

## InsideArt, Spring 2015 — *Historias*

### **Title**

*Progress and Preservation: The Work of Caio Reisewitz*

### **Concept/Main Idea of Lesson**

In this lesson, students will become familiar with the work of Brazilian artist Caio Reisewitz, consider the relationship between economic development and environmental preservation, and reflect on their own understandings of human interaction with the environment.

### **Intended Grade Levels**

Grades 9-12

### **Duration**

1-2 days

### **Infusion/Subject Areas**

Visual Arts

Social Studies

### **Curriculum Standards**

#### *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*

- Visual Arts:

VA.912.C.12: Use critical thinking skills for various contexts to develop, refine, and reflect on an artistic theme

VA.912.C.1.4: Apply art knowledge and contextual information to analyze how content and ideas are used in works of art.

TH.5.C.3.2: Use a photograph, sculpture, or two-dimensional work of art to inspire creation of an original scene or monologue.

- Social Studies:

SS.912.H.1 Identify and analyze the historical, social, and cultural contexts of the arts

SS.912.H.2 Respond critically and aesthetically to various works in the arts

SS.912.G.2 Understand physical and cultural characteristics of places

SS.912.G.3 Understand the relationships between the Earth's ecosystems and populations that dwell within them

SS.912.G.5 Understand how human actions can impact the environment

#### *National Standards for Arts Education*

Standard 1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.

Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.

#### *National Council for the Social Studies*

Culture: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.

People, Places, and Environments: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.

### 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.CCRA.SL.5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

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.

### **Instructional Objectives**

The student will:

- relate the biography and artistic influences of Caio Reisewitz to his work in an introductory visual analysis activity;
- describe some of the works created by Reisewitz through whole-class discussion;
- develop visual and critical thinking skills through whole-class discussion and a writing exercise;
- reflect upon the relationship between natural environments and human civilization in a written response.

### **Learning Activities Sequence**

**Teacher Preparation:** Access the PowerPoint presentation, “Day 3. Progress and Preservation (Caio Reisewitz)” and be ready to project slide 2 onto a screen. Before presenting the lesson, read through the information in the “Notes View” of the PPT.

### **Attention Getter: Video & Group Discussion** (slide 2)

Tell students that they will be learning about the artist, Caio Reisewitz. The short clip is a statement by Caio Reisewitz describing his artist process. This video is in Portuguese with English subtitles.

Link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iorP\\_yla40](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iorP_yla40) (2:45)

After students watch the video, ask students:

- What did the artist say influences his work?
- Based on the video, what sort of photographs might we see today?

**Visual Analysis:** Advance the PPT to slide 3. Tell students that the image of “*Tababuia*” is a work created by Brazilian artist Caio Reisewitz. Today they will learn more about the artist, his work, and his particular artistic style.

Project Caio Reisewitz's *Tababuia* (2009). Have students view and consider the image on slide 3 and engage in a Think-Write-Pair-Share:

- On your paper, list everything that you see in this image
- Where do you think the backdrop of this image is located?
- What is the form in the foreground?
- Why do you think the artist has arranged the image in this way?
- What do you think the title *Tababuia* is referring to?

Ask students to consider how the development of civilizations throughout history has impacted the existing natural landscapes.

### **PowerPoint-Guided Presentation:**

Slides 4, 5, and 6: Show students the images of São Paulo while describing its urban expansion in the past century (see Notes View in PPT).

### **Visual Analysis:**

Slide 7: Show *Butantã*, and ask students:

- What do you see in this picture?
- How is this picture different than the other pictures we saw of São Paulo?
- Is this picture real? Or did Caio manipulate it? Explain your reasoning.
- Why do you think he chose to take this picture?

Inform students that São Paulo is located within the Mata Atlantica (Atlantic Forest) that spans over half a million square miles in southeastern Brazil. Much of Caio Reisewitz's work explores the relationship between natural and human made environments in São Paulo.

Ask: What does this photograph say about the relationship between the forest and the city? Can you think of a place in your community that shows a similar relationship between the natural environment and man-made structures?

### **Visual Analysis continued:**

Slide 8: *Goiânia Golf Club II*, 2004

The tension between the country's economic development and the degradation of the environment is a consistent theme in Reisewitz's work.

Ask:

- What do you see in the photograph?
- What is real and what is artificial in this photograph? What makes you think that?
- What does this photograph say about the relationship between natural and human made environments?

Slide 9: Revisit *Tababuia*

We are now going to look to his more recent works examining this line between reality

and artificiality. These photographic collages, like we saw in *Tababuia*, include digitally overlaid cutout images – of people, *favelas* or slums, and vegetation- onto scenes of forests, rivers, and grasslands.

Considering the background information we have learned about the artist:  
 What is real and what is artificial in this photograph? What makes you think that?  
 What does this photograph say about the relationship between natural and human made environments?

Slide 10 -12: Show each of the images, pausing to continue with Visual Analysis questions.

### **Discussion**

Slide 13: Guide whole-class discussion by posing the following questions:

1. The artist decided to add images to the photographs. In what ways does this disrupt reality? In what ways does this process reflect environmental issues facing humanity?
2. How does the artist portray water in his works? How do you think the relationship between urban centers and natural environments impacts the water supply?
3. Much of the artist's work explores the line between reality and artificiality. Which work do you feel best reflects this artistic interest? Explain your response.

### **Closure: Quote and Writing Prompt**

Slide 14: Read the quote by Christopher Phillips aloud to the class, pausing to paraphrase or define any unknown vocabulary. Ask students: Consider the conflict between the preservation of natural environments and the desire for human progress through economic development. Is it possible to have both progress and preservation? Have students write a one-page reflection paper expressing their thoughts.

[Note: This writing activity can also serve as a homework assignment.]

### **Evaluation**

Allow students to share their written response to the closing quote and prompt with a shoulder partner.

Alternately, students may share with multiple partners using the inside-outside circle cooperative learning structure. Students stand in two concentric circles of equal numbers, facing each other. Each student is paired with the person across from him or her. The inside group will share their response with their partner for two minutes, and then the outside group will their response with their partner for an additional two minutes. After the allotted time has passed, the members of one of the circles will rotate to meet his or her next partner. Allow students to share with at least three other students.

### **Optional Extension Activities**

Ask students to take a photograph of a place or person within their neighborhood that they feel demonstrates the relationship between progress and preservation. Have them accompany their photograph with a written or audio-recorded narrative of why they think

it is “imperceptible” to most people.

Alternatively, students can use found images from magazines or newspapers.

### **Materials and Resources**

- Computer, Projector, and Screen
- PowerPoint Presentation: *Crossing Boundaries* (Day 3. “Progress and Preservation (Reisewitz)”)
- Paper and pencils/pens for student writing

### **Internet Links**

**Video with the Artist:** <http://www.pipaprize.com/pag/caio-reisewitz/>

### **References**

International Center for Photography. (2015). *Caio Reisewitz*.  
<http://www.icp.org/exhibitions/caio-reisewitz-0>

Phillips, C. (2014). “Caio Reisewitz,” *Aperature*. Retrieved from:  
<http://aperture.org/blog/caio-reisewitz-christopher-phillips/>

Schneider, R.M. (2015). “São Paulo,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.britannica.com/place/Sao-Paulo-Brazil>