

Lesson Plan:

Monumental Drawings

High School-Art I Foundations Class

Introduction:

This art lesson relates to the work of Robert Longo. Longo renders extraordinary drawings of icons and popular culture. Because of his use of perspective, viewpoints and angles his subject matter is monumentalized. Allowing the student to use a subject or theme that relates to their personal philosophy, aesthetic, and or interests, can transform a dull perspective exercise into meaningful art!

Objectives:

After completion of this lesson, the student should be able to:

1. Show an understanding of perspective.
2. Render shading in drawing.
3. Explain visual culture, icons, and ideology, and how it relates to the culture and to the student personally.

Instructional Objectives:

After looking at a series of drawings rendered by the artist Robert Longo, the High School Art I students will choose a contemporary issue or icon that has personal meaning to them. Paying attention to perspective, viewpoint, and shading, the students will complete a drawing of their chosen subject matter.

Vocabulary:

- Icons, visual culture, ideology, controversy
- monumentalize
- Perspective, viewpoint
- Shading-stippling, cross-hatching, hatching
- Concept
- Contrast



Robert Longo, *BODYHAMMER: REVOLVER*, 2008, Charcoal and graphite on paper, 96 x 48 inches/243.8 x 121.9 cm

Materials/Media:

- drawing paper
- drawing materials: (pencils, erasers, charcoal, graphite)
- Computer and library (access to imagery)
- Printer and copy paper (to print out subject matter)
- Objects for drawing exercises

Instructional Procedures:

1. **A. Set -**

The teacher will show the drawings of Robert Longo and explain how he pulls imagery from popular visual culture and focuses on the issue or controversy surrounding the icon or subject. For example, “*Gun Study* can be visually and conceptually linked to our movie and television culture’s attachment to violence, gunplay, and our interest in criminals.” Because of the perspective and realistic rendering his drawings seem monumental with the drama that is often associated with movies. The teacher after the series of key questions and discussion will inform the students that they will choose an issue and an icon or image that relates to their issue and draw it using perspective, rendering and shading.

B. Key Questions – After finishing the set the teacher will show the students the photo of Robert Longo’s *Gun Study* and ask the following questions:

1. Do you remember seeing this piece at the museum?
2. What is perspective/viewpoint? How does this affect the viewer with this particular subject matter?
3. What is visual culture? What is an icon? What do you think a gun can symbolize in our society?
4. Was Longo’s intent successful?
5. What is something that you care about? An issue? What type of icon could symbolize that issue? Are there already symbols or icons in our visual culture that relate to that issue?
6. What monumentalizing mean? How can you use perspective and viewpoints to monumentalize your icon or issue?

Who Made It?

Robert Longo

Robert Longo has had retrospective exhibitions at the Hamburger Kunstverein and Deichtorhallen; the Menil Collection in Houston; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago; the Hartford Athenaeum and the Isetan Museum of Art in Tokyo. Group exhibitions include Documenta (1987 and 1982); the Whitney Biennial (2004 and 1983); and the Venice Biennale (1997.) His work is represented in collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art, in New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis; the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam; the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris; the Albertina in Vienna; and the Ludwig Museum in Cologne. Robert Longo was the recipient of the Goslar Kaiserring in 2005. Robert Longo is represented by **Metro Pictures** in New York City and **Galerie Hans Mayer** in Düsseldorf, Germany. He is a co-founder and member of the band X PATSYS (with Barbara Sukowa, Jon Kessler, Anthony Coleman, Anton Fier and Sean Conly).

Robert Longo lives with his wife, Barbara Sukowa, and their three sons in New York.

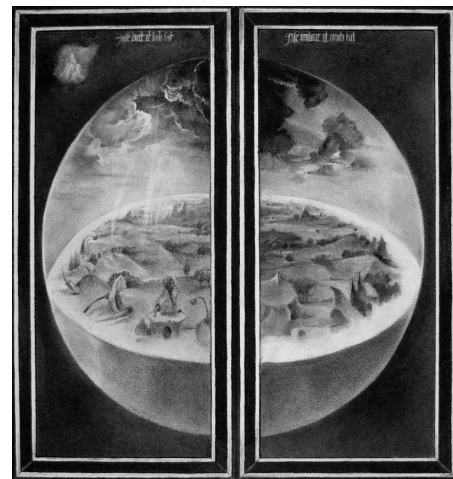
UNTITLED (AFTER H.B.)

2008

Graphite on paper

7-7/16 x 6-7/8 inches/18.9 x 17.5 cm

Well known for his series of large-scale drawings of crashing waves, atomic explosions, planets, sharks and views of Freud's consulting room, Longo has in recent years begun making intimately-scaled drawings of iconic artworks that have inspired or informed his own works. Typically no more than 4 × 6 inches, the works are drawn in graphite with astounding detail and are a radical shift in scale for the artist. Longo views these works as an art historical family tree – an homage to his ancestors and heroes. To date he has drawn works by Caravaggio, Brancusi, Rodin, Warhol, Bosch, Pollock, Hopper and Johns, among others. Each is an artwork in which Longo has found great inspiration.



Retrieved from <http://www.robertlongo.com/about/> and <http://www.robertlongo.com/work/view/1223/6255>, November 2009.

Classroom Strategies Day One Choosing a subject matter and brainstorming

1. Review the artwork of Robert Longo.
2. Allow students to research and brainstorm subject matter.
3. Allow the students to begin sketching their ideas.
4. Remind the students to work in their sketchbook and to have at least 2 completed sketches of ideas by next class.
5. Ask the students to write a journal reflection on why they picked that particular issue and image.
6. Clean up five minutes prior to end of class.

Classroom Strategies Day Two Shading and Rendering Exercise

1. Review the concepts and covered in the previous class.
2. Explain that today the class will be practicing shading and rendering.
3. Demonstrate how to stipple, cross hatch, and hatching as well as build up shades.
4. Ask the students to follow along in a page of their sketchbook with every example.
5. Inform the students that they will be drawing the object that has been placed in the middle of the table. Remind them that this is only exercise and they only have today to practice.
6. Clean up five minutes prior to end of class.

Classroom Strategies Day Three Perspective Exercise

1. To prepare for class, set up a still life in the middle of the room.
2. Review concepts from the previous class such as shading, cross-hatching, and stippling.
3. Explain that today the class will be practicing perspective.
4. Demonstrate how to work on perspective.
5. Urge the students to work only with line drawing and to sketch out the entire area before coming back in with shading techniques.
6. Monitor the students progress and help them as they need it.
5. Clean up five minutes prior to end of class.

Classroom Strategies Day Four Monumental Drawings-Line

1. Review the artwork of Robert Longo as well as rendering and perspective techniques.
2. Discuss the issues and show an example of an image to work from.
3. Explain that today, the students should begin to outline the image, paying close attention to perspective and viewpoint. How does viewpoint affect the meaning or impact of the imagery?

4. Demonstrate how to begin drawing the basic lines and shapes like the perspective drawing.
5. Monitor the student's progress and individually discuss their issues choices and subject matter. Discuss their choice of perspective and/or viewpoint.
6. Clean up five minutes prior to end of class.

Classroom Strategies *Day Five* Monumental Drawings-Line and Shading

1. Review the artwork of Robert Longo as well as perspective and rendering.
2. Demonstrate how to begin rendering and shading in the objects and imagery. Encourage the students to take their time and look at the various shades of grey and contrast.
3. Monitor the student's progress and individually discuss their issues choices and subject matter. Discuss their choice of perspective and/or viewpoint.
4. Clean up five minutes prior to the end of class.
5. *note: drawing will take more class periods, but gauge the student's progress and adjust time for lesson accordingly.

Classroom Strategies *Day Six (Last Day)* Critique

1. Monitor a class wide critique.
2. Ask the students first to swap projects and write 3 things they like and 3 things to improve the work.
3. Place all of the works on the tables and critique the work (about 1 minute per work).

Practice and Review:

- The students will review the artist Robert Longo throughout the process, addressing each of his concept and drawing techniques.
- The students will review issues and the impact of visual culture on personal philosophy.

Learner Involvement:

- Students will answer and ask questions during the discussion.
- Students will be picked as volunteers to help pass out the supplies.
- Students will be encouraged to give feedback to the critique and be expected to talk, at least briefly, about their own piece and how it relates to the artist.

Learner Environment:

- Teacher will need to prepare by gathering examples of Robert Longo's art found on the Knoxville Museum of Art website as well as the artist's personal site: <http://www.robertlongo.com/home>.
- Teacher will need to prepare by gathering objects for the rendering and perspective exercises.
- Teacher will need to find instructional aids and/or worksheets for rendering and perspective exercises. Some good websites include: www.portrait-artist.org/basics/techniques.html
http://www.artfactory.com/perspective_drawing/perspective_index.htm
- Teacher will need to make sure all accommodations have been made for special needs learners.

Closure:

- Close with positive statements about each student's work.
- For middle school or high school level, pass out a self-reflection/evaluation sheet to fill out.
- Students will receive a rubric that scores their individual work.

Alternative/Supplemental Activities:

- This is a project that can be tailored to any age level. The drawings can be as simple or as complicated as the students and teacher desire. It leaves quite a bit of room for low and high achieving students to be successful.
- This project could easily become an interdisciplinary unit involving other classes such as Government/Economics, History, Sciences, and English. They could be asked to pick a current controversial issue from their Government or History class and pick a side: for or against and portray that issue in the drawing. Also, there are many issues in the sciences right now such as genetics, stem-cell research, evolution, abortion, to name a few. They could be asked to write a reflection paper explaining their philosophy about a certain issue in an English class.
- The teacher needs to monitor the subject matter of the drawings. While personal expression should not be censored, there is a level of

appropriateness that needs to be recognized while working on art in the school atmosphere. Both the teacher and the students need to recognize this. Also, some issues may be quite personal to the students and it is important to the teacher to get to know why the students are working with a particular issue or cultural image.

Evaluation:

Informal: Teacher will walk around the room to make sure the students understand the assignment. Teacher will check individually (time permitting) with each student.

Formal: Teacher will grade students according to rubric.

Reteaching:

- Teacher will go over the artist at successive intervals in the future.
- Teacher will ask students in successive lessons if they remember the artist Robert Longo and what he did in his art work.
- Teacher will remind students of the wonderful job they did on this project even when it has passed, citing specific examples of student work that stood out to those individual students.

References:

http://www.artfactory.com/perspective_drawing/perspective_index.htm

<http://www.knoxart.org/index.html>

www.portrait-artist.org/basics/techniques.html

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

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

State Standards for Visual Arts:

9-12 Grade: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2