

# Lesson Plan

**Date**

September 29, 2003

**Name**

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**I. Topic**

Nature and Culture

**• Content Statement/Concept Statement (the specific focus of the lesson)**

In this lesson, students will investigate the relationship between nature and cultural expression.

Through this exploration students will address the following essential and art questions:

- *How has nature influenced cultures of the past and present?*
- *In what ways is this influence evident in art from those cultures?*
- *What changes and what stays the same in each cultures view of nature?*
- *What does the artist want the viewer to understand?*

**II. Objectives / Expected Learner Outcomes**

1. After a motivational activity, students will review the ways civilizations have interpreted nature through visual art. We will view a selection of slides that will assist students in recognizing the effect of nature on culture. We will discuss nature and culture in each example using the questions above.
2. After viewing and discussing "Time Capsule" by Chris Drury, students will take a solitary walk and explore nature and culture outside the classroom. As in the motivational activity and discussions about the work of Chris Drury, students should research the signs of nature: life, decay, time, renewal and as well as cultural signs: industry, politics, religion as evidenced in their research. Students should be aware of the feelings they have during this research. Brief notations on their feelings should be recorded along with notes and drawings dealing with nature and culture in their sketchbooks.

**\*Assessment 1.** Students should be able to discuss their interpretations of the signs around them in the context of nature and culture.

3. After taking an inventory of the research done on the solitary walk, students will interpret these signs by creating a visual representation to express how they feel about what saw. Evidence of their research should be incorporated into their piece.

In making the visual representation, students may incorporate a commentary, express their opinions, or make a statement such as the one Chris Drury makes in his piece "Time Capsule."

**\*Assessment 2.** Did the student use any, some, or all of the information gathered in their notes?

Questions to consider in developing this visual exploration will be: Can the viewer tell how I feel about nature? Can the viewer tell how I feel about my culture? The point of view or concerns of the student should be evident in the piece.

### **III. Standards of Education**

#### **• Related National Standards for Visual Arts Education**

**Content Standard #1:** Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

*Achievement Standard:*

- Students use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories

**Content Standard #2:** Using knowledge of structures and functions

*Achievement Standard:*

- Students use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas

**Content Standard #3:** Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

*Achievement Standard:*

- Students select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning

**Content Standard #4:** Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

*Achievement Standard:*

- Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures
- Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places

- Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art

**Content Standard #5:** Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

*Achievement Standard:*

- Students describe how people's experiences influence the development of specific artworks

**Content Standard #6:** Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

*Achievement Standard:*

- Students identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum

• **Related National Standards for Language Arts**

**Content Standard #1:** Writing: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

Prewriting: Uses Prewriting strategies to plan written work (e.g. uses graphic organizers, story maps, and webs: groups and related ideas: takes notes: brainstorms ideas: organized information according to type and purpose of writing.

*Achievement Standard:*

- Writes narrative accounts, such as poems and stories (e.g., establishes a context that enables the reader to imagine the event or experience; develops characters, setting, and plot; creates an organizing structure; sequences events; uses concrete sensory details; uses strategies such as dialogue, tension, and suspense; uses an identifiable voice)

• **Related Virginia Visual Arts Standards of Learning**

- 4.1 The student will generate ideas for works of art through discussion.
- 4.3 The student will create a work of art that uses themes, ideas, and art forms from the past.
- 4.6 The student will identify and use a variety of lines in a work of art.
- 4.8 The student will identify positive and negative space in works of art.
- 4.9 The student will use contour drawing, perspective drawing, and shading techniques to create a work of art that depicts a three-dimensional object on a two-dimensional surface.

**Cultural Context and Art History**

- 4.15 The student will use research tools and procedures to investigate artists and their work.

## **Judgment and Criticism**

4.18 The student will identify and investigate ways that works of art from popular culture reflect the past and how they influence the present.

## **Aesthetics**

4.21 The student will discuss how personal beliefs influence responses to works of art.

4.22 The student will formulate questions about works of art from past or present cultures.

## **IV. Student Group Targeted**

- Grade 4 - heterogeneous
- Students will need previous experience in discussing historical contexts, composing compositions and basic drawing, painting, and collage techniques.

## **V. Time Required**

Four, 60-minute sessions.

## **VI. Materials and Resources**

**Teacher Materials:** Slides and slide projector. Materials for art making will include those listed for the students. In addition a flip chart, dry erase board, and light table will be needed.

**Materials to be provided to the students** will include: sketch book, foam core cut to 18"x24" size, vellum 18"x24", pencils, watercolors, acrylics, colored pencils, colored markers, colored construction paper, tissue paper, Kraft paper, found objects, glue, tape, balls of string, colored clay, water, and various sized brushes.

**Found objects:** Students may incorporate found objects into their piece. Found objects must be approved by the teacher before use. Suggested found objects could be: string, straw, metal, grass, bottle caps, dirt, sand, shells, leaves, sticks and wood.

## **VII. Itinerary and Strategies**

### **Day One:**

Motivational Activity: (20 minutes)

1. Hand out bags containing three leaves in them. One leaf is dead, one is dying, and one leaf is green and very much alive.
2. Attached to the bags is an envelope that is sealed. Inside the envelope are different rating systems on 3 x 5 index cards. Some are words, some are symbols. All deal with either pictures or written words that express the life cycle from beginning, middle, to end. Word samples of this rating system are: (good, ok, bad); (carefree, concerned, worried); (white, gray, black); (up, middle, down). Some visual samples of this rating system are: (smiley face, not smiley face, sad face); (up arrow, side-to-side arrow, down arrow); (clear circle, half black/half white circle, black circle).

3. Students are asked to take one minute to match a leaf to the rating system without sharing their rating system with anyone else.
4. Once they have finished, each student takes 30 seconds to describe the rating system and explain why they gave each leaf the rating that they did.

Objective: To show that we have a similar response to the life cycle, even if symbols or descriptions vary.

Following the motivational activity, we will have a slide presentation and discussion to investigate our theme. Artworks and their historical context will be presented and students will be expected to participate in the discussion concerning our theme. Guiding the discussion about the artworks shown will be the following questions: Why did the artist represent nature the way they did? For whom was the artwork created? What does the artwork tell us about how the artist views themselves within their culture? Are the social and cultural influences apparent in the piece? How has the interpretation of nature changed works of art over time? (40 minutes: 10 minutes per slide and discussion)

**\*Assessment 3.** Participation of students in this discussion.

The artworks and cultures that we will incorporate are:

- Cave Art: Upper Paleolithic Period (28,000 B.C – 15,000 B.C). Cave paintings from the Font-de-Gaume and Lascaux in the Dordogne region of France. These paintings suggest the prehistoric hunter attributed magical properties to the paintings themselves and by confining nature within the limits of the painting the hunter subjected it to his power.
- African Masks: Bapende Mask from Congo-Kinshasa (The Bapende rely on simple geometrical forms to create the effect of a spiritual force working through the figure) and Dogon Mask, Upper Volta (strong vertical-horizontal structures poising man between earth and sky)
- Albert Bierstadt: The 1907 painting: “Rocky Mountains”: depicts an encampment of Shoshoni Indians on the bank of the Wyoming’s Green River. An explorer to the area: “It seemed as if...Nature had collected all her beauties together in one chosen place.”
- Chris Drury: Time Capsule: Installation at South Carolina Botanical Gardens, Clemson, SC., 2002.

### **Day Two:**

Chris Drury: land artist working with nature. A description and photographs of the piece “Time Capsule” by Chris Drury are shown below. Drury is a contemporary artist working with the themes of nature and culture. The first part of class (30 minutes) will be devoted to looking at and discussing Drury’s piece.



Time Capsule: 2002, (photograph) South Carolina, Botanical Gardens, Clemson, SC: Two large woven stick domes in a figure of 8 plan. The nucleus of each dome is a rammed earth monolith in a woven stick mould. In the weaving are four live tree saplings. American Beech in one and River Birch in the other.



2002: 'TIME CAPSULE' a projected drawing of the work in 50 years' time.

Students will view and discuss the themes in Chris Drury’s piece. Key to our discussions will be Drury’s effort to insure that his art will benefit species other than humans. Themes dealing with time, nature, and culture are present in all of his works.

Following our view and discussion of “Time Capsule, students will take a solitary walk outside the classroom. They will take a sketchbook and a large paper bag. They should research these signs of nature by making notes and sketches about what they see, hear, smell, and feel. Drawings may be used as research or as support for their research. Items found on the walk that support their research may be collected and brought back to the classroom for display or future use in art making.

**\*Assessment 4.** What is the completeness of the research in the sketchbook?

The walk will last 30 minutes.

**Day Three:**

Students will be asked to do a 2-dimentional or 3-dimentional artwork that will be based on the research they conducted on their walk. The representations may be in the media of the student’s choice or mixed media. Technical processes will include: planning and drawing, painting, three dimensional construction, and collage techniques.

**\*Assessment 5.** How well does the narrative and the piece compare; are they conveying similar ideas about culture and nature?

**Day Four:**

We will review the finished pieces and discuss how each interpretation conveys the themes we are investigating.

Record these comments\* and include in the students assessment.

**VIII. Evaluation Strategies**

*Assessments:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
<b>Assessment 1.</b> Students should be able to discuss their interpretations of the signs around them in the context of nature and culture. (Obj. 2)				
<b>Assessment 2.</b> Did the student use any, some, or all of the information gathered in their notes? (Obj. 3)				
<b>Assessment 3.</b> Participation of students in this discussion. ( Day 1)				
<b>Assessment 4.</b> What is the completeness of the research in the sketchbook? (Day 2)				
<b>Assessment 5.</b> How well does the narrative and the piece compare; are they conveying similar ideas about culture and nature? (Day 3)				
<b>Comments from Day 4:</b>				

## Background information on Chris Drury:

Stylistically, Chris Drury has been working with growth and decay since 1994. The uses of interwoven sticks, botanical species indigenous to a location are important elements in his work. The works are imposed on the environment where they are constructed. However, the installations reference and benefit the environment as well. The pieces are monumental in size and effort of construction. Materials are found and harvested from the surrounding locations.

## From the Green Museum and the Artist:

Chris Drury is a Curator's Choice Artist from the UK. He has had a prolific career exploring, shaping and presenting nature with exceptional creativity. His environmental art includes a range of stunning works from woven sculptures made from living plants, mushroom spore prints, stone cairns and delicate arrangements of plastic trash to large stacked stone wave chambers for observing and accentuating the splashing of waves.

"My work explores nature and culture, inner and outer. I travel and walk in out-of-the-way places, often alone. More recently I have been looking at Body as Landscape or systems within the body and systems on the planet."

"I have also worked extensively with small communities in Europe, Japan and America, collaborating with others and making work that fits with the needs of the community and is an integral part of the landscape."

"A defining characteristic of all my works is that they draw attention to something which is outside of the work itself, they are not self-referential."

## Chris Drury's Body of Work

### COMMISSIONED WORK OUTSIDE AND WORKS IN PUBLIC PLACES

#### Temporary Site Specific Installations which last from three weeks to two years.

- 1992      ['Cuckoo Dome'](#), Sussex, UK
- 1993      ['Beehive Shelter'](#), Seeley Copse, Goodwood, Sussex, UK
- 1993      ['Covered Cairn'](#), Langeland, Denmark
- 1994      ['Vortex'](#), Lewes Castle, Sussex
- 1994      ['Tree Mountain Shelter'](#), Arte Sella, Sella Valley, Italy
- 1995      ['Open Vessel'](#), Joseloff Gallery, University of Hartford, Connecticut, USA
- 1996      ['Mind Wave - Trilogy: Art, Nature, Science'](#), Royal Botanic Gardens, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 1996      ['Okawa Village Project'](#), Kochi Province, Shikoku Island, Japan
- 1997      ['Shimanto River Spheres'](#) Higashitsuno Village, Kochi Prefecture

- Shikoku Island, Japan
- 1998 ['Tree Vortex - a woven work for tall trees'](#), Dragsholm Castle, Odsherred, Zealand, Denmark
- 1999 ['Wool Chamber'](#), Buttles Barn, Forest of Bowland, Lancashire, UK
- 2000 ['Holding Light'](#) Fabrica, Brighton, UK
- 2001 ['Yew Spheres'](#), Ickworth House, Suffolk.

#### **Permanent Site Specific Works.**

- 1995 ['Long Vessel'](#), Watergrove Reservoir, Lancashire.
- 1996 ['Shelter Project'](#), Allihies, Beara, County Cork, Ireland.
- 1998 ['March Library Garden Project'](#), Cambridgeshire, UK.
- 1999 ['Coming Full Circle'](#), Irwell Sculpture Trail
- 2001 ['Rythms Of The Heart'](#) – Conquest Hospital, Hastings.

#### **Cloud Chambers, as temporary installations and permanent site specific works.**

These circular chambers made outside work on the principle of a camera obscura. The interiors are dark, the entrance being from a door or curved passageway, the floor or viewing surface is white, and there is a small aperture or lens in the ceiling or wall. Images of clouds, branches, waves, landscape, are thus projected inside. A large preoccupation in my work has been the exploration of what inner and outer nature mean. These cloud chambers are still, silent, meditative and mysterious spaces. They are often built underground, so that in these dark spaces what is outside is brought in and reversed. Clouds drift silently across the floor.

- 1990 ['Cloud Chamber'](#), Bielden Buiten, Belgium.
- 1990 ['Wicklow Cloud Chamber'](#), Maulin Mountain, Glencree, Ireland.
- 1992 ['Clohan Cloud Chamber'](#), Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin.
- 1993 ['Cloud Chamber'](#), St. James, Piccadilly, London.
- 1994 ['Cloud Chamber'](#), Tyrebagger Sculpture Project at Kirkhill Forest, Aberdeen.
- 1995 ['Wave Chamber'](#), Kielder Water and Forest Park, Northumberland.
- 1996 ['Cedar Log Sky Chamber'](#), Okawa Village, Kochi Province, Japan.
- 1997 ['Both Nam Faileas: Hut of the Shadow'](#), Lochmaddy, North Uist, Western Isles.
- 1998 ['Coppice Cloud Chamber'](#), Kings Wood, Challock, Kent.
- 2002 ['Eden Cloud Chamber'](#), Eden Project, Cornwall, UK
- 2002 ['Reed Chamber'](#) Wildfowl and Wetland Centre, Arundel, Sussex, UK

#### **Growing Works**

- 2000 ['Time Capsule'](#), South Carolina Botanic Garden at Clemson
- 2002 ['Willow Domes On the Este'](#), Neddernhof, Nr Hamburg, Germany

## “Time Capsule”

Commissioned by The sculpture program at the South Carolina Botanical Garden, Clemson and funded by National Foundation for the Arts. These saplings are tied and grafted together at the top. The weaving will eventually rot away leaving the saplings to grow up around the red earth monoliths.

Each vertical stick in the domes is planted with a Serviceberry Sapling (80 in all) which are grafted where they cross. As the weaving of the domes dies away so these trees will replace them forming one continuous figure of 8 shrub tree encircling the monoliths. Each Tree species has a different life span. Serviceberry with its crimson fall leaf and red berry provides food for birds and will live around 50 years, but will re-sprout again from the root base. River Birch will live up to 100 years and American Beech, a climax tree, will live for 250 or more years and will eventually shade out the other trees. So perhaps in 200 years time this will be the only element to remain – 4 large trees becoming one with the remains of rammed earth in the cavity.

The work was made with the help of Landscape architecture students at Clemson University.

### **South Carolina Botanical Gardens at Clemson University, SC**

Started in 1958 around a camellia collection, the "Hort. Garden" at Clemson brings to mind images of the red caboose entrance, thousands of March daffodils, cool paths winding around camellias and rhododendrons, several log cabins, a gazebo or two, and, of course, the duck pond. Over the years, it has evolved into a 295-acre center of education, research and outreach, which was recognized in 1992 as the official state garden.