

Inside Art, Fall 2017 — *David Claerbout*

Title

Working and Waiting in Nigeria: Using David Claerbout's Art to Explore the Nigerian Petroleum Industry

Estimated Time for Completion of Lesson

1 class period

Concept/Main Idea of Lesson

In this lesson centering on David Claerbout's *Oil workers (from the Shell company of Nigeria) returning home from work, caught in torrential rain* (2013), students will consider both the artist's technique as well as Nigeria's petroleum industry.

Intended Grade Levels

Grades 6-12

Infusion/Subject Areas

Visual Arts
Social Studies

Curriculum Standards**Next Generation Sunshine State Standards**

Visual Arts: The arts reflect and document cultural trends and historical events, and help explain how new directions in the arts have emerged. (VA.912.H.2); The arts are inherently experiential and actively engage learners in the processes of creating, interpreting, and responding to art. (VA.912.S.1)

Social Studies: Compare economic, political, and social developments in East, West, and South Africa. (SS.912.W.3.13); Apply various types of critical analysis (contextual, formal, and intuitive criticism) to works in the arts, including the types and use of symbolism within art forms and their philosophical implications. (SS.912.H.2.3)

National Standards for Arts Education

#7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

#8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

#11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

National Council for the Social Studies

People, Places, and Environments
Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
Production, Distribution, and Consumption
Global Connections

Common Core

LACC.1112.L.3.6: Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C: Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

Instructional Objective

The student will:

- read about Nigeria's oil strike in 2013 and consider the event's impact on its people and society;
- consider key facts about Nigeria and some of the challenges the nation faces;
- visually analyze David Claerbout's *Oil workers (from the Shell company of Nigeria) returning home from work, caught in torrential rain* (2013);
- engage in class discussion about Claerbout's work and the Nigerian petroleum industry.

Learning Activities Sequence

Attention-Getter: Visual Critical Analysis and Class Discussion: Access the PPT, *Working and Waiting in Nigeria*. Advance the presentation to Slide 2, which shows buses near a market in Lagos, Nigeria. Give students 1-2 minutes to study the image silently, and then facilitate a whole-group discussion by asking:

- In what country do you think this photograph was taken? (After a few guesses, tell them that it was taken in Lagos, Nigeria's largest city. NOTE: The identifying title of the slide is animated and will thus appear with an additional "click.")
- What might you conclude about Lagos' transportation system from this photo? (Answers will vary, but students will likely point out the number of buses and mini-buses that service residents and might bring goods to market.)
- What types of energy do all of these vehicles use? (Gasoline.)
- What might happen if a union strike prevented these vehicles from filling up with gas? (People would not be able to travel to places, there might be a shortage of goods and services.)

Explain to students that in 2013, the petroleum workers' union called a 3-day strike in Lagos to force the Nigerian government to make changes in the way employees were being treated.

Learning Activities:

Reading: Copy and distribute the article, "Nigeria oil workers strike grounds Abuja." Before asking students to read independently, go over the Vocabulary Key at the beginning of the article [Note: you may want to **bold** the key vocabulary terms in the reading depending on your students' reading levels] . After allowing students sufficient time to read the article, direct them to answer the questions at the end of the reading. Discuss their answers as a class, calling on volunteers to share their responses.

PPT Presentation and Guided Note-Taking: Review the material on Slides 3 through 9 beforehand, reviewing any special notes in the Notes View. Present the material to the students, pausing to check for understanding and to answer any questions students may have. Ask students to take notes in their Student Journals.

Pause at Slide 9 and ask: Look at the chart of oil production predictions in Africa. Ask: *What is being charted on the x- and y-axes? What is the trend between now and 2020? How might this impact African economies, and Nigeria's in particular?*

Art Appreciation and Analysis: Resume presentation at Slide 10. Tell students that they will be viewing a work by David Claerbout, *Oil workers (from the Shell company of Nigeria) returning home from work, caught in torrential rain*. The work was created in 2013, the same year as the strike. Claerbout got the inspiration for the work by finding an image on the Internet of unnamed workers patiently waiting out a storm under the shelter of a bridge. With the use of 3D graphics, Claerbout animated the water in the foreground and the men in the image appear and disappear from the edges of the frame.

Show the 5-minute clip of the work by accessing it at <http://davidclaerbout.com/Oil-workers-from-the-Shell-company-of-Nigeria-returning-home-from> (the link is also provided on Slide 11), encouraging students to make notations in their student journals about anything that strikes them as they view.

Closure: Prompt a discussion by saying: One art critic has said that "the workers seem to be waiting – for the rain to pass, or for better days. Time passes slower when we wait, and waiting is economically unproductive and hence unpaid." With this work, how is Claerbout making a statement about time? In what ways does this image relate to the economy of Nigeria? What connections can you make between the reading and this image?

Evaluation

Informal evaluation conducted by observing student engagement, participation in class discussion, and completion of reading assignment.

Optional Extension Activities

Have students read another account of the 3-day strike, “Oil workers strike triggers fuel queues in Nigeria” (July 2, 2013), <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/02/oil-workers-strike-triggers-fuel-queues-in-nigeria.html>.

Allow students to research how the 3-day strike was eventually resolved. What concessions did each side make in order to resolve the dispute?

Materials and Resources

PowerPoint Presentation: “Working and Waiting in Nigeria”
 Handout: “Nigeria oil workers strike grounds Abuja” (reading)
 Paper/Student Notebook and Writing Instrument
 Computer
 Projector
 Screen

References

Dixon, T. (2017). Art & Accelerationism. *Art Monthly*. Retrieved from: <http://www.timothydixon.co.uk/am403piece.pdf>.

Geopolitical Intelligence Services. (2016). *Nigeria’s oil reform faces steep hurdles*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/nigerias-oil-reform-faces-steep-hurdles,energy,1822,report.html>.

Hessler, S. (2016). David Claerbout. *Art Review*. Retrieved from: https://artreview.com/reviews/jan_feb_2016_review_david_claerbout/.

Science Kids. (2016). *Nigeria*. Retrieved from: <http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/countries/nigeria.html>.

Woodward, R.B. (2016). David Claerbout, LIGHT/WORK @Sean Kelly. *Collector Daily*. Retrieved from: <https://collectordaily.com/david-claerbout-lightwork-sean-kelly/>.