

“Meaningful Metaphors”



Objective: Using a news story as inspiration, create a piece using metaphor and allusion.

Materials

- This project is not media specific and could be completed in a number of different ways. The teacher should determine the best media necessary to complete the assignment based on the students' previous experience.

Motivation

- Introduce artists that capture meaning in art through modern visual metaphors. For example:
 - [Guitar Drag](#) by Christian Marclay: an electric guitar is pulled down a dirt road in Texas as a metaphor for the murder of James Byrd Jr.
 - [Tar Baby vs. St. Sebastian](#) by Michael Richards: a bronze that memorializes the Tuskegee WWII Air Force Pilots by using the metaphor of St. Sebastian being shot full of arrows. In place of arrows, Richards uses fighter planes.

Step 1: Introduce

Introduce students to artists that make meaningful work through the use of modern metaphors. See “Motivation” for two examples. You might also include artists like Dalí and [Beth Lipman](#) and street artists like Banksy and [Plastic Jesus](#).

Step 2: Warm Up

As a warm up, have students research how symbolism is used in modern advertisements. You can ask them to find hidden symbols in logos, think about symbolic color or the use of color theory in advertisements, and to explore symbolic metaphors that have been used in advertisements.

Step 3: Create

For the final project, students should research a news story and create an illustration that uses symbolism or metaphor to express the article's point. Below is the student's artist statement for the piece featured:

"This piece of artwork will represent the hasty tensions between the United States and Russia during the Space Race in the '60's. The metaphor is that it looks like a comic and that they are threatening each other with Ray/Space guns". ~ Jacob

Tip: Occasionally, students get stuck finding news stories. Have a few 'ready to go' news items from different sections of the news to help. Consider weather, sports, current events, entertainment, and more.