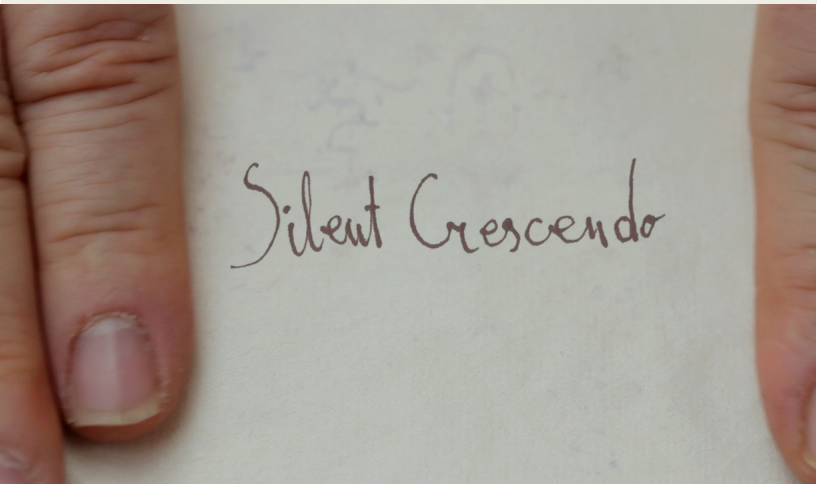




LESSON PLAN

Exploring the Creative Process



RELATED FILM

Silent Crescendo

BY EMMANUEL VAUGHAN-LEE



Exploring the Creative Process

Key Idea

The creative process is a subject of study across disciplines including the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences. Creativity is a practical skill for individuals, which can lead to innovation, effective learning, and self-discovery.

Background

This film, *Silent Crescendo*, is an intimate portrait that explores the creative process. Slobodan Dan Paich, an ex-Yugoslavian émigré artist, follows a daily ritual creating simple drawings with tea and ink. He discovered this art form accidentally by spilling tea on a drawing. He defines his creative process as “a searching approach.” With more than fifty years of life in the arts, Slobodan is currently the Artistic Director of Artship, a San Francisco cultural initiative, whose mission is to offer broad access to the transforming powers of the creative process and to present new opportunities for breakthrough thinking and creative work.

Slobodan leads collaborative teams creating works for theater. He also curates exhibitions, and researches and presents scholarly papers at international conferences in the field of comparative history of arts and ideas. One project he curated, the “Windows Project,” showcased over 5,000 artists in vacant storefronts in downtown Oakland for over ten years.

Connections to National Standards

Common Core English Language Arts. SL.9-10.1 and SL.11-12.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 [or 11-12] topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards. D2.Geo.4.9-12. Analyze relationships and interactions within and between human and physical systems to explain reciprocal influences that occur among them.



Film: 4 minutes

Class: 60 minutes

SUBJECT AREAS

HIGH SCHOOL

- Art
- English Language Arts
- Psychology

COLLEGE

- Art
- Film
- Philosophy

THEMES

- Originality versus unoriginality
- Creative exploration
- Spontaneity

MATERIALS

- Online access to the film
- Equipment for showing film

PREPARATION

- None



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Common Core English Language Arts. RST.11-12.7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Lesson

SETTING THE STAGE

Introduce the film by telling students that they will be watching a film about an artist who draws with tea and ink. The artist accidentally discovered the art form of drawing with tea and ink by spilling tea on a drawing.

Introduce the following quotes by writing them on the board:

- “Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn’t really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while. That’s because they were able to connect experiences they’ve had and synthesize new things.”
–Steve Jobs, inventor and co-founder of Apple Inc.
- “You can’t use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.”
– Maya Angelou, writer and poet.
- “Painting is just another way of keeping a diary.”
–Pablo Picasso, painter.

These quotations define the creative process from the perspective of an innovator, writer, and artist who have embraced the power of creativity. The verb create means to bring something into existence. Ask students to think about their own creativity. What do these quotes mean to them? What does it mean to be creative? Do they think creativity is valuable? If yes, why? Where do they get their inspiration for creative ideas? When students explore ideas for school papers, art, or science projects, what sparks their ideas?



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ENGAGING WITH THE STORY

Direct students to note as they watch the film how the artist draws daily. They should observe his pace of life and his philosophy. What is the significance of slowing down for Slobodan when he creates his drawings? What happens? How can art portray an individual's expression, exploration, and insights?

Delving Deeper

After viewing the film, lead a discussion with such questions as:

- Do you think it is beneficial to have a daily ritual when creating art? Music? Writing? Why or why not?
- “There is no attempt to be original. Originality is totally irrelevant. If they look like something else, why not?” says Slobodan. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? In what ways are his drawings original? Unoriginal?
- What do you think Slobodan gains from living a creative life? What do individuals gain? What does society gain?
- If you could rename the title of this film, what name would you give it?

Reflecting and Projecting

Give students one of the following reflective writing prompts to demonstrate their understanding of the story. (Note for teachers: Just as quotes from a book or text are used to prove an analytical thought, students use the film to justify their reasoning.)

1. Throughout history, scientists have discovered solutions by accidents, including the discovery of penicillin, the x-ray, and superglue, among others. Slobodan's art form originated from an accident when he spilled tea on a drawing. Can you think of a time when you stumbled on a solution by accident? What can one learn through spontaneous discovery? Do you think it is important to be open-minded in this process? Why or why not? (CCSS.ELA.RST.11-12.7)



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2. How do you think Slobodan's decision, to commit daily to drawing, affects his creative process in the long run? What can you take from his decision and apply it to your own life? (C3.D2.Geo.4.9-12)
3. In the film, Slobodan says that his drawings try to reflect a nonverbal narrative that nourishes us. Imagine that you are on a community board judging the winner of a community art contest. There are three finalists and the chosen winner will create a community mural in the center of town. The finalists' drawings have been selected and they now have to answer the following two questions: How do you think art can nourish a person? In what ways can art benefit your community, country, or world? As a judge, what would be your answer to these questions? On what basis would you judge the three finalists' answers? (CCSS.ELA.SL.9-10.1 and SL.11-12.1)

Resources

(Community website) [Artship](#).

Maria Popova, "[Combinatorial Creativity and the Myth of Originality](#)." *Smithsonian Magazine*, June 6, 2012.

Julie Burstein, "[4 Lessons in Creativity](#)." TED Video, February 2012.

Belle Beth Cooper, "[10 Surprising Ways to Transform Your Creative Thinking](#)." *Fast Company*, April 2, 2014.