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NTIEVA Newsletter© is published by the North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts.
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AESTHETICS: QUESTIONING THE NATURE OF ART

Higher Level Thinking Through Aesthetics

Students can become involved in aesthetic inquiry when something puzzles them about works of art. Questions arise when we encounter works that do not fit our expectations or our experiences.

For example, we may assume that works of art should be pleasant and should present objects that are recognizable. What then are we to think when we encounter a painting that is unpleasant? Can the painting be art if it disturbs and upsets us? Why or why not? These are the kinds of questions that relate to aesthetic issues.

If we begin to look for answers to our questions in thoughtful and deliberate ways, we become involved in aesthetic inquiry. Teachers and students, adults and children can participate in this inquiry, using higher level thinking skills to look for answers to questions about works of art.

What is Aesthetics?

Aestheticians consider such questions as: What is a work of art? How do we determine what is a work of art? Who makes that decision? How is a work of art different from other objects? These and other questions arise in the classroom as students investigate works of art using critical thinking and higher level learning skills.

Aesthetics is one of the four foundational disciplines of Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE), along with art criticism, art history, and art production. Aesthetics is often described as one of the branches of philosophy -- philosophy about art.

Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy that is concerned with concepts of value and beauty as they relate to the arts. The word *philosophy* comes from the Greek words *philo* and *sophia* which mean, when used together, "love of wisdom."

Through aesthetics as a component of DBAE we try to understand art in a broad and fundamental way, investigating possible answers to some of the basic questions people ask about art. Questions often arise when we look at and think about art. By participating in aesthetic inquiry, we participate in an age-old search for understanding.

A German philosopher, Alexander Baumgarten, first used the word *aesthetics* in 1744 to mean "the science of the beautiful." Today, aesthetics is generally approached more comprehensively. In addition to ideas about "beauty," aestheticians (philosophers about art) attempt to understand the nature of art in a broader context. Aesthetics can include the study of art from all cultures and all times.

William James, a widely-read American philosopher of the 1900s, defined philosophy as "an unusually stubborn attempt to think clearly." Philosophy encourages people to become critical thinkers. A philosopher can be any person who engages in thinking deeply and rigorously. Students of all ages can be philosophers and utilize critical thinking through aesthetic activities in the classroom.

The Fundamental Question: What is Art?

Philosophers from **Plato** until the present time have discussed ideas about the nature of art. During some periods, philosophers have had very rigid ideas about what artists should create and what people should like, but in today's world, aestheticians represent a variety of different approaches to the philosophy of art.

For example, the answers to the fundamental aesthetic question of "what is art?" continue to change over time. One viewpoint is presented by Parsons and Blocker in *Aesthetics and Education*.

Parsons and Blocker suggest that "At any given time, there are limits to what can be considered art; an artist creates something that exceeds these limits in a particular way and claims it is art; usually by exhibiting it as if it were art and often with an argument about why it is art; the work is considerably discussed and eventually either accepted or rejected as an artwork. In this way the boundaries of art have been continually widened."

The Role of the Aesthetician

In all four disciplines of DBAE, practice is based upon the role of each discipline's practitioner or expert. For aesthetics, the role model is the aesthetician. Aestheticians in contemporary society are most often found teaching philosophy in universities.

Unlike art critics, who primarily focus on specific, contemporary works of art, aestheticians are usually more concerned with "big" questions about art in general.

Though aestheticians may use individual works of art as examples, Parsons and Blocker suggest that "The aesthetician is primarily concerned not with artworks, but with the way we think about them." Aesthetics, then, is the analysis of the ideas with which we think about and question the nature of art, especially art in general.

Use learning activities and vocabulary appropriate for students' grade levels. Whole class or small group discussions are beneficial as brainstorming and prewriting activities. Allowing students to work in pairs or small groups fosters collaborative learning.

Why Teach Aesthetics?

In *Aesthetics and Education*, Parsons and Blocker present three underlying beliefs about aesthetics in the classroom that support the teaching of aesthetics:

- 1) One of these is that the basic purpose of aesthetics is to help students understand art better, both particular artworks and art in general. This may be especially critical because of challenges raised by both contemporary art and art from other cultures.
- 2) A second belief is that aesthetics should be integrated into what otherwise happens in the class. Aesthetics is not taught as a separate subject, but integrated into the classroom.
- 3) A third belief is that aesthetics should be related to students' experiences and that discussions should be held at the level of students' understanding. Even very young children can become involved in aesthetics discussions appropriate for their grade level.

Aesthetics in the Classroom

Aesthetic activities in the classroom can involve a combination of critical thinking and discussion. When we talk about our ideas, we begin to organize and refine them in order to communicate them to others.

Matthew Lippman and his associates at the Institute for Advancement of Philosophy for Children encourage teachers to use the "good reasons approach." This method emphasizes looking for reasons and then considering their validity. In a discussion of this type, the teacher might ask, "How did you arrive at that judgment?" or might encourage further consideration of a statement by saying to a student "Please explain to me why you say that."

Aesthetic inquiry may be a rather freewheeling, informal process of investigating issues, or it may follow a more systematic approach involving the use of questioning strategies which lead the discussion in the direction the teacher has chosen.

Aesthetic Guidelines and Strategies for the Classroom

Aesthetics activities should be appropriate to the age and experience of the students. Small group discussions and discussions that involve the entire class are both appropriate for investigating most aesthetic issues. Writing done in small groups and shared with the class can also be valuable. Both written and oral responses to aesthetic questions should be supported by reasoned judgments.

Parsons and Blocker suggest that "art begins with a problem, with something that puzzles us in an encounter either with artworks or with talk about art." In *Puzzles About Art: An Aesthetics Casebook*, aesthetician Margaret Battin recommends using "puzzle cases" or problems for initiating discussions.

Aesthetic "puzzles" can be based on actual cases found in art magazines and newspaper articles or reported on television or radio newscasts. These media stories give concrete examples of how people are faced with aesthetic issues in our world and can be brought to class by the students or by the teacher.

Especially meaningful puzzle questions can be developed in relation to local art-related controversies or issues. Articles throughout this newsletter offer specific strategies and approaches for aesthetic discussion.

Once students become involved in aesthetic discussions, they begin to enjoy the opportunities to express opinions. These discussions can be demanding for teachers who need to recognize issues of aesthetics as they arise and who need to become the "guides" as students explore possibilities and reasons. Aesthetics can add a valuable dimension to the learning that occurs in the classrooms of teachers confident in their abilities to lead meaningful discussions.

by Kay Wilson, Nancy Walkup, and Bill McCarter for the North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts

References

Battin, Margaret P., Johan Fisher, Ronald Moore, and Anita Silvers. *Puzzles About Art: An Aesthetics Casebook*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.

Lippman, Matthew. *Philosophy Goes to School*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988.

Parsons, Michael J. and H. Gene Blocker. *Aesthetics and Education*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

CLASSROOM STRATEGIES FOR AESTHETIC DISCUSSIONS

Form Small Groups

Students will often speak up in a small group even if they are shy about speaking before the entire class.

Prepare the Students

Have students do some sort of preparatory work. Perhaps they could read an article from a newspaper, conduct interviews with friends or family members, or complete a studio project that is related to the issue to be discussed.

Create Interest and Encourage Creativity

As groups work together on a problem, encourage them to be creative in the ways that they present their ideas to the class. Students might produce posters, role-play characters, and use costumes or props.

Be Clear and Keep Students On Task

Teachers can provide examples and "what ifs" to clarify and direct student thinking.

Use Students' Ideas

Students' ideas must be central to activities. Teachers may need to yield some of their authority in order to give students the opportunity to think through a problem and articulate their ideas and feelings. Student efforts should be praised without a need to judge responses right or wrong.

Encourage Ownership of Ideas

Students should be encouraged to develop their thoughts fully, and to explain, clarify, and refine their ideas.

Summarize and Synthesize

Issues in aesthetics can often be complex. Teachers can do two things to keep ideas from becoming too tangled. (1) The teacher can periodically summarize what has been said, clarifying and refocusing the discussion. (2) Teachers can conclude dialogues by summarizing and synthesizing ideas. Bringing about a conclusion will help give students a clear picture of what has transpired and what conclusions have been reached. Of utmost importance is a fair representation of the ideas that have emerged, not just the most popular ones, but varied and contrasting perspectives as well.

adapted from *Aesthetics: Issues and Inquiry* by Louis Lankford, National Art Education Association, 1992

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CAMPBELL'S SOUP CAN VS. *CAMPBELL'S SOUP CAN*: WHICH IS ART?

What characteristics determine if two quite similar objects are or are not works of art? Asking students to set personal standards and then applying that criteria to images and objects assists young learners in justifying personal opinions about the nature of art.

There is no lack of enthusiasm when aesthetic problems are posed. Children's oral and written expressions typically are not hindered by technical art jargon and may therefore seem unsophisticated to the trained ear. However, this lack of vocabulary does not prevent elementary-age children from delving wholeheartedly into attempts to solve aesthetic problems.

This lesson about Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Can* sparked heated debates and provoked in-depth discussion when it was introduced to a group of fourth-grade students.

Materials:

- Reproduction of *Campbell's Soup Can* by Andy Warhol
- Can of Campbell's tomato soup
- Paper and pencil for writing

Objectives

Students will closely examine and describe Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Can* and an actual Campbell's tomato soup can, contrast and compare the image and object, explore criteria for determining if an image or object is a work of art, and provide justifying reasons.

Procedure

Part I

Display a reproduction of Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Can*. Ask students to carefully observe the image and to describe what they see. Require that students determine the artist, title of the image, timer period, style, culture, and media. Record the information on the chalkboard.

Display an actual can of Campbell's tomato soup. Ask students to observe the object and to determine the same information that was recorded for the Warhol image. Record this information on the chalkboard.

Contrast and compare the image to the object. How are they different? How are they the same? Which was designed first? Who designed the label? What is the function of the image? What is the function of the object?

Ask students to consider: Which soup can is a work of art? Is neither a work of art? Are both works of art?

Part II

Organize students into small groups. Distribute writing paper and pencils and assign a recorder in each group.

Ask students to make a list of at least five characteristics that determine if something is a work of art. After the lists are complete, ask students which soup can they now consider most to be a work of art.

Apply the criteria from each list to both objects. As students question the nature of art they should realize that art comes in many forms and is not necessarily easy to define.

Additional Questions to Consider

Does a work of art need to be original? If so, then which of these soup cans is the work of art?

Should a work of art be one-of-a-kind? How many actual soup can labels do you think have been produced? How many *Campbell's Soup Cans* were produced?

Should a work of art be found only in places such as galleries or museums? If art is found in other places, is the soup can in the grocery store a work of art? If the actual can of tomato soup were placed in an art museum by the artist, would it then be a work of art?

Should the intent of the work's creator be considered? Did Warhol intend for his *Campbell's Soup Can* to be accepted as a work of art? Did the graphic artist who created the soup can label intend for this to be accepted as a work of art?

Extensions

Ask students to research the role of graphic artists. How does this art career differ from Warhol's? How is it the same?

Assign students the problem of determining who designed the original Campbell's tomato soup label and the process used to create the label. How does this method compare with Warhol's art procedure?

About the Artist

Andy Warhola was born August 6, 1929, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Czech immigrant parents. He studied pictorial design at the Carnegie Institute of Technology and received his B.F.A. in this field in 1949. He moved to New York City, changed his name to Warhol, and worked as a commercial artist and illustrator.

Warhol's first solo exhibition was in 1952 where he was awarded the Art Directors Club Medal for newspaper advertising art. Warhol continued his commercial art career until the early 1960s when he first began to paint in the popular (Pop) art style.

Pop Art draws its content from commercialism and products familiar to industrialized society. His first works in this style included the *Campbell's Soup* paintings and prints. Warhol became known

for unusual exhibitions such as stacking boxes of common household scouring pads in an art museum.

Later, Warhol experimented with a 16 mm movie camera and produced films such as *Sleep*, a documentary that filmed a man sleeping. Andy Warhol died February 22, 1987, in New York City after gall bladder surgery. The **Andy Warhol Museum** opened in 1994 in Pittsburgh, the artist's hometown, and features an extensive permanent collection of Warhol's work.

Resources

"Andy Warhol: Pop Art." (April/May 1988), *Art & Man*.

Janson, H.W. and Janson, A.F., *History of Art for Young People* (Third Edition), New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

The Andy Warhol Museum, 117 Sandusky Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15212-5890

compiled for the North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts by Pamela Stephens, Nancy Walkup, and Jan Dodd

IS IT ART? YOU DECIDE!

Working in pairs, carefully examine and discuss the objects illustrated below. On a separate piece of paper, make two columns. Title one column "A Work of Art"; title the other column "Not a Work of Art." With your partner, decide which column is most appropriate for each object. List *each* object in *one* of the columns, along with the reasons for your choice. If time allows, share and compare responses with the rest of the class.



compiled for the North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts by Nancy Walkup.

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A DASH FOR THE TIMBER

Frederic Remington, American, 1861-1909 1889, Oil on canvas, 48-1/4" x 84-1/8" Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth

About the Artist

Frederic Remington grew up in New York State near the Saint Lawrence River. Though his artistic training was limited to only three semesters at the **Yale College** of Art and three months at the Art Students League in New York, he became an influential portrayer of the American West. His first trip to the western U.S. was in 1881, when he vacationed in the Montana Territory.

Two years later Remington moved to Kansas. While working to become a successful artist, he struggled at several different ventures that included a sheep ranch, a hardware store, and a saloon. He returned to New York City in 1885 and began to do illustrations for *Harper's Weekly*, the largest pictorial newspaper at that time in the world. He soon became one of their best artists.

From 1885 to 1888, Remington made several trips to the southwestern United States to report on the U.S. Cavalry and the Apache Indians. The landscape and the dramatic events he witnessed were an important influence on his development as an artist. He wrote observations in his diary, made many sketches, collected artifacts, and took photographs with the latest photographic equipment available. Back in his New York studio, Remington used these aids to develop paintings that were as realistic as possible in every detail.

A Dash for the Timber launched Remington's career as a major painter when it was first exhibited in 1889. That year Remington and his wife, Eva, were wealthy enough to buy a large house with stables outside New Rochelle, New York. Only a few years earlier in Kansas he had been a struggling artist, but by 1890, at the age of only twenty-eight, he was a celebrity, one of the best known artists in this country.

About the Art

"The dust flies, guns blaze away, the wind whips the big hat brim. There is no time for second thoughts. It is big action in big space." --*Frederic Remington: The Masterworks*, Michael Edward Shapiro

In *A Dash for the Timber*, the viewer sees riders being pursued by a group of Indians. They all gallop toward the viewer across a dusty plain. Some of the eight cowboys or prospectors have turned in their saddles to shoot at the pursuing Indians. On the left side of the painting is the edge of a group of trees where the men might hope to find safety. The sun is shining brightly, and Remington has made the resulting shadows a deep blue-violet.

This painting had strong appeal for the American public, who enjoyed the romantic notion of the disappearing world of action and adventure in the untamed West.

Additional Information

Accuracy was very important to Remington, not only in the details of clothing and objects, but also in the people and animals he painted. He shows us horses charging toward the viewer. They appear to be caught in a moment of intense action much like that which would be popular in western films a generation later.

The action is on the viewer's eye-level with a shallow foreground that places the horses' legs very near us. The way Remington has shown the horses with all four hooves off the ground is a view the public might not have been willing to accept earlier, but the photographs of Eadweard Muybridge showing how this actually does occur in galloping horses proved the authenticity of this presentation.

About the Time and Place

Remington's subjects were definitely American but these were not the common subjects of other American painters of the time. Most artists felt that studying in Europe was necessary, and his rejection of this idea was unusual for the time.

In 1889, the year that *A Dash for the Timber* was exhibited, the United States was growing and changing. North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Washington became the 39th, 40th, 41st, and 42nd states.

New inventions and developments were changing the life of Americans in their homes. Electric lights were installed in the White House, in Washington, D.C., but neither President Harrison nor his wife would touch the switches. An employee turned the lights on each evening and they remained on until he returned the next morning to turn them off.

Important works of art and architecture were produced in 1889. Winslow Homer painted *The Gulf Stream*, and Vincent van Gogh painted *The Starry Night* and *Self Portrait with Bandaged Ear*.

The Eiffel Tower, designed by French engineer Alexander Gustave Eiffel, was finished in Paris for the Universal Exhibition that opened May 6. It was a 984.25 foot tall wrought-iron structure on a reinforced concrete base and had three hydraulic elevators, one of which was produced by the Otis Company of Yonkers, New York.

More works by Frederic Remington are available at these sites:

Frederic Remington Art Museum, Ogdensburg, New York

Lesson Summary to use with *A Dash for the Timber*

compiled for the North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts by Kay Wilson.

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A DASH FOR THE TIMBER

LESSON SUMMARY

Title: *A Dash for the Timber*, Frederic Remington

Objectives:

Students will:

1. view, discuss, and analyze *A Dash for the Timber*.
2. recognize Remington's photographically accurate depiction of horses and men in action.
3. compare and contrast Remington's *Dash for the Timber* (two-dimensional) with the sculpture, *Coming Through the Rye* (three-dimensional).
4. evaluate the effect of artwork such as Remington's on the legend of the American West.
5. create a collage depicting overlapping animals in action poses.

Materials and Preparation:

- 12" x 18" construction paper in a variety of colors
- scraps of a number of colors of construction or other types of papers
- scissors
- glue
- chalk, markers, or oil pastels

Resources:

- *Frederic Remington: Masterpieces from the Amon Carter Museum*, by the Amon Carter Museum
- *Frederic Remington: A Biography*, by Peggy and Harold Samuels
- slide of Remington's sculpture, *Coming Through the Rye*

Motivation:

Analyze *A Dash for the Timber* with students. Discuss Remington's reasons for painting *Dash* and his choice of a life-and-death struggle in the West. Discuss how art work such as Remington's has influenced stereotypes of the American West. Though photographic accuracy was important to Remington, his work was painted in the studio, not on location. Examine Remington's realistic depiction and action poses of the horses and his use of perspective and foreshortening. Compare Remington's *Dash* with his sculpture, *Coming Through the Rye*. Contrast Remington's life and work with that of fellow artist Charles Russell.

Vocabulary:

- overlap
- two-dimensional
- perspective
- cast shadows
- movement
- three-dimensional
- foreshortening

- collage

Procedure/Production:

Tear or cut out the shape of an animal in an action pose (running, jumping, walking) from colored construction or other kinds of paper.

Using the first animal as a pattern or guide, tear or cut out 3 - 6 more of the same animals. On a larger background paper, arrange the animals so they overlap and depict movement across the page. Glue in place.

Details may be added to the composition with crayons, colored chalk, oil pastels or markers.

Extensions:

After animals are glued in place, a thin piece of paper (same size as background paper) could be laid over the composition and rubbed heavily with crayon to create another image.

Animal shapes could be cut from thin, stiff cardboard, glued to a heavier base and used as a printing plate for cardboard printing. To print, coat plate with printing ink with a brayer, then lay a piece of paper over the inked surface. Rub evenly with hands, then pull off print.

Evaluation/Outcomes:

Did students

1. examine, discuss, and analyze *A Dash for the Timber*?
2. compare and contrast *Dash* and *Coming Through the Rye*?
3. create a collage depicting overlapping animals in action poses?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Language Arts: Write a narrative from the point of view of one of the Indians in the painting.

Mathematics: Discover the average speed of a running horse, then create a word problem about the time needed to run a specific distance.

Science: Identify the time, events, and activities occurring in the work. Arrange events in sequential order.

Social Studies: Explore the possible causes of this chase and the effects it produces.

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MAKING PUBLIC ART PERSONAL

Works of public art offer valuable opportunities for generating personal responses through aesthetic discussions in the classroom. The use of public art form within the community as a focus of discussion has several advantages: (1) students may actually have seen the work in question and/or may be able to visit the site with a school group or family member; and (2) useful written critiques might be available from newspapers and other sources about works that may have been controversial in the community.

An example of such a work is the giant bronze depiction of a 19th century cattle drive in Pioneer Plaza, located in downtown Dallas, Texas. The work by artist Robert Summers includes seventy six-foot-high steers and three trail drivers herding them down and around a ridge and over a stream.

Touted as the largest bronze sculpture in the world by its promoters, journalist Sam Howe Verhovek wrote in the *New York Times* that "it will unarguably be the largest bronze cow sculpture in the world."

The work has generated controversy in north Texas since its first proposal by real estate developer Trammell Crow. In fact, the controversy has spread beyond Texas, as evidenced by Verhovek's January 17, 1994, article in the *New York Times*, "Dallas, Where East Ends, Casts Image as a Cowtown."

The controversy centered on the image of Dallas presented by the subject of the sculpture, a cattle drive. Many local residents argued that nearby Fort Worth was more appropriately represented by such a theme. Fort Worth earned its reputation as a "cowtown" because the Chisholm Trail, a major route for 19th century cattle drives, passed through the heart of Fort Worth.

Dallas, however, was not in the path of the major cattle drives and developed as a mercantile city. In response to this issue, artist William Easley suggested that "a herd of lawyers, bankers, and insurance men stampeding through town" would have been more appropriate.

In his initial support of the sculpture, Trammell Crow predicted that the cows would someday be what the Eiffel Tower is to Paris and the Coliseum is to Rome. Only time will prove him wrong or right, but the sculptures are finished and are attracting tourists and fostering civic pride. A photograph of the work now appears on the cover of the Southwestern Bell Greater Dallas Business White Pages phone book.

A classroom discussion of this controversy might include such questions as: What is your personal response to this work of public art? What would be your decision if you were given the power to decide if this sculpture would be chosen to represent Dallas? Who has the right to decide what work of art will be chosen or designed for a public site? What are some of the reasons a work of public sculpture might be erected? How important is it that such a work be historically accurate? How might an artist be chosen for a commissioned work of public art? What happens if the work produced by the commissioned artist is not acceptable to the community? These questions can be adapted for your local public sculptures.

A good resource to introduce public sculpture and related issues is Public Sculpture: America's Legacy, an education resource set from the National Arts and Humanities Education Program.

The unit includes a video on national monuments and other public sculptures, a study guide, twelve color reproductions, and twenty slides of public sculptures. It is available from Crystal Productions; call 800-255-8629 for a free catalog.

*compiled for the North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts by **Nancy Walkup**.*

ART EDUCATION ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

An increasing number of art educators are learning a new language to approach art--the language of the Internet and the World Wide Web. The Internet, sometimes called the Information Superhighway, is the vast electronic system of computer networks linked together throughout the world.

The World Wide Web (WWW) is an information presentation system on the Internet that allows users to access information through text, images, sound, music, and video. The availability of images and the access to museums and galleries makes the WWW especially useful for art educators.

The best way to learn about the Internet is to get online and experience it. For art educators and others interested in art, there are some specific sites that invite exploration. [ArtsEdNet](#), the new online web site from the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, is designed to serve the needs of K-12 arts educators and general classroom teachers as well as policy makers academics, and arts advocates.

[NTIEVA](#), too, has taken the leap into cyberspace and now has a website with links to its [programs](#), [newsletters](#), [the Marcus Fellows Program](#), and the [National Center for Art Museum/School Collaborations](#). Though some pages are still under construction, content will be continually updated and expanded.

Computer access for teachers currently is inconsistent from district to district; however, new technologies will continue to develop with or without our participation. It is our belief that innovative teachers committed to student learning about art will begin to explore and break new ground in art education through such means as the Internet and the World Wide Web.

If you would like to receive a list of Internet terms and definitions and a list of art-related web site addresses, please send your mailing address to [Nancy Walkup](#), Project Coordinator, NTIEVA.

THE TOP TEN REASONS COMPUTER NETWORKING IS A BENEFIT TO ART EDUCATORS

Networking is fast emerging as an essential part of working with computers. As art teachers become actively involved in using computers they will find that networking offers numerous possibilities and benefits. All you need to get started is a modem (preferably with a 28K baud rate or higher) and communications software (such as Eudora) which allows your computer to work with other computers over standard telephone lines. Once connected to the "electronic global community," you can:

1. Organize and coordinate international, national, or state-wide art exchanges for your students. The world can become your classroom and, in turn, you have the help of other educators and students from around the world to motivate and teach your students.
2. Send E-mail to access and retrieve loads of information on about any subject (including

- art) to help you in your lesson plans.
3. Join one or more discussion groups on just about any topic (including art education, teacher education, creativity, photography, animation, origami, advanced placement courses, ceramics, and much more).
 4. Download a variety of software programs and images for use in your classroom.
 5. Collaborate with other art teachers on projects of mutual interest and arrange for student collaborations on art projects involving telecommunications media.
 6. Tour online art exhibitions at art museums and virtual art galleries around the world.
 7. Use an assortment of powerful Internet tools for research, publication, and grant development.
 8. Promote your program on a global scale by exhibiting your students' work that has been scanned into digital format or created electronically.
 9. Design learning experiences in HTML format that can be available to students for independent study, serve as examples and stepping stones for new projects and be shared with art teachers around the globe.
 10. Most importantly, break the isolation of being the only art person in your school. There are loads of people to meet and learn from online and just about everyone is willing to share what they know with you.

NAEA 35th Annual Convention, Houston, Texas
April 11, 1995, by

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HINA AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Hina, a sculpture of a horse by **Deborah Butterfield**, is currently missing from her usual place under the trees in front of the **Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth**. She may be temporarily found in greener pastures on the lawn at the White House in Washington, D.C., as one of ten sculptures in the exhibit *Twentieth Century Sculpture at the White House, Exhibition III*.

In the fall of 1994 the White House initiated a series of exhibitions of twentieth century sculpture for the First Ladies' Garden. Conceived by **Hilary Rodham Clinton**, developed by J. Carter Brown, and organized under the auspices of the Association of Art Museum Directors, this series highlights sculpture drawn from public collections across the United States.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, was invited to curate the third exhibition in this series, showcasing works from museums in the Southwest and West. The ten artists featured in this exhibit include **Deborah Butterfield**, **Georgia O'Keeffe**, William Tucker, Scott Burton, Robert Therrien, Martin Puryear, Adolph Weinman, Jesús Bautista Moroles, **Joseph Havel**, and **Joel Shapiro**.

Hina, one of the images reproduced in NTIEVA's *ArtLinks* Study Prints, will be on exhibit from September 28, 1995, until March 15, 1996.

Six sculptures of horses by Deborah Butterfield in Chicago

The **current exhibition** of Twentieth Century Sculpture at the White House

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The ArtLinks Inquirer

**A Student Newsletter of the North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts,
Winter 1996**

About the Painting

Have you ever been to a circus? What are some of the sights and sounds you saw and heard? Joan Miró (Mee-ROH) was an artist who created this painting titled *The Circus*. Miró's *The Circus* does not have a big top or ringmaster but it does have a seal precariously balancing a ball, bold black lines that appear to be high wires, and numbers floating across the surface. In *The Circus* you have to look carefully to find these objects because they are not painted realistically, but are *abstract*.

The seal in Miró's painting is drawn with curved lines and few details. Sometimes this type of figure is called biomorphic. Biomorphic shapes are organic and seem to be alive and could wiggle around the painting. On top of the seal's head is perched a red ball that appears to be sprayed on rather than painted with a brush. Why would Miró choose to make the animal look this way rather than creating a lifelike seal?

There are other lines and numbers in Miró's painting. Can you locate the numbers within the painting? Why do you suppose that Miró placed numbers in *The Circus*?

The texture and color of the background in this painting might remind you of the canvas from which tents are made or the sawdust and straw that could be found on the floor of an actual circus. A building material known as Celotex provides the rough texture for the background of *The Circus*.

About the Artist

Miró was born in 1893 in Barcelona. He loved Spain, his native country, although he traveled a great deal in Europe and frequently spent long periods of time in Paris, France. Because of this love for Spain, Miró was deeply concerned about the effects of the **Spanish Civil War** (1936) upon the country. Some historians think that Miró painted *The Circus* to offer a happy topic that would take viewer's minds away from the problems of the war.

At his death in 1983 Miró was a recognized and admired artist. He had many worldwide exhibitions of his work during his lifetime. His friends included the artist Pablo Picasso and writer **Ernest Hemingway**.

Activities

Think of a time or place when you were very happy; perhaps going fishing or hiking in the woods. What symbols could you draw to show these ideas? Write a story about your experience, using symbols in the place of certain words. For example, instead of writing the word "fish" draw your symbol. Exchange your writing with someone else and try to translate each other's story.

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