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art starts here™
lesson overview

lesson plan
Designed to extend and enhance the learning experience of our exhibits while linking to core curriculum subject matter.

lesson objectives
- To understand the cultural significance of “Chinaman’s Chance” on Promontory Summit.
- To explore the themes that can be found within historical events.
- To foster a culturally diverse social landscape in our classroom and community.

lesson overview
On the A.R.T.S tour, the students will learn about the work of Zhi Lin and the historical events that inspired him to work in the realm of social change. The students will learn how to develop a theme based on social change and the power of humor in art making. Each student will create a political cartoon about one of these events: Chinese Exclusion Act 1882-1943, June 24th 1867 Chinese Railroad Workers Strike, Wedding of Rails Celebration without any Chinese workers present.

length of class
Two Class Sessions.

core curriculum tie-ins
Sixth through Eight Grades: Visual Art and Social Studies.

supplies
- Scratch Paper
- Heavier Sketch Paper 11” x 15”
- Pencils and Erasers
- Rulers
- Pens
- Markers
core curriculum tie-ins

Social Studies

Grade 6
Standard 4 Students will understand current global issues and their rights and responsibilities in the interconnected world.

Grade 7
UT Standard 2.6: Students will explain how agriculture, railroads, mining, and industrialization created new communities and new economies throughout the state. (economics, geography)

Grade 8

U.S. I Standard 6.3: Students will identify the economic and geographic impact of the early Industrial Revolution's new inventions and transportation methods, such as the Erie Canal, the transcontinental railroad, steam engines, the telegraph, the cotton gin, and interchangeable parts.

U.S. I Standard 6.4: Students will make a case for the most significant cultural, political, and economic impacts of territorial and/or industrial expansion.

Visual Arts

Strand: CREATE
Grades: 6 / 7 / 8

Strand: RESPOND
Grades: 6 / 7 / 8

Strand: CONNECT
Grades: 6 / 7 / 8

Strand: PRESENT
Grades: 6 / 7 / 8
ABOUT

Zhi Lin: “Chinaman’s Chance” on Promontory Summit

Kimball Art Center is pleased to present the work of Zhi Lin. This Exhibit explores the buried history of Chinese Railroad workers who built our country’s railroads and addresses social change by honoring those who deserve recognition and respect for their contribution. From the artist, Zhi Lin:

“A project about these workers cannot be only intellectual--it needs to be felt.”

“I wanted to feel my way into the experience of these people...empathy was my starting point.”

“How do I represent those people who would never be recorded by history, not in a written word or in visual materials? In the entire body of my work in the exhibition there is no single portrait of them. As a figurative painter, I like to paint people. However, in order to respect their individuality, and their lost identities, I decided that it would be a further erasure if I were to substitute them with an imagined portrait...In the end, I have tried to open up spaces for the audience in their individual bodies and imaginations to think and feel about the sorts of conditions (social and natural) that those workers’ bodies would have encountered.”
1. In a class discussion, explore the theme for Zhi Lin’s “Chinaman’s Chance” on Promontory Summit. Why is it so important to honor the work and the lives of the men who built our railroad now, when the events are part of our country’s history?

2. Show students political cartoons from Bagley, Herblock, and Nast. Address the way biases, stereotypes and the often inflammatory nature of political cartoons. Also discuss how humor can be an effective and powerful tool when creating art.

3. Review the three events with students informing them they will choose one to make their own political cartoon:

   A. Chinese Exclusion Act 1882-1943
   B. June 24th 1867 Chinese Railroad Workers Strike
   C. Wedding of Rails Celebration photo without any Chinese workers present.

4. For the first draft hand out paper, pencils and rulers. Ask students to start sketching thumbnails of the scene adding text or captions. Encourage kids to start over as needed flipping first draft over as they brainstorm.

5. When the students have decided how to convey their idea, allow them to choose how large they want their picture and use a ruler to block in the box size for their cartoon on the final nicer piece of paper. Draw in the scene with pencil then go over it with markers and pen to outline.

6. Give the students a few choices for hanging their work for display in the school or classroom and allow them to participate in hanging the work and taking time to discuss the ways students solved the challenge of making work that is humorous about a weighted historical event.
vocabulary

Social Commentary- Commentary on society or social issues; an instance of this.

Satire- The use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people’s stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues.

Cartoon- A simple drawing showing the features of its subjects in a humorously exaggerated way, especially a satirical one in a newspaper or magazine.

Bias- Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

Stereotype- A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

resources

https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/bagley/

http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/herblock/overview.html

https://thomasnastcartoons.com/


https://www.pbs.org/ancestorsintheamericas/time_17.html

http://exhibits.usu.edu/exhibits/show/transcontinentalrailroad/building/weddingoftherails

https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/editorial-cartoons-an-introduction

https://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/21733

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/political-cartoons/procedure.html


https://www.seattlepi.com/national/article/150-years-since-Chinese-workers-were-brought-in-6286513.php#photo-8046401

http://cprr.org/Museum/Chinese.html

https://web.stanford.edu/group/chineserailroad/cgi-bin/website/

PDFs:

K12_Engines-of-Change-Railroads-in-Utah_OPTP.pdf

HTTPS://WEB.STANFORD.EDU/GROUP/CHINESERAILROAD/CGI-BIN/WEBSITE/