

Title

Humor, Sarcasm, and Wit: The Art of Tonel

Estimated Time for Completion of Lesson

1 class period

Concept/Main Idea of Lesson

Students will become familiar with the work of Cuban artist Antonio Eligio Fernández (“Tonel”), consider how humor and sarcasm can be used as artistic tools, and reflect on the cost of making art.

Intended Grade Levels

Grades 9-12

Infusion/Subject Areas

Visual Arts
Social Studies

Curriculum Standards**Next Generation Sunshine State Standards**

- Visual Arts:

VA.912.C.1.2: Use critical-thinking skills for various contexts to develop, refine, and reflect on an artistic theme.

VA.912.C.3.1: Use descriptive terms and varied approaches in art analysis to explain the meaning or purpose of an artwork.

- Social Studies:

SS.912.H.1.2: Describe how historical events, social context, and culture impact forms, techniques, and purposes of works in the arts, including the relationship between a government and its citizens.

National Standards for Arts Education

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

National Council for the Social Studies

Time, Continuity, and Change
People, Places, and Environments
Science, Technology, and Society
Global Connections

Common Core

VA.912.C.2.2: Assess the works of others, using established or derived criteria, to support conclusions and judgments about artistic progress.

Instructional Objectives

The student will:

- become familiar with the work of artist Tonel;
- identify elements of social commentary in Tonel's works;
- develop visual critical analysis skills;
- consider how Tonel uses humor, sarcasm, and wit in his work.

Learning Activities Sequence

Attention-Getter: Activate the PowerPoint presentation, *Tonel: Sarcasm, Humor, and Wit*; project Slide 1. Give students a minute or two to view the image. Then guide their visual analysis and whole-class discussion by asking:

1. How many objects are on the shelf? (five)
2. Can you make out any words on the objects?
3. What does it say on the wall? (hint: the second object from the left on the shelf, a brick, is a translation)
4. What do they all have in common? (they are all inexpensive items)
5. What do you think the artist is trying to say with this work?

Debrief on the work by telling students that its title is *Art Should Not Be Expensive to Make (Hacer Arte No Debería Ser Caro)* and was made by the artist in 2014. The work consists of a shelf and five handmade, inexpensive items. The text appears written on the wall over the shelf in Spanish and in English on the items. Among other things, the work is a commentary on the difficult economic conditions in Cuba and the scarcity of materials; artists must make do with what is available.

Slide 2: Ask students to consider the central issue expressed in *Art Should Not Be Expensive to Make*. Why is this issue of special concern for artists in developing countries? Is there anything that the art community can do to ameliorate this situation?

PPT-Guided Lecture: Present the remainder of the presentation (Slides 3 – 8) by advancing the slides, first reviewing the commentary provided in the Notes View.

Closure: (Slide 9): Pose the questions to the class, asking for volunteers to share their thoughts:

- What would you do if you were an artist and wanted to make commentary on a social issue, what issue would it be?
- What would you do if you were an artist with limited resources, what materials might you use?

Evaluation

Participation and engagement throughout the presentation and discussion will be qualitatively assessed.

Students will also respond to the lesson's title: *Humor, Sarcasm, and Wit: The Art of Tonel*: how does the artist's work project humor, sarcasm, and wit? Responses can be expressed orally in small groups, whole class, or in writing.

Optional Extension Activity

Allow students to put into practice their ideas that were generated by the closure. Give students an opportunity to present and share their works with their peers.

Materials and Resources

PPT Presentation: *Tonel: Sarcasm, Humor, and Wit*
Computer
Projector
Screen
Student notebooks
Pencil/Pen

References

The Farber Collection. (2018). *Tonel (Antonio Eligio Fernández)*. Retrieved from: http://www.thefarbercollection.com/artists/bio/tonel_antonio_eligio_fernandez

Havana Cultura. (2013). *Retrospective exhibition of the works of Antonio Eligio Fernández Tonel*. Retrieved from: <http://havana-cultura.com/en/havana-cultura-news/retrospective-exhibition-works-antonio-eligio-fernandez-tonel>.

Smith, N. (November, 2017). *Interview with artist Tonel*. Tampa, FL: USF CAM.