

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SITES FOR STUDENTS PROJECT  
TEACHING ARTIST: ROSS LEWIS  
PS 6 STATEN ISLAND

16 sessions, Fall 2001-Spring 2002  
5th Grade Classes

At PS 6 in Staten Island, I worked with fifth grade students on creating a permanent public art installation in the atrium lobby, which followed a process similar to that which I undertake in my own work. The goal was to teach students how to develop their own individual artistic sensibilities through the act of exploration of different ideas and media. The visual skills and the familiarity with materials they acquired were a natural outgrowth of the ideas which they pursued in developing the form of the final artwork. The focus was to let them enter the process and philosophy of the artist who evolves a "serious" idea, that stems from a real passion and which engages the mind, the soul and the eyes.

The students were given a notebook in which to keep a record of their ideas and the process in the form of drawings, images from other sources and writing. Students were asked to design their own concepts for the atrium space and then bring those ideas to the larger forum. They developed their ideas two dimensionally and three dimensionally in a maquette scaled to the approximate space of the atrium.

## LESSON PLAN

SITES FOR STUDENTS PROJECT  
TEACHING ARTIST: ROSS LEWIS  
PS 6 STATEN ISLAND

16 sessions, Fall 2001-Spring 2002  
5th Grade Classes #s409, 411,413 32 students/class  
Teachers: Bonnie Lombardo, Dawn Athas, & Cindy DeFalco  
9:30-10:20 am, 10:25-11:15 am, 11:20 am -12:10 pm

(Quick physical warm -up before each class to help develop concentration)

### CLASS 1

Introduction to public art works and to artist's installations (slide & video presentation). Discussion of possible themes for atrium installation, materials and working methods. Present sculptural concept for the atrium as a work which engages an entire space including floor, ceiling and walls. Students draw initial ideas on a piece of 9" x 12" paper. Students write notes on same paper regarding the color, shapes, and feeling that they associate with their idea. Start a dictionary of art related terms.

Questions: What would you like to see when you enter the building? Which direction do you look when you come in the door? What is public art? Ask for examples of public art vs. private art. Talk about monuments, plaza art, and buildings e.g. Eiffel Tower and Guggenheim Museum.

### CLASS 2

Present examples of public works by artists Tapias, Richard Hunt, show connection between their sketches for the space and actualized work. Work on the floor around the atrium area on 4th floor, students do a larger drawing using graphite pencil and sticks on a 18" x 24" paper. A perimeter line for the space is first drawn so that they will start to focus on the actual shape and dimensions of the site. Experimentation is important as graphite is a new material for these students.

### CLASS 3

Slide lecture on public art works by artists Jessica Stockholder-uses variety of ordinary materials and shapes. Do a drawing simplifying some of shapes from previous drawings. Begin working on a construction inside a cardboard box which is approximate scale of space. Materials supplied include string, tape, foam cups & plates, wood skewers, pipe cleaners, straws, cotton balls, rubber bands, paper clips, cardboard,-all things devoid of color. Emphasis is on understanding Space. Hand-out notebooks to use as journal for drawings and vocabulary building.

CLASS 4

Slide lecture on public art works by artists Jessica Stockholder, Richard Serra "Torque Ellipse", Parenko' inflated sculpture, Fred Sanders', works with string to create space, Begin working on a construction inside a cardboard box which is approximate scale of space. Materials supplied include string, tape, foam cups & plates, wood skewers-all things devoid of color. Emphasis is on understanding Line  
Vocabulary words: Ellipse, space line, form, volume, tension

CLASS 5

Slide lecture on public art works by artists Picasso, Noguchi, Calder, Gehry. Continue working on a box construction. Materials supplied include string, tape, foam cups & plates, wood skewers-all things devoid of color. Emphasis is on understanding Shape.

CLASS 6

Slide lecture on public art works by artists Picasso, Noguchi, Calder, Gehry. Continue working on a box construction. Materials supplied include colorful foam hair curlers, kitchen sponges, and a variety of household objects. Emphasis is on understanding Color.

CLASS 7

Working with Celluclay-made of pulverized paper pulp students are asked to create simple sculptural shapes to get a feel for another material and process. Focus is on experimentation rather than product, to develop a feel for different approaches to art making. Practice working with clay to learn how to create different basic shapes and structures-coils, rolling balls using slabs to create form. Vocabulary words: shapes, cube, sphere, pyramid, cylinder

CLASS 8

Discussion of color theory primary, secondary colors. Teach a method for mixing Continue working on a box construction. Materials: acrylic paint. Students paint celluclay sculptures and boxes. Emphasis is on understanding Color. Vocabulary Words: Hue, shade, value

CLASS 9

Students are taught basic brushwork from Chinese calligraphy and landscape painting as a means to expanding their hands-on vocabulary. The emphasis here is not on the "Chinese" brush but learning how to express oneself using different tools. This is just a way to develop a feel for the beauty and dynamics of line. A demonstration of early pictographic characters shows how Chinese characters correspond to the "real" world; students learn the difference in holding a calligraphy brush from the way they normally handle a water color brush; students draw with crayon on paper their own visual symbols or characters for simple ideas such as sun, moon, mountain, person, fire and water and animals such as fish and horse, which are compared to the Chinese symbols/words. Students learn to write Chinese characters with brush and ink. Teach basics of landscape painting and bamboo. Students are asked to use brush and ink to do a drawing on a large piece of paper of their concept for the atrium sculpture.

CLASS 10

Using a color xerox of elevation of tile wall in atrium, students do overlay drawings using tracing paper of sculptural ideas to be attached to the wall. They are asked to write notes in margins explaining materials and concepts for their art works.

CLASS 11

Discussion of the drawings from previous class. Vote on which box constructions each class prefers and why. Brief slide lecture on Meaning in the context of the works for the Atrium. Slides shown: Matisse, Red Room,

CLASS 12

Using a xerox of elevation of horizontal area under the windows in the atrium , students do overlay drawings using tracing paper of sculptural ideas to be painted or attached to the wall. They are asked to write notes in margins explaining materials and concepts for their art works.

CLASS 13

Students are asked to draw a plan and an elevation of their bedrooms at home from memory. This is an exercise to help them understand space, drafting and scale and memory. Homework: to measure objects and wall dimension in their rooms to bring be used in next class.

CLASS 14

Draw two new drawings; a plan and an elevation, using grid paper and plugging in the actual dimensions they took. of their bedrooms.

CLASS 15

Draw final sculptural idea to in to scale. Note dimensions and any essential details.

CLASS 16

Slides: Artist Xu Bing use of English/Chinese language to create his own particular symbols which become part of larger installations. Comparison of art works to everyday examples of design: artist Claes Oldenburg plaster pastries to real pastry displays; Felix Gonzales-Torres cander wrapper installation to Turkish street vendors artistic stacking of shoes on blankets; neon tube words of Bruce Nauman compared to the calligraphic writing of a fortune teller in China ; Richard Long's stone installation compared to a spice merchant display in Xian, China.

Create own symbol for horse after learning the Chinese symbol then use it as the basis for a collage using colored construction paper on a circular paper plate.

**MATERIALS :** Cardboard boxes for maquette, Ink, brushes, newspaper, newsprint pads, cling wrap, aluminum foil, baggies clay tools, glue, scissors, string or rubber bands, Xeroxes of images, colored felt, buttons, pompons, pipe cleaners.