

InsideArt, Fall 2016 — *Extracted*

Title

Remnants of the Past: Otobong Nkanga

Estimated Time for Completion of Lesson

1-2 class periods

Concept/Main Idea of Lesson

Otobong Nkanga's work focuses on the multiple narratives surrounding colonial and post-colonial histories. Students will learn about mining in West and South Africa and consider the environmental impacts of such practices.

Intended Grade Levels

Grades 9-12

Infusion/Subject Areas

Visual Arts

Social Studies

Curriculum Standards

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

- Visual Arts:

VA.912.H.3 Connections among the arts and other disciplines strengthen learning and the ability to transfer knowledge and skills to and from other fields.

- Social Studies:

SS.912.G.5 Understand how human actions can impact the environment

SS.912.H.1 Identify and analyze the historical, social, and cultural contexts of the arts

National Standards for Arts Education

National Council for the Social Studies

Time, Continuity, and Change

People, Places, and Environments

Production, Distribution, and Consumption

Common Core

LAFS.910.WHST.1.1 Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

Instructional Objective

The student will:

- engage in visual analysis of art via VTS and whole-class discussion;
- analyze a quote by the artist individually through written response;
- articulate their thoughts on statements dealing with mining orally in the "Take a Stand" activity.

Learning Activities Sequence

Attention-Getter: Visual Analysis and Discussion (Slide 1)

Ask students:

- What do you see in this image?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What else can we say about this image?

Probe student responses to ensure that students are able to support their inferences about the image with visual evidence. After students have generated several hypotheses about the image via whole class discussion, inform them that this image is a still from a video performance piece, *Remains of the Green Hill* (2015), by the artist, Otobong Nkanga.

PPT Guided Lecture: Using the associated PowerPoint presentation (PPT), students will learn more about the artist and her work from the *Extracted* exhibit. Students will revisit the opening image, *Remains of the Green Hill* (2015).

Slide 3: Provide students with background information about the artist, Otobong Nkanga. Inform students that her work focuses on storytelling, and multiple perspectives that shape a narrative.

Slide 4:

Ask students:

- What is mining?

Mining is the extraction of minerals and metals from the earth. In the Spring of 2015, Nkanga travelled to Namibia with the goal of reaching The Green Hill in Tsumeb, an area recognized for its wealth of minerals, crystals, and copper deposits. The hill had been hand-mined by the Ovambo people living in the region for generations. However, when Namibia became German South West Africa, the colonial regime began to mine The Green Hill industrially, extracting and exporting tons of minerals each year. The Green Hill got its name from the green tint of malachite (pictured), one the most abundant minerals at the Tsumeb site.

Slide 5:

Show students the map of Namibia, highlighting Tsumeb, and also pointing to where Namibia is located in relation to the rest of Africa.

Slide 6:

Tell students:

When Nkanga arrived in Tsumeb, The Green Hill was no longer a hill, but a dormant hole in the ground, fenced-off from public access.

In her work, *Remains of the Green Hill (2015)*, Nkanga performs a spontaneous yoga-like routine while an interview with the last Managing Director of the Tsumeb mine is overlaid as audio. The interview describes the exploitation of colonial powers, while also looking forward into a hopeful future in which the Tsumeb community makes both industrial and environmental progress.

Ask students:

Given this new information, would you like to revise any of the claims you made about this image at the start of the lesson?

What do you think Nkanga was feeling at the time of this performance?

What makes you say that?

“Take a Stand” Activity**Slide 7, 8, 9, and 10:**

Introduce students to the activity by posting the signs: “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Disagree”, and “Strongly Disagree” in the four corners of the room (Appendix A). Ask students to consider whether or not they agree with the statements to follow and move to appropriate corner of the room when prompted. Students may stand in the middle of the room if they are unsure. Students should be prepared to defend their responses in the four corners. As students from the “Agree” and “Disagree” positions share, students in the middle of the room are invited to move to either side when presented with reasoning.

Closure: (Slide 11) Think-Write-Pair-Share

Ask to students to reflect on the quote, “Nature does not reveal its secrets until we acquire the knowledge to decipher it. The appearance of something is not necessarily the truth of what it is, or the reality of what it was.” How does this quote relate to the *Remains of the Green Hill (2015)*? How does it apply to relationship of people to the environment?

Students should first think about the quote, then write a response on paper, pair up with a partner, and finally share their thoughts. Invite pairs to share their thoughts with the whole class.

Evaluation

- Participation in visual analysis
- Participation in “Take a Stand” activity
- Quote response

Optional Extension Activities

- Follow-up to “Take a Stand”: Students should research a position that they took in the “Take a Stand” activity gathering information in support of their original thinking. Students return to class the next day prepared to debate the statements with researched arguments.
- Read the article “Florida Counties Try to Contain Phosphate Mines” in *The New York Times*. Ask students to write a one page response comparing the environmental concerns of phosphate mining in Florida with the environmental impact of mining in Africa.

Materials and Resources

- Computer, Projector
- Paper and pencil
- PowerPoint
- “Take a Stand Signs”
- Copies of the article (extension)

Internet Links

Appel, Adrienne. (2007). Florida counties try to contain phosphate mines. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/04/us/04phosphates.html?_r=0

References

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Kadist. (2015). *Comot your eyes make I borrow you mine*. Retrieved from <http://www.kadist.org/en/programs/all/2141>

Kind, C. (2015). An introduction to the geology of the tsumeb mine, Namibia. Retrieved from <http://www.tsumeb.com/en/geology/>

Population Education. (2010). Take a stand. Retrieved from: http://www.populationeducation.org/sites/default/files/take_a_stand.pdf