How would your community be different if everyone were exactly the same? How is a community strengthened by the unique attributes of its members?

How do you simplify a cause so it can be quickly read and understood from signage? Do certain activist causes conflict with other causes? How can we use protest signs to learn and respect others who have different concerns and beliefs from us?

**VOCABULARY**

- Activism
- Action
- Intersectionality
- Inclusion
- Rights (Human rights)
- Movements

**MATERIALS**

- Cardboard (collected/ salvaged)
- Poster board
- Markers
- Acrylic Paint
- Printed photographs
- Pencils/Pens
- Tracing paper and carbon paper (Optional for transferring images)

*All materials are options for individual’s signs, though not all will necessarily be used for each.*
BEFOREHAND

- Tour the Andrea Bowers exhibit at the CAC (optional)
- Collect examples of protest signage (bed sheet, shirt, banner, interestingly shaped cardboard or poster board, etc.) along with examples of protest signage from Bower’s exhibit—possibly some from her found collection of signage and her large scale cardboard collages which reference union protest
- Instruct students to collect materials to create the surface for their sign

DISCUSSION

- Is protest signage considered fine art? If not, should it be? How do you make that distinction?
- Show examples of Andrea Bower’s protest works from the exhibition. For example: Womxn Workers of the World Unite!, Trans Liberation: Building a Movement (Cece McDonald), Écoute ma voix et nous sauverons le monde! / Listen to my Voice and We will Save the World! Talk about her role as an artist and activist.
- How can imagery elevate a message of protest?
- What makes a protest sign easy or difficult to understand (i.e. design issues, messy handwriting, unclear/obscure references)
- Discuss concepts around contemporary protests—particularly issues that are important to students
- Highlight examples of important historical protests (examples can be found under lesson resources).
- Define what makes a cause worthy of protest.
- Discuss motivations and effects of peaceful protest. Why might peaceful protest be a preferable mode of inciting change?
- Discuss other ways to peacefully incite change. (i.e. writing letters to your government officials, attending other activist events, donating to activist organizations, etc.)
- Highlight upcoming activist meetings, peaceful protests, panel discussions, film showings etc. happening in your community or nearby communities.

It is imperative to create a respectful classroom environment in which students can feel comfortable and included, especially when speaking of issues that may directly impact their lives.

PROCEDURE

- Separate students into groups if they are to work in groups (optional)
- Discuss with the students which causes they intend to create work about.
- Have students discuss how to best portray their intended message (would imagery add or detract, would the addition of other materials create a more impactful message, etc)
- Have students generate small sketches to discern the best layout for their message
- Have students prepare the surface of their sign. This will be different for each student, but may include; laying out the design with pencil, collage materials (layered cardboard in the style of bowers), printing out imagery (or drawing imagery) to be collaged, etc.
PROCEDURE (CONTINUED)

- Periodically, ensure that the students are not creating material that would be offensive or harmful to other students in the room. Also use this time to discuss the individual ideas to ensure they are properly communicating their intended message.
- Encourage students to begin drawing/collage and assembling their designs.
- Should students finish earlier than others, encourage them to create another sign or form of protest for their cause that represents it in a different manner (perhaps using imagery if they didn’t before, or the addition of cultural or political references, etc.).
- Once the signs are finished, reconvene the class to discuss the sign-making process; if there were any revelations, struggles or innovations with the work.
- Did you learn anything new from your small group or class?
- Did you learn anything new from another group’s causes? If so, what?
- Do you feel a more personal connection to your cause, and/or inspired to pursue activist causes and protest?

RESOURCES

- Timeline of the History of Protest: http://www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/ztvxtfr
- Activist Art of Andrea Bowers: https://wford1nonviolence.wordpress.com/2013/03/05/andrea bowsers-the-political-landscape-2010/
  http://content.time.com/content/photogallery/0,29307,1887394_1861256,00.html

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Consider encouraging students to stay involved and informed in activist issues of their choosing with emphasis on researching ways to get involved with their individual cause outside of the class room.