Art History Focus: The Evolution of Street Art

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Grade Level: 11th Grade

Subject: Visual Arts and Career Preparation

Objective: Students will explore the historical and cultural development of street art, understand its evolution from a form of personal expression to a significant global art movement, and create their own art pieces inspired by the style and messages of street art.

Materials:

- Computers or tablets with internet access for research
- Video clips or images of street art from different eras
- Crayons, colored pencils, markers, and other art supplies for creating art pieces
- Paper and canvas for sketching and final projects
- Journals for reflective writing on their art process and thoughts
- Handouts detailing the history of street art and profiles of key artists
- Projector and screen for presenting video examples and artist profiles

Lesson Duration: Five 60-minute class sessions.

Relevant Text:

In the late 1960s, a Philadelphia teenager named Cornbread began tagging his nickname across the city. What started as a personal quest to impress a girl became the spark for a global movement. Cornbread's tags, simple as they were, set the stage for the modern street art movement—a form of expression that turned city walls into canvases and influenced urban culture around the world.

As street art spread to New York City, it grew both in scale and significance. The city's subway cars and alleyways transformed into canvases for artists like TAKI 183 and Lady Pink, who began to tag their names. This movement wasn't just about art; it was about making statements in spaces that were accessible to everyone, not just those who visited museums. These artists conveyed their thoughts on society, politics, and personal experiences, democratizing the process of storytelling through art.

The 1980s saw artists like Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring take street art to new heights. Basquiat began with cryptic messages and tags under the name Samo© and eventually moved his work into galleries, gaining international acclaim. Keith Haring's vibrant drawings in subway stations captured the dynamic energy of New York City while addressing social issues like AIDS awareness, becoming symbols of activism and advocacy. Their work helped elevate street art from a perceived act of vandalism to a respected artistic movement, showing that it could engage with critical societal issues in real, impactful ways.

Today, artists like Banksy continue to push the boundaries of street art. Banksy's works often appear overnight, sparking immediate conversation and media coverage. His satirical and politically charged pieces challenge viewers to think critically about pressing global issues. Street art has a unique ability to engage the public in spaces that are unavoidable and inclusive, making it an essential part of public discourse.

Street art is significant not only because it transforms spaces but also because it offers a platform for voices that might otherwise be unheard. It allows artists to comment on their societies in highly visible ways, engaging ordinary people in conversations about topics that affect their daily lives. It's a powerful tool for community engagement and social commentary, capable of reaching people directly in their everyday environments.

Quote:
"The city is a canvas, and we're the artists." – Unknown Street Artist

Detailed Weekly Plan:

Day 1: Introduction to Street Art

Objective: Introduce students to the history and evolution of street art, emphasizing its cultural and political impact.

Materials for Day 1:
- Video clips or images of street art from different eras
- Crayons, colored pencils, markers, paper
- Handouts with information on key street artists and their works

Instructions and Script for Day 1:

Introduction (10 minutes):
- Teacher Script:
  "Good morning, everyone! Today, we're going to delve into the history of street art, starting with its origins in Philadelphia with Cornbread. Street art has grown from simple tags to a powerful form of cultural and political expression. Let's explore how this art form has evolved over the decades."

History of Street Art (20 minutes):

- Presentation: Show video clips or images of street art from different eras, including works by Cornbread, TAKI 183, Lady Pink, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, and Banksy.
- Discussion:
  - "What do you notice about the changes in street art over time?"
  - "How do these artists use their work to convey messages?"
  - "What cultural or political issues do you think are reflected in these artworks?"

Hands-On Activity: Sketching Street Art Concepts (20 minutes):
- Instructions: "Let's start by sketching some ideas for your own street art piece. Think about a local issue you care about and how you can express it through your artwork."
- Materials: Provide paper, crayons, colored pencils, and markers.
- Guidance: Walk around and help students brainstorm ideas and create their sketches.

Wrap-Up (10 minutes):
- Teacher Script: "Great job today! We learned about the evolution of street art and started sketching our own ideas. Tomorrow, we'll research more about specific street artists and their impact."

Day 2: Researching Street Artists

Objective: Guide students in researching street artists and their contributions to cultural and political discourse.

Materials for Day 2:
- Computers or tablets with internet access
- Crayons, colored pencils, markers, paper
- Handouts with research prompts and questions

Instructions and Script for Day 2:

Introduction (5 minutes):

- Teacher Script:

 "Good morning! Yesterday, we sketched ideas for our own street art pieces. Today, we'll research more about specific street artists and their contributions to cultural and political discourse."

Researching Artists (20 minutes):
- Instructions: "Choose a street artist that interests you and use the computers to research their work and impact. Take notes on their major projects, the materials they use, and the messages they convey."
- Materials: Provide computers or tablets and research prompts.
- Guidance: Assist students in researching their chosen artist, helping them find relevant information and encouraging them to think about how the artist's work influences public attitudes towards social issues.

Hands-On Activity: Refining Sketches (25 minutes):
- Instructions: "Based on your research, refine your sketches and start planning your final street art piece. Think about the materials you'll use and the message you want to convey."
- Materials: Provide paper, crayons, colored pencils, and markers.
- Guidance: Walk around and help students refine their sketches, offering suggestions on how to incorporate their research findings.

Wrap-Up (10 minutes):
- Teacher Script: "Great job today! We researched street artists and refined our sketches. Tomorrow, we'll start creating our final projects."

Day 3: Creating Street Art Projects

Objective: Begin creating the final street art projects using appropriate materials.

Materials for Day 3:
- Crayons, colored pencils, markers, paint, brushes, spray paint (if permitted), craft materials

- Glue, scissors, tape, rulers

Instructions and Script for Day 3:

Introduction (5 minutes):
- Teacher Script:
  "Good morning! Yesterday, we refined our sketches based on our research. Today, we'll start creating our final street art projects. Remember to use appropriate materials and think about the message you want to convey."

Hands-On Activity: Creating Art Projects (50 minutes):
- Instructions: "Use the materials provided to create your final street art piece. Focus on incorporating elements that highlight a local issue you care about."
- Materials: Provide various art supplies and craft materials.
- Guidance: Assist students in creating their projects, offering suggestions on techniques and materials to best convey their message.

Wrap-Up (5 minutes):
- Teacher Script: "Great job today! We made a lot of progress on our street art projects. Tomorrow, we'll continue working on them and add finishing touches."

Day 4: Finishing Street Art Projects

Objective: Complete the street art projects and prepare for presentation.

Materials for Day 4:
- Crayons, colored pencils, markers, paint, brushes, spray paint (if permitted), craft materials
- Glue, scissors, tape, rulers

Instructions and Script for Day 4:

Introduction (5 minutes):

- Teacher Script:

 "Good morning! Yesterday, we made great progress on our street art projects. Today, we'll finish them and get ready to present them to the class. Think about any final details you want to add."

Hands-On Activity: Completing Art Projects (50 minutes):

- Instructions: "Add the finishing touches to your art projects. Make sure each detail is complete and your piece is ready for presentation."
- Materials: Provide various art supplies and craft materials.
- Guidance: Assist students in completing their projects and preparing for their presentations.

Wrap-Up (5 minutes):

- Teacher Script: "Great job today! We've finished our street art projects. Tomorrow, we'll present them to the class and discuss their cultural and political impact."

Day 5: Presenting Street Art Projects

Objective: Present art projects to the class and discuss their cultural and political messages and impact.

Materials for Day 5:
- Completed street art projects
- Reflection journals, self-assessment forms

Instructions and Script for Day 5:

Introduction (5 minutes):
- Teacher Script:

"Good morning! Today is the day we present our street art projects to the class. Let's get ready to share our creations and discuss the cultural and political messages and impact of our work."

Presenting Art Projects (45 minutes):
- Instructions: "Each of you will come up and present your art project. Explain what local issue you chose to highlight, the materials you used, and the message you want to convey."
- Guidance: Encourage each student to present their project, giving them positive feedback and highlighting the cultural and political impact of their work.

Discussion and Reflection (5 minutes):
- Teacher Script: "Let's take a moment to reflect on our projects. What did you enjoy most about creating your street art? How did you decide on the local issue and materials to use?"

Reflection Journals (5 minutes):
- Instructions: "Write in your reflection journals about what you enjoyed, what you learned, and any challenges you faced while creating your street art."
- Materials: Provide reflection journals and writing tools.

Wrap-Up (5 minutes):
- Teacher Script: "Great job, everyone! You all did amazing work creating street art that highlights important cultural and political issues. Keep thinking about how you can use art to inspire change and raise awareness!"

Extensions and Assessments

Extensions:
- Early Finishers: Students who finish early can write a short essay in their reflection journals about the cultural and political significance of their art project, describing how it addresses a local issue.

- Additional Research: Students can research another street artist or street art movement and create a short presentation for the class.
  - Recommended Resources:
   - Street Art NYC
   - Art21 - Street Art
   - Smithsonian Institution
- Virtual Tours: Use online resources to take virtual tours of street art installations and projects. Links can be provided to museum websites with virtual tour options.

Assessments:
- Formative Assessment: Monitor students' progress during hands-on activities and provide ongoing feedback.
- Summative Assessment: Use a rubric to evaluate each student's art project based on creativity, adherence to the cultural and political concept, effort, and understanding of how street art can raise awareness.
- Self-Assessment: Have students complete a self-assessment form reflecting on their project and learning experience.
- Peer Assessment: Encourage peer feedback during the final critique session to promote collaborative learning.

Teacher Notes:
- Provide clear criteria for assessments and explain them to students at the beginning of the project.
- Use the rubric consistently to ensure fair and objective grading.
- Model positive and constructive feedback during critiques and encourage students to practice these skills.