VISIONARY ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Villa’s Universe, Margaret Munz-Losch, 2015. Courtesy of Megan Hurdle.
**Poetry From the Heart**

**Grades 1-5**

*Lesson inspired by the book Awakening the Heart by Georgia Heard*

Mosaic artist Rafael Matias creates intricate glass and bead mosaics and says “all the inspiration you need is right in front of you.” He is inspired by the heart and personal connections humans make in relationships.

In this activity, students will create a heart map to help them articulate and visualize what is meaningful to them. Then, students will explore their heart map and write a narrative poem.

**Objectives**

- Students will consider and identify what’s inside their heart.
- Students will develop visual representations of their ideas.
- Students will communicate their unique experiences to others using pictures and words.

**MD Content Standards**

**Visual Art Indicators:**

- K-2nd Grade: I:P-2:3: Make use of ideas to communicate about self, others, places and events.
- 3rd - 5th grade: I:3-5:1: Act on creative ideas to develop personally meaningful compositions through observation, imagination, or memory.

**English Language Arts: Writing**

- K-5th grade: W3 CCR Anchor Standard Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences

**Materials**

Heart map template, colored pencils

**Critical Questions**

- What has really affected your heart?
- What people have been important to you?
- What are some experiences that you will never forget?
- What secrets have you kept in your heart?
- When does your heart feel heavy?
- What makes your heart sing?
**Activity**

1. To warm up, define what a map is and its purpose. Students will identify examples of maps, or talk about a time they or a family member used a map.
2. Introduce students to the concept of a heart map: a document that shows a map of what is inside rather than outside. Ask students why an internal map might be useful or important and have them brainstorm a list of things inside or on their heart based on the Critical Questions above.
3. Have students create a heart map of what's inside their heart. Students can create different segments in their heart maps, links between segments to establish connections or stories between ideas or objects, and make them different colors and sizes to represent emotions or levels of importance.
4. Have students choose one section of their heart map to explore in more detail.
5. Inspired by the chosen section of their heart map, have students write a narrative poem.

**Resources**
Heart Maps: Helping Students Create and Craft Authentic Writing by Georgia Heard
The Mystery of the Portal
Grades 6-8
Inspired by Antar Mikosz’s painting The Gateway

Antar Mikosz’s mysterious painting The Gateway, is meant to be viewed while wearing 3D glasses. The dark, black portals jump out from the red pillars painted with blue accents, and the viewer is left to wonder “what could be down there?”

In this activity, students will explore portals in popular culture, and create a 3D paper portal of their own.

Objectives
- Students will define the word “portal.”
- Students will identify examples of portals in popular culture.
- Students will read a story involving a portal.
- Students will create a portal from cut paper.

MD Content Standards
Visual Art Anchor Standard 6-8th grade
- E:6-8:2: Determine the stages of the creative process in traditional or new media.

RL3 CCR Anchor Standard 6-8th grade
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of text

Vocabulary
Portal: a doorway, gate, or other entrance, especially a large and elaborate one.

Critical Questions
What is a portal and where does it lead?
Can you brainstorm examples of portals in books, movies or TV?
What happens to the character in the book / movie / TV show when they encounter a portal?

Materials
Colored paper in a variety of colors size 9 x 12, cardboard or matboard, popsicle stick (if you wish to add dimension to your portal), scissors, white glue, paper clips or binder clips.
Activity

1. Introduce the idea of the portal to students. Have students brainstorm examples of where they have seen a portal in popular culture (books, TV, movies). Good examples: Stranger Things, Poltergeist, Harry Potter, Wizard of Oz, Jumanji, etc.


3. Have students create their own multi-layer 3D relief sculpture of a portal:
   a. Have students choose 6 different colors of paper, and stack them in spectral order. They will also need one sheet of black paper and one sheet of white paper.
   b. Beginning with the black piece of construction paper, fold it in half so it measures 9" x 6". Using a pencil, begin on the fold line close to one edge and draw the outline of a shape, ending it on the fold line near the opposite edge, see (A) for an example. It can be a flowing and organic shape, or geometric. It should be as large as possible (close to the paper's edges) and just one piece that is cut away.
   c. Fold the next piece of paper in half in the same manner. Select the next color, and insert it in the black piece so that the folds line up. Use paper clips, binder clips, or bulldog clips to hold the papers together perfectly aligned.
   d. From the fold, cut a contour line that follows the outline of the first shape, just slightly inside the first shape. This will produce a second shape that is a bit smaller than the first.
   e. Remove the black outline and set aside. Fold a third sheet and repeat steps 2 and 3. For best results, always use clips to hold paper in place and only work with two sheets at a time.
   f. Repeat until it is no longer possible to cut more shapes.
   g. Place all the outside cut-outs together, arranging them so that the edges line up together and the folds in the middle match. Glue the one with the smallest cut opening to a sturdy board.

Resources
Stark Raving Paper Art lesson by Dick Blick
https://www.dickblick.com/lessonplans/stark-raving-paper-art/
Portals In Fiction
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portals_in_fiction
Gorey-telling
Grades 6-12
Inspired by Edward Gorey

Edward Gorey wrote and illustrated over 100 books, including his abecedarian story The Gashlycrumb Tinies. Gorey’s stories were eerie, strange and dark, and came alive in unique illustrations that he created using only pen and ink.

In this activity, students will create a three panel comic, inspired by a scary movie, in the style of Edward Gorey.

Objectives
- Students will read Edward Gorey’s story The Gashlycrumb Tinies.
- Students will describe the themes and styles in Edward Gorey’s story and illustrations.
- Students will communicate a story using the visual language of Edward Gorey to create a short, spooky comic.

Visual Art Anchor Standard
6th-8th grade:
- E:6-8:3: Apply visual organizational strategies to create works of art and design that clearly communicate main/central idea.
- E:6-8:1: Demonstrate persistence and intellectual risk taking through experimentation and innovation in order to develop a variety of skills and approaches to creating art.

9th-12th Grade:
- I:9-12:1: Act on creative ideas within the context of a given or chosen art problem.

Critical Questions
What words would you use to describe the style of Edward Gorey’s illustrations? Why?
What techniques are used to achieve this specific style?
What type of story fits best with this style of illustration?
How are these illustrations different from other illustrations in other books?

Activity
1. Show students examples of Edward Gorey’s books and animation of PBS’s Mystery! show (see link below) and have students describe Edward Gorey’s style and how it is achieved.
2. Have students brainstorm a movie with a similar feel as Edward Gorey’s work: dark, scary, ghosts, monsters etc.
3. Have students chose three sequential scenes from the movie of their choice to draw in the style of Edward Gorey. Discourage students from including excessive dialogue, or any narration at all. Encourage them to show, not tell.
4. Encourage students to practice pen and ink techniques before starting their comic:
   a. Using short strokes of the pen, build up to create different values of gray to black
   b. Draw tiny details that may be hidden in the background
   c. Create patterns to fill large empty spaces in either the background or foreground
5. Once students have sketched their comic panels in pencil, have them go over in ink, then erase their pencil lines.

Materials
Sketchbook, fine tip black pens

Resources
The Gashlycrumb Tinies by Edward Gorey
PBS’s show “Mystery!” opening sequences
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CG7SyxaXGwU