

Carlos Amorales: Discarded Spider Metamorphosis Self-Portrait

Post-Visit Lesson Plan
K-5th Grade
Science/ Visual Arts
1-2 class sessions



About the Artist and His Work:

Carlos Amorales is a Mexican artist who works in many different mediums that include performance, animation, drawing, painting, and sculpture. In one of his early works, he created a performance that focused on the theme of *luche libre* (Mexican masked wrestling). The wrestlers wore masks that represented Amorales' face. In essence, they were transforming themselves through wearing a mask. This theme of transformation through masks, costume, and bodily alterations is common throughout his work.

Amorales' exhibition at the Contemporary Arts Center, *Discarded Spider*, exhibits his most recent work. Many of the artworks in this exhibition have images in them that are part of a visual database. Amorales refers to this database as the "Liquid Archive." For over ten years, he has collected images from books, magazines, the internet and his own photographs of the urban environment of Mexico City. He uses a process known as rotoscoping to trace over these found and created images to produce silhouettes and line drawings. Over the years he has added to his archive, much like we add new words to our vocabulary. Now he has over 1,500 digital drawings. The images in his archive include line drawings of animals, birds, machines, geometric patterns, and people. Amorales' objects morph together to create unexpected hybrids that are both beautiful and horrific. The use of these images might relate to his childhood when he was attracted to fantasy and monster tales in which of transformation is common.

Objectives:

- Students will explore the theme of transformation in Carlos Amorales' exhibition.
- Students will learn about the stages of metamorphosis as they pertain to butterflies and moths.
- Students will explore the stages of human development and compare/ contrast these to that of a butterfly.
- Students will discuss parts of a butterfly and moth.
- Students will utilize the concept of metamorphosis to morph a silhouette of themselves into an insect.

Materials:

- heavy weight black paper
- scissors
- tape

- fishing line
- pencil
- glue

Vocabulary:

metamorphosis

egg

larva

antennae

pupa

Installation Art

adult

silhouette

abdomen

thorax

proboscis

spiracle

hind wing

forewing

Anticipatory Set:

To link your CAC visit to the Science lesson and art project, start with the following questions.

- What were some of the different animals and things you viewed in Carlos Amorales' exhibition at the CAC?
- If you had to name an emotion that the "Liquid Archive" evokes what would it be?
- You might have been reminded of horror movies and books but what made you think this?
- Have you ever read a horror story or seen a scary movie that has someone or something go through a transformation? (vampires and werewolves are good examples)
- Did you notice any images at the CAC's *Discarded Spider* exhibition that looked like they were changing or transforming? Please explain.
- What animals or insects go through transformations? Discuss.

Procedure:

1. Discuss the parts of a butterfly and moth as part of a unit on insects. Review terms like antennae, abdomen, thorax, fore wing, etc. Make sure to review what makes a moth different from a butterfly.
2. Discuss the life stages of a butterfly and moth with your class. Define the word metamorphosis.
3. Have students draw an 11 -12" tall full body portrait of themselves on the black paper. Then have students cut out their portrait. Stress that this is a silhouette and many artists such as Carlos Amorales use this as a form of art.
4. Students will then reuse the scraps and additional paper if needed to draw and cut out the silhouette of at least 5 parts of a moth or butterfly.
5. Students can then glue these onto their self portrait. It is best that they attach them all to one side so that the glue joints can be hidden.
6. Hang the morphed portraits from the ceiling using fishing line or attach some to the wall using tape to create your own swarm.

Wrap-Up:

As part of a group discussion ask the students:

- How does your self portrait represent transformation?
- Do humans go through transformations as they grow?
- How is a human's life cycle different from a butterfly or a moth?
- What is another word you could use for art that is *installed* into a space?

Installation Art

- What stage of metamorphosis do the parts on your buggy self-portrait represent?
- Did Carlos Amorales' use the concept of transformation in any of his works at the CAC, describe the work.

Assessment:

From memory have student's draw and label the life cycle of a butterfly or moth. Students can also create silhouettes of a moth and a butterfly. Then they can attach them to a white sheet of paper and label the parts.

Ohio State Standards:

Science Standard: Life Science

K-12 C. Describe similarities and differences that exist among individuals of the same kind of plants and animals.

3-5 A. Differentiate between the life cycles of different plants and animals.

Visual Arts Standard: Creative Expression and Communication

K-4 A. Demonstrate knowledge of visual art materials, tools, techniques and processes by using them expressively and skillfully.

5-8 A. Apply knowledge of materials, tools, media, techniques and processes to communicate subject matter, themes or ideas in a variety of visual forms.

Visual Arts Standard: Valuing the Arts/Aesthetic Reflection

K-4 A. Apply basic reasoning skills to understand why works of art are made and valued.

B. Form their own opinions and views about works of art and discuss them with others.

5-8 A. Demonstrate aesthetic inquiry and reflection skills when participating in discussions about the nature and value of art.

B. Analyze diverse points of view about artworks and explain the factors that shape various perspectives.

Visual Arts Standard: Connections, Relationships and Applications

K-4 B. Use the visual arts as a means to understand concepts and topics studied in disciplines outside the arts.

5-8 C. Use key concepts, issues and themes to connect visual art to various content areas.

For more information:

<http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/webquests/butterflies2/butterflies.htm>

http://www.butterflybushes.com/monarch_metamorphosis.htm

<http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/jmresources/butbodyparts/1act.html>