

Carlos Amorales: *Discarded Spider*
Transform Your Fears T-Shirt Designs



Post-Visit Lesson Plan
5th -12th Grade
Visual Arts
2-4 class sessions

About the Artist and His Work:

Carlos Amorales is a Mexican artist who works in a many different mediums that include performance, animation, drawing, painting, and sculpture. 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. He 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. His objects morph together and form unexpected hybrids that are both beautiful and horrific.

Objectives:

- Students will create a t-shirt design using textile paint.
- Students will learn how to make their own stencils.
- Students will discover Carlos Amorales' work through visiting his exhibit at the CAC.
- Students will explore the concepts of fear as represented through visual images.

Materials:

Textile paints in red, white and black
100% pre-shrunk white cotton T-shirts (long or short sleeve)
Heavy paper to create stencils
Masking tape
Clothes pins
X-Acto knife

Palette/ foam plates
Variety of brushes
Fabric markers (red, white and black)
Thick cardboard (to keep image from bleeding through the shirt)
Pencil
Paper
Fabric
Thread
Needles
Optional: Images of “scary things” but also plant life, buildings and other background elements.
Buttons or other forms of embellishment might be useful.

Vocabulary:

transformation
graphic
stencil

design
silhouette
line drawing

fear
rotoscopy

Anticipatory Set:

After touring the *Discarded Spider* exhibit at the CAC and sharing the information above about the artist, ask the following questions:

- We have discussed how Amorales uses a visual archive called “Liquid Archive.” Can you name some of the images that were part of his archive?
- What type movie or book does his work remind you of?
- Would you be surprised to learn that one of Amorales’ inspirations was a book by Edgar Allen Poe called *The Narrative of Arthur Gorden Pym*?
- How did Amorales’ work represent transformation? Did this change the feeling the work expressed?
- What types of “scary” or “transformative” images would you add to Amorales’ Liquid Archive? What are some of the images that he used that you might omit?
- Were the images from the Liquid Archive three dimensional? What are two words that could describe the style of drawings he used? (line drawings and silhouette)
- Why do you think he kept his pallet simplified to red, white and black?

After your discussion with the class, explain to them that they will now begin to design a t-shirt using images they saw in the liquid archive and by adding in their own images. Have them look for images of things that might be perceived as strange or frightening. The class can share their archive or each create their own. These images will be morphed together to form complex designs like those they viewed in the exhibition at the CAC.

Procedure:

1. T-shirts should be washed to prevent shrinking and remove any sizing on the material.
2. Have students collect images of “scary things” and background elements to create their own Liquid Archive.
3. Before beginning the t-shirt have the students sketch the form of their t-shirt and the design they want to put on it. Remind the students that they can put a design anywhere

they want on the t-shirt (around the neck, on the sleeve, stretching around the side, etc.).

4. Place the cardboard inside of the t-shirt. Use clothespins and masking tape to secure the t-shirt so that the fabric on the front lays flat. Do not stretch the fabric as it will result in distorted images.
5. Students can either create stencils to transfer their design using the thick paper and X-Acto knife or they can freehand draw their design on the t-shirt using a pencil.
6. Students will then use either black, white or red paint and fabric markers to create their designs.
7. After the designs have dried put a clean sheet of paper on the painted areas and iron over them to set the paint.
8. Students may take the optional step of embellishing their t-shirt design further by adding buttons, accents of fabric or any other additional materials.

Assessment:

Display the shirts in the classroom on a clothing line, on dress forms or other creative ways. Discuss formal elements of the t-shirts during a classroom critique. Explore how these designs reflect Amorales' design aesthetic and how they differ.

Interdisciplinary Ideas:

Language Arts

Carlos Amorales was inspired by one of Edgar Allen Poe's books, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. The students should either read this text or another of his works. Focus on the type of horror and have a discussion relating Poe's works to Amorale's works. Discuss what is it in the stories that make them scary and how they compare to Amorales' images.

Ohio State Standards:

Standard: Historical, Cultural and Social Contexts

- 5-8 C. Demonstrate knowledge of historical influences on contemporary works of art and make predictions about influences on the future of visual art.
- 9-12 C. Explain ways in which selected, contemporary works of art relate to the themes, issues and events of their contexts.

Standard: Creative Expression and Communication

- 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.
B. Create two- and three-dimensional original artwork that demonstrates personal visual expression and communication.
C. Achieve artistic purpose and communicate intent by selection use of appropriate media.
- 9-12 A. Demonstrate mastery of materials, concepts and personal concentration when creating original artworks.
B. Create expressive artworks that demonstrate a sense of purpose and understanding of the relationship among form, materials, techniques and subject matter.

Standard: Analyzing and Responding

- 5-8 B. Present and support an individual interpretation of a work of art.
- 9-12 B. Explain how form, subject matter and context contribute to meanings in works of art.