

Hip Hop Notions

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“Writing that is free and anonymous, chromatically aggressive, inscribed with spray paint, calls the attention of passers-by...” (Chiappini 15)

Overview

Having originated in the 1970's in the neighborhoods of the Bronx and Kingston, Jamaica, hip hop moved into the mainstream and has been a part of youth culture ever since. (Rose 199) It included the enthusiasm of break dancing, rap music, rhyming, fashion and graffiti. This unit relates the study of hip hop to the School District's Core Curriculum. Students will be able to demonstrate some aspect of the Hip Hop culture through the expressive performance of reading, writing, listening, speaking and through the study of several visual artists associated with hip hop life style. The outcome of the lessons would include the creation of a series of moderate sized paintings in the visual style of Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring and other artists who began as graffiti writers and who graduated to one man shows held at international galleries.

Rationale

Most students of high school age are concerned about the trivialities of pop culture especially celebrity personalities. Young people are the great consumers of not only the music but other media like books, magazines, posters and television shows that feature their favorite personalities and singers. The theme of this unit is something that high school students can relate to because it covers music and print media that they already consume. They listen to hip-hop music, defend it and peruse magazines of their favorite performers. Are they aware of the true origins of hip-hop? What lies beneath the surface of hip hop? Do they think of it as a passing fad? Is it fading fast? What are its roots? Will its significance be scrambled so that future generations will not learn its true origins and significance? Who are the visual artists who were known as graffiti artists? What are their contributions to the hip-hop lifestyle?

Students can improve their research skills by using the library, developing or expanding an interest in one of the artists of the early graffiti era. Learning how to distill the information they find into visual expressions is the major goal of the unit. Students will be exploring ways to link text, color, line and form with one of the artists who began his career as a graffiti artist. They might explore how the artist's lifestyle has influenced fashion, attitudes, mannerisms and figures of speech. This unit relates to the School District of Philadelphia curriculum by having students demonstrate an understanding of the origins of graffiti writing and painting by creating graphic organizers, a one to two page paper and several paintings. This will be achieved by studying the work of several visual artists from the 1980's like Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring who gained success through promotion by upscale galleries.

Background

With the publicity and drama surrounding various rap artists who came from difficult backgrounds like Fifty Cent or Tupac Shakur, it is easy to assume that all rappers come from similar circumstances and have similar problems. Early successful groups like Run DMC however, were from middle class backgrounds. A more recent example is Kanye West, whose late mother was a former professor of English before she became his manager. Some high profiled celebrities such as Russell Simmons, Run DMC, Will Smith and Puff Daddy tried to steer young people toward social activism by encouraging them to register and vote. They launched a highly funded national campaign with celebrity speakers who traveled across the country.

After the mid to late 1980's, the lyrics of rappers, and producers of the medium changed. The lyrics of rap took on a harder edge. Complaints about the use of language that might encourage "cop killings," the free wheeling use of the "n" word and the negative references to women as "bitches" brought accusations of sexism and racism along with cries of foul play from all corners. The late Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, C. Delores Tucker, was quoted in an interview in 1996 with Ryan MacMichel as saying that gangster rap had a negative influence on young Blacks because it "encouraged men to slam women down onto the floor, to rape, to kill..." And there were many accusations of homophobia. Why did it go in this direction? The wife of former Vice President Al Gore, Tipper, was so incensed over this new direction that she co- founded the organization Parents Music Resource Center (Siegel NPR web site). The organization would act as a watchdog over the rap industry to make sure that its content would be acceptable for the ears of its youngest listeners. The organization wanted the industry to label purchased music with stickers or warnings—a goal that has been achieved.

The Graffiti Writers

I see the rhythm of hip hop
Dig its way out with a shout
From the urban underground
Of boom boxes and block parties

To hit the top of the charts.
Don't- push- me- cause- I'm- close- to- the- edge.
--Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, 1982

Fred Braithwaite, aka Fab Five Freddy, was once a graffiti artist and is credited as being one of the early pioneers of Hip Hop. In an interview by Oluwaseye Olusa, he said, "Hip hop is deeply integrated into the channels and fabric of life, not just the play list [of an MTV show]. Hip hop is a dominant global culture that generates billions of dollars in revenue." Russell Simmons, the co-founder of Def Jam Records is considered "the godfather of Hip hop." (npr.org) His initial attempts at forming his own Hip hop label were rejected. He believes that the lack of interest in his ideas about rap music were the real catalyst for his future success. He has branched off into other areas which include fashion labels such as Phat Farm, Baby Phat, and even a line of designer sneakers with their own logo.

In order to understand the artistic lifestyle of the 1970's and the 1980's when hip hop evolved, it is important for students to grasp the postmodern currents of that era. By studying the origins of the sub culture of Hip hop, students can relate to themes that deal with the issues that they already feel an immediacy or interest in. In particular, I would like the students to connect graffiti and text with personal imagery in the style of Jean-Michel Basquiat, whose art career spanned a mere eight to ten years because of his untimely death at the age of twenty-seven in 1988.

Jean -Michel Basquiat is one of the most famous and short lived of a small group of graffiti writers (Keith Haring and Kenny Scharf). They became successful painters who exhibited at international galleries. Basquiat and his classmate Al Diaz met at the New York alternative high school for gifted and troubled teenagers called "School-as-City."

Basquiat dropped out of the alternative high school before graduating because of his unstable family life. His father, Gerard, a Haitian immigrant was thought by some to have been physically abusive toward him. He told several of his friends that at one point, his father had stabbed him during an argument. The details of the incident are disputed because Jean-Michel told two versions of the story to two different friends. He was known to sleep at home "in a crawl-space" (Hoban 20) under the stairway on a mattress as a child and some who were familiar with his circumstances believed Jean-Michel to have been the real victim. Gerard Basquiat denies this. "I was under tremendous pressure as a single parent. I was a strict parent but not a severe one." (Hoban 21) Jean-Michel's sister, Lisane backs this statement up. "Were we abused as children? No. Was my father a child abuser? Absolutely not." (Hoban 21)

His mother, Matilde was of Puerto Rican descent. Except for his very early years, she was not a part of his life after she and Gerard divorced. But she is credited with giving Jean-Michel *Gray's Anatomy* and his first art materials while he was recuperating in the hospital from being hit by a car at age five. Jean-Michel used every opportunity to

draw and create art after trips with his mother to the museums in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Estelle Finkle, his homeroom teacher at PS101 in Bensonhurst remembers him as having “unusual talent.” In her homeroom, Jean-Michel drew cartoon strips with original “dialogue.” (Hoban 19) Cynthia Shechter was the art teacher at PS 101 who remembers Jean- Michel as being “an angry child” who would “draw cartoons all day long.” (Hoban 20)

After his parents split, the fifteen-year old Jean-Michel left home and spent months on the streets of New York before his father found him again. “Papa, I will be very, very famous one day” he remarked. (Hoban 23) As a runaway, he hung out with junkies and drug dealers and it is believed that this is where he first acquired a habit for using hard drugs. He states in an interview with writer, Suzi Gablick, “I just sat there dropping acid for eight months. Now that all seems so boring- it eats your mind up.” (Hoban 23)

When he would return to school, he was a different person and disrupted the classes that he didn’t cut. He would sell the free subway tokens given to him by the school and would hang out in parks instead. Jean-Michel dropped out of the alternative high school, City- As- School, in the eleventh grade after pulling a bad prank on the principal, Fred Koury during a graduation ceremony. That was the last straw as far as everyone was concerned even though Basquiat was apologetic. “I hope that you don’t hate me” he said to Koury afterwards. (Hoban 31) “There didn’t seem to be much point in going back.” he stated (Hoban 31).

Basquiat and his classmate, Al Diaz, began graffiti writing on the streets of New York City in 1976 using the name “SAMO”--ironically mocking the very life that he benefited from. He hated his father’s middle class values and symbols of consumerism. His SAMO writings were his way of talking to his father whom he could not really talk to. But unlike the other wall writers, Basquiat did not just use a tag. His early graffiti writing included “combinations of words and symbols.” He would also include his feelings about current issues. When asked the meaning of his “SAMO” tag, he commented that it had to do with his feelings about the status quo (“Same Old Shit”). (Museo d’Arte Moderno 33) Jeffrey Deitch, art dealer and curator, wrote in *Flash Art* that Basquiat’s wall writings were akin to “disjointed poetry.” (Hoban 33) Some of the phrases were:

“Safe plush he think” and
“Pay for soup/build a fort/set that on fire “

Luca Marenzi interprets Basquiat’s phrases thus: “This is a game plan. First, get in position. Then create an artistic vision and style you can live in, and then set it on fire, thereby destroying it, or maybe yourself.” Charta, Marenzi xxxii) Some examples of Basquiat’s early poetry are found in his “Untitled” (Biography), 1983.

I will raise my voice I will stand up and
Look you in the eye and I will do the same
You can tell me go to hell-
And I well tell you this examination is over- (Charta, xxxiii)

The SAMO tag seemed to be written everywhere in Manhattan. Keith Haring noted “A few years back, there were a lot of things that influenced me: graffiti writers, and street artists...SAMO, who used the whole of downtown Manhattan as his field of operation, was the first to write a sort of literary graffiti...he added a kind of message to his name which conveyed an impression of poetry: statements criticizing culture, society and people themselves.” (Malca 11) The SAMO writings attracted attention from the newspaper media. The Village Voice asked the question, “Who is SAMO”? The newspaper sought him out for an interview in 1978 in which he stated that SAMO “was a private joke- and then it grew.” (Hoban 26)

Having left high school behind, Jean-Michel found his way to the School of Visual Art and it is there that he met Kenny Scharf and Keith Haring. Scharf would be known for his cartoon-like figures and bright colors, while Haring would later become famous for his graphic outlines of human and animal forms on black or white backgrounds. As a teenager, Basquiat used other avenues of visual expression in order to survive. He created small hand painted postcards which he attempted to sell to Henry Geldzahler, who was the curator of contemporary art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. When Basquiat was seventeen years old, he was dismissed by Geldzahler as being “too young.” (Museo d’ arte Moderno 35) Of course Basquiat was disappointed after his initial encounter with Geldzahler, but that rejection (he had approached him at a Soho restaurant) did not deter him.

Basquiat’s favorite materials included markers, spray paint and his canvas was cast off doors, windows, refrigerators and even mattresses. At first, Basquiat’s main target areas were the walls on the streets of New York’s Lower east neighborhoods like Soho and Tribeca. Eventually, he “graduated” to paintings on stretched canvas with exposed wooden corners which were exhibited in upscale galleries and international shows. He didn’t consider himself a true graffiti artist and said this in an interview with Demosthenes Davvetas. “Labels don’t mean anything. My work doesn’t have anything to do with graffiti. Its painting. It always has been.” (Charta Lxiii)

Basquiat, Haring and Scharf were a part of the first official introduction of graffiti to the established art scene by June 1980. “Text, an important motif in numerous art movements from cubism, Surrealism and Dada, was enjoying a resurgence as subject matter thanks to Postmodernism ...” (Hoban 33). Postmodernism had its roots after the Second World War, but came to fruition in the 1960’s and 70’s. Before the war, Paris was the center of the art world. Major artists who lived in Europe were forced out and fled to New York City with the exception of Picasso and Kandinsky. Pessimism about the future along with a disconnection from the past focused artists’ attention to current events or popular culture. During the sixties and seventies, student riots, the Civil Rights Movement, the Women’s Movement, and the disillusionment surrounding the Vietnam War influenced the way that artists created their images. “It became necessary to destroy art, or at least the modernist understanding of it, in order to save it.” (Whitcombe 5)

Organized in 1980, the “Times Square Show” (one of the first to feature graffiti-inspired art) was held in a shabby building on 41st street in a blue light district of New York City. “The birth of the eighties art movement could not have found a more appropriate crèche for its unimmaculate conception.” (Hoban 37) Before the seminal show, the artists, musicians and performance types met at various nightclubs like the Mudd Club, in a loft building, and Club 57, located in the basement of a church. (Marshall 10) In an atmosphere of mutual support and camaraderie, a counterculture was thriving. (Malca 10) The Mudd Club was the scene of another pivotal art show in April, 1981 called “*Beyond Words*.” This show brought together the work of Lady Pink, Dondi, Futura 2000, Fab 5, Phase II, Rammellzee, Zephyr, Daze, Crash and Samo.” (Hoban 37) Meanwhile, “Wild Style”, the first film to chronicle the birth of hip hop was just going into production at this time. The film is important to note because it featured the other “hip hop art forms- break dancing, and rap music, which were quickly picked up by white New Wave club goers.” (Hoban 37)

With the regular appearance of Basquiat on *TV Party*, Glenn O’ Brien’s local cable show, it was only natural that he was asked to appear in a film about a starving artist who lived on the streets of New York City. (Hoban 53) The money for the film (*New York Beat*) was raised through several sources who were sympathetic to the anti art establishment movement and written by Glenn O’ Brien himself. Unfortunately, production of the film was never completed—even though one of the characters was acted by Deborah Harry, lead singer of the New Wave band, *Blondie*.

The next big break for Basquiat occurred with the help of Diego Cortez, a.k.a. James Curtis, who was originally a film maker from Chicago. He had begun collecting Jean-Michel’s canvases for inclusion in future shows. With the backing of director, Alanna Heiss, who specialized in showcasing art in off beat spaces, the *New York/New Wave Show* opened in an abandoned elementary school known as PS 1 in February, 1981. The show drew large crowds and included the very influential dealer Leo Castelli. Several of the other art dealers in attendance outbid each other for Basquiat’s work. “...the PS 1 show did more than earn Basquiat some money, it earned him recognition. The young artist had been discovered.” (Hoban 68) Dealer Anina Nosei lost no time in forging a business arrangement with him even going so far as to arrange for the artist to set up a workspace in the basement of her gallery in Soho. Through Nosei, Basquiat was introduced to Bruno Bischofberger, who eventually became his European representative. Several years later, it would be Bischofberger who would also suggest that the young artist create collaborative work with Andy Warhol and Francesco Clemente, another artist that Basquiat admired. “I had noticed that in the works of the so called “ postmodern” movement a certain kind of conceptual collaboration was taking place, because artists were referring to other artists works’ or integrating parts thereof in their own paintings.” (Bischofberger, Charta 149) To the novice observer, it would appear that the artist was sampling, or lifting entire sections of another’s work which is paralleled in the sampling found in rap music today. When Bischofberger questioned Sandro Chia in 1980 why he had painted an almost exact replica of a Kirchner painting in New York, he had answered, “Of course, I fish around in the history of painting.” (Bischofberger, Charta 149).

Andy Warhol, one of Pop Art's most famous artists, was a hero to Basquiat for years. Jean-Michel, as a teenager, had seen Warhol sitting in a restaurant in Soho with Henry Geldzahler and had barged in to show and sell them his hand-made postcards. At the time Geldzahler was Mayor Koch's cultural commissioner (1977-1982). Although Geldzahler was dismissive of the young artist, Warhol ended up buying one of Jean-Michel's postcards. Years later, it would be Geldzahler who would "become an ardent champion of the artist and his work." (Hoban 210) And it would be Geldzahler who would be instrumental in promoting the collaborations with the older artist, Warhol. Geldzahler states, "The second time I saw Jean's work, I just flipped out, I took the painting back to my office, and I called a meeting, of the entire staff, and I said, 'He's twenty-two years old, he's black and he's part of history.'" (Hoban 201)

The show *Collaborations—Basquiat Clemente Warhol*, which included fifteen paintings and silk-screens by the three named artists, was held in Zurich in 1984. Back in New York, Basquiat and Warhol were busy working on more collaborations which they kept secret from the Swiss art dealer at first. Their reasoning was that they had not been commissioned by him to continue. Another show of sixteen paintings held in 1985 was generally panned by art critics. They saw the paintings as being unsuccessful because the subject matter chosen by each artist was unrelated. One critic, Vivian Raynor, went so far as to accuse Warhol of "using Basquiat as his mascot." (Bischofberger Charta 153) Warhol and Bischofberger, his European agent, were unperturbed but Basquiat was very upset and broke off his working relationship with Warhol. (Bischofberger, Charta 153) Keith Haring saw the paintings as a reaffirming of Warhol and Basquiat's friendship. "The quality of the paintings mirrors the depth and importance of their relationship." (Charta xlvi) Haring had seen both the artists in action while working on the paintings and felt that at first Warhol did not trust Basquiat because they were from two different worlds. Warhol had been afraid of him at first, believing Jean-Michel to be just another street kid with an interest in art. Yet they both shared an enthusiasm for work and would exercise together. "Andy eventually trusted Jean to the point that he would let him cut and sculpt his hair." Haring stated. (Charta xlvi)

By 1984, Basquiat was being represented by Mary Boone, a gallerist whose professional relationship had turned sour by the end of 1986 even though he had had two solo exhibitions at her gallery. Although he had trusted Boone at one time, he felt that she was like all of the other dealers he had done business with. He felt that they were getting the best of him. "Mary had no enthusiasm for my career at all. She didn't interest a museum in my work. She did nothing for me at all." (Hoban 250) Basquiat demonstrated his feelings about his former agent Mary Boone by painting over a replica of Mona Lisa's face to make it appear hideous and then using dollar symbols to imply that she was only interested in making money from the artists that she represented.

Basquiat's work was constantly being exhibited in America and Europe. Many times, he was the youngest artist to be featured in the numerous solo and group exhibitions that were held in London, Milan, Paris, Tokyo, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Osaka, Seoul, Hanover and Barcelona. His last American agent, Vrej Baghoomian, was a

relative of Tony Shafrazi who owned the gallery where Basquiat had had his last show before leaving for Europe in 1988. At the Paris show, he met a painter named Ouattara Watts, who was a native of the Ivory Coast. The artist befriended him and suggested that he visit him in Africa at the end of summer. (Museo d'Arte Moderna 188) Basquiat had met Watts at a time in his life when the young artist was taking an interest in his cultural background. He had already completed a series of paintings of Black heroes like Cassius Clay, Jack Johnson, Max Roach, and Miles Davis. And like one of his heroes, he was having a serious struggle with using hard drugs. He had tried to detoxify himself without using medical intervention by hiding away in distant locations such as Dallas, Los Angeles and Maui, where he had owned homes. He had gone so far as to tell Brian Williams, a former assistant, that he had been cured of his addictions. (Charta 203) Nevertheless, Basquiat died of an overdose of heroin on August 12, 2008 at his studio on Great Jones Street in New York. A funeral ceremony was held for him a week later at the Campbell Funeral Chapel on Madison Avenue. It was attended by his father, Gerard, and other family members, several close friends and contemporaries like Keith Haring and Francesco Clemente. At his memorial ceremony, a poem by A.R. Penck was read by a former girlfriend, Suzanne Mallouk. It reads as follows:

“Jean-Michel lived like a flame.
He burned really bright.
Then the fire went out.
But the embers are still hot.” (Chiappini 188)

Interest in Basquiat's contributions to the art movement of the 1980's has increased along with the value of his paintings at auctions. *Untitled* (Baptism, 1982) is a case in point. In 1997, at Sotheby's auction, the painting sold for 1.4 million dollars. (Emmerling 80). It depicts a black skeleton like figure with upraised arms while another figure stands to the left with arms drawn closely to the body. The artist uses lines on both figures' heads to indicate crowns, a motif that occurs often in many of his paintings along with outlined letters, irregular grids, and blotches of color, scribbles and stick-like digits. Basquiat has drawn his text and imagery from studying the work of Da Vinci, from the African Rock paintings, Cy Thombly, Picasso (who was heavily influenced by African art), and Dubuffet. And like Dubuffet (1901-1985), he used the urban environment as one of the underlying themes of his work. “My subject matters are royalty, heroism, and the streets.” he stated. (Charta 80)

Bernabe, Chamoiseau and Confiant wrote an extensive paper on the merits of “Creole” as a descriptive term to describe Basquiat's work. In the treatise, the authors discuss at length the influence of politics as it relates to the cultural scene. “Creole” is defined as a person and also as a language that was created as a way to communicate among the European settlers, Native Americans and the enslaved Africans who had been brought to America. (Emmerling 89) Basquiat's work was the result of many influences and originates in many cultures. It cannot be confined to America and Europe. So it is fitting that my students—who are themselves from varied backgrounds—study the work of an artist whose biggest influences are garnered from many sources in this very multicultural world.

Objectives

Students will be asked to become familiar with one of three artists from the postmodern heyday of the 1980's. They will explore the biographical and artistic background of Jean-Michel Basquiat or the body of work created by Keith Haring or Kenny Scharf. One of the most important objectives of the unit will be to understand the historical background of the post-modern art movement. What significant events were occurring in the country around the years 1960-1988? Were there any events of importance that occurred internationally? What is popular culture? How is it reflected in artists' work during this period? How did this cultural movement occur? Who and what were its influences?

Students will be using the library for reading resources like magazine articles in the Village Voice, Art Forum, and the internet and for information in encyclopedias and books. Graphic organizers can help to assemble the distinctive descriptions of the three artists and their visual styles.

Technological resources will include MP3 players and the computer. The MP3 players will serve as tools for listening to downloaded pod casts of interviews about the artists. Students will be using the web for research and it will be important that they go beyond the on-line encyclopedia to find richer sources of information. To start off the process, the teacher will provide a list of web sites in a PowerPoint presentation.

Students will create two to three paintings in the style of one or more of the three artists. (Basquiat, Haring or Scharf) Journals will be used to store written and visual information for the studio segment. Students may also choose to do paintings about hip hop as a culture, with or without using the style of one of the three artists. In other words, the paintings can include hip hop-related images like musical artists, or dance performers.

Strategies

Since this is a studio lesson unit, the teacher will provide individualized help after the general instructions are given to the group. The time needed to complete this unit will vary, but it should be about two weeks. The teacher will present visual and verbal information about the artists through the PowerPoint presentation entitled *The Jean-Michel Basquiat Show*. The presentation is a collection of reproduced slides of the three artists, Basquiat, Haring and Scharf. In the slide show, the emphasis will be on Basquiat's early life and influences, his background as the wall writer known as "SAMO" on the streets of New York, and his collaborative work with other artists such as Andy Warhol and Francesco Clemente. The "Think-Pair-Share" strategy will also be used, with pairs of students sharing information for the study of the artist's background and the listing of descriptive words needed for a second graphic organizer.

Classroom Activities

Pre-classwork

Information about the three artists will be presented using the PowerPoint presentation. Visual styles and subject matter will be discussed for each artist. Students will have time to disseminate the information from the presentation by interacting with the presentation. Information about each artist will be presented by having the students answer interactive questions asked by the teacher. The *Who is the Artist?* video program issued by Crystal Productions will be the prototype used for student interaction.

- Students will be asked to identify who the artist is (Basquiat, Haring or Scharf) by viewing the reproductions while listening to an introduction and discussion of the artist's work.(30 minutes) This will help students to be able to distinguish/identify each of the three artists presented through the PowerPoint presentation.
- Students will be organizing pertinent facts about each artist: dates of vital statistics. They will write one page of biographical information gathered from various sources like the internet, downloading pod casts of interviews and the library. (60 minutes)

These items can be used as guidelines for writing background information about each of the artists that are chosen:

- What type of background did the artist come from?
- Was the artist's family supportive of his creative endeavors from an early age?
- What were the artist's motivations to create art so early in life?
- What was his family life like?
- What sort of experiences did the artist have in high school?
- What was the period of the artist's life like when he was 15- 19 years old?
- Name five things about the artist's personality.
- What were the circumstances that led to the artist's first opportunity to exhibit?
- What is a trademark?
- Describe some of the symbols the artist uses in his paintings.
- Describe some of the colors the artist uses in his paintings
- Describe some of the lines the artist uses in his drawings and paintings.
- What is the artist's point of view? Select three paintings to describe this point of view.

Using Think-Pair-Share, students can assemble the answers to the above questions more quickly and accurately. They will use the graphic organizers to clarify the information that is gathered.

A second set of graphic organizers can help to assemble the distinctive descriptions of the three artists and their visual styles. At this point students will spend 45minutes to 1 hour making sketches and working out their ideas in a sketchbook.

Lesson 1- Jean-Michel Basquiat paintings

Grade Level: 10-12

State Standards Addressed:

9.1 Production, Performance, Exhibition (A, B, C, D, E, F, H)

9.2 Historical, Cultural Contexts (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, L)

9.3 Critical Response (A, B)

Goals:

Students will be able to create paintings that incorporate some of the elements found in Jean Michel Basquiat's paintings based on African American heroes: *Big shoes* 1983, *Toussaint L'Overture Versus Savonarola*, 1983 and *Max Roach*, 1984 to name a few. After gathering visual information from Google search engine, students will create graphic organizers that list the visual characteristics of at least three paintings. Students will understand and demonstrate motif, symbols, text and form in their paintings. They will be able to answer the following questions about the list of Black History words provided by the teacher (see below):

- What is text? How much of it is incorporated into the painting titled "Big Shoes"?
- What are symbols and are they a part of the painting that is shown?
- Who are the names of the heroes and what do you know about them?
- What are the fields that they excelled in?
- Why would the artist find this subject matter interesting?
- Who are the students' heroes and why do they find them interesting?
- Where the images are and what do they represent?
- How does the artist handle the scale of the images?
- Why is it called Big Shoes?

Art words to learn include: motif, symbol, text, form, abstraction, gesture, social/political subject matter

Black History words: Toussaint L' Overture, Savonarola, Max Roach, Cassius Clay. Sugar Ray Robinson, Jackie Robinson, Hank Aaron, Charlie Parker.

Materials/ Resources

Images from *Basquiat*, Charta.Civico Museo Revoltella Trieste, 1994.

Laptop computer

Digital projector

Stretched canvases

Acrylic paints/Oil sticks/Brushes

Graphic organizers

Lesson 2- Keith Haring and Kenny Scharf paintings

Grade Level: 10-12

State Standards Addressed:

9.1 Production, Performance, Exhibition (A, B, C, D, E, F, H)

9.2 Historical, Cultural Contexts (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, L)

9.3 Critical Response A, B)

Goals:

Students will create paintings based on the themes found in the paintings of Keith Haring and Kenny Scharf. (*Moonray Man*, 1983-4; *Ichiget chay*, 1984-5 by Scharf and *Untitled*, 1984; *Untitled /Robot w Monkey*, 1983 by Haring). Students will be able to identify the differences between the Haring and Scharf paintings by listing the characteristics on graphic organizers. Students will demonstrate the use of outlined forms, repetition of forms, cartoon characters, color gradation, background/ foreground/and middle ground in two separate paintings.

Questions

What elements of art are emphasized in *Moonray Man* by Kenny Scharf and *Untitled*, 1984 by Haring?

- Is there a focal point in the Haring painting *Untitled*, 1984?
- Is there a focal point in the Scharf painting *Ichiget chay*?
- What is the basis of the subject matter in both paintings by the two artists?
- What is the artist's point of view in the two paintings *Ichiget chay* and *Untitled/Robot w Monkey*?
- How does the artist define the background in *Ichiget chay* as opposed to *Untitled/Robot w Monkey*?
- Is there a division in these paintings between backgrounds, foreground and middleground?
- How is color handled in the artists' paintings? Compare the two artist's styles.

Art Words: focal point, subject matter, background, middle ground, foreground, soft edge, hard edge.

Materials/ Resources

Images from *Basquiat*, Charta.Civico Museo Revoltella Trieste, 1994.

In Your Face. Malca, Leon.1997

Laptop computer

Digital projector

Stretched canvases

Acrylic paints

Brushes

Graphic organizers

Assessments

A critique for the entire class related to art and studio work will be held after the paintings are finished. Some of the assessment criteria will be:

1. The level of quality and details included in the work
2. The mastery and use of the materials
3. The originality of the work
4. Adherence to the themes chosen

The following questions will be used to spur discussion in the critique

1. When viewing the painting is it evident that the student demonstrated knowledge of color, line and form?
2. If letter type is used in the print, does it have significance to the painting?
3. Is there a focal point demonstrated in the design of the painting?
4. Is the theme present?
5. Has the student used text, line, symbols, and or trademarks?
6. Is the use of color interesting in terms of variety?
7. Is there a point of view expressed in the paintings?

Annotated Bibliography/ Resources

Basquiat and Leonardo. Jean Michel Basquiat. Milano. Museo Arte de Moderno. 2005

C. Delores Tucker. Interview by Ryan MasMichel. Real Audio, 1996. An interview with the late Secretary of the Commonwealth about her battle against rap music lyrics.

The History of Hip Hop. Interview on Fresh Air from WHY radio. August 30, 2005. April 5, 2008. Called the “godfather of hip hop, Simmons is interviewed on public radio about his life and achievements.

In Your Face. Catalogue. New York: Malca Fine Art.1997. A collection of the work of three artists: Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring and Kenny Scharf, during the 1980’s.

Chang. Jeff. *Can’t Stop Won’t Stop A History of the Hip –Hop Generation.* New York: St.Martin’s Press, 2005. A definitive study of the Hip –hop origins, art forms, people and lifestyle set against a background of New York City politics.

Charta, Edizioni. *Basquiat.* Milano: Trieste, Museo Revoltella:1999. A 200 page collection of Basquiat’s drawings, paintings with quotations and photographs of the artist.

Crystal Video. *Who is the Artist?* Glenview: Crystal Productions, 2003 An interactive video disc of three artists: Lichtenstein, Thibaud, Warhol and their most popular work from the Pop Art era.

Emmerling, Leonhard. *Basquiat*. Köln: Taschen, 2006. A background of the artist's life along with examples of his drawings and paintings.

Fineberg, Jonathan. *Art Since 1940: Strategies of Being*. New York: Harry N Abrams, 1995. A four hundred and ninety-five page volume of the art from 1940 with a section about Basquiat's work and his place in the art movement that occurred after WWII.

Green, Jared. [Ed.]. *Rap and Hip Hop: Examining Pop Culture*. Chicago: New Green Haven Press, 2003. A series of interviews with various well known Hip-hop authorities.

Hoban, Phoebe. *Basquiat: A Quick Killing in Art*. New York: Penguin Press, 2004. A detailed account of the artist's life, motivations, work and the people he knew during his brief career.

Rose, Tricia. *Black Noise*. Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 1994.
A discussion of Rap music and Black culture in the 20th century in America.

Wood, Michelle and Igus, Toyomi. *I See the Rhythm*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1998. Basquiat's work is paired with poems by Maya Angelou.

Web Sites/ Media Resources for Students

Political Activism, Leadership and Hip Hop Culture. Keyes, Allison. News and Notes. Dec.27, 2007. May 1, 2008 <www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php>

Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat, 1986. June 15, 2008 <www.youtube.com>
Basquiat is interviewed in this short video of the two artists at a photo shoot about their collaborative work.

Basquiat Rare Interview 3 Only Basquiat, 1984. June 15, 2008 <www.youtube.com>. A rare and brief interview of the artist at age twenty-four about his early SAMO years

Basquiat Painting Live 1981. June 15, 2008 <www.youtube.com> A four minute video reenactment of Basquiat painting on walls

Bling: A Planet Rock. Cepeda, Raquel. Film Documentary. [VH1 Rock Docs, Article 19 Films](#), 1982 A documentary about early Hip-hop

Bling: Novel Takes on Glitz of Hip Hop. June 19, 2004. May 3, 2008
<www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?> A pod cast of an interview about current style makers.

Downtown 81 trailer. <www.youtube.com>. May 3, 2008 . A trailer of the seminal movie about graffiti artists in New York City featuring Basquiat in the lead role.

Jean-Michel Basquiat Interview by Glenn O'Brien
<www.artistvideo.net/2007/12/jean-michel-basquiat-samo-sayo.html>.
<www.google.com>. May 1, 2008 .A video segment of an interview with Basquiat from O'Brien's cable television show about Basquiat's SAMO years.

Julian Schnabel interview with Charlie Rose about the film *Basquiat*.
<www.charlierose.com/show/1996/08/09/i/a-conversation-about-the-film-basquiat>. May 2, 2008. Charlie Rose interviews Julian Schnabel, artist/director about the film *Basquiat*

Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat. *Graffiti* <www.youtube.com>. May 2, 2008.
Basquiat and Haring's work is set against a background of Hip-hop music in this four minute video tribute.

Appendices/ Standards

Pennsylvania standards addressed in the units include the following:

9.1 A. Production, Performance, Exhibition Elements and Principles

Elements in the Visual Arts: color, form, line, space, texture

Principles in the Visual Arts: balance, contrast, focal point, repetition

B. Recognize, know, use and demonstrate art elements and principles to produce a work of art.

C. Vocabulary: recognize and use fundamental terminology within an art form.

E. Demonstrate the ability to define objects, illustrate an action or relate an experience through creation of original art work.

F. Historical & Cultural Production, Performance (Demonstration) and Exhibition.

H. Handle materials, equipment and tools safely. Identify materials used.

9.2 Historical, Cultural Contexts

A. Context of Works in the Arts Explain the historical, cultural and social context of an individual work in the arts.

B. Chronology of Works in the Arts.
Relate works in the arts chronologically to historical events

C. Styles and genre in the Arts.
Relate works in the arts to varying styles and to the periods in which they were created.

D. Historical & Cultural Perspectives.
Analyze how historical events and culture impact forms, techniques and purposes of works in the arts.

F. Vocabulary for Historical and Cultural context

9.3 Critical Response

Know how to recognize and identify similar and different characteristics among works in the arts.

9.4 Aesthetic Response

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening