

## Inside Art, Fall 2019— *Return of the Real*

### **Title**

Rodrigo Valenzuela: Shedding Light on the Human Experience

### **Estimated Time for Completion of Lesson**

1 class period

### **Concept/Main Idea of Lesson**

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the work of Chilean artist Rodrigo Valenzuela. Students will view and analyze works representing the three approaches (installation, photography, and film) used by the artist and consider how Valenzuela's life experiences as an immigrant and undocumented worker in the United States influences his work.

### **Intended Grade Levels**

Grades 6-12

### **Infusion/Subject Areas**

Visual Arts

Social Studies

### **Curriculum Standards**

#### *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*

- Visual Arts:

VA.912.C.1.2: Use critical-thinking skills for various contexts to develop, refine, and reflect on an artistic theme.

VA.912.C.1.4: Apply art knowledge and contextual information to analyze how content and ideas are used in works of art.

VA.912.C.3.1: Use descriptive terms and varied approaches in art analysis to explain the meaning or purpose of an artwork.

- Social Studies:

SS.912.H.2.1: Identify specific characteristics of works within various art.

SS.912.H.2.3: Apply various types of critical analysis (contextual, formal, and intuitive criticism) to works in the arts, including the types and use of symbolism within art forms and their philosophical implications.

SS.912.A.1.7: Describe various socio-cultural aspects of American life including arts, artifacts, literature, education, and publications.

#### *National Standards for Arts Education*

Visual Arts Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.

Visual Arts Standard 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Visual Arts Standard 5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of

their work and the work of others

*National Council for the Social Studies*

Culture

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Global Connections

### *Common Core*

VA.912.C.2.2: Assess the works of others, using established or derived criteria, to support conclusions and judgments about artistic progress.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

LACC.1112.L.3.6: Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

### **Instructional Objective**

The student will:

- view and analyze the work of Chilean artist Rodrigo Valenzuela;
- explain how Valenzuela's life experiences influence and inform his work;
- examine and analyze the significance of Valenzuela's artwork;
- engage in small- and whole-group discussion;
- design an artwork in the style of Rodrigo Valenzuela, selecting a critical issue in their local community.

### **Learning Activities Sequence**

**Teacher Background:** Before teaching the lesson, be sure to familiarize yourself with the notes available in the "Notes View" of PPT.

**Attention-Getter:** Activate the PowerPoint, "Rodrigo Valenzuela (Overview and Bio)" and project on a screen. Advance the PPT to slide 2 allowing students a couple of minutes to view and analyze the image. Ask for volunteers to share what they see and what feelings and thoughts the image evokes, facilitating a whole-class discussion.

Advance to slide 3 and explain that the image on the preceding slide is part of a larger work created by Rodrigo Valenzuela, a Chilean artist who now lives and works in Los Angeles, California. [Explanatory notes available in the "Notes View" of PPT.] Having once been an undocumented construction worker when he immigrated to the United States, Valenzuela's piece evokes the urban landscape of a metropolis littered with debris and echoing the alienation sometimes experienced by immigrant laborers.

Slide 4: Tell students that today they will learn about the Chilean artist Rodrigo Valenzuela.

**Learning Activities:****PPT-Guided Mini-Lecture:**

Present brief biography and overview of Valenzuela's work (slides 5-7).

Tell students that Valenzuela primarily uses three artistic techniques for his work (slide 8):

- Installation
- Photography
- Film

Slides 9-24: show examples of each of the three types of artworks Valenzuela creates, pausing to answer students' questions and facilitating discussion as appropriate. Direct students to take notes and jot down their thoughts and impressions as they view the art works.

**Closure:** Ask a volunteer to read aloud the quote on the final slide of the PPT:

“The films are one way of looking at yourself, finding a way to aestheticize that story. Ultimately, it's about engaging with other people, realizing that your story isn't so unique as to have a connection with someone else.”

Prompt discussion by asking:

How does Valenzuela's personal history impact his artwork?

How does his art depict his “engaging with other people”?

How is the commonality of the human experience reflected in Valenzuela's work?

**Evaluation**

Engagement and participation in the lesson will be assessed informally by the teacher.

**Project design:** have students think about a problem in their local community on which they would like to shine a light. Have them design (on paper) an artwork in the style of Rodrigo Valenzuela (photography, installation, or film) that would call attention to their selected issue. The design should have a 1-2 paragraph description and rationale for the work attached.

**Optional Extension Activities**

**Project design execution:** Provide students with the time and resources necessary to execute the project design they created for the lesson evaluation. Set up a “gallery walk” in the classroom so that students can display their works and view that of others.

**Social Issues-based art discussion:** Valenzuela (2019) has observed that

contemporary art allows people to create “what is missing,” especially outside the confines of traditional art forms. Ask student to consider: What might be missing from the extant body of art? How might they help to fill this void?

**Video viewing and analysis:** Allow students to view one of Valenzuela’s films (URLs provided in the Notes View of PPT) and facilitate discussion. For example, for *Maria TV* (2014), HD Video: 17 min. 15 sec (<http://www.rodrigovalenzuela.com/maria-tv>). Direct students to note as they watch:

What stereotypes of Latinas are highlighted in the film?

Why do you think the artist elected to use real immigrant women – rather than professional actors --- to create this piece?

What point(s) does the artist make with this work?

### **Materials and Resources**

PPT: “Day 2.Rodrigo Valenzuela (Overview and Bio)”

Computer

Projector

Screen

Paper

Pencils/Pens for writing

### **References**

Allenchey, A. (2016). How Chilean Artist Rodrigo Valenzuela Sheds Light on the Immigrant Experience. Retrieved from: <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-how-chilean-artist-rodrigo-valenzuela-sheds-light-on-the-immigrant-experience>

Huete, B. (2018). Rodrigo Valenzuela at Art League Houston. *Glasstire*. Retrieved from: <https://glasstire.com/2018/04/20/rodrigo-valenzuela-at-art-league-houston/>

Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. (2018). *Work in Its Place*. Eugene, OR: Author. <https://jsma.uoregon.edu/RodrigoValenzuela>

Laurence Miller Gallery. (n.d.). *Rodrigo Valenzuela*. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.laurencemillergallery.com/artists/rodrigo-valenzuela>

Snyder, S. (n.d.). *Rodrigo Valenzuela*. ArtForum. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.artforum.com/picks/rodrigo-valenzuela-50618>

Valenzuela, R. (2019, August 1). *Interview with Rodrigo Valenzuela*. Tampa, FL:  
University of South Florida.