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Who is in Charge Here?: Examining (in)visibility and Cultural Context of Jim Crow Era Monuments in Elementary Art Education

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Rationale

As art educators, we are often drawn to a “traditional” western canon of art, imagining that it is race neutral. This canon is commonly viewed as the gold standard of fine art. Public monuments and within museums across the country, art and the artists featured are often drawn exclusively from European and white American artistic traditions and genres. The traditional western canon of artists that I was taught in K-12 included Van Gogh, Picasso, Calder, Hopper, Warhol, Rembrandt, Michelangelo, Matisse, and many more. Teaching about these artists remains important, however, excluding Black artists and other artists of color sends a powerful message. And it's not a good one.

Colorblind racism operates in the practice of art education because of the artists and the subject art educators typically choose to teach and not to teach. “Colorblindness” is the idea that ignoring or overlooking racial and ethnic differences promotes racial harmony. However, colorblindness does just the opposite as it “reinforces whiteness as the unmarked norm against which differences are measured” (Lipsitz). The colorblind and race neutral methods recreates imbalance of power that are internalized as truth. When teaching students of color exclusively about art made by and for white people, it creates an environment that is not only insensitive, but reinforces systems of power. Teaching narrowly and not explaining context is a disservice to white students as well. Colorblind teaching assumes that white students would not be drawn to this contextual way of thinking. White students benefit from being taught to recognize and to feel personally involved in dismantling systemic oppression and responsible for racial justice. Centering race and culturally relevant pedagogy is critical to this project because it facilitates critical conversations about race and socially engaged artmaking with students and dismantle the passive way we sometimes expect students to mimic works of art instead of having a dialogue with the work from an inquiry lens.

This unit, designed for an elementary art education curriculum, teaches students about the role public Confederate monuments, and other monuments across the country, play in promoting white supremacy and systemic racism. I developed this unit curriculum because anti-racist teaching and pedagogy has taken renewed importance amidst all of the recent national uprising and resistance. This unit allows students to explore counter narratives created by contemporary artists of color that dismantle unequal control of power and therefore facilitating the end of racist ideas of superiority.

For many decades, the defense of Confederate statues was a defense rooted in the disavowal of race and racial power. Confederate statutes were meant to designate a specific chapter of important regional and national history, allegedly free of racial meaning in general and white supremacist commitments in particular. Yet this unit shows that that this disavowal was masking very clear racialized relations of power.

The rationale for teaching with and through Confederate monuments is clear. The unit allows students to reflect on art making and art-viewing practices through local history, culture, and the built environment. In addition, the unit demonstrates the role of art, culture, and the built environment in producing and maintaining racial hierarchy and producing new visions of justice.

In the state and national standards for 4th and 5th grade visual arts, there are strands that address cultural context, analysis, judgement and aesthetics. These strands are ripe for teaching about race and racism as it exists within art history and visual culture. This unit teaches students to identify ways that works of art from popular culture reflect the past and influence the present, and how the criteria used to assess the value of art may vary over time and from one culture to another.

School Demographics

I teach at Bellevue Elementary in Richmond, Virginia within the historic Church Hill neighborhood. The majority of my students come from a low socioeconomic background and rely on public assistance. The art classroom is a break from the high stakes teaching and testing environment they experience in their traditional classrooms. Richmond was the capital of the Confederacy during the Civil War and there is so much evidence of this history. My students are surrounded by history and experience it on their way to and from school but do not fully understand the context of these historic sites. St. John's Episcopal Church, where Patrick Henry gave his "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" speech, is one block away. Additionally, the Richmond slave trail which runs along the James River, can be seen from the school's playground. The site of the Lumpkin Slave Jail and slave auction is located just six blocks away in the Shockoe Valley. In historic Libby Hill park there is a monument to Confederate soldiers and sailors. Just 2.7 miles away is Monument Avenue, a parkway lined with century old mansions and five grand monuments to Confederate generals.

The Unit

The unit, Who Is In Charge Here?: Examining (in)visibility and Cultural Context of Jim Crow Era Monuments in Elementary Art Education, is designed for fourth and fifth grade visual arts class. The unit could be used in fourth and fifth grade U.S. History classes as well. The unit could easily be adapted for classrooms up to 12th grade. It covers the Jim Crow era statues of Confederate generals along Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia and the activist street art that has recently been produced on and around the monuments. I will expand my focus to include contemporary artists who have reinterpreted the work of other artists. Contemporary artists who have made art confronting systems of racism in American society will be introduced. These artists will give students additional insight to the way artists confront racism. This unit is distinctive because confronting heavy topics like white supremacy and racism are generally not addressed

with elementary students since public schools have taken a colorblind approach of resorting to repressive measures to suppress controversy. (Milbrandt; Dewey) The purpose of this unit is for students to increase fluency of race and racism and give students a voice to confront institutional systemic racism and get them excited about ways to effect positive change.

The unit's primary focus is on the monuments to Confederate generals on Monument Avenue that were erected in the late 19th and early 20th century. While this unit specifically draws on the Confederate memorial statues on Monument Avenue in Richmond, VA, there are examples of Jim Crow era monuments all over the United States. The students examine and analyze the history of these monuments using a circuit of culture framework. They consider when they were built, the significance of where they were placed and why they were erected. They explore who raised the money to have them made and who the intended audience was. The students then examine and analyze the changes that have occurred recently to the monuments. They consider the events leading up to the monuments removal and why they were removed. They examine the street art created by the community on and around the monuments. They consider the significance of where the street art is placed and why it is being created. They explore who is creating the art and who the intended audience is.

Essential Questions:

- What opportunity does viewing and responding to public art (monuments) allow you to see how art is made, consumed, and exhibited through time?
- Who was in charge here? Who is in charge now? What role does race play in the change of power?
- Who was invisible and visible in each part of the context/narrative? Does race play a role in who is invisible and visible?
- Is authority being challenged? Is colorblindness being challenged?
- What does "democracy begins with conversation" (Dewey) mean to you?
- Where do the assumptions or ideas about these systems of power and race come from?
- What can artists do to challenge these systems of power and colorblind racism?
- What role does history have in these systems of power and racism?
- What is the purpose and function of art in public spaces and what can we learn from analyzing it?
- How have the sites of Confederate statues evolved into an expression of community care, hope, an obligation to one another and a collective process of creativity?

In the state and national standards for 4th and 5th grade visual arts, there are strands that address cultural context, analysis, judgement and aesthetics. These strands are ripe for teaching about race and racism as it exists within art history and visual culture. This seminar increases my fluency of race and racism and how it relates to art (specifically, Jim Crow-era public art commemorating Civil War generals) and an historically hegemonic white art world. Increased fluency of race and racism enables deeper dives into how the characteristics of diverse cultures are depicted in works of art, identify ways that works of art from popular culture reflect the past and influence the present, and how the criteria used to assess the value of art may vary over time and from one culture to another.

Background

Richmond, VA

The history of the city of Richmond dates to the 17th century and is deeply rooted in white supremacy. The city played an important role in the development of the colony of Virginia, the American Revolutionary War, and the Civil War. The growth of agricultural economies led to the introduction of slavery. By 1680, slaves were responsible for most of manual labor in Virginia. The oldest neighborhood in the city is on a hilltop called Church Hill overlooking the James River. The school where I teach is in this neighborhood and has a clear view of the river. The James River and slave labor helped Richmond become a center of industry and trade including iron foundries, mills and tobacco warehouses along the river. Richmond was a major port in the massive downriver Slave Trade that made Richmond the largest source of enslaved Africans on the east coast of America from 1830 to 1860. As an urban city, slaves in Richmond were manual laborers in the tobacco processing warehouses, built canals, built houses, and worked in iron manufacturing.

In 1775, Patrick Henry delivered his famous “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” speech at St. John’s Episcopal Church. The speech helped spark troops to be sent starting the Revolutionary War. In 1780, the capital of Virginia was relocated from Williamsburg to Richmond. When Virginia seceded from the United States at the beginning of the Civil War, Richmond was declared the capital of the Confederacy until the end of the war in 1865. There are numerous historical markers and monuments around the city and state to commemorate these moments in history but none as numerous as those honoring the Civil War and Virginia’s Confederate “heroes.”

Note: Teachers who want to use this unit that do not reside in Richmond should research their state’s regional history. When presenting local history to students, ensure that research is from a variety of perspectives, particularly Black and Indigenous experiences that is often erased from the way these histories are told.

Lost Cause Narrative

University of Virginia professor, Gary W. Gallagher writes:

> “The architects of the Lost Cause acted from various motives. They collectively sought to justify their own actions and allow themselves and other former Confederates to find something positive in all-encompassing failure. They also wanted to provide their children and future generations of white Southerners with a 'correct' narrative of the war.”

Organizations like the United Daughters of the Confederacy, established in 1894, promoted The Lost Cause narrative and are key players in elevating propaganda campaign to erase slavery as the cause of the civil war and to whitewash the Confederate cause as a noble one. This group of Southern women from elite antebellum families, states their intention as to "tell of the glorious fight against the greatest odds a nation ever faced, that their hallowed memory should never die." The United Daughters of the Confederacy was instrumental in fundraising efforts to erect the visible and tangible large bronze monuments to Confederate generals across the United States. Monuments were erected on roadsides, in parks, in state capitol buildings; any widely visible space. The organization also promoted the Lost Cause narrative be written into textbooks, therefore teaching students this perspective until the 1970s. For decades, students were taught that slavery was

benign, the war was about states rights not slavery, and Confederate soldiers were southern gentlemen. The book *A Measuring Rod to Test Text Books, and Reference Books in Schools, Colleges and Libraries* by Mildred Rutherford was widely shared across the south to school superintendents ensuring that textbooks were shaping how southern white children feel about their heritage (whiteness), that Lost Cause history be presented as "real history" and provided a foundation on which Southerners built the Jim Crow system.

Jim Crow Era Confederate Monuments

While groups like the daughters of the Confederacy suggested these monuments represented "white Southern heritage," they also represented a very elite planter dominated version of that heritage. During Reconstruction, there were white people who did not necessarily see their interests aligned with those of wealthy southern elites. These monuments helped to solidify and create cross class alliance of whites who understood their interest to be always opposed to those of Black people. The point here is not to suggest that the monuments simply represented the expression of all white people spontaneously, but rather demonstrated the ways that white elites use the symbols to legitimate their own authority. These are complex issues to be sure, but it's an important point to make if we are to disrupt the notion that these monuments simply represent interpersonal bigotry and antagonism, had nothing to do with larger structures of society. In this sense they're not just about "hate," they are also about elite power and control.

There are five monuments on Monument Avenue in Richmond Virginia explored in this unit. Monument Avenue is a cobblestone tree-lined grassy divided boulevard that was conceived during a site search for the memorial statue of General Robert E. Lee. The street was, and continues to be, a favored area of Richmond's elite class with mansions lining the street from the end of the Guilded Age. When the neighborhood was conceived, it was written within the official planning documents that Black people would not be allowed to live on the Avenue.

The Robert E. Lee statue was the first statue erected in 1890. Planning and fundraising for the Lee monument began at Lee's death on October 12, 1870. It is grand in scale at 61 feet tall and consists of a bronze statue of Lee on horseback which sits upon an enormous granite pedestal. The statue is in the center of a grassy traffic circle that is approximately a quarter acre in size. The J.E.B. Stuart was the second statue unveiled on May 30, 1907, just one block away from Lee. The third monument of the President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, was unveiled days later on June 2, 1907. The Stonewall Jackson was the fourth monument unveiled in 1919. The fifth monument of Matthew Fontaine Maury was unveiled in 1929. The monuments of Confederate generals on Monument Avenue were largely funded through direct financial support from the Commonwealth of Virginia and the City of Richmond. Fundraising efforts of the United Daughters of the Confederacy were also instrumental to the construction of the monuments and promotion of the "Lost Cause" narrative, perpetuating a narrow set of memories about the Confederacy.

Controversy over the removal of these monuments has been increasing over the past couple years. In 2015, a group of Virginia Commonwealth University students, a nonprofit design studio, the Valentine Museum and the Branch Museum of Architecture and Design invited artists to submit plans to consider alternatives to the monuments as part of a competition called *General Demotion/General Devotion.* These artist proposals initiated a dialogue that was a beginning point to visualize a way forward. When the city of Charlottesville, VA voted to remove a statue of Robert E. Lee and rename Lee Park, white supremacists marched in the "Unite the Right" rally through the city resulting in the death of a counter protestor. The event in Charlottesville sparked local (and national) discussion and debate about the presence and removal of Confederate monuments. The Monument Avenue Commission was formed by the mayor in response to public outcry over

the monuments as a source of “pride and shame” to gather feedback and inspire civil dialogue from city residents to consider adding context to the monuments and suggestions for additional monuments. The Commission submitted their report in July 2018, and nothing changed.

Note: Teachers outside of Richmond are encouraged to think about their regional history of oppression and/or enslavement and how these histories might be evident in public art works and historic memorial sites within their communities. In the subsection Images from Lesson in the Appendix on Implementing District Standards section, there is an abbreviated list of monuments across the country to consider.

Black Lives Matter Movement

George Floyd’s murder by police officers in Minneapolis, Minnasota in May 2020 sparked national outrage over police brutality and systems of white supremacy. Since protests against police brutality erupted in Richmond on May 28th , the monument sites have become a focus of local demonstrations. Specifically, the Lee and Stuart monuments, which are just one block away from each other. On the evening of May 30th , protesters took to the streets and spray-painted messages on the monuments and set fire to the United Daughters of Confederacy national headquarters causing considerable damage to the building. The street art protest messages on the monuments include, “BLM”, “F*ck 12”, “ACAB”, “Blood on your hands”, “All I see is blood”, “Amerikkka”, “How much more blood?”, “Stop white supremacy”, “Black Lives Matter” and “Cops are creepy”, all in a kaleidoscope of colors. “YOUR TAX STATUS IS RACIST” was added after an article in the Washington Post reported that a group of homeowners on Monument Avenue filed a lawsuit claiming that removing the statues would cause them to “suffer the loss of favorable tax treatment and reduction in property values.” More context challenging the “Lost Cause” narrative continues to be added to the monuments every night. At first it was a protest, but now it resembles a community space.

On June 4th, Governor Northam announced that the Robert E. Lee statue would be removed. (The Lee monument is the only monument that is on state property.) However, a lawsuit was filed by a descendent of the family who transferred the private property to the state. The lawsuit states that the transfer deed agreed the state would “faithfully guard” and “affectionately protect” the monument. On June 5th, Mayor Stoney announced that when City Council reconvenes on July 1st , he will request the removal of the other four monuments to Confederate generals be removed as well. (These four statues are on city property.) Richmond Mayor, Lavar Stoney, stated, “It’s time to heal, ladies and gentlemen. Richmond is no longer the capital of the Confederacy.”

Every day, local artists and the protests are challenging colorblindness by adding to this reimagined communal art space around the monuments. Public art is vital to a community and a way to create conversation. The reactive art making by social activist artists have contributed to changing the space in an effort to reeducate and tell a different story to the public. The community has unofficially been renamed the circle as Marcus-David Peters Circle (MDP Circle, for short) referencing a Black biology teacher who was shot and killed by police while experiencing a mental health crisis in 2018. Beginning June 5, 2020 an artist named Dustin Klein began projecting images of figures including George Floyd and Marcus-David Peters on the Lee monument’s surface every night. Musicians such as cello players, trombonists, DJs, local bands, and R&B star Trey Songz have performed at the monument sites. A violin vigil for Elijah McClain, which included over 30 strings musicians, happened at sunset on July 21, 2020 which drew an enormous crowd. Families visit and take photos of recent graduates in their cap and gown. The site is now a popular spot for formal wedding portraits. A community garden and fruit trees have been planted. A community library has been installed. There is a basketball hoop and a couch. There are voter registration booths and community groups set up

grills to make free food for the visitors to the community space. There are dozens of laminated placards posted around the monument, with the name, photo and biography of Black people killed at the hands of the police violence. Each placard has a makeshift memorial with flowers and candles beneath it. Artists and protestors are changing the context of the monuments in real time.

Prior to May 2020, the Robert E. Lee statue and the surrounding park has attracted very few visitors beyond the occasional tourist. Now, many Richmond residents are stopping and visiting the site for the first time instead of just driving by it. The site of the J.E.B. Stuart monument has transformed into a popular skateboarding spot, affectionately referred to as “Skate in Solidarity” Circle by the local skate community, and a photo and accompanying article was featured in Thrasher magazine in their June 2020 issue.

Strategies

> “In creative fields, for instance, from the visual arts to theater, the white gaze has long determined whose stories are told – what gets to be seen, what’s given value and what’s deemed worthy enough to be recorded and remembered – enforcing a seemingly immovable standard by which black artists and other artists of color are nearly always cast in supporting roles to the mostly white stars of the Western canon.” (Brara, 2020)

The students at my school have very limited experience analyzing art from a cultural context due to the lack of exposure to how race neutrality functions as a system of power that protects the Western canon. The history and function of public monuments erected during the Jim Crow era is foreign to them due to the intentional silence of the subjects by art educators. As art educators, our concern with symbols of power and multicultural education make it necessary to initiate dialogue and art making around unmentionable subjects like race and power. (Siegesmund, Delacruz). Silence on this issue is a “form of tacit racism and cultural violence” (Delacruz). Now that public monuments across the country are being removed and the spaces that they inhabit are being reimagined as community spaces that inspire art making and conversations, my students can move beyond listening and contribute to the “dialogue” of art making. I teach against the dominant factory model approach of education and its relations to power and draw from the freedom school model where students will be active makers of knowledge and counter narratives through inquiry and analysis (Boggs). It is not enough to include art by historically aggrieved populations in the curriculum and classroom without producing new approaches to making and viewing art (Blake). Rather than having students examine formal works of arts typically collected in museums and galleries, I turn my student’s attention toward different sites of art making and consumption. The principle here is to try and capture creativity where the student is instead of having to leave the community to see beauty outside of formal settings such as a museum. In Toni Morrison’s speech at Portland State in 1975, she said:

> “For art focuses on the single grain of rice, the tree-shaped scar, and the names of the people, not only the number that arrived. And to the artist one can only say, not to be confused, (sigh) not to be confused. You don’t waste your energy fighting the fever, you must only fight the disease. And the disease is not racism. It is greed and the struggle for power.”

Toni Morrison is stating that ending domination (Confederate monuments about unequal power and control) will facilitate the end of racist ideas and superiority. This is what Richmond has seen happen at the monuments. The Black Lives Matter movement and the community has taken control of the space around Lee Circle to the point that they have renamed the space Marcus-David Peters Circle. Freedom has been taken by the people.

This unit is being written in a time of uncertainty for all educators regarding the future of in-person versus virtual teaching and learning. I address in-person and virtual methods of instruction within the classroom activities section of the unit to address how this could work in either setting. The unit can be taught over a nine-week grading period for approximately 45 minutes once a week. The first part of the unit is process focused, not product focused. The unit begins by providing the students with images of the monuments before the protests. They will discuss the aesthetics of the statues and also consider scale, location, accessibility, material and other elements of public works of art. One monument will be researched per week starting with Matthew Fontaine Maury monument. Using their laptops, students will use the circuit of culture framework to learn more about each monument.

Circuit of Culture:

Production- (Who is paying for it? Where is the money coming from? Produced by white elites?)

Consumption- (Are the people who consume different from the people who are producing it?)

Regulation- (Who makes and enforces the rules? Who is in charge here?)

Identity- (What do others think about those who consume it? What do you have to know, understand, value, believe in order to consume it? Were these monuments produced and displayed in the interest of all white people?)

Signification- (What argument is it making- intentionally, or not? What argument about power is being made here? Power over who? What is the specific role of white elites, who were seeking to reestablish their dominance over Black people in the South as well as poor whites, also played in the construction of the monument?)

Each table works as a group and concentrate on one of the assigned frameworks. Each table presents their findings to the class and is collectively asked “Who was in charge here? Who was invisible and not a part of the context/narrative?” The students then present the images of the monuments with the street art protest messages. Each table group applies the same framework again. (Depending on whether the monuments are actually removed, the space where the monuments once stood should be considered as well.) Their findings will again be presented to the class and will be collectively be asked again “Who was in charge here? Who was invisible and not a part of the context/narrative?” Continue discussions about how the context and circuit of culture has changed.

The following contemporary artists are introduced:

Kehinde Wiley, *Rumors of War,* 2019.

Sonya Clark, *Unraveling,* 2015-present.

Robert Colescott, *George Washington Carver Crossing the Delaware,* 1975.

Kara Walker

Betye Saar

Titus Kaphar

Paul Rucker

Paul Stephen Benjamin, *Let Freedom Ring,* 2019.

DJ Spooky, *Rebirth of a Nation,* 2015. (film)

Amy Sherald

Renee Cox

Calida Rawles

Rashid Johnson

In Richmond, the statues of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Maggie L. Walker, Arthur Ashe, the Virginia Civil Rights monument, Kehinde Wiley's *Rumors of War*, and the Richmond Slavery Reconciliation statue will be presented as examples of monuments to Richmond natives, counter-narrative to J.E.B. Stuart and the end of the slave trade.

Teachers outside of Richmond are encouraged to incorporate their local history and public monuments. In order to make clear that public monuments with a troubled past are not exclusive to Richmond, Virginia, examples of public monuments installed around the country will also be analyzed. While Richmond represents a prominent example of these statues, many communities have their share of Jim Crow era public art as well. For example, there is the long legacy of statues of Christopher Columbus in the Northeast and many other areas, the recently removed Theodore Roosevelt statue in front of the Museum of Natural History in Manhattan, the removal of statues of missionaries in California, as well as pioneer figures in the Northwest. There are numerous monuments in the western United States that glorify the settler colonialism of Union soldiers who fought in the civil war. It is often overlooked that during the Civil War, Union soldiers in the West weren't fighting to end slavery, but to "annihilate and remove Native Americans" (Nelson). Survey your local community for examples of public art that has been reimagined and the local art space and organizations that have been part of that expression of community.

For the second part of the unit students will design new public monuments that help to represent and capture a vision of society and community and justice with which they identify. Students will be instructed to consider people in their communities, individuals as well as groups, that they may want to celebrate, who are not traditionally thought of as elite figures in this way.

Students have an additional option to create an original art piece that conveys a personal message referencing Black Lives Matter. My students would be very excited if their work was displayed in the same space that street art protests are displaying around the monuments.

Classroom Activities

Art Process Activities:

Matthew Fountain Maury statue, Richmond VA, dedicated 1929. Photo by Danielle Houdek.

On day one of this unit, students examine the lesser known monument on Monument Avenue of Matthew Fontaine Maury. The students begin by analyzing historical images of the statue based on its visual properties. Is it a realistic representation? Is it life size or larger/smaller scale? What is it made out of? Where is it? Is it in a space where it can be viewed by large volumes of people? What is the pedestal made of? What images are engraved on the pedestal? Next, the students explore and examine cultural and historical influences of the creation of this statue. Who is this a statue of? Who was the statue made for? Was it made to establish power over a specific group of people? What was he famous for? When was the statue erected? Working in groups,

the students conduct research on their laptops to answer the Circuit of Culture framework questions. Each group is assigned one of the questions addressing Production, Consumption, Regulation, Identity and Signification. After the conclusion of this quick research, students share their findings with the class. The students are then shown an image of the statue as it exists today. (The globe and the seated figure were removed on July 2, 2020.) The students are asked to consider the framework question they researched earlier in the class. How would the question be answered now? Who wanted the statue removed? Why was it removed? Who paid for it to be removed? In whose interest was it removed? Who is in charge here? What message does the absence of the statue say to the viewer? The same framework questions will then be applied to these contemporary works of art Robert Colescott, (*George Washington Carver Crossing the Delaware,* 1975) and Paul Stephen Benjamin, *(Let Freedom Ring,* 2019). As an exit ticket from class, students will reflect about the lesson in their visual journal. I will pose the open-ended question, "Imagine a new monument placed on that pedestal. What should it be?"

Stonewall Jackson monument, Richmond VA. Photo by Danielle Houdek.

On the second week, students examine the monument of Stonewall Jackson. Again, the students begin by analyzing historical images of the statue based on its visual properties. Is it a realistic representation? Is it life size or larger/smaller scale? What is it made out of? Where is it? Is it in a space where it can be viewed by large volumes of people? What is the pedestal made of? Next, the student will explore and examine cultural and historical influences of the creation of this statue. Who is this a statue of? What was he famous for? When was the statue erected? Working in groups, the students will conduct research on their laptops to answer the Circuit of Culture framework questions. Each group will be assigned one of the questions addressing

Production, Consumption, Regulation, Identity and Signification. After the conclusion of this quick research, students will share their findings with the class. The students will then be shown an image of the statue as it exists today. (The bronze equestrian statue of Stonewall Jackson was removed on July 1, 2020.) The students will be asked to consider the framework question they researched earlier in the class. How would the question be answered now? Who added the colorful street art to the base of the statue? Who paid for it to be removed? In whose interest was it removed? Who is in charge here? What message does the absence of the statue say to the viewer about power and racism? The same framework questions will then be applied to the contemporary works of art by Betye Saar, (*The Liberation of Aunt Jemima,* 1972) and Titus Kaphar's website. As an exit ticket from class, students will reflect about the lesson in their visual journal. I will pose the open-ended question, "What message would you add to the street art that could inform and engage a viewer?"

Jefferson Davis monument, Richmond, VA. Photo by Danielle Houdek.

On the third week of the unit, the students investigate the monument to the President of the Confederacy,

Jefferson Davis. Again, the students begin by analyzing historical images of the statue based on its visual properties. How is this monument different from the others? What is it made out of? Where is it? Is it in a space where it can be viewed by large volumes of people? What is this monument made of? Look closely at the text that is in several locations on the monument. What does it say? Next, the students explore and examine cultural and historical influences of the creation of this statue. Who is this a statue of? What was he famous for? When was the statue erected? Working in groups, the students will conduct research on their laptops to answer the Circuit of Culture framework questions. Each group is assigned one of the questions addressing Production, Consumption, Regulation, Identity and Signification. After the conclusion of this quick research, students share their findings with the class. The students are then shown an image of the statue as it exists today. (The bronze statues and bronze plaques were removed on July 10, 2020.) The students will be asked to consider the framework question they researched earlier in the class. How would the question be answered now? Who added the colorful street art to the base of the statue? Who paid for it to be removed? In whose interest was it removed? Who is in charge here? What message does the absence of the statue say to the viewer? The same framework questions will then be applied to the contemporary works of art by local artist Hamilton Glass, (*Fresh Paint* exhibit mural, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, 2020), Sonya Clark, (*Unraveling,* 2015-present) and Paul Rucker, (*Storm in the Time of Shelter,* 2014). As an exit ticket from class, students will reflect about the lesson in their visual journal. I will pose the open-ended question, “What does this monument reveal about the role of racism and public monuments? What messages are being sent to Black people?”

J.E.B. Stuart monument, Richmond, VA. Photo by Danielle Houdek.

On the fourth week of the unit, the students analyze the monument of J.E.B. Stuart. Again, the students begin by analyzing historical images of the statue based on its visual properties. Is it a realistic representation? Is it life size or larger/smaller scale? What is it made out of? Where is it? Is it in a space where it can be viewed by large volumes of people? What is the pedestal made of? Next, the students explore and examine cultural and historical influences of the creation of this statue. Who is this a statue of? What was he famous for? When was the statue erected? Working in groups, the students will conduct research on their laptops to answer the Circuit of Culture framework questions. Each group will be assigned one of the questions addressing Production, Consumption, Regulation, Identity and Signification. After the conclusion of this quick research, students share their findings with the class. The students are then shown an image of the statue as it exists today as it was featured in Thrasher Magazine. (The bronze equestrian statue of J.E.B. Stuart was removed on July 7, 2020.) The students are asked to consider the framework question they researched earlier in the class. How would the question be answered now? Who added the colorful street art to the base of the statue? Who

paid for it to be removed? In whose interest was it removed? Who is in charge here? What message does the absence of the statue say to the viewer? The same framework questions will then be applied to the contemporary work of art by Kehinde Wiley, (*Rumors of War,* 2019). Kehinde Wiley said of his visit to Richmond, “When I came here, all those years back, and I saw Monument Avenue, and I saw some extraordinary sculpture,” he said. “People took a lot of time to make something powerful, beautiful, elegant. And menacing.”

As an exit ticket from class, students will reflect about the lesson in their visual journal. I will pose the open-ended question, “Consider Kehinde Wiley’s quote. In what ways is the statue of J.E.B. Stuart menacing? Who would see and experience it as menacing?”

The statue of Robert E. Lee on Monument Avenue, Richmond, VA. At night, artist Dustin Klein projects images onto the state pedestal and BLM directly onto Lee. Photo by Richmond photographer, Chloe Houdek.

On the fifth week of the unit, the students analyze the oldest and largest monument of Robert E. Lee. The students begin by analyzing historical images of the statue based on its visual properties as a whole class discussion. Is it a realistic representation? Is it life size or larger/smaller scale? What is it made out of? Where is it? Is it in a space where it can be viewed by large volumes of people? What is the pedestal made of? Why is the pedestal so tall? Consider the reasons why the artist would design the pedestal in this way? Next, the students explore and examine cultural and historical influences of the creation of this statue. Who is this a statue of? What was he famous for? When was the statue erected? Working in groups, the students conduct research on their laptops to answer the Circuit of Culture framework questions. Each group is assigned one of the questions addressing Production, Consumption, Regulation, Identity and Signification. After the conclusion

of this quick research, students share their findings with the class. The students are then shown an image of the statue as it exists today. The students will be asked to consider the framework question they researched earlier in the class. How would the question be answered now? Who added the colorful street art to the base of the statue? Who is in charge here? Who holds the power? The framework questions will then be applied to the contemporary works of art by lighting artist Dustin Klein, (*videometry* Instagram account). As an exit ticket from class, students will reflect about the lesson in their visual journal. I will pose the open-ended question, "What is the artist's response to racism? How has Dustin Klein changed the message of power and control? How does his artwork connect art and activism?"

Art Production Activities:

Weeks 6-9 of the unit is art production. At the beginning of each class, students are introduced to a contemporary artist that makes art as a response to racism, social injustice and identity.

In their visual journals, students respond to these questions and brainstorm about the artwork presented:

What is the connection between art and when it is made?

What is the relationship between art and activism?

What is the artist's response to racism, social injustice and identity?

The remaining time in each class will be sketching and producing their final artwork. Students will use their visual journals to brainstorm, complete thumbnail sketches, justify media and subject choice, and as well as write an artist statement. Visual journals keep student thoughts and processes organized. Visual journals are periodically collected to assess progress. Students will design new public monuments that help to represent and capture a vision of society and community and justice with which they identify. Students will be instructed to consider people in their communities, individuals as well as groups, that they may want to celebrate, who are not traditionally thought of as elite figures in this way. The media of the final artwork is the student's choice.

Note: Regarding virtual learning, group work can be done in Google break out rooms. Student research and findings can be organized into a slide format to be turned into Google Classroom.

The teacher can monitor and assess art production activities by instructing students to photograph visual journal pages, sketches, periodic progress and final artwork and upload to Google classroom. Additionally, weekly whole class video check ins will allow students to receive feedback from teacher and peers.

Appendix on Implementing District Standards

Virginia Visual Arts Standards of Learning

Critical Thinking and Communication

4.3.1 The student will analyze, interpret, and evaluate artwork using art vocabulary.
- Analyze works of art based on visual properties and contextual information.
- Interpret works of art for multiple meanings.

Describe criteria used to evaluate artwork of self and others.

4.4. The student will describe how personal beliefs influence responses to works of art.

4.4 The student will demonstrate skills needed to work collaboratively in an art community.
- Provide and receive constructive feedback.
- Demonstrate personal responsibility for the art room spaces and tools.

History, Culture, and Citizenship

4.6.1 The student will explore and examine cultural and historical influences of art.
- Identify ways that works of art from popular culture reflect the past and influence the present.
- Explain how criteria used to assess the importance of art may vary from one culture to another.

4.7 The student will explain how art is an integral part of one's life and community.

4.8 The student will give credit to sources used in art research.

Creative Process

5.1.1 The student will apply creative thinking to artmaking.
- Express personal ideas, images, and themes through artistic choices of media, techniques, and subject matter.
- Demonstrate resilience and resourcefulness in solving art challenges.

5.2 The student will apply a creative process for artmaking.

5.2.1 Apply steps of the creative process, including brainstorming, researching, preliminary sketching, planning, reflecting, and refining, to synthesize ideas for and create works of art.

Critical Thinking and Communication

5.3.1 The student will analyze, interpret, and evaluate artwork using art vocabulary.
- Analyze and interpret works of art based on visual properties and context.
- Interpret an artist's point of view based on contextual information.

5.5 The student will apply skills needed to work collaboratively in an art community.
- Apply communication skills in class discussions and presentations.

History, Culture, and Citizenship

5.6 The student will explore and examine cultural and historical influences of art.
- Describe how criteria used to assess the importance of art may vary over time.
- Examine the influence of historic events on works of art.
- Describe similarities and differences among art and artists from a variety of diverse cultures and experiences.
- Compare and contrast contemporary and historical works of art, including architecture.

Virginia History and Social Science Standards of Learning

Skills

VS.1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical thinking, geographical analysis, economic decision making, and responsible citizenship by
• analyzing and interpreting artifacts and primary and secondary sources to understand events in Virginia history;
• recognizing points of view and historical perspectives;
• comparing and contrasting ideas and cultural perspectives in Virginia history;
• determining relationships with multiple causes or effects in Virginia history;
• explaining connections across time and place;
• practicing good citizenship skills and respect for rules and laws while collaborating, compromising, and participating in classroom activities; and
• investigating and researching to develop products orally and in writing.

Civil War and Postwar Eras

VS.8 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the reconstruction of Virginia following the Civil War by
• identifying the effects of Reconstruction on life in Virginia;
• identifying the effects of segregation and "Jim Crow" on life in Virginia for American Indians, whites, and African Americans.

Virginia: 1900 to the Present

VS.9 The student will demonstrate an understanding of Virginia during the twentieth century and beyond by
• describing the social and political events in Virginia linked to desegregation and Massive Resistance and their relationship to national history.

Images from Lesson:

Fred Moynihan, *J.E.B. Stuart* monument, 1907, Richmond VA then and now

Kehinde Wiley, *Rumors of War,* 2019.

"Skate in Solidarity" at former site of J.E.B. Stuart monument

Jean Antonin Mercie, *Robert E. Lee* monument, 1890, Richmond VA then and now

Dustin Klein, lighting artist, videometry Instagram account

William C. Noland, *Jefferson Davis* monument, 1907, Richmond VA then and now

Hamilton Glass, Fresh Paint exhibit mural, Virginia Museum of History and Culture

Sonya Clark, *Unraveling,* 2015-present.

Paul Rucker, *Storm in the Time of Shelter,* 2014.

Frederick W. Sievers, *Stonewall Jackson* monument, 1919, Richmond VA then and now

Betye Saar, *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima,* 1972.

Titus Kaphar: kapharstudio.com

Frederick W. Sievers, *Matthew Fontaine Maury* monument,1929, Richmond VA then and now.

Robert Colescott, *George Washington Carver Crossing the Delaware,* 1975.

Paul Stephen Benjamin, *Let Freedom Ring,* 2019.

DJ Spooky, *Rebirth of a Nation,* 2004. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQNp-VHAueE

Renee Cox, *The Signing,* 2017.

Mending Walls, public art project, https://mendingwallsrva.com

Rashid Johnson, https://art21.org/watch/new-york-close-up/rashid-johnson-makes-things-to-put-things-on/

Jack Witt, *Bill "Bojangles" Robinson* statue, 1973

Toby Mendez, *Maggie L. Walker* statue, 2017

Paul DiPasquale, *Arthur Ashe* statue, 1996

Stanley Bleifeld, *Virginia Civil Rights Memorial*, 2008

Stephen Broadbent, *Richmond Slavery Reconciliation Statue*, 2007

Monuments outside of Richmond VA:

Equestrian statue of Juan de Oñate, New Mexico

John Sutter statue, Sacramento, CA

Sacramento Native American Health Center mural, 2020

Christopher Columbus statue, Boston, MA

Christopher "Kit" Carson, Denver

Olalekan Jeyifous, *Protest,* Cleveland OH, 2017

Union Soldiers, Colorado State Capital Building, Denver

Shepard Fairey, Crush Walls street art festival, Denver, 2018

Union Soldiers, Santa Fe, NM

Victoria Memorial, London, UK, 1911

Kara Walker, *Fons Americanus,* 2019.

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