

Social Stories: Connection and Zoom

MATT KISH & ROBERT DEL TREDICI: CHASING THE WHALE

Grade Level: 4-12

VOCABULARY

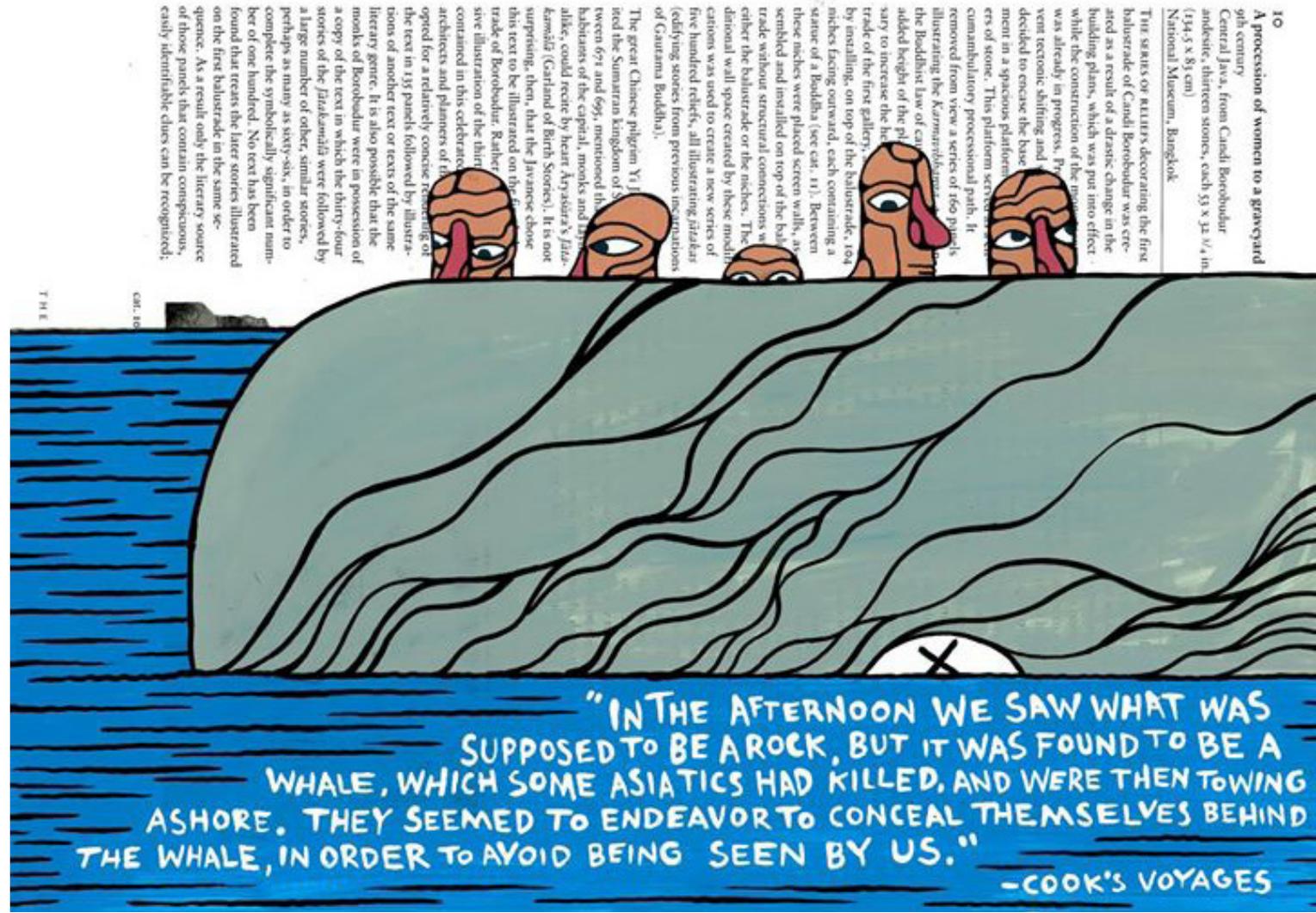
Connection
Frame
Zoom
Narrative

MATERIALS

Large, white cardboard sheets
Letter-sized paper
Tape
Markers: Black, orange, yellow, gray, light blue
Acrylic paint (optional)

BEFOREHAND

- Talk about the artists and artwork from the CAC exhibition, Chasing the Whale
- Collect materials.
- Research the artists and collect images to share with the class.
- Watch the 9-min. video, Powers of Ten. www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fKBhvDjuy0



10
A procession of women to a graveyard
9th century
Central Java, from Candi Borobudur
andesite, thirteen stones, each 53 x 32 1/2 in.
(134.5 x 83 cm)
National Museum, Bangkok

THE SERIES OF RELIEFS decorating the first balustrade of Candi Borobudur was created as a result of a drastic change in the building plans, which was put into effect while the construction of the monument was already in progress. Previous plans had decided to encase the base of the monument in a spacious platform of stone. This platform served as a circumambulatory processional path. It was removed from view a series of 160 panels illustrating the *Karmasambandha*, the Buddhist law of cause and effect, by adding height to the platform. The necessary to increase the height of the first gallery, by installing, on top of the balustrade, 104 niches facing outward, each containing a statue of a Buddha (see cat. 11). Between these niches were placed screen walls, assembled and installed on top of the balustrade without structural connections with either the balustrade or the niches. The additional wall space created by these modifications was used to create a new series of five hundred reliefs, all illustrating *stairas* (edifying stories from previous incarnations of Gautama Buddha).

The great Chinese pilgrim *Yi T'sing* visited the Sumatran kingdom of Srivijaya between 671 and 695, mentioned the *balustrades* of the capital, monks and *stairas*, could recite by heart *Aryadara's Jatakamali* (Garland of Birth Stories). It is not surprising, then, that the Javanese chose this text to be illustrated on the first balustrade of Borobudur. Rather than a narrative illustration of the thirty-five *stairas*, the text contained in this celebratory balustrade, architects and planners of the monument opted for a relatively concise reworking of the text in 135 panels followed by illustrations of another text or texts of the same literary genre. It is also possible that the monks of Borobudur were in possession of a copy of the text in which the thirty-four *stairas* of the *Jatakamali* were followed by a large number of other, similar stories, perhaps as many as sixty-six, in order to complete the symbolically significant number of one hundred. No text has been found that treats the later stories illustrated on the first balustrade in the same sequence. As a result only the literary source of those panels that contain conspicuous, easily identifiable clues can be recognized;

THE
CAT. 10

"IN THE AFTERNOON WE SAW WHAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A ROCK, BUT IT WAS FOUND TO BE A WHALE, WHICH SOME ASIATICS HAD KILLED, AND WERE THEN TOWING ASHORE. THEY SEEMED TO ENDEAVOR TO CONCEAL THEMSELVES BEHIND THE WHALE, IN ORDER TO AVOID BEING SEEN BY US."
-COOK'S VOYAGES

DISCUSSION

- Read the first paragraph of Moby Dick out loud with the class. Ask students to close their eyes and listen.
- Read again, asking them to quickly draw a picture of the scene, or situation, as they hear it. Repeat this process for the last paragraph of the epilogue of Moby Dick.
- Ask students what they focused on? What was easy or hard? What did they think happened between these 2 paragraphs? Do they think this is the main character?
- Discuss with the class what makes a story different from other kinds of texts? How does level of zoom apply to this discussion?
- Look at and discuss a standard narrative arc.
 - What does this look like? Discuss similarities to other structures, e.g., mountains, slides, roller coasters, airplane paths, etc.
 - What can we possibly learn about stories by thinking about those similar structures and representations?
 - How do the Earth's gravity and narrative driving action perform similar roles for roller-coasters and stories, respectively? What are the differences?
 - Does this model feel like a good story? Are there other options for a story model?
- In what ways do drawings/images and stories relate to each other? Think of the image above, cave paintings, comics, children's books, film, storyboards, newspapers/websites, advertisements, etc.
- Now think about Chasing the Whale, connection, and zoom. In what other ways do words and images go together? How else could they?
- What is Chasing the Whale about? Is it a bunch of individual works? A process? A fracturing? A re-appropriation? Something else? What is the chase?
- What are the similarities and differences between the following:
 - Spoken language
 - Visual language
 - Words
 - Images
 - Concepts
 - Objects

PROCEDURE

- Have your students make a drawing to show how all of the above topics relate to each other? Try working with a specific example.
- Invite the class to make a simple drawing of an object on the letter-sized paper, and write a single word describing it. Have them show it to another student and look it to each other's work together. Ask them what do they see first? What next?
- Put the drawings together. Can the class think of a connection between them? What's the story?
- Have students make another drawing together to show what happens; fill in the gaps with more words and pictures (repeat on a large board until the entire group is connected).
- Basic modeling practice typically involves 4 foundational elements: frames, entities, labels, and relationships. Individually use these elements to represent:
 - A family
 - A local business
 - An ecosystem
 - An argument
 - A story
 - Something else
- Gather all of these images at the front of the room. In groups of four, quickly make visual stories using words, drawings, and any of the elements created so far. Share with the group.

EVALUATION

- Evaluate the student's participation in class discussion.
- Evaluate the student's thoughtfulness about familiar things.
- Evaluate the student's ability to play with story elements.
- Evaluate the student's ability to collaborate with others.
- Evaluate the student's ability to present their work to the class.