



Heavy Light

RECENT PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO FROM JAPAN



Pre- and Post-Visit Materials for: Junior High School

Tomoko Sawada

From the series *School Days*, 2004

Chromogenic print

© Tomoko Sawada

Courtesy of MEM Inc. and Zabriskie Gallery



International Center of Photography

May 2008

Dear Educator,

We are pleased to introduce and welcome you to the International Center of Photography's (ICP) Spring/Summer 2008 exhibitions including: *Heavy Light: Recent Photography and Video from Japan*, *Bill Wood's Business* and *Arbus/Avedon/Model: Selections from the Bank of America LaSalle Collection*.

To better acquaint you and your students with the content of the exhibitions, ICP provides Guided Tours, Self-guided Tours, Polaroid Workshops, and Writing Workshops. For the most tailored experience, our Museum Educators lead guided tours focusing on the themes of your curriculum, facilitating dynamic discussions that emphasize visual literacy and looking closely. Please see the attached Group Tour Guidelines and Information Page for more information.

In an effort to provide you with the most comprehensive museum-based learning experience, for every exhibition cycle we create pre-visit activities designed as a starting point from which you and your students can view and discuss our exhibitions and post-visit activities designed to transfer their museum experience to classroom learning and projects. While these materials provide a framework for exploring the themes presented in the exhibitions, we encourage you to modify these materials to the needs of your students. This packet contains activities designed for *Heavy Light: Recent Photography and Video from Japan*.

Additionally, ICP has developed an array of Education and Public Programs to support all of these exhibitions including curator and artist panels. To learn more about public programming for these exhibitions, please call 212-857-0001 or visit us online at www.icp.org.

Again, we look forward to welcoming you and your students to the International Center of Photography for our Spring/Summer 2008 exhibitions!

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Lacy Austin in black ink.

Lacy Austin
Director of Community Programs

Handwritten signature of Alexandra Gratsas in black ink.

Alexandra Gratsas
Coordinator of Community Programs



Naoki Kajitani
JPEG /starlight_Nagasaki, 2006
Ink-jet print
© Naoki Kajitani
Courtesy of Third Gallery Aya

Introduction

Since the collapse of the “bubble economy” in Japan in the early 1990s, Japanese artists have closely examined and, at times, criticized their contemporary culture. The country’s photographers, in particular, have responded to issues that may be familiar to an American audience, including: environmental destruction, the disappearance of cultural traditions, and the ways in which youth establish their personal identity through physical appearance.

In Heavy Light: Recent Photography and Video from Japan, the International Center of Photography (ICP) has brought many of these photo-based responses together for an exhibition that broadly examines the work in a way no North American show has accomplished since the mid-1990s. According to the curators Christopher Phillips and Noriko Fuku, American museums have shown Japanese painting or sculpture – especially those of a neo-pop variety that take anime or manga as their point of departure – as well as Chinese photography, but have largely under-represented the work of Japanese photog-

raphers. This show has been organized along four general themes: 1) Transformations of Tradition, 2) Costume and Self-Display, 3) The Child as Icon, 4) Surfaces of the World.

Through viewing this museum exhibition, students will explore how artists transform everyday objects in beautiful and unexpected ways, how artists define our individual and group identities, and how artists think the environment will affect our futures. The accompanying activities will help students to deepen their understanding of the ideas addressed in the exhibition and provide them with hands-on activities that engage them with the photography. These lessons and activities are broken down as pre-visit and post-visit activities for elementary (3 – 5), junior high (6 – 8), and high (9 – 12) schools. They are designed to be integrated with Social Studies, Global History, Humanities, Arts, and English Language Arts curricula.



Hiroh Kikai

"I've always wanted to be different since I was a kid, and I've always been knocked around for it" (eight years later), 2002

Gelatin silver print

© Hiroh Kikai

For the elementary school lesson plans, students will explore how artwork is often inspired by the potential and beauty of everyday objects. Students will collect their favorite everyday objects and transform them through collage.

For the junior high school plans, students will delve into how identity defines us and how we define our own identity. Students will create photography triptychs that represent their own desired identities.

Finally, for the high school plans, students will survey the works in this exhibition that address environmental destruction. They will create plans for installations that imagine our future world.

The lesson plans have been conceived of not as scripts but rather as suggestions to be applied to any grade and with any adaptations that teachers might feel are appropriate. They can stand alone or as lessons prior to and/or following a visit to ICP.

Heavy Light: Recent Photography and Video from Japan educational materials were written by Jackie Delamatre for the International Center of Photography.

This exhibition was organized by the International Center of Photography with lead support from the ICP Exhibitions Committee. Generous support provided by Nikon, Robert and Gayle Greenhill, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Diana Barrett for The Fledgling Fund, Roberta and Steven Denning, and Studley. Additional support provided by Asahi Beer Arts Foundation, Asahi Beer USA, Japan Foundation, Rick and Ellen Kelson, Andrew and Marina Lewin, Ira M. Resnick, Shiseido, David Solo, Artur Walther, and by Omar Al-Farisi, Frank and Mary Ann Arisman, Toyota Motor North America, and Diane and Tom Tuft. Support for the interpretive programs has been provided by the W.L.S. Spencer Foundation.

Junior High School Pre-Visit: Categorizing Identities

Overarching Question	How do we define our identities?
Supporting Questions	How do we categorize ourselves and others? How do we define ourselves in relation to group identity?
Objective	To examine the ways in which we define our identities and categorize ourselves in society.
Suggested Time Frame	1 class period
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual image below • Pencil and paper
Related Images	<p>Plate 1: <i>School Days</i>, Tomoko Sawada</p> <p>Plate 2: <i>Goth-Loli: Ageha 24 Aoko 23</i>, Masayuki Yoshinaga</p>
Preliminary Discussion	<p>1. Begin by asking your class if there are ways in which their identities are constricted (i.e. their mother limits what they can wear, their friends criticize certain behavior). Ask them if there are ways in which they define their own individual identities and that of their sub-groups within society. They are obviously part of the adolescent group of society, but what are the sub-groups within their school (i.e. athlete, drama group, etc.)? How do individuals within these sub-groups demonstrate that they are part of this group (i.e. activities, dress, hairstyle)?</p> <p>2. As a class, look at Tomoko Sawada's photograph, <i>School Days</i>. Ask students what they notice about this photograph. Ask them to guess about the lives of the girls in this school photograph. What are the differences and similarities between the girls in the photograph? How would they describe the girls' collective versus individual identities?</p> <p>3. Most likely, students will notice that the women in this photograph are all the same woman or at least that they look remarkably alike. You can then tell students that all of the faces in this photograph are that of the artist who has digitally inserted her head – with varying expressions and hairstyles – onto the body of each sitter. Sawada's goal is to critique the constrictions placed on young girls in terms of their identity. Do you think this photograph is successful as a critique? Why or why not?</p> <p>4. Now, as a class, look at Masayuki Yoshinaga's photograph, <i>Goth-Loli: Ageha 24 Aoko 23</i>. Ask students what they notice about this photograph. Yoshinaga photographs sub-cultures in Tokyo's Shinjuku district where young people create and wear costumes to define themselves and provoke others. Ask students these questions: How do you think these girls might want others to see them? Why? Do you know of any sub-groups in the U.S. that wear specific clothing</p>

to define themselves (i.e. goth, hip-hop, or preppy clothing)? If so, why do you think they wear them? What do you think of these sub-groups?

5. In preparation for the post-visit project, brainstorm some of the many identities that already define you or you would like to define you.

- a) List the ways in which you are viewed by the people in your life. To your mother, you might be the obedient student. To your friends, you might be the outgoing leader. To your older brother, you might be the bratty child. Think of the many ways in which you define yourself.
- b) List the groups that you consider yourself a part of. These might include: adolescents, Chinese-Americans, New Yorkers, athletes.
- c) List the ways in which you would like to be viewed. Perhaps, for instance, you would like people to see you as creative, or introspective. Perhaps, you would like to be compared to certain characters from movies or literature.

Junior High School Post-Visit: Displaying our Multiple Identities

Overarching Question	How can we showcase our identities?
Supporting Questions	What are the multiple identities we are made up of? What are the ways in which we externalize how we see ourselves internally?
Objective	To investigate students' multiple identities and the ways in which they can be externalized.
Suggested Time Frame	1 class period
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual images below • Paper and pencil • Cameras (depending on availability) • Copy Machine • Collage materials: fabric, string, ribbon, markers, cray-pas, newspaper, construction paper
Related Images	<p>Plate 1: <i>School Days</i>, Tomoko Sawada</p> <p>Plate 2: <i>Goth-Loli: Ageha 24 Aoko 23</i>, Masayuki Yoshinaga</p>
Preliminary Discussion	<p>1. For this project, students should either bring in a photograph of themselves or take one in class. (In a photography class, students can use whatever equipment they are working with. In a regular class, a Polaroid camera will work just fine.) Students will need three copies of their photograph for this project – either printed multiple times in a photo lab or copied on a Xerox machine.</p> <p>2. Students should then go back to their brainstorm from the pre-visit. They should pick three of the ways in which they would like to be viewed. Then jot down some notes about how they could externally showcase these desired identities. If a student would like to be seen as intelligent, for instance, she/he can brainstorm characters from movies and books that are intelligent and how they present themselves. Tell students to be aware of stereotypes and think about how they can use stereotypes to their advantage without playing into them entirely. For instance, not every intelligent person wears glasses.</p> <p>3. Using these brainstorm, students should collage or alter their photographs. Students will need access to fabric, string, ribbon, markers, craypas, newspaper, construction paper, etc. Each of the three copies of the photograph should represent a different desired identity. Make sure students are inspired by the Yoshinaga photograph to make alterations that are fanciful (as in, not something they would necessarily wear) and by the Sawada photograph to alter hairstyle and facial expression.</p>

4. Finally, have students display their photograph triptychs in a section of the classroom. Ask other students to post questions on post-its about their fellow students' identity alterations. This way, your class can have a further discussion about appearance versus reality. Time permitting, each student can present the work she/he has displayed to the class.

Junior High School
Pre-Visit: Categorizing Identities
Post-Visit: Displaying our Multiple Identities

Plate 1



Tomoko Sawada
From the series *School Days*, 2004
Chromogenic print
© **Tomoko Sawada**
Courtesy of **MEM Inc. and Zabriskie Gallery**

Junior High School
Pre-Visit: Categorizing Identities
Post-Visit: Displaying our Multiple Identities

Plate 2



Masayuki Yoshinaga
Goth-Loli: Ageha 24 Aoko 23, 2006
Digital Image
© **Masayuki Yoshinaga**
Courtesy of the artist