Lesson 1: Freedom of Speech

Freedom of Speech is the right to speak freely without censorship or limitation. It is the right to criticize or encourage all equally, to question and enter into a dialogue about even the most sensitive of topics. Some of the artists in the exhibition have taken their right to free speech very seriously. It is important to not only spend time appreciating this right, but also thinking about the consequences if we lost our right to speak and express freely.

Objectives:
- Students will think critically about the freedom of speech and the role it plays in our lives.
- Students will think about the benefits and costs of free speech while also discussing the consequences of not having free speech.

Critical Questions:
- Why is freedom of speech important?
- What are the limits to free speech?
- What happens when we don’t have free speech?
- How have you exercised your right to free speech?
- What is censorship?
- Should certain things be censored?
  - What are they and why?

Visual References:
Various work by Ala Bashir
Various work by M.T. Liggett
Various work by Jesse Howard

Activities:

1. Freedom of Artistic Expression

   Language Arts/Social Sciences: Grades 5-12

   A visitor to a museum sees a piece of artwork that they think is inappropriate. They call the museum administration to complain about the work. Write out a dialogue between the museum patron and museum administrator debating why this piece of art should or should not be in the exhibition. Create two different endings to their conversation. Research other examples to back up both sides of this argument.

   Above and Beyond: Think of another scenario where the right to free speech or freedom of expression is in question. Write out another dialogue.

   NL-ENG.K-12.8, Developing Research Skills
   NL-ENG.K-12.11, Participating in Society
   NL-ENG.K-12.12, Applying Language Skills
   NSS-C.5-8.2 and NSS-C.9-12.2, Foundations of a Political System

2. Censorship

   Language Arts/Social Sciences: Grades 5-12

   Have students write a letter as though they were reporting from a war zone or from the scene of a current and controversial event. Have students then trade their letters and censor some of the words or sentences from their fellow students’ letter. Then have a third student try to decipher the meaning of the original letter. How did censorship change the meaning. Have a conversation with students about this experience of censoring and being censored. How did this make them feel? What do they censor in their own lives? Is there a place for censorship? Is it ever necessary?

   Above and Beyond: Research a time in history (or currently) of censorship. What was the response? Was it deserved? Is the item still censored? Did the item deserve censorship? Make a case for or against the censorship of a particular item.

   NL-ENG.K-12.4, Communication Skills
   NL-ENG.K-12.7, Evaluating Data
   NSS-C.5-8.5 and NSS-C.9-12.5, Roles of Government
LESSON 2: WORLDS OF OUR OWN MAKING

Letting our imaginations wander to create worlds we can escape to are often the only ways we can survive a bad, sad or boring situation. Being able to create a place to go to in our mind that is safe and where we are completely in control is a powerful tool. This refuge, whether it exists in actuality or in our minds provides hope and that is a great motivation. Visionary Artists have often taken this idea of escape and creating worlds to an extreme. They transform their environments and create stories with mind-boggling details, sometimes as a way to survive. Renaldo Kuhler did not create a utopia in Rocaterrania, but he did create an escape. He created a world that he could choose every last part of. He has become so immersed in the details of this world, that it has often seeped in to his own life and reality.

OBJECTIVES:

• Students will research a variety of artists and think critically about questions to pose to the artist.
• Students will imagine their own world and details about how it would function.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS:

• Why do people create imaginary worlds to escape to?
• What would your imaginary world look like?
• What is important to include in your fictional world?
• How can you begin creating a bit of this fictional world in your reality?

VISUAL REFERENCES:

Various work by Renaldo Kuhler
Rocaterrania, a film by Brett Ingram

ACTIVITIES:

1. World of Your Own Making
   Fine Arts/Language Arts, Grades K-12

What would a world of your own making look like? What is the political system in your world? Where is this city or nation located? Is there a primary religion? Who lives there? Think about some of these details.

Create three of the following:

a. A short history of your world
b. Some images of the architecture that is in your world.
c. Some images and biographies of a few citizens in your world.
d. Some actual objects that come from this world—in the same way that Renaldo Kuhler has created instruments, vessels, and clothing that is inspired by Rocaterrania.
e. Some images of the transportation system.
f. Some images from the entertainment industry.
g. Some explanation of the language.

NA-VA.K-4.6, NA-VA.5-8.6 and NA-VA.9-12.6, Making Connections Between Visual Art and Other Disciplines
NA-ENG.K-12.12, Applying Language Skills

2. Interview with an Artist
   Language Arts, Grades 5-12

Why do some artists or writers create these worlds to escape to? How do these created worlds mimic their reality? How are they different?

Research an artist or writer who has created some sort of escape through their work. Create a fictional interview with this artist/writer. Think carefully about the questions you ask them and respond as they would in their voice. Write this interview as if it were going to be published in a magazine or newspaper article. What images would accompany your interview?

Above and Beyond: Write three “letters to the editor” about the article you wrote. Think about different responses to this article. Write in three different voices.

NL-ENG.K-12.1, Reading for Perspective
NL-ENG.K-12.8, Developing Research Skills
NA-ENG.K-12.12, Applying Language Skills
According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, our most basic needs are physiological. These are the needs required for our survival—breathing, water, food, sleep, clothing, shelter, etc. After these are met comes our need for safety. The need for safety comes from an individual’s yearning for some element of control and predictability in their world. Often safety is associated with our living space, a home or haven. This can also be expanded to feeling safe in our own country, a fact that is not assured everywhere. Looking at the art and stories of Ala Bashir (Saddam Hussein’s personal physician who described his life as “like living on the edge of a knife”) and Alma Carillo, Angeles Segura, Carmela Valdivia and Luz Maria Bucio (immigrants from Mexico, who are still struggling with the needs of safety, security and home), we begin to see how critical the feeling of safety is to the human experience.

**OBJECTIVES:**
- Students will think critically about what “safety” and “home” mean.
- Students will brainstorm about what it means to not have these needs.
- Students will discuss the responsibility of a society to insure these needs for its citizens, our responsibility as humans to insure these needs for others.
- Students will think about what would happen if they did not feel safe or have a home.

**CRITICAL QUESTIONS:**
- How do you define “safety” and “home”?
- What happens in a society when these needs are not met?
- What would a society need to change to help its citizens feel safer?
- What makes you feel un-safe?
- What do you need to feel at home somewhere?
- What represents safety to you?

**VISUAL REFERENCES:**
- Torment-Predicament of Man by Ala Bashir
- Suppression-Predicament of Man by Ala Bashir
- Journey by Ala Bashir
- The Cry by Ala Bashir
- Suppression-Predicament of Man by Ala Bashir
- Death Lives in the Desert by Luz Maria Bucio
- Prisoner in the Land of Liberty by Angeles Segura
- Mexican Dream/American Dream by Carmela Valdivia
- Journey Without Return by Alma Carillo

**ACTIVITIES:**

1. **Personal Safety**
   - **Fine Arts, Grade 5-12**
   - Have a discussion with students about the idea of safety. When do students feel safe? When do they feel at home? How does this differ for individuals? What common threads come up in the discussion? Create a drawing of this safe place. Include details and try to think about what this feeling of safety looks like. On the other side of the paper, or in a diptych fashion—draw the opposite scenario: a place where you feel un-safe. Accompany these drawings by written descriptions of the scenes. Which scene is closer to your reality?
   - NA-VA.5-8.3 and NA-VA.9-12.3, Choosing and Evaluating a Range of Subject Matter, Symbols and Ideas
   - NA-VA.5-8.6 and NA-VA.9-12.6, Making Connections Between Visual Art and Other Disciplines

2. **Safety and Society**
   - **Language Arts/Social Sciences, Grade 5-12**
   - To what extent is safety the responsibility of a society? What does your society do to keep the citizen’s safe? Do you think there are more things that could happen to keep you and your neighbors safe? Write up a plan for these additional safety measures? What do you need to enact your plan? Money? People? Time? Write an article for your local newspaper about what happens and how things change once this new safety measure you have proposed is implanted. Explain in your article how the safety plan works (is it sustainable?) and how you came up with the idea. Depending on your idea, you may need to interview fictional citizens/neighbors. You may also need a series of articles to track the progress of the safety plan. Be sure to include the response of the city officials and if they would like to use your safety plan in other neighborhoods.
   - NL-ENG.K-12.1, Reading for Perspective
   - NL-ENG.K-12.8, Developing Research Skills
   - NA-ENG.K-12.12, Applying Language Skills
We each have our own personal memory of our childhood, of good times and bad. Beyond this we also share a collective memory. There are events we relive and study and retell so that we all remember. Some of these stories are to encourage each other, to remind that times have changed. Some of these stories are to stop horrors we have experienced from happening again. Telling our stories, whether an individuals’ story or the story of a country, a race, a religion, is critical in understanding each other, history and planning for our shared future.

OBJECTIVES:
- Students will think critically about history in a new and visual way.
- Students will research various historical events and portray them through the visual and verbal.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS:
- What do you remember most from your childhood?
- Why do those memories stand out?
- Is there anything you wish you remember from your childhood but don’t?
- What do you think we need to remember from our history as a nation?
- What do you think we need to be reminded of?
- How do you think memories change with time?

VISUAL REFERENCES:
Vases, baskets and bowls by Golden Venture
Various works by Christopher Haile
Painted Elk Hide with Marauding Calvary Scene and Cheyenne War Council by Rejoices-Over-Her-Horses
No More the Driver’s Horn We Hear, No More the Whip We Fear by Sam Doyle
The Story of My Childhood by Andrew Romanoff
A Blast From the Past in Black and White I by Vincent Nardone
A Blast From the Past in Black and White II by Vincent Nardone
Sweet Dreams of You by Vincent Nardone
50 to 7 1/2 by Vincent Nardone
**ACTIVITIES:**

1. **Forgotten History**  
   Fine Arts/Language Arts/Social Sciences, Grade 5-12

   There are many historical (and current) events that have either been glossed over or forgotten. Throughout the exhibition, Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness—some of these events are given a new light and voice. Research one of these events, and a new event you find on your own that has been lost in the pages of history books.

   **Examples of topics to research from the current exhibition:**
   a. The trials and tribulations of the Golden Venture Immigrants.
   b. St. Helena’s Island and the community that lives there.
   c. The involvement of the Iroquois nation in the writing of our Founding Documents.
   d. The incarceration rate and system in the United States.

   **Some questions to think about as you research:**
   - How do Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness come in to each of these (and other) examples?
   - Why have these events/topics/facts been overlooked?
   - Why are they important to remember?
   - What lessons can we learn from them?
   - Write a short newspaper style article revisiting this event.

2. **Personal History**  
   Fine Arts, Grade 5-12

   Several artists in this exhibition have drawn on the memories of their own childhood as inspiration. In the case of Andrew Romanoff, he has recorded his life growing up in Windsor Castle on shrinky dinks (a medium that in many ways mimics memory). Vincent Nardone, an artist serving a life sentence, also draws on images from his life before prison.

   Can you think of 4-6 memories from your childhood to portray in pictures? Do the pictures/memories connect? Think about how and what you will draw the pictures with? Will you use the same materials you used as a child? (finger paint? Crayons? Etc?) Create a small collection with a description and explanation of why you chose these specific moments.

NA-VA.5-8.3 and NA-VA.9-12.3, Choosing and Evaluating a Range of Subject Matter, Symbols and Ideas  
NA-VA.5-8.6 and NA-VA.9-12.6, Making Connections Between Visual Art and Other Disciplines

NA-VA.5-8.4 and NA-VA.9-12.4, Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History and Culture  
NL-ENG.K-12.8, Developing Research Skills  
NL-ENG.K-12.9, Multicultural Understanding  
NSS-C.5-8.5 and NSS-C.9-12.5, Roles of Citizens
There are a multitude of factors that come in to play when we imagine what freedom means. The definition of freedom may be different for an immigrant than for a tsar, for a prisoner than for a child, but there are common threads. Different cultures and times have created different standards and symbols of freedom. A closer look at these symbols and what they mean give us a greater understanding of these cultures and some of their ideas. They also help us on our own search for what freedom means to each of us.

OBJECTIVES:
- Students will think critically about what symbolizes freedom and how this idea changes.
- Students will envision and create their own monuments to freedom.
- Students will research various symbols of freedom and think about their similarities and differences.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS:
- What symbolizes freedom?
- How do symbols of freedom change through time? In different cultures? In different social classes? In different religions?
- How do monuments to freedom play a role in our culture?

VISUAL REFERENCES:
Star-Spangled Banner by Adam Morales
Statue of Liberty by Adam Morales
Coretta Scott King by Vernon Burwell
Martin Luther King by Vernon Burwell
Sojourner Truth by Vernon Burwell
Martin and Rosa by John King

Statue of Liberty by Adam Morales
Coretta Scott King and Martin Luther King
by Vernon Burwell
LESSON 5:
THE DIFFERENT FACES OF FREEDOM

ACTIVITIES:

1. Freedom Symbols
   Fine Arts/Language Arts, Grade 5-12

   Brainstorm with your students some of the symbols of freedom in our culture. How are those symbols timeless and how are they timely? Compare these symbols of freedom with symbols from other cultures. How do these symbols define a set of shared values? What is the meaning of these symbols? Research two different symbols of freedom (either from different times in history, different countries or different value systems). Create a diptych of these two different pieces.

   Above and Beyond: Write a travel article about a visit to both of these monuments; describe their differences and similarities. Include some historical background but also a first person account of your visits (this can be fictional). Be sure to explain why you chose these two monuments.

   NA-VA.5-8.4 and NA-VA.9-12.4, Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History and Culture
   NA-VA.5-8.6 and NA-VA.9-12.6, Making Connections Between Visual Arts and Other Disciplines
   NL-ENG.K-12.1, Reading for Perspective
   NL-ENG.K-12.8, Developing Research Skills

2. Choosing Your Statue of Liberty
   Fine Arts/Language Arts/U.S. History, Grade K-12

   Research the Statue of Liberty and how each part of the statue is symbolic. The Statue of Liberty was originally a gift from France in 1886 to celebrate our centennial. Create a statue to give to another country. Think about the gender of the statue (if it a person), headdress, pose, facial expression, garment, what objects the statue is holding or are near it. Why did you make these choices? Why did you choose that country? Where would this statue be placed? What future significance would this statue hold?

   Above and Beyond: Write a story about a student who goes to visit your statue in the country you gifted it to.

   NA-VA. K-4.4, NA-VA.5-8.4 and NA-VA.9-12.4, Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History and Culture
   NL-ENG.K-12.8, Developing Research Skills
   NL-ENG.K-12.9, Multicultural Understanding
   NSS-USH.5-12.6, Era 6: The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)

3. Your Monument
   Fine Arts/Language Arts, Grade K-12

   There are definitely universal freedom symbols in our culture. But what represents freedom to you? Think beyond flags and monuments to your own personal idea of freedom. If you built your own monument to freedom, what would it look like? Where would it be? Would it cost money to visit? What could visitors do there? Make a brochure, for visitors to your monument. Be sure to include pictures and all the details for visitors.

   NA-VA. K-4.4, NA-VA.5-8.4 and NA-VA.9-12.4, Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History and Culture
   NL-ENG.K-12.9, Multicultural Understanding