

Altered Book Poetry Lesson

Exhibition: *Chasing the Whale, and Other Endless Pursuits*

Matt Kish used discarded books and other print material as the background for his illustrations in *Moby-Dick in Pictures*. He likes how the text from these found items would often appear in the work and feels this adds a depth to his illustrations that hints at a deeper more complex meaning in the artwork. For Kish this becomes a visual metaphor for the many layers within Melville's novel. Robert Del Tredici incorporates text from the novel into his illustrations allowing Melville's words to exist within the artwork. Both artists' visual exploration of the novel adds a new dimension to the understanding and exploration of Melville's celebrated tale.

The Altered Books Poetry lesson allows students to uncover poetry hidden in existing prose. Using discarded books, newspaper and other print material the students alter the text to create poetic verse. By highlighting a sampling of descriptive words or phrases they are able to create an entirely new piece of written expression. Using a black marker they redact unwanted words and phrases from the borrowed piece of writing uncovering the new verse. The resulting poetry may or may not be contextually tied to the words they are built from. The students can add color pencil, paint, and other materials to create illustrations for their poetry.

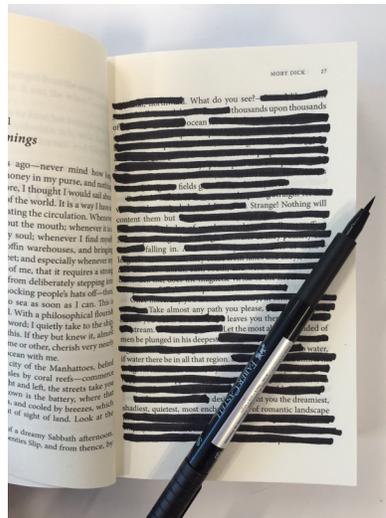
Grade Level: 5-8 (*This lesson can be adapted for additional grade levels)

Vocabulary:

- Poetic verse
- Redacting
- Descriptive language
- imagery

Materials:

- Discarded print material.
- Black markers
- Black Pens
- Color pencil
- Paint
- Collage materials
- Modge Podge
- Brushes



Discussion

- Tour *Chasing The Whale, and Other Endless Pursuits* at the CAC.
- Discuss Matt Kish and Robert Tredici's visual exploration of Hermann Melville's novel, *Moby-Dick*.
- How does Matt Kish's use of discarded materials enhance his illustrations?
- Robert Del Tredici embeds in his illustrations the passages from the novel that inspired his drawings. How does this enhance his work?

- What is redacting? Discuss why material might be redacted or omitted from a piece of writing.
- How can you use existing prose as the building blocks for creating art and poetry? Discuss and provide examples like those pictured below.

Beforehand:

- Tour *Chasing the Whale and Other Endless Pursuits* at the CAC.
- Collect print materials for the students to use.
**You may elect to use discarded copies of books you have studied or used in class. You can reuse these discarded books and have future classes add to them creating a collection of redacted poetry.*

Procedure:

Classwork:

- Introduce the project to the students and provide guidelines for completing the project.
- Share a page of prose with the class and work as a group to identify poetic verse within the existing text. Redact the unneeded words with a black marker revealing the poem created by the class. Read the poem aloud and discuss ideas for illustrations to accompany the verse.

Individual Project:

- Have the students select the discarded print material they plan to use for their poem from the materials supplied.
- Ask the students to use a pencil to select and mark the words they would like to use to create their poem.
- Instruct the students to use a black marker to redact the words they no longer need.
- Once their poem has been “uncovered” have the students design an illustration. The artwork can be on the same page as the poem or created on another page from their discarded material.
- They can use colored pencil, paint, or even collage to complete the artwork.
- Have the students share their poetry and illustrations with the class.

Evaluation:

- Evaluate the student’s participation in class discussion.
- Evaluate the student’s contribution to class poetry exercise.
- Evaluate the student’s individual project from completion and concept