



GRADE LEVEL: GRADE LEVELS: 7-12 (CAN BE ADAPTED FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS).

OBJECTIVE: This lesson is designed to allow students to investigate and find deeper meaning in the work of the artist Do Ho Suh, as well as to uncover their own personal histories and memories associated with home. This lesson also allows the opportunity for students to discuss and empathize with people who have been or are in the process of being displaced or are migrating from their homes, either related to current world events or to past social histories. In this lesson each student will create a continuous line drawing and integrated poem reflecting on the notion of home.

VOCABULARY

Memory
Rituals
Personal and Communal Histories
Heirloom
Symbol

MATERIALS

Semi-transparent vellum or mylar paper
Watercolor paper
Extra fine tip sharpie marker
Watercolors
Watercolor brush
Glue dots (or other adhesive)

DISCUSSION

"If we wish to know about a man, we ask "what is his story - his real, inmost story?" - for each of us is a biography, a story. Each of us is a singular narrative, which is constructed, continually, unconsciously, by, through, and in us – through our perceptions, our feelings, our thoughts, our actions; and not least, our discourse, our spoken narrations. Biologically, physiologically, we are not so different from each other; historically, as narratives - we are each of us unique.

To be ourselves we must have ourselves - possess, if need be re-possess, our life stories. We must "recollect" ourselves; recollect the inner drama, the narrative, of

Ourselves. A man needs such a narrative, a continuous inner narrative, to maintain his identity, his self." –excerpt from *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks

Dr. Oliver Sacks believed that everyone is influenced by the sum total of our individual experiences, and that without memory, it would be almost impossible to function. Sacks also believes that individuals are capable of "recollecting" and thereby retaking ownership of their own life stories. Much of this "retaking ownership" is done through regular markings of time and dates (calendars) as well as ritualistic events for important religious, seasonal, national or familial milestones (baptisms, harvest festivals, 4th of July, birthdays, etc.).

Artist Do Ho Suh utilizes memory in his work to reclaim his own life story, specifically in regards to the various places that he has called home. Take a look at some of Do Ho Suh's home fabric installation pieces and discuss the process by which these are made and how they might "reclaim" the personal history of home for the artist.

How can an object reconstruct the past through memory?

For Marcel Proust, the smell of a cookie he dipped in tea prompted him to relive a moment in his life. In Do Ho Suh's work, he is exploring how the recollection of a physical architectural space can relive a set of life memories for him.

Ask students these discussion questions:

What does heirloom mean? Why are they important?

If you were forced to leave this country tomorrow with just one small suitcase, what would you bring with you and why?

What triggers memories for you?

Most people have many objects that if they move, they'd like to carry with them. Heirlooms, treasured relics, photographs and small trinkets all may hold special meaning and could be considered irreplaceable. However, not everyone is able to carry objects with them when they relocate, especially when being forced to move due to war or persecution. These people are forced to reconstruct their homes through memory alone. You may also discuss with students relevant social histories and current events (the resettling of Native Americans, the Jewish Holocaust, Japanese-American Internment Camps, contemporary Syrian refugees, etc.).

This idea of creating a home from memory ties directly to Do Ho Suh's work. Do Ho Suh's Seoul Home piece fits in two suitcases, a perfect way for a traveler to be able to bring it home with him. How can we construct a physical symbol, an heirloom to express our history, through memory alone? It usually works the other way; a photo or other object is carried and treasured, continually reminding us of something from the past. But in the absence of such things, what can we construct from our memories to serve this purpose?

PROCEDURE

For Do Ho Suh, home can be reconstructed through fabric and memories of architectural space. For others, the smell of warm soup or the sound of a creaky door may elicit a memory. Have students take some time to brainstorm what objects may symbolize home for them.

1. From the list of objects that symbolize home for your students, have them each choose one. Students will create a drawing of this object to remind them of home.

On a piece of mylar, students will touch their extra fine tip sharpie marker to the surface and it will stay in contact with the mylar until the entire drawing is done. The drawing will be one continuous, curvy and overlapping line. Show students a few of Do Ho Suh's thread drawings. Just like a single piece of thread, their drawing's line will be continuous. Tell students to not worry so much about what it looks like. Since the drawing is based off of what they remember, it is going to be a fairly loose, abstract drawing. Have them continue to draw until the shape emerges from a bundle of tangled lines, much like Do Ho Suh's thread drawings.

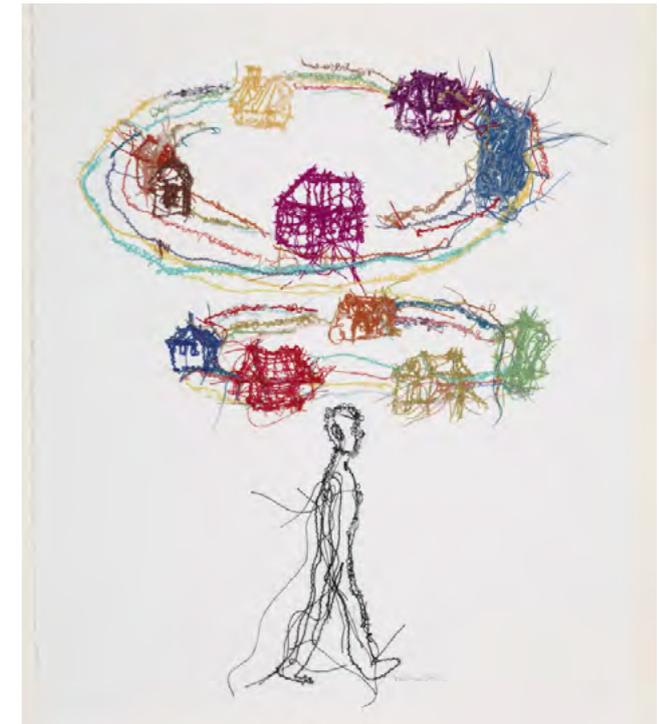
2. On a piece of watercolor paper the same size as the Mylar, students will paint with watercolor a background color in roughly the same shape as their drawn object. The Mylar drawing will sit on top of the watercolor painting once dry.

3. While the watercolor is drying, ask students to think about what home means to them. Beyond the tangible objects (your room, your toys, etc.), what do you love about your home? Is it your mother's cooking? Your grandmother's hugs? The sunshine in the backyard? Make a list.

Now, students select 3 things from this list to use as lines in a poem to describe their homes. They may tweak the lines, add words in between or at the end to help with the flow or rhythm of the poem.

4. Write the poem with an extra fine tip sharpie on the piece of paper with the watercolor painting on it. Have students think of the placement of the words in relationship to the drawing that they created on Mylar, and how it will look once that is laid on top.

5. Finish the piece by affixing the Mylar to the watercolor paper using 4 glue dots, one in each corner, or an alternative adhesive. It is recommended to place the Mylar ink-side down so that the drawing appears "imbedded" in the final piece in much the same way as Do Ho Suh's thread drawings are.



EVALUATION

Have the students share their finished work with the class. Discuss how effective their piece would be in reminding them of their home if they were far away. Ask students how they decided what details to include and what details they omitted. How does this shape their personal narrative and personal history of home? How can this be applied to a broader history of peoples and cultures from throughout the world? How do you think historians decide which stories get told and remembered and which don't?

RESOURCES

Lessons and activities for "Memory and History" <http://www.wliw.org/edonline/teachingheritage/lessons/lp1/index.html>

STANDARDS

Common Core

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2.A

Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2.C

Use varied transitions and sentence structures to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

