THE ART OF CONSERVATION

Educator Facilitated Session 1

Location: Digest Ed

Resources: Digest Ed iPad – Photo album/keynote

OUTLINE:

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT – TO HELP EDUCATOR ASSESS THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE STUDENTS

- MZ is 155 years old; it’s the 9th oldest zoo in the world.
  - What was the role of Zoos when it opened?
  - What is the role of Zoos around the world in today’s context?
  - What do you think the role of Zoos should be?
  - Why do you think that we have artworks at Melbourne Zoo?

ZOOS VICTORIA’S MISSION: ZBCO = FIGHT EXTINCTION

What are some of the ways we do this?

- Breeding programs for Ark Species
- Breeding & Release programs for Recovery Species
- Wildlife Research
- Supporting wildlife organisations
- Influencing the public – this area of ZV’s work will be the focus of our inquiries in the program.
  - Students will use the cultural and contemporary frameworks to analyse artworks and ultimately answer the big question...

BIG QUESTION

Can Art Save a Species?
Feldman’s Method

Judgement

Interpret

Analyze

Describe

COLOR
LINE
SHAPE
SPACE
TEXTURE

BALANCE
EMPHASIS
HARMONY
MOVEMENT

PROPORTION
RHYTHM
UNITY
VARIETY
Introduction – Cultural & Contemporary Framework

Ask students to interpret the artwork pictured below.

- What do you think the message or meaning of the artwork is?
- What about the artwork makes you think/feel that?

Abdul-Rahman Abdullah

Fremantle Waters – Sculpture – Painted wood & rope. 2015

Size: 120 x 48 x 40 cm
Students have just used the contemporary framework to analyse an artwork. In the contemporary framework the message and meaning of the work is authored by the viewer, based on what they see in the work.

Ask students to interpret the artwork pictured below with the accompanying artist statement. Thus giving them the cultural context of the work.

Fremantle waters recalls a bright summer morning spent fishing with my dad from the South Mole beside Fremantle Port. After many hours without a bite my dad pulled in a juvenile bull shark, thrashing and whipping on the line.

Those seemingly benign waters, with kids and dogs swimming off the white beach behind us belied an unnerving proximity to nature – red in tooth and claw.

We were the apex predators that day, tourists stopped to take photographs and dad was my hero. We ate the shark and I was never tempted to go swimming in the waters off Fremantle again.

Students have just used the cultural framework to analyse an artwork. In the cultural framework the cultural context of the artwork is considered when analysing the artwork. This includes the artist’s intentions of meaning and messages as well as a number of other factors.

**THE CULTURAL FRAMEWORK**

Unpack the cultural context – this should be revision

*The Cultural Framework is used to identify influences on an artwork including the time, place, purpose and cultural and political settings in which it was made. It considers common attitudes and beliefs of the time and the effect on the artist and their artwork.*
These influences may include historical, political, social, socio-economic and religious contexts as well as aspects of ethnicity and gender.

Animals have been the muse of artists since the beginning of art. The way they have been portrayed has changed through the eras.

- This will be accompanied by a series of images showing animals in artwork from cave art up until the 1800's.
- Select 1 or 2 pieces to analyse using the cultural framework with the students.
  - Below is a list of prompting questions that you may use to help the students analyse the selected art piece/s using the cultural framework. – It is by no means an exhaustive list.

- If there is time to unpack 2 artworks it is best to select 1 from pre-1990 and 1 from post 1990

### CULTURAL FRAMEWORK PROMPTS

- How have historical or contemporary events have shaped the intentions of the artists and our understanding of the artwork’s meaning?

- When and where was the work made?

- Who was the artist?

- Has the artists personal circumstances influenced the work.

- Did they have any significant life events? E.G. Accidents, death in the family, broken heart etc.

- How do the social, political, cultural, artistic and/or religious contexts of the artwork contribute to its meaning?

- How are values, beliefs and attitudes and social context reflected in this art piece? How do these values, beliefs and attitudes compare to the values of today?

- How does the placement or location of artworks affect their interpretation?

- What are the symbols or metaphors explored or utilised in the artwork that contribute to the meanings and messages?

- What signs and symbols in the work reveal cultural information?

- How was the artwork reviewed or critiqued during the time in which it was made? Was the work considered challenging or innovative?

### SEGWAY

These artworks were created in their specific cultural contexts with their cultural counterparts as the audience in mind. However, artwork quickly becomes artefacts from that past culture and is viewed by people from the contemporary context.

We’re now going to view some artwork and analyse it using the contemporary framework.
The Contemporary Framework is used to examine an artwork, irrespective of when it was created, in the context of contemporary art ideas and issues.

Below are some examples of the artwork that may be used as well as some prompting questions to help the students analyse the artworks using the contemporary frameworks.

Note: Although the contemporary framework enables the viewer to become the author of the meaning the students still must refer to the content of the art piece to justify their meanings.

**OPTIONAL INFORMATION**

In 1967 Roland Barthes (literary critic) wrote an essay entitled ‘The Death of the Author.’ The main concept put forward in this essay was that the author/artist were not the person to imbue the work with meaning, it is the viewer. For each work is viewed from that person’s personal and contemporary context. Therefore art can have as many meanings as viewers. This could be considered the beginnings of interpreting art from the contemporary context.

**CULTURAL FRAMEWORK PROMPTS**

- How have historical or contemporary events have shaped the intentions of the artists and our understanding of the artwork’s meaning?
- When and where was the work made?
- Who was the artist?
- Has the artists personal circumstances influenced the work.
- Did they have any significant life events? E.G Accidents, death in the family, broken heart etc.
- How do the social, political, cultural, artistic and/or religious contexts of the artwork contribute to its meaning?
- How are values, beliefs and attitudes and social context reflected in this art piece? How do these values, beliefs and attitudes compare to the values of today?
- How does the placement or location of artworks affect their interpretation?
- What are the symbols or metaphors explored or utilised in the artwork that contribute to the meanings and messages?
- What signs and symbols in the work reveal cultural information?
- How was the artwork reviewed or critiqued during the time in which it was made? Was the work considered challenging or innovative?
CONTEMPORARY FRAMEWORK PROMPTS

- What does the artwork say to you? What in the work tells you that?
- How does the artwork make you feel? Why? How have contemporary art ideas and issues challenged traditional understandings of artworks and their significance?
- What are the symbols or metaphors from contemporary culture utilised in the artwork and how do they contribute to its meanings and messages?
- Has the artist referenced any symbols or metaphors from previous artworks?
- How is the artwork of the past interpreted from a contemporary point of view? How does this differ from the way it was interpreted when it was made?
- How does the placement or location of the artwork in a setting other than the intended setting impacted on its meaning and value?
- What new media or technologies has the artist used to make or produce the artwork?
- What is the impact on the viewer of new media applications or technologies and other emerging art forms?
- How has the internet, virtual technology and augmented reality changed the way artworks are viewed and presented? How has social media changed the way audiences view art? How does this differ from traditional ideas about viewing and experiencing artworks in museums and galleries?
- How does the choice or presentation of subject matter, or media, materials, and techniques or processes reflect or challenge artistic or social traditions?
- What political concerns such as globalisation, and environmental and social issues, are expressed in the artwork? How do these concerns challenge and influence the viewer’s interpretation of artworks?
- Has the artists appropriated any practices or content? Are they making references to other works?
- How have contemporary art ideas and issues challenged traditional understandings of artworks and their significance?
- How does the choice or presentation of subject matter or medium, materials and techniques reflect or challenge artistic or social traditions?
- How might artworks of the past take on new or different meanings, in the context of contemporary ideas and issues?

WRAP UP

During this session we have examined & analysed how animals have been portrayed in artworks in different contexts through history. Next you will be using those same skills to write your own art analysis piece on a work by Joel Satore – We want you to answer “Can art save a species?”

NOTE TO EDUCATORS

I would encourage educators to research four artworks, 2 pre-1990 and 2 post-1990 that speak to them.
The purpose of this is so that if the students are quiet or hesitant to contribute the educator can strongly model the analysis of the chosen art piece using the cultural and/or contemporary framework.

**Educator Facilitated Session 2**

**Location:** Leopard Lodge (Photo Ark Exhibition)

**Resources:** Nil. – iPad optional.

**Joel Satore Biographical Information:**

**What he has done:**

Joel Satore has been a photographer for the past 25 years. He has contributed to Audubon Magazine, GEO, Time, Life, Newsweek and Sports Illustrated.

He spent 15 years in as a National Geographic photographer travelling the world and capturing its natural wonders.

In 2005 his wife was diagnosed with breast cancer, halting his work in the field. He began taking pictures of captive animals on black or white backgrounds that year, something which he had never done before.

**His aim:**

From there he was inspired to create his photo ark. He aims to document the 12,000 species that are held in captivity around the world. 12 years into his project he has photographed over 6000 of these species. Many of them are the last of their kind. He aims to document their beauty in the hope that he can inspire people to act for wildlife “Hopefully each species in the Photo Ark is a new opportunity to hook people and get them into the tent of conservation before it’s too late. It’s vital people pay attention and realize what amazing creatures we share the planet with.” (National Geographic 2015)

It seems that Satore has the skills to deliver some amazing photographs, but does that mean that he is successful? His photos could be either viewed as beautiful works of art that will inspire people to act for wildlife or his work could be viewed as an artist morbidly documenting the demise of biodiversity and of the earth’s species. Are they just the modern version of a death mask for that species.

During this session we would like you to apply the skills that we practiced in Digest Ed.

Students are to select 1 or 2 pieces in this Photo Ark exhibition and interpret them using the cultural or contemporary framework and answer the question – **Can art save a species?**

**Conclusion**

Sharing of writings.

**Act element - Advocacy (Photo Ark Challenge?)**
Links & Resources

Art of Conservation Biographical Information – Click [here](http://www.dummies.com/education/art-appreciation/art-history-timeline/) for document.


The Sixth Mass Extinction | Joel Sartore - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzBOB4HB4&t=12s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzBOB4HB4&t=12s)

Endangered Studio: Joel Sartore at TEDxDeExtinction - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4fsN1D-EVk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4fsN1D-EVk)

“Can we get people to care?”

Photo ark: Joel Sartore at TEDxMidwest - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHf-Pft_5Bs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHf-Pft_5Bs)

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