

Title

Jorge Tacla: Sign of Abandonment

Estimated Time for Completion of Lesson

1-2 Class periods

Concept/Main Idea of Lesson

This lesson will focus on the work of Chilean contemporary artist Jorge Tacla.

Intended Grade Levels

Grades 9-12

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.C.4.3 Assess human rights policies of the United States and other countries.

S.912.W.8.10 Explain the impact of religious fundamentalism in the last half of the 20th century and identify related events and forces in the Middle East over the last several decades.

SS.912.A.7.11 Analyze the foreign policy of the United States as it related to Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Middle East.

National Standards for Arts Education

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

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

Standard 5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

National Council for the Social Studies

People, Places, and Environments

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Power, Authority, and Governance
 Global Connections
 Time, Continuity, & Change

Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.10: By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Instructional Objective

The student will:

- visually analyze Jorge Tacla's works from the series *Sign of Abandonment* during whole class discussion activities;
- describe facts related to the civil war in Syria;
- discuss the role of the city of Homs in the Syrian conflict;
- examine and analyze the significance of Tacla's artwork via class discussion;
- reflect upon the message of Tacla's work in written form.

Learning Activities Sequence

Pre-Lesson: Review the "Notes View" for each of the slides in the PowerPoint presentation, background information on Tacla, his artworks, and discussion questions are provided.

Attention-Getter:

Visual Analysis and Discussion (slides 1, 2 & 3)

Activate the PowerPoint presentation, *Jorge Tacla: Sign of Abandonment*, projecting Slide 1 on the screen visible to all students.

Slide 1: Provide students with 1-2 minutes to view the image silently. Then, begin analysis and discussion (having students build on each other's observations) by using the Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) approach (Yenawine 1999, Hailey, Miller & Yenawine 2015), asking:

- What's going on in this painting?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

Probe further by asking:

- Where is the setting of this painting?
- Why do you think this setting is portrayed in this manner?

Debrief the discussion of the painting by telling students that Chilean-born, New York-based artist, Jorge Tacla, created the painting. It is part of a series titled *Sign of Abandonment* (2018).

Advance to Slide 2: *Sign of Abandonment*

Ask students:

- What message do you think the artist is trying to convey with the title of the series, “Sign of Abandonment”?
- Why do you think the artist has chosen this image to include in the series?

Engage students in a brief discussion predicting the intent behind the artist’s work prior to advancing to the title slide.

Advance to Slide 3 (title slide): Jorge Tacla: *Sign of Abandonment*

Review the description of Tacla’s project with students.

Say: Through his ghost-like paintings, Tacla blurs the formal boundaries between abstraction and representation to present a damaged view of the world. His paintings explore the invisible structures and systems at work in society. Today we will discuss Tacla’s work, *Sign of Abandonment 34 (Homs, All that is Solid Melts Into Air)* and the Syrian conflict that has led to the destruction of the city of Homs represented in the painting.

If desired, reverse back to slides 1 & 2 to review students’ predictions of the artist’s meaning.

Learning Activities:

PPT-Guided Mini-Lecture: (Slides 4-9)

Review the discussion questions embedded throughout to check comprehension and promote engagement.

Slide 4: Provide a brief biography of Tacla. Pause to read Tacla’s quote about his experience with the 1985 earthquake in Chile.

Slide 5: Ask students:

- What do you know or what have you heard about the crisis in Syria?

Provide an opportunity for students to share their responses with the class.

Video

Show students the video: “Understanding the Complexities of Syria’s Civil War” (2: 21)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLHt5lQtl40>

This video provides a succinct explanation of the conflict in Syria.

Advance through slides 6-9. Review the information on each slide, pausing after each slide to allow time for students to process information and ask questions as needed.

Independent Reading (Slide 10)

Distribute a copy of the reading to each student. Encourage students to highlight important passages and significant vocabulary as they read.

Comprehension Check and Discussion:

After students have completed the reading and answered the questions on Slide 10, have them debrief either in small groups or as a whole class, comparing their responses with those of others.

Ask for volunteers to share their answers to the final question:

- Is the Bairuty family hopeful about the future of Homs? Explain.

Extend the discussion by asking students:

- What do you think the future holds for the city of Homs? Explain.

Art Appreciation and Analysis: (Slides 11 and 12)

Project the image on Slide 11. Read students the contents of the Notes view describing the painting.

Ask students:

- What do you notice about this picture that is different from the first painting we viewed in this lesson? What is similar?
- Why do you think the artist has chosen to include both paintings in the series titled “Signs of Abandonment”?

Advance to Slide 12. Tell students that this quadriptych (a picture or series of pictures painted on four panels) also represents the city of Homs. Read students the contents of the Notes view describing the painting.

Ask students:

- In what ways is the destruction of the city of Homs important to our understanding of history?
- Why do you think Tacla chooses to portray destruction using his ghost-like method of painting? Explain your response

Closure:

Written Reflection: “All That is Solid Melts Into Air” (Slide 13)

Read aloud (or ask for a student volunteer) the quote by Karl Marx. Ask students to write a paragraph responding to the following questions:

- In what ways does the quote by Karl Marx relate to the work of Jorge Tacla?
- What message might Tacla be trying to convey about humans’ relations with his

kind' in using this quote as a subtitle?

Evaluation

Student engagement throughout the lesson, participation in discussion, and written reflection will be the bases for evaluation.

Optional Extension Activities

TED Talk & Discussion

Show students a TED Talk by architect and Homs resident, Marwa Al Soubni, "How Syria's architecture laid the foundation for brutal war" using this link:

https://www.ted.com/talks/marwa_al_sabouni_how_syria_s_architecture_laid_the_foundation_for_brutal_war/transcript?language=en#t-3025

Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you agree with the claim that architecture has played an important role in Syria's conflict? Why or why not?
2. In what ways do slums and urban housing contribute to conflict in Syria and other places in the world?
3. How does Marwa Al-Sabouni's plans for rebuilding Homs differ from official plans? Which design do you prefer? Why?
4. Do you think that Jorge Tacla would agree or disagree with Marwa Al-Sabouni's position on the role of architecture? Why or why not?

Predicting Abandonment

Have students identify other places that Tacla might consider documenting in his series *Sign of Abandonment*. Direct student research with the question:

- What other cities, structures, or institutions are disappearing today?

Students should assemble a proposal for the artist demonstrating the reasons why their chosen place needs to be made visible before it disappears.

Materials and Resources

Computer, Projector, Screen

PowerPoint presentation, *Day 4. Jorge Tacla (Sign of Abandonment)*

Handout 1, *Homs Reading*

Internet Links

The Learning Network. (2017). *Examining how the Syrian crisis has shaped the lives of young refugees: A guest lesson plan*. Retrieved from

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/26/learning/lesson-plans/examining-how-the-syrian-crisis-has-shaped-the-lives-of-young-refugees-a-guest-lesson-plan.html>

Rogow, F. (2015). *Lesson Plan: News Writing, Target Audience and the Syrian Conflict*.

Retrieved from <http://archive.pov.org/returntohoms/lesson-plan/>

The Choices Program. (n.d.) *The Conflict in Syria*. Retrieved from <http://www.choices.edu/teaching-news-lesson/the-conflict-in-syria/>

Cristin Tierney Gallery. (2018). *Jorge Tacla: Sign of Abandonment*. <https://vimeo.com/241022035>

References

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Giussani, B. (2016). A TED Talk from a war zone. Retrieved from <https://blog.ted.com/a-ted-talk-from-a-war-zone/>

Hailey, D., Miller, A., & Yenawine, P. (2015). Understanding visual literacy: The Visual Thinking Strategies approach. In D.M. Baylen & A. D'Alba (Eds.), *Essentials of Teaching and Integrating Visual and Media Literacy* (pp. 49-73). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing

Milani, J. (2019, Jan. 17). USF art exhibit is a wakeup call about the health of our world, *Tampa Bay Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.tampabay.com/visual-arts/usf-art-exhibit-is-a-wakeup-call-about-the-health-of-our-world-20190117>

Mroue, B. (2018). Homs: Inside the obliterated town Syria once called the 'capital of the revolution'. *Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/homs-syria-civil-war-damage-revolution-rebels-forces-assad-regime-damascus-a8164146.html>

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Yenawine, P. (1999, September). *Theory into practice: The Visual Thinking Strategies*. Paper presented at the Conference of Aesthetic and Art Education: A Transdisciplinary Approach. Lisbon, Portugal.