, Angela + Hannah
- mini-narrative examples
  with Maranda, Carver, Margaret,
  Angela, Jason + Hannah
- overview and material locations
  with Shea + Carver
- optional tour of MECA/work time
- work time

Lunch inside MECA in room 120

- discussion of exhibiton and optional shared reflection
  with Maranda + Katelyn
- clean up of SPACE Gallery

Good Bye!

EXHIBITION PHOTOS

Second row photos: Hannah Twombly, MAT 2015
First and third row photos:: Andrea Reising, MAT 2015