Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils

Education Guide

Mohadese Movahed:
The Burden of Street

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Iranian-born visual artist and educator Mohadese Movahed focuses on painting as the core of her studio practice. She earned her BFA from the University of Science and Culture in Tehran, Iran, and completed her MFA at the University of Regina in Saskatchewan, Canada, in 2020. Now based in Vancouver, Movahed teaches at Vancouver Film School (VFS) and has exhibited her work nationally and internationally including at Art Mûr in Montreal, Inselgalerie in Berlin, CICA Vancouver, Shirin Art Gallery in Tehran, Two Rivers Gallery and The Reach Gallery Museum in British Columbia. She is a recipient of the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation grant and a "Rising Star" awardee of the CICA Vancouver & Jelina Couture International Art Awards 2025.

In her painting practice, Movahed moves fluidly between observational and speculative spaces, representation and abstraction, to explore the formal and conceptual liminal spaces that exist between these contrasting qualities. Investigating the psychology and politics of place, she examines allegories embedded in the natural and urban landscapes around us.

EXHIBITION ESSAY

The Burden of the Street
Essay by Lin Li

The Burden of the Street features a selection of paintings by the Iran-born Canadian artist Mohadese Movahed, composed in 2021 and 2022.

In this series, Movahed explores the coexistence of power and resistance within the same space, displaying a mixture of visual motifs that metaphorically depict urban life in an oppressive social environment. The wall stands as the central icon in this series. In visual arts, the wall carries diverse iconographical meanings depending on the context and depictions. A wall can symbolize barrier and oppression, containment and isolation, and meanwhile, it can also represent resistance and protests, memories and histories. In The Burden of The Street series and the artist's other ongoing series, the walls in the paintings serve as symbols of political oppression. Meanwhile, the walls are also illustrated as public channels of expression and signs of continuous civil resistance. Through a meticulous portrayal using various techniques - painting, drawing, and collage, Movahed captures ongoing struggles to reclaim public spaces from authority, visible on the street walls.

At first glance, The Burden of the Street series immerses viewers in mythical dreamscapes, characterized by vibrant colours and a subtle sense of isolation. This surrealist approach allows the artist to unveil and emphasize the multiple dimensions of reality and the disparities of the world behind the walls and the world inside the walls. In her artist statements, Movahed described paintings in The Burden of the Street series ashaving multiple layers. The first layer is the depiction of the wall and the surroundings, and the second layer is the depiction of the vibrant visual and written contents left by people who interact with the walls and use them as platforms for expression. Through visually presenting the multiple iconic meanings of the wall, Movahed explores the dichotomy of social oppression and civil resistance - a recurring theme in her artistic practice. This thematic approach stems from Movahed's personal experiences growing up in Iran, where she witnessed the ongoing struggles against the ruling system, as well as her current experience of displacement. Movahed stated in a 2025 Interview with the Galleries West magazine, that she views the act of painting and image-making as an accessible way of getting involved in the political movements in her home country Iran. In the same interview, Movahed also indicated that moving to Vancouver in 2020 and working in the city's Downtown Eastside serves as another

major inspiration for her painting practice, that “the displacement, turbulence, and social conflicts she encounters daily” and the lively street arts and wall inscriptions throughout the neighbourhood has impressed and influenced her research of the diverse forms of resistance.

The works in this exhibition also highlight Movahed’s experiment with various materials as painting mediums to replicate the texture of cement, concrete, and tar walls. The visual effects of the rough surface of the walls are created with Movahed’s application of a mixture of materials, including cold wax, Liquin Impasto and molding paste. In her artist statement, Movahed indicates that the attempt to create the realistic visual effect of a textured surface of the wall with traces of time, is to “reference the acts of concealment, eradication, negligence, and cultural decadence as means of control and power.”

Movahed’s paintings often reveal a sense of isolation and desolation. Since 2021, street view has become a subject that she continues to explore. The streets she depicted conveys a feeling of emptiness as the presence of the residents is typically indicated indirectly through subtle visual details such as a tiny drawing on the wall. Works in The Burden of the Street delicately showcase the trauma, disparities, violence, and horror experienced by people living in oppressive social conditions. Additionally, although dark realities are hidden under the first layer of Movahed’s canvas, a closer observation of the paintings in The Burden of Street also reveals traces of rebellion that evokes a feeling of hope. As the saying goes "Where there is power, there is resistance, and this resistance is shaped by the very structures it opposes." [1]

[1]Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 95.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Kindergarten
CHK.1 Investigate arts expressions found in own homes and school community in relation to own lives
CRK.1 Respond to arts expressions verbally and non-verbally
(e.g. through movement or drawing).
Grade 1
CH1.1 Describe the arts and cultural traditions found in own home and school community.
Grade 2
CR1.1 Examine arts expressions to determine how ideas for arts expressions may come from artists' own communities
CR2.1 Identify key features of arts and cultural traditions in own community.
CP2.7 Create visual art works that draw on observations and express ideas about own communities.
Grade 3
CR3.2 Respond to arts expressions that use the environment (natural, constructed, imagined) as inspiration.
Grade 4
CR4.2 Respond thoughtfully to a variety of contemporary Saskatchewan arts expressions.
CH4.1 Investigate and share discoveries about the arts in Saskatchewan through collaborative inquiry.
Grade 5
CH5.3 Analyze and describe how arts and pop culture expressions convey information about the time and place in which they were created.
Grade 6
CH6.1 Investigate how personal, cultural, or regional identity may be reflected in arts expressions.
Grade 7
CH7.1 Investigate how artists' relationship to place may be reflected in their work.
Grade 8
CP8.12 Solve visual art problems using a variety of processes and media.
CH8.1 Research and share insights about arts expressions that incorporate social commentary.
CR8.2 Investigate and identify ways that today's arts expressions often reflect concern for social issues.
Grade 9
CH9.2 Investigate diversity of artistic ideas, styles, and media in contemporary arts expressions
CR9.3 Investigate and identify how arts expressions can challenge thinking about values, ideas, and beliefs.
Visual Art 10-20-30
CP20.4 Use inquiry to create a work of art inspired by the work of local and international artists.
CH30.2 Examine how visual art expressions have changed over time and/or inspired change in individuals, communities and societies.
Visual Art Module 3 Local and Regional Culture, Module 16 Visual Art in Canada, Module 18 Social Issues and Visual Art

VOCABULARY

Abstract Art: Art that does not attempt to represent an accurate depiction of the visual world.

Aesthetic Choices: Decisions artists make about color, composition, materials, and style to achieve a particular look or feeling.

Activism: The use of art to promote social, political, or environmental change.

Artistic Intent: The purpose or message an artist wants to convey through their work.

Balance: The distribution of visual weight in a composition to create stability or tension.

Collage: An art technique where different materials (paper, fabric, photographs) are layered and glued onto a surface.

Community Engagement: Art projects that involve and connect with a community, often to reflect shared experiences or values.

Composition: The arrangement of elements within an artwork to create a unified whole.

Contrast: The use of differences in elements (light/dark, rough/smooth, large/small) to create visual interest.

Critique: The process of analyzing and discussing art to understand its meaning, strengths, and areas for improvement.

Culture: The ideas, customs, and social behaviors that influence and shape art and creativity.

Elements of Art: These are the building blocks artists use to create art.

· Lines: Lines are the paths that connect two points. They can be straight, curved, wavy, or any other form

· Shape: Shapes are the outlines of objects that are defined by lines. They can be geometric (like squares and circles) or organic (like the shapes of leaves or clouds).

· Form: Form gives something three dimensions—height, width, and depth. It's what makes an object look real or 3D in art

· Colour: Colour comes from light and is described with terms like hue (what colour it is), intensity (how bright or dull it is), and value (how light or dark it is).

· Space: Space is the area around, between, and within objects. It can be used to create depth, making things look closer or farther away.

· Texture: Texture refers to how things feel or look like they might feel if you could touch them. It can be smooth, rough, soft, etc.

· Value is how light or dark something is. It helps to create contrast, which can make art look more dynamic and interesting.

Home: A personal or cultural reference in art that conveys identity and belonging.

Humanitarian: Art focused on human rights, social justice, or global concerns.

Identity: The way an artist expresses personal, cultural, or social identity through their work.

Interpretation: How an audience understands and finds meaning in an artwork.

Landscape painting: The representation of natural scenery in art.

Layering: A technique in which multiple materials, colors, or images are built up in an artwork to add depth.

Metaphor: When one object or image is used to represent another idea or feeling in art.

Mixed Media: Art that combines different materials, such as paint, fabric, and digital elements.

Narrative: The story or message conveyed through an artwork.

Representational: Works that contain representations of real objects. These objects can be works that are realistic or abstract.

Style: Style is the artist's way of presenting things. Use of materials, methods of working, design qualities, choice of subject matter, and so on reflect the individual, culture, or time period.

Surveillance: The idea of being watched or documented, which can influence how artists create and share work.

Symbolism: The use of images or objects to represent deeper meanings.

Texture: The way a surface feels or looks like it feels in an artwork.

Visual Communication: Using images, symbols, and design to share ideas and emotions.

Visual Language: The use of artistic elements to create meaning in an artwork.

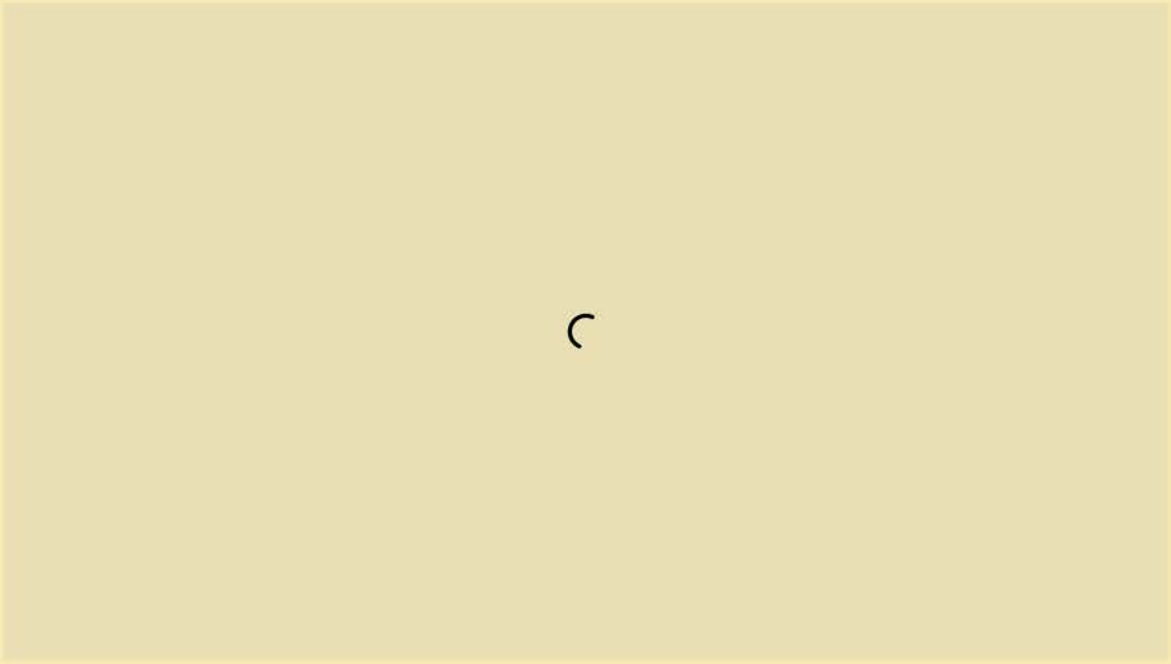
RESOURCES:

Teacher Resource:

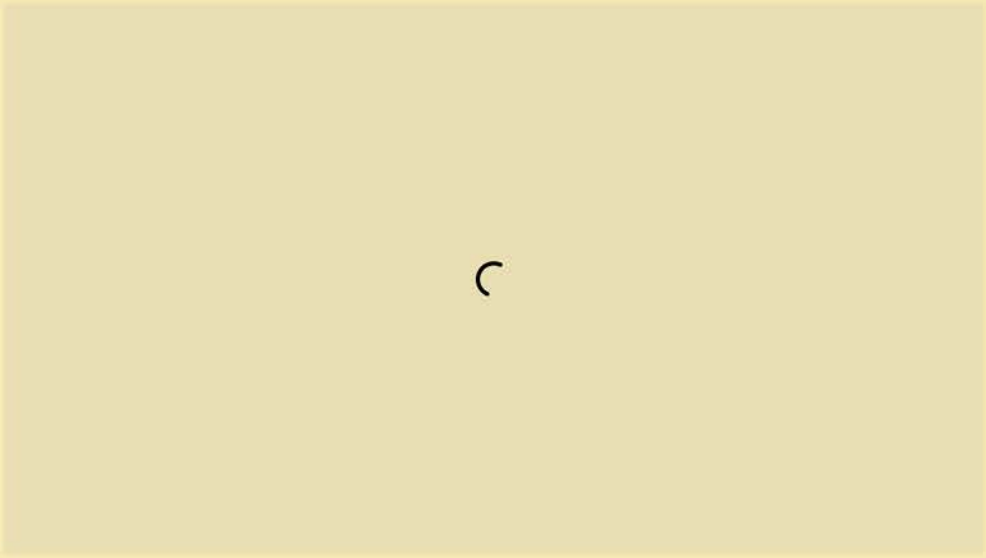
https://www.mohadesemovahed.ca/

Artist Talk

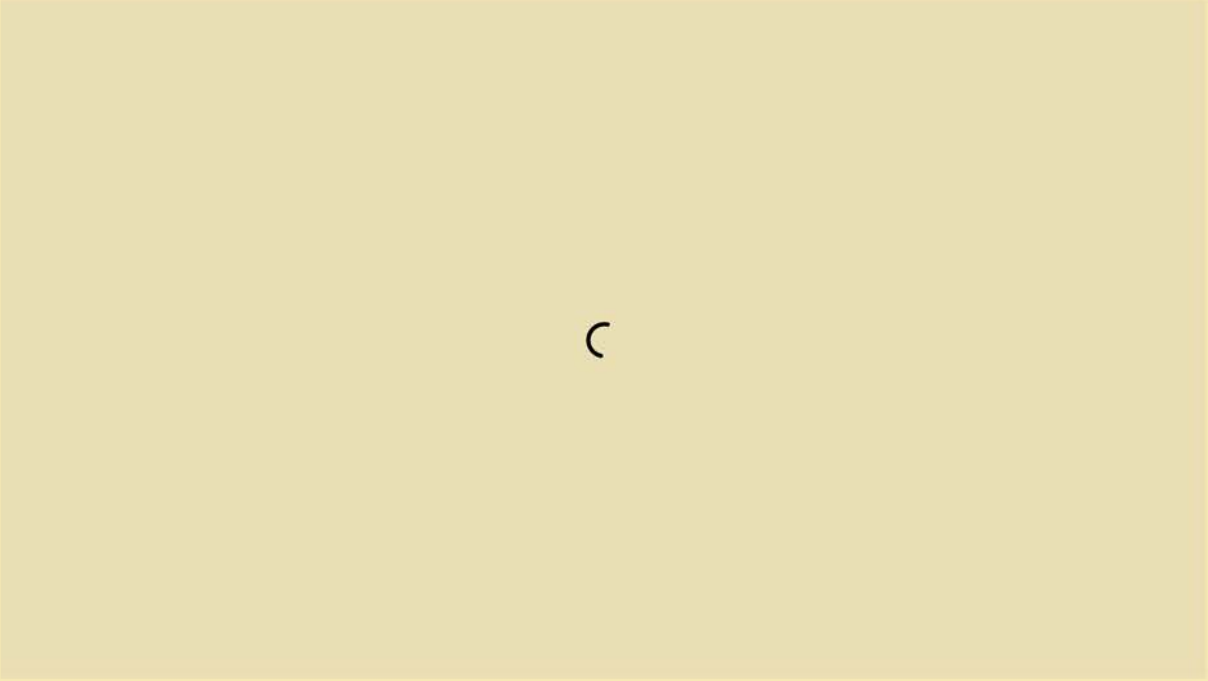
Workshop- Pen and Ink



Watch this video Mohadese has put together as she describes her practice, her works, and a reading of a poem in her native language Farsi.



The Reach's Emerge program provides valuable opportunities for young emerging artists and curators in the Fraser Valley. In this video, we learn more about the latest Art on Demand 6.3 exhibition that features the work of Mohadese Movahed and is curated by Cassidy Luteijn.



PRE-TOUR ACTIVITIES

Pre-Tour Activity 1

Symbolism in Our Surroundings

Grade Level: 1-8
Theme: Exploring Symbolism in our surroundings

Students will be introduced to Symbolism in art and explore how natural and urban elements around us can represent emotions and meanings. They will analyze colour psychology and Frida Kahlo's use of symbolism before creating their own expressive and symbolic paintings.

Materials Needed:

Visual References:

- Printed or projected images of Frida Kahlo's paintings:
  - The Two Fridas
  - The Broken Column
  - Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird
  - The Wounded Deer

Art Supplies:

- Paper or canvas
- Paints, brushes, coloured pencils, markers, soft pastels
- colour chart (warm/cool colors and emotional associations)

Activity Structure

1. What Do We See Around Us?

Guiding Questions:

- What are some things we see in nature (trees, water, animals, mountains)?
- What do we see in urban spaces (walls, buildings, roads, fences, traffic signs)?
- How do these elements make us feel? (Example: *A tall mountain might feel powerful, a fence might feel restrictive, a road might symbolize a journey or an unknown future.)*

2. Symbolism in Art

Introduce symbolism in art and show students some examples from Frida Kahlo's paintings and discuss how she used natural and cultural elements (flowers, animals, trees, objects) to express emotions like hope, pain, strength, and identity.

- Ask: *What symbols do you notice in her paintings? (Example: Broken Column = pain, Hummingbird = hope, Thorns = suffering.)*

3. Colours, Shapes & Emotion

Discuss how colours and shapes influence meaning in paintings.

- Colours:
  - Red = Love, anger, passion

    - Blue = Sadness, calm, wisdom
    - Green = Growth, healing, renewal
- Shapes:
    - Squares = Stability, rigidity, balance
    - Triangles = Movement, energy, imbalance

4. Making a Symbolic painting

Step 1: Pick an Element

- Students choose one natural or urban element that represents an emotion (e.g., a tree for growth, a wall for feeling trapped, birds for freedom).

Step 2: Create a Painting

- Using colour and composition, students paint a scene featuring their chosen element in a way that expresses an emotion or idea.

Step 3: Reflection & Sharing
Each student presents their artwork, explaining:

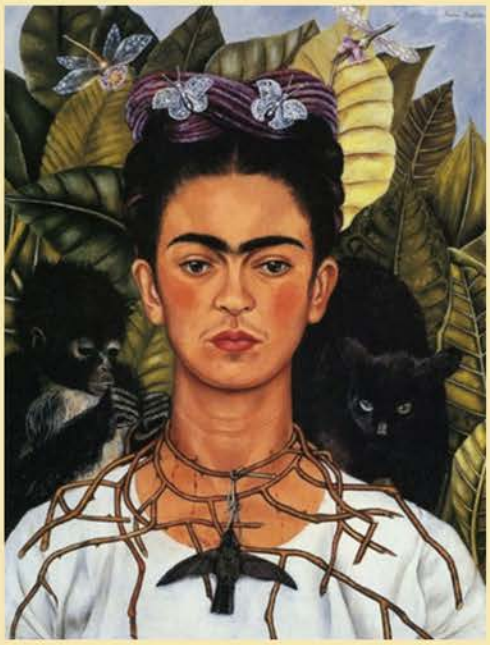
- Why did you choose this element?
- How do your colours, shapes, and composition express meaning and emotion?

Wrap-Up Discussion

Final Questions:

- *How do artists use symbols in paintings?*
- *Where do we see symbols in real life (murals, flags, traffic signs)?*
- *Do you have a personal colour association? What does a specific colour remind you of?*

Follow links for full image and info:



Art and Activism

Students will explore how street art and murals are used as forms of resistance and self-expression. Through the analysis of famous murals and political posters, they will create their own protest posters using collage, text, and symbols.

Grade Level: 6-12
Theme: Public Art and Social Change

Materials Needed
Visual References:

- Printed or projected images of famous political and street art, including:
  - Diego Rivera's murals – Art as an educational and revolutionary tool.
  - Banksy's political graffiti – Commentary on war, surveillance, capitalism.
  - Hanibal Alkhas' murals – Iranian resistance, exile, and human survival.
  - Berlin Wall street art – Messages of division, unity, and hope.
  - Black Lives Matter murals (2020) – Public art as activism.
  - Barbara Kruger's text-based art – Gender equality, challenges to authority and capitalism.

Art Supplies:

- Large paper or cardboard for posters
- Magazines, newspapers, printed text for collage
- Paint, markers, stencils, glue, scissors
- Optional: Spray paint (for controlled use outdoors or on cardboard)

Activity Structure

1. Introduction & Discussion– Why Street Art?

Guiding Questions:

- *Why do artists create art on walls instead of on canvas?*
- *How is street art different from traditional painting?*
- *Why do some governments erase or criminalize street art?*
- *Can art change public opinion or laws?*

Discussion Points:

- Art as a tool for the people – Unlike gallery art, street art is public, accessible, and immediate.
- Murals & graffiti as activism – Artists use them to educate, resist, and reshape history.
- Censorship & erasure – Many governments criminalize political street art because of its impact.

Show and Discuss:
Students examine projected or printed images of famous protest artworks and discuss their impact.

2. Political Art Analysis

Activity:

- Pairs or small groups analyze one artwork from the provided images.
- Use these questions to guide discussion:
  - What is the message of this artwork?
  - What symbols or text does the artist use?
  - How does the location (on a wall, in the street) affect its meaning?

Students present their findings to the class.

3. Protest Poster design

Step 1: Choose a Cause
- Students pick a social or political issue important to them (e.g., climate change, human rights, women's rights, censorship, war, education access).

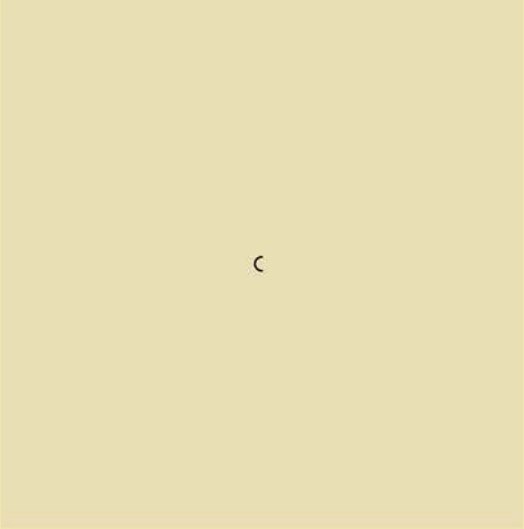
Step 2: Design the Protest Poster
- Collage – Cut out text and images from magazines/newspapers.
- Symbolism – Encourage students to use strong visual symbols.
- Bold Colours & Words – Discuss how protest art must grab attention.
- Composition & Placement – Discuss static vs. dynamic layouts and how arrangement affects the message's effectiveness.

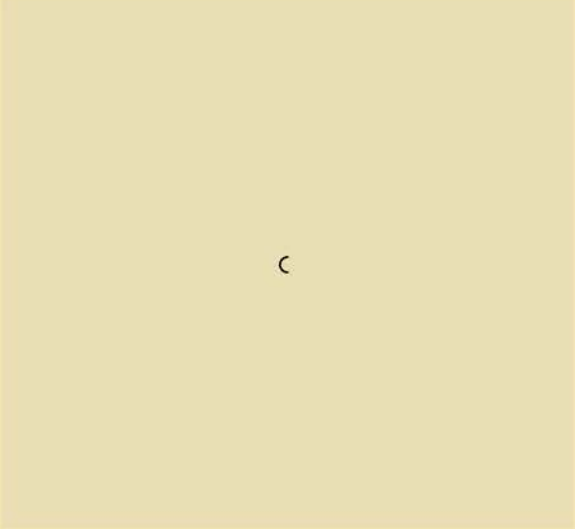
Step 3: Artist's Statement (Short Reflection)
- Students write 3-5 sentences explaining:
  - *What their message is*
  - *Why they chose their colours and symbols*
  - *How their composition enhances the impact*
  -

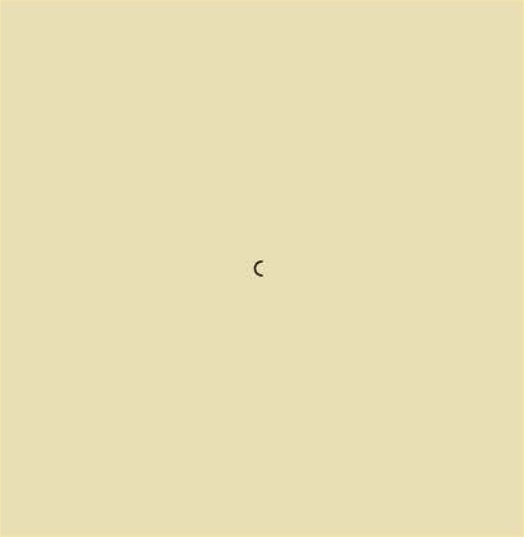
4. Wrap-Up Discussion

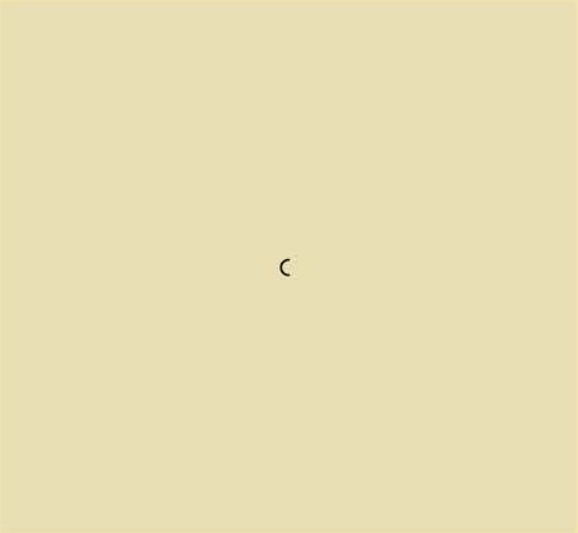
Guiding Questions:
- *What was it like to create political art?*
- *How do different colours and images influence a message?*
- *How does it feel to express resistance through art?*
- *Art is a language of protest, resistance, and change. Every mural, stencil, and poster in the streets carries a voice—what will yours say?*

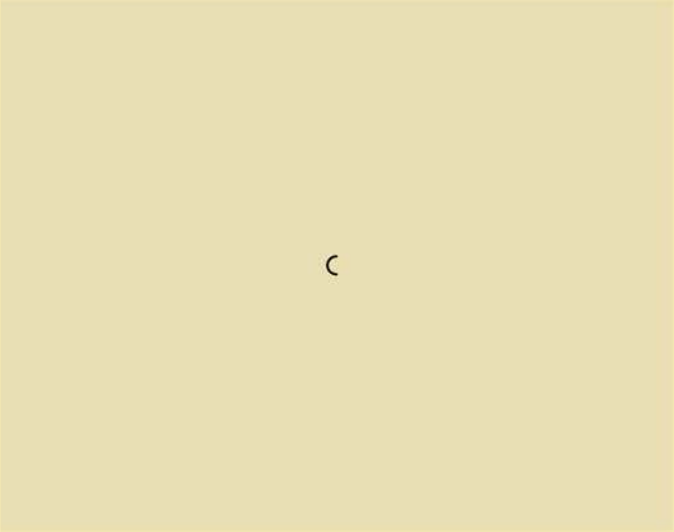
https://www.diegorivera.org/diego-rivera-murals.jsp











THE TOUR:

suggested for older audiences

1. Focus Attention
Provide an opportunity for all members of the group to participate. Ask some questions which focus the group's attention and introduce some key concepts in the exhibition. Invite participants to consider their own experiences.
- How many of you have seen an art exhibition before?
- What did you see?
- What do you expect to see today?
- Why do artists make ART?
- What materials do they use?
- How do art works communicate ideas?

2. Introduce the Exhibition
The viewing process often involves dialogue-either a silent one between the viewer and the work of art or a verbal one involving two or more viewers discussing an artwork. You are a catalyst. Your task is to stimulate dialogue and initiate discussion. You will not tell a group about each work. You will supply some information at appropriate points.

What is the title of this exhibition and where did it come from?
At the entrance of the gallery there will be a panel that introduces the title and theme of the exhibition. The exhibition is touring the province through the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils' (OSAC) Arts on the Move touring exhibition program.

Why has this exhibition come to your (our) community?
The exhibition is being toured by OSAC to communities like yours throughout Saskatchewan. OSAC is a non-profit organization of groups of volunteers in over 50 Saskatchewan towns and cities across the province. The vision of OSAC is that the arts will be integrated into the lives of Saskatchewan people through assisting the arts council members in developing, promoting and programming the performing and visual arts.

Before we talk about the images, I would like each of you to quietly walk through the exhibition and look at all the work. We will take about 5 minutes to do this, and then meet back here to talk about what you saw.

3. Questioning Strategy
The purpose of questioning is to set up conditions for learning. Questions can focus the group's attention on specific concepts or ideas. Following are a wide range of questions. They are presented to offer you options and stimulate your thoughts. A good questioning strategy starts with good knowledge of the exhibition being presented. See background information about the artist and the exhibition.
Questions should be:
- Clear in their meaning
- Easily understood
- Simple
- Specific
- Definite and direct
- Thought provoking and challenging

First Impressions

Gather the group together and ask guiding questions that will allow them to describe their first impressions of the exhibition. Begin by focusing on one artwork. Ask the following questions in order.

What is the first word that comes into your mind when you look at this artwork? Record their answers on a large sheet of paper with a marker. Collect as many words as possible. Select one word from the list.

What has the artist done, specifically, to make you think of the word _____?

The viewer may describe what they see in the artwork. This will generally lead the viewer from an initial impression into a more analytical exploration of details.

Analysis

Analysis is a process of gathering evidence. This step acknowledges that the artist has manipulated the materials (media) and the elements in such a way as to elicit the viewer's first impression. The group will compare and contrast visual elements, analyze relationships among visual elements and gather evidence that leads to meaning in the work. Begin by taking a visual inventory of the formal elements, such as, line, colour, shape and texture and describe how the artist has used these elements in the artwork. Ask the following:

- What do you notice first and where does your eye travel from there?
- What other details do you see in this artwork?
- What techniques and devices (medium) did the artist use?
- What do you see up close, and what is noticeable far away?
- What visual elements are repeated?
- Compare this artwork with another work in the exhibition.
- What is different and what is the same?
- What shapes or symbols have you seen before? Where?
- How did the artist use colour? What effect did the artist achieve through their use of colour?
- To what effect did the artist use line? Do the lines draw your eye along any particular path of movement? Do they emphasize any one part of the work?
- Are the shapes you see geometric or organic? What effect did the artist achieve through her choice?
- What role does contrast play in this work? Artists are aware of our expectations and cultural conditioning. They can use them when planning the impact of their work. Sometimes they deliberately challenge our ways of thinking.

Interpretation

At this stage, you will be asking questions that encourage the group to explain the meaning they discover in the works. Comparing works often makes the interpretation process flow more easily. Please ask the following questions:

- If this artwork were the cover of an album, what kind of music would it be?
- If this artwork were the cover of a book, what would the book be about?
- Do the art works tell stories? Which ones? What stories?
- What symbols does the artist use?
- Where do these symbols come from? What do you think they mean?
- What was the artist's purpose in creating these works? (See Exhibition Essay)
- Do these artworks speak of the past, present or the future?

Remember that there is no right or wrong answer to any question!

Context

Information about the artist and the exhibition (found in the exhibition essay) can be shared with participants during the tour as the opportunity arises. Split this information up, especially for younger students. Too much lecturing on the part of the tour leader breaks the momentum of the tour.

- If you were able to give this artwork a title, what would the title be?
- What title do you think the artist chose for this artwork? (Look on the title card to see what title the artist chose for the artwork.)
- Now that you know what title the artist has given this artwork, does it bring new meaning to the work?

Synthesis

Now it is time to combine all of the information gathered during the stages of: First Impressions, Analysis, Interpretation and Context, so the viewer may arrive at a personal evaluation of the artwork.

Ask the following:

- What will you remember most about this artwork?
- What is its significance to the community?

Next, review the artist's intent (refer to the Exhibition Essay and Artist Biography). Compare the artist's intent with the viewer's personal interpretation and evaluation.

Ask the following:

- Did the artist achieve their purpose?
- What one thing will you remember most about this exhibition?

SIMPLIFIED TOUR QUESTIONS:

suggested for younger audiences

Explore the exhibition with your group, ensuring they have enough time to observe the artwork. Start a discussion with the following questions to encourage deeper examination and conversation:

1. The artist uses different materials to create the artwork in this exhibition.
   - What materials do you see and recognize?
   - What materials are new to you?
   - Why do you think different materials were used?

2. Many of the artworks and their parts are based on living things.
   - What things do you recognize?
   - Are they exactly what you see in nature or have they changed in some way? How are they different?

3. The artworks show a surreal landscape.
   - Have you ever been somewhere like this before? How is it different from where you live?
   - What are some important features of the place you live?

4. How does this artwork make you feel?
   - What feelings do you think the artist was intending to have viewers feel?

Additional Tour Questions:

The artist uses different media to create her artwork.
- What media (materials) do you see?
- Why do you think the artist used different materials?

TOUR ACTIVITIES

Symbol Hunt

Grade Level: 1-5
Theme: Exploring Symbols in the Burden of Street Exhibition

Students will observe and identify symbols in the exhibition, discuss their meanings, and create their own sketches based on their interpretations. This activity will help them understand how artists use symbolism to convey deeper meanings in their work.

Materials Needed

For the Activity:

- Symbol Hunt Worksheet (printable checklist of possible symbols: bricks, plants, trees, graffiti, light, water, mirrors, pond, fire)
- Clipboards & Pencils for sketching
- Coloured pencils or crayons (optional)

Activity Structure

1. Introduction – What Are Symbols?

Guiding Question:
"Have you ever noticed that certain objects in paintings have special meanings? Today, we're going on a symbol hunt to discover hidden messages in art!"

Discussion Points:

- What is a symbol? – A symbol is an object or image that represents something else (e.g., a tree = growth, hope, or freedom).
- Examples of everyday symbols:
  - 💙 Heart = Love
  - 🛑 Stop sign = Rules & caution
  - 🌳 Tree = Strength & growth
- How do artists use symbols? – To tell stories and express emotions.

2. Exhibition Walk & Symbol Hunt

Find the Symbols:

·Students use their Symbol Hunt Worksheet (or their own notebooks).
·As they explore the paintings, they search for and identify symbols, such as:

Symbol	Possible Meanings
🧱 Bricks	Strength, barriers, history
🌿 Plants/Trees	Growth, resilience, hope
🎨 Graffiti	Rebellion, self-expression
💡 Light	Truth, guidance, change, hope

💧 Water	Life, movement, transformation, adaptability
🪞 Mirrors	Reflection, self-identity
🌊 Pond	Calmness, mystery, hidden depths

Discussion & Interpretation:

- *What symbols do you see?*
- *What do you think these symbols mean?*
- *Does this symbol remind you of something in real life?*

3. Sketch & Explain

Draw Your Favorite Symbol:

- Each student chooses one symbol they found most interesting.
- They sketch it and write a sentence about what they think it means.
- Optional: If time allows, students can share their sketches with the group.

4. Wrap-Up Discussion– Reflection & Connection

Reflection Questions:

- *Did any symbols surprise you?*
- *How do symbols help us understand a painting's story?*
- *Can we find symbols in everyday life? Where?*

Encourage students to think about symbols in their daily surroundings (school murals, city signs, nature).

Symbol	Possible Meanings
☐ 🧱 Bricks	Strength, barriers, history
☐ 🌿 Plants/Trees	Growth, resilience, hope
☐ 🎨 Graffiti	Rebellion, self-expression
☐ 💡 Light	Truth, guidance, change, hope
☐ 💧 Water	Life, movement, transformation, adaptability
☐ 🪞 Mirrors	Reflection, self-identity
☐ 🌊 Pond	Calmness, mystery, hidden depths

Nature vs. Construction

Grade Level: 1-12
Theme: Contrasting qualities and stories

Students will observe how natural and urban elements interact in the Burden of Street exhibition. They will explore how contrasting qualities such as shapes and compositions (static vs. dynamic, organic vs. geometric) tell different stories in an artwork. Through guided observation, discussion, and sketching, students will understand how artists use visual and conceptual contrasts to create meaning and emotion.

Materials Needed

For the Activity:

- Shape Hunt Worksheet (printable, includes simple shapes & prompts)
- Plain paper
- Clipboards & Pencils for notes/sketching
- Coloured pencils or crayons (optional)

Activity Structure

1. Introduction – Visual and conceptual Contrasts

Guiding Question:
"How do artists show the difference between nature and structure in their artwork? What stories do these differences tell?"

Key Discussion Points:

- Nature & Construction Look Different!
  - Natural elements = soft, curvy, organic, unpredictable (trees, clouds, flowers, water).
  - Urban structures = straight, rigid, geometric (buildings, walls, bricks, roads).
- Why do artists use these contrasts?
  - To show tension, harmony, or conflict between nature and the city.
  - To create different emotions (peaceful, chaotic, growing, trapped).

Example:
- A tree growing through a cracked wall—what might that mean? (Resilience, nature reclaiming space?)

2. Exhibition Walk & Shape Hunt

Find & Compare Shapes:
- Give students a Shape Hunt Worksheet with basic shapes (circle, square, triangle, wavy line).
- As they walk through the exhibition, they look for and sketch examples of:
  - Soft, curvy, dynamic shapes and elements (trees, grass, fire, water) 🌿
  - Sharp, straight, static shapes and elements (walls, bricks, ponds, pavilions) 🏗️
  - Mix of both in one painting – How do they interact?

Discussion Prompts:

- *What shapes do you see more of—organic or geometric?*
- *Does nature look strong or fragile in these paintings?*
- *How do these shapes help tell a story?*

3. Sketch & Storytelling

Draw & Imagine:

- Students sketch a general composition of one of the scenes from the exhibition where nature and construction meet.
- They write or share a sentence about what they think is happening in the artwork.

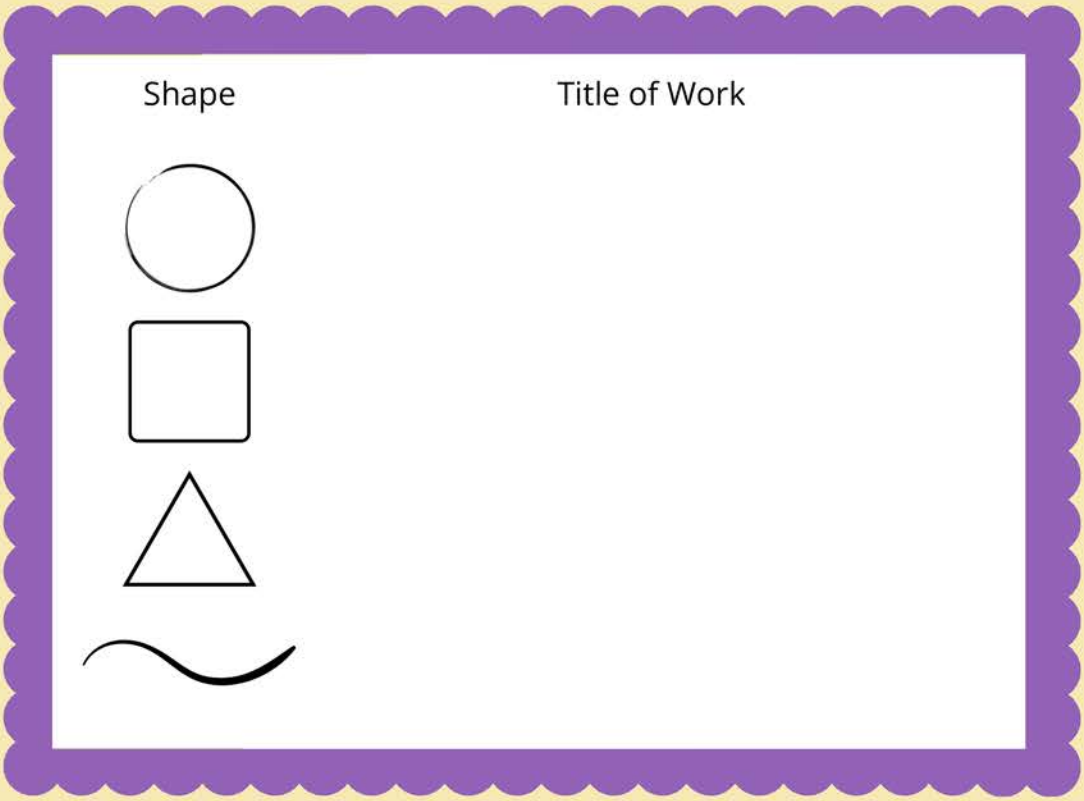
Example:
"The water is breaking through the brick wall because nature is finding its path despite the hardship, representing hope and the difficult path to freedom."

4. Wrap-Up Discussion– What Shapes Say
Reflection Questions:

- *Did any shapes or contrasts surprise you?*
- *How does a curved tree feel different from a straight wall?*
- *Can we find nature vs. construction in our own city or neighborhood?*

Real-Life Connection:

- Ask students to notice how trees, buildings, and streets interact on their way home!
- Encourage them to draw or photograph examples of nature vs. construction in their surroundings.



Material and Meaning

Grade Level: 6-12
Theme: Exploring Material Choices in the Burden of the Street exhibition

Students will analyze how different materials—oil paint, collaged photographs, mirrors, textures—contribute to meaning in the paintings. Through guided observation and discussion, they will explore how material choices affect the viewer's experience and perception of the artwork.

Materials Needed

For the Activity:
• Paper
• Clipboards & Pencils for notes/sketching

Activity Structure

1. Introduction – Materials & Their Role in Art
Guiding Question:
"What difference does it make if an artist paints a wall rather than photographs it? Or if a tree is painted softly instead of with rough, expressive strokes?"

Key Discussion Points:

• Why do artists choose specific materials? (Texture, realism, symbolism, emotion)
• How do material choices change the meaning of artwork?
• How does combining materials (paint + collage) affect how we see the piece?

Material Breakdown in Burden of Street

Material	**Impact & Meaning**
Oil Paint	Expressive, layered, creates depth & atmosphere
Collaged Photographs	Reality-based, archival, evokes memory & history
Frames & Mirrors	Reflection, illusion, shifting perspectives
Rough Textures (Concrete, Brick)	Harshness, permanence, oppression, urban structure
Soft Textures (Plants, Trees)	Growth, movement, fragility, resilience

2. Exhibition Walk & Material Investigation

- Students select one painting that interests them.
  - What materials stand out?
  - Does the rough or soft texture change how you feel about the subject?
  - What happens when different materials interact (e.g., brick vs. tree, paint vs. photograph)?
  - How would this artwork feel different if made with just one or a different material?

- In pairs or small groups, students discuss:
  - How do brick and concrete textures compare to trees and plants?
  - What does collage suggest about memory or history?
  - How do 3D collaged mirrors and frames change the way we see the artwork?

3. Sketch & Analyze

Sketch & Write:

- Using paper & drawing pencils, students walk around the exhibition and take notes on different textures they see in the paintings.
- They respond to both implied and actual textures, exploring how materials create different sensory effects.
- Short Response Prompts:
  - What do these materials/textures symbolize?
  - How do they contribute to the artwork's message?
  - How do different textures create emotion or meaning in the painting?

4. Wrap-Up Discussion

Reflection Questions:

- What surprised you about the materials used in these paintings?
- How do materials help tell a story beyond just images?
- How do artists use materials to influence how we feel?

Connection to the Real World:

- How do different materials affect our emotions and experiences? *(Example: A cold metal bench vs. a warm wooden one—how do they make you feel?)*

POST-TOUR ACTIVITIES

Stencil Workshop

Grade 1 to 12

Theme: Printmaking & Street Art

Students will explore stencil art as a form of printmaking and activism, creating prints inspired by themes from *Burden of Street* exhibition, such as resistance, urban spaces, nature vs. construction, and political symbolism. Through this hands-on activity, they will discover how artists use printmaking and stencils as tools for storytelling and social change.

Materials Needed

For Stencil Prints

- Mylar sheets or thick paper (for stencil cutting)
- X-acto knives or scissors (for older students)
- Pre-cut simple stencil shapes (for younger students)
- Sponges, rollers, or spray paint (for controlled use)
- Fabric or thick paper (for printing)

Activity Structure

1. Introduction to Printmaking & Stencils

Guiding Question:
"Why do artists use printmaking and stencils for graffiti and street art?"

Discussion Topics:

- The Power of Printmaking in Political Movements
  - Discuss protest posters & political prints (e.g., José Guadalupe Posada's revolutionary prints).
- Stencil Art in Activism
  - How stencils were used in feminist movements, Black Lives Matter, and the Woman, Life, Freedom Movement in Iran.
  - Reproducibility matters – How prints allow messages to spread quickly in public spaces.
- Street Artists Who Use Stencils
  - Show examples of Banksy, Dolk, and Icy & Sot.

2. Stencil Art Activity

Step 1: Design a Stencil

Students choose a theme inspired by the works in the *Burden of Street* exhibition.

- Younger students: Use pre-cut stencil shapes or design simple sticker-like images (e.g., walls, plants, birds).
- Older students: Design a unique symbol or word inspired by stencil artists & activism.

Step 2: Cut the Stencil

Cut out the design carefully:

- Grades K-5: Use scissors.
- Grades 6-12: Use X-acto knives for finer details.

Step 3: Print Using Stencil

Stencil Printing Process:

- Place the stencil on paper or fabric.
- Apply paint using a sponge, roller, or spray (controlled use).
- Lift the stencil carefully to reveal the image.

3. Group Reflection

Discussion Questions:

- *How does printmaking/stenciling feel different from painting?*
- *How do artists use these techniques to make political or personal statements?*
- *Where do we see stencil and print-based art in public spaces?*

Humor & Satire in art

Grade Level: 6-12
Theme: Using Humor & Satire in Art

In this activity, students will analyze how humor and satire are used in art. They will explore how these techniques appear in Burden of Street and other political artworks before creating their own satirical illustrations, cartoons, or digital artworks. **In the *Burden of Street* exhibition, Stickers of pop elements, pieces of newspapers, photographs and texts are juxtaposed to create satirical and Ironic situations criticizing power and status quo.**

Materials Needed

- Examples of political satire in art (Honore Daumier, Dadaism, Goya's Los Caprichos print series)
- Paper, pens, markers, or digital art tools (e.g., Procreate, Photoshop)
- "Satire in Art Worksheet" (optional guiding questions)

Activity Structure

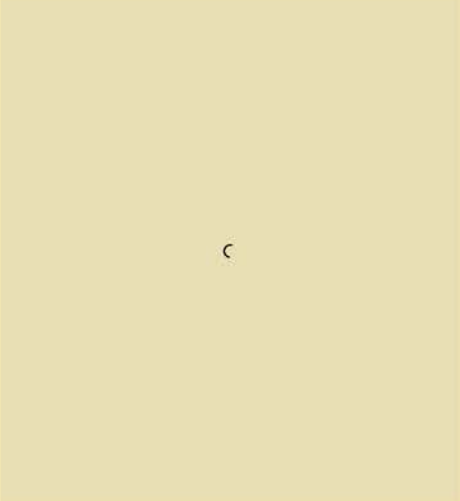
1. Discussion & Reflection– What Is Satire?
Guiding Question:
"How can humor make a political message even stronger?"

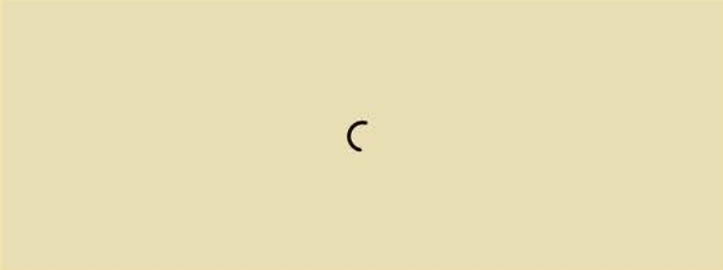
Key Discussion Points:

- What is satire? – The use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to criticize politics or society.
- Why do artists use humor in serious topics? – Sometimes, humor makes messages more powerful, engaging, or digestible.
- Where do we see satire today? – Political cartoons, memes, graffiti.

Examples of Political Satire in Art:

- Banksy's graffiti – Irony and sarcasm to critique war, surveillance, capitalism.
- Honore Daumier's 19th-century caricatures – Political leaders mocked through exaggeration.
- Modern political cartoons (New Yorker, Washington Post, independent artists).
- Memes in social media





2. Satirical Artwork Creation through Mixed media

Students create their own satirical political artwork using humor to critique a social or political issue they care about.

Steps:

- Pick a topic – Students choose an issue (e.g., government control, environmental destruction, media bias).
- Choose a satirical technique – Exaggeration, irony, absurdity, parody.
- Create the artwork – Options:
  - Comic strip or illustration
  - Meme or collage mixed media work using stickers, photographs, newspaper, drawing and text

4. Group Reflection & Presentation

Discussion Questions:

- What was challenging about using humor for a serious topic?
- How does satire make a message more or less effective?
- Can humor be dangerous or misinterpreted?

Reverse Graffiti: Art by Erasing

Grade Level: 1-12
Theme: Eco-Friendly Street Art

Students will explore Reverse Graffiti, a technique where artists "clean" surfaces to create images instead of adding paint or ink. They will use charcoal and erasers to create artworks by removing darkness, simulating how real artists use this method on city walls. This activity will spark discussions on environmental activism, public space, and alternative street art techniques, while also enhancing their understanding of the interplay between light and shadow as they work in reverse—starting with lightening instead of darkening.

Materials Needed

- Black paper or charcoal-covered paper
- Compressed charcoal sticks
- Kneaded erasers & regular erasers
- Brushes or cotton swabs (for smudging & soft erasing)
- Reference images of reverse graffiti & urban textures

Activity Structure

1. Introduction to Reverse Graffiti

Guiding Question:
"What if instead of painting on a wall, you cleaned part of it to make art?"

Key Discussion Points:

- What is Reverse Graffiti?
  - Artists remove dirt/grime from walls to create temporary street art.
  - It is an eco-friendly alternative to spray paint.
- Where can we see this technique?
  - Famous examples: Paul Curtis (Moose) and Alexandre Orion.
- Why do artists use Reverse Graffiti?
  - To make a statement about pollution, the environment, and public space.
  - To create temporary protest art that challenges authority without vandalism.

Show Examples of Reverse Graffiti:

- Moose Curtis's "clean" murals – Graffiti by erasing dirt.
- Alexandre Orion's work – Skull patterns in city tunnels.
- Natural elements (leaves, animals) revealed through cleaning techniques

Paul Curtis (Moose) photo By Valerie Hinojosa from Washington DC, USA - Broadway tunnel reverse graffiti, CC BY-SA 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=68366811

Video of Alexandre Orion making Ossario (reverse graffiti)

2. Hands-On Reverse Graffiti Art

Step 1: Prepare the Surface

- Students cover their paper with charcoal to mimic a dirty wall.
- Encourage heavy coverage to allow contrast when erasing.

Step 2: Sketch the Image

- Using erasers, students "clean away" the charcoal to reveal their images.
- Experiment with soft vs. hard erasers for different textures.

Step 3: Add Details & Texture

- Use brushes, cotton swabs, or fingers to smudge & refine details.
- Discuss how light and shadow create depth in Reverse Graffiti.

3. Reflection & Group Discussion

Discussion Questions:

- *How does Reverse Graffiti challenge traditional ideas of street art?*
- *Do you think public spaces should allow this kind of graffiti? Why or why not?*
- *How does using erasers instead of paint change the way we think about making art?*

LIST OF WORKS

1. *A Blocked View,* Oil, collage and mixed media on wood panel 18x24 inches, 2022

2. *The Reflection of the Street,* Oil, collage and mixed media on canvas, 8x5 inches, 2022

3. *Solitary Confinement,* Oil, collage and mixed media on canvas, 14X18inches 2022

4. *Irrepressible,* Oil and mixed media on canvas 14x18 inches, 2021

5. *Forest Is A Confined Society,* Oil and mixed media on canvas, 18X24inches, 2021

6. *Weight of a Bruise,* Oil and mixed media on canvas, 8X10inches, 2022

7. *From the piece Leisure in the Persian Gazebo,* oil on canvas, 11x14 inches, 2022

8. *From the piece Leisure in the Persian Gazebo,* oil on canvas, 11x14 inches, 2022

9. *From the piece Leisure in the Persian Gazebo,* oil on canvas, 11x14 inches, 2022

10. *Euphoria of Madness,* Oil and mixed media on canvas, 18X24 inches, 2022

11. *Open Society,* oil on canvas, 5x7 inches, 2022

12. *Burden of Street,* oil on canvas, 9x12 inches, 2021

ORGANIZATION OF SASKATCHEWAN ARTS COUNCILS

Burden of Street by artist Mohadese Movahed is toured by the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils (OSAC) through OSAC's Arts on the Move Program.

The Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils (OSAC) is a provincial arts organization founded in 1968 by a group of volunteers representing eight arts councils from across the province. Since its inception, OSAC has grown and currently has 48 volunteer run arts councils and over 100 school centres. OSAC's vision is to be a vital and identifiable arts organization, with a purpose to make the visual arts and performing arts relevant to the personal and community lives of Saskatchewan people.

OSAC's Performing Arts program and Performing Arts in Schools program results in more than 250 concerts on an annual basis. The Performing Arts program engages professional performers to deliver live music, dance, theatre, and variety performance to communities across Saskatchewan. Performing Arts in Schools engages professional performing artists, representing a variety of disciplines to perform for Saskatchewan schools.

Showcase, OSAC's annual conference, features visual art exhibitions, performances, workshops, an annual general meeting, an exhibitor exchange, and the opportunity for members to connect and engage.

Visual & Media Arts Program
The Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils' (OSAC) Visual Arts Program offers a number of opportunities and services to audiences and artists throughout the province. Our aim is to develop an awareness and appreciation for visual and media arts in the province of Saskatchewan, and to assist in the creative and professional development of Saskatchewan visual artists.

Since 1975, OSAC's Arts on the Move program has provided communities throughout the province with visual and media arts exhibitions & screenings. Each exhibition is accompanied by educational materials that complement the Saskatchewan Education Arts Curriculum, offering arts councils, gallery staff, and teacher's strategies and means of engaging youth and audiences with the touring exhibitions. The program annually tours 15 exhibitions of visual and media arts to over 50 arts council communities. Exhibitions are curated and organized in house, from partnering institutions, from public and corporate collections, and from artist and curator submissions.

The Local Adjudications program, partially funded by OSAC and organized by arts councils, provides an opportunity for artists to participate in an exhibition, attend professional development workshops, have their work critiqued by an adjudicator, and network with their colleagues.

The Visual Arts Program Grants offer arts councils funding for adjudications, classes, workshops, professional development seminars, exhibition extension activities in response to touring exhibitions, and exhibition tour guide training.

For further information about our programs:
visit our website www.osac.ca email us info@osac.ca or call us at (306) 586 1252 Our office is located at 1102 – 8th Avenue, Regina, SK S4R 1C9

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Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils

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