

InsideART

Title

Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz: Promoting Radical Empathy

Estimated Time for Completion of Lesson

1 class period

Concept/Main Idea of Lesson

This lesson provides an introduction to performance artist Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz, who addresses trauma in her work.

Intended Grade Levels

Grades 6-12

Infusion/Subject Areas

Visual Arts

Social Studies

Curriculum Standards**Next Generation Sunshine State Standards**

- Visual Arts:

VA.912.C.1.2: Use critical-thinking skills for various contexts to develop, refine, and reflect on an artistic theme.

VA.912.C.1.4: Apply art knowledge and contextual information to analyze how content and ideas are used in works of art.

VA.912.C.3.1: Use descriptive terms and varied approaches in art analysis to explain the meaning or purpose of an artwork.

VA.912.C.3.3: Examine relationships among social, historical, literary, and/or other references to explain how they are assimilated into artworks.

- Social Studies:

SS.912.H.2.5: Describe how historical, social, cultural, and physical settings influence an audience's aesthetic response.

SS.912.P.9.8: Discuss the nature and effects of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.

National Standards for Arts Education

Anchor Standard 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

National Council for the Social Studies

Time, Continuity, and Change

People, Places, and Environments

Culture

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Power, Authority, and Governance

Civic Ideals

Instructional Objective

The student will:

- critically view and analyze selected works by Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz from the *Constant Storm* art exhibition at USF Contemporary Art Museum;
- develop reading, writing, and discussion skills;
- consider the impact of 2017's Hurricane Maria on the island of Puerto Rico;
- reflect on the concept of "radical empathy."

Pre-Teaching: Review and read through the Notes View of the PPT presentation. Make photocopies of the lesson handouts. Activate the PowerPoint and advance to slide 2.

Learning Activities Sequence

Attention-Getter: [Slide 2] Show the image and allow students 1-2 minutes to study the image, coming up to the screen, if necessary, in order to note as many details as possible. Then ask:

- Who is the central character in the image?
- What is she wearing?
- What materials is her clothing made of? Are there any individual elements you can identify?
- Where might she be going?
- Where do you think this is taking place?
- When do you think this photograph was taken?

Ask for volunteers to share their observations as part of a whole-class discussion.

Announce that today the class will be exploring the art work of Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz. Explain that the image was part of a performance piece by Raimundi-Ortiz in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria in 2017.

Learning Activities:

Mini-lecture and note-taking [slides 3-7]: provide overview of Hurricane Maria and its impact on Puerto Rico.

Critical viewing and analysis [slides 8-12]: using the information provided in the Notes View of the PPT slides, expose students to Raimundi-Ortiz's work *Exodus/Pilgrimage*

(2019), her public performance addressing forced migration of thousands of Puerto Ricans from the island to the mainland United States with whatever they could salvage on their backs to Florida cities (such as Miami and Orlando) and the trauma to those left behind as a result of Hurricane Maria. Culminate the discussion of this performance with a 5:12 minute video (slide 12) explaining its origins, the artist's intent, and the performance in the United States.

Reflection [slide13]: Ask a volunteer to read aloud the quote by the artist. Ask for other students to paraphrase what the artist was trying to convey in the statement.

Have students reflect on the sentiment expressed in the quote and in their student journals, write about how *Exodus/Pilgrimage* is both somber and celebratory.

Close reading: Distribute Handout 1 (HO1), "BIO: Raimundi-Ortiz." Ask students to closely read the artist's biography, underlining or highlighting key words, phrases, and ideas.

After students have finished reading, bring the class together for a discussion:

- How does Raimundi-Ortiz's background influence her work?
- What key words, phrases, and ideas did you underline/highlight? Why?
- If there was one question you could ask the artist, what would it be?

Critical viewing and analysis [slides 14]: Resume the PPT by showing Michelangelo's *Pietà*. Ask:

- Have you ever seen this work?
- What kind of art work is it?
- Who is it by?
- What is the content of the work?
- What emotions does the work convey?

Video interview with the artist [slide 15]: Have students watch a brief (2:48min) interview with Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz regarding her work, *Pietà* (2017):

<https://www.raimundiart.com/pieta> or
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7eWKWQWh-A>.

Viewing guide: Before playing the video clip, ask students to consider the influences and concerns that served as foundations for her performance piece.

Critical viewing and analysis [slides 16-18]: Resume the PPT by showing images from Raimundi-Ortiz's *Pietà*. At slide 18, say:

For *Pietà*, the artist channels the Virgin Mary as the archetypal grieving mother, in response to current concerns about violence against young people, especially those of color. Raimundi-Ortiz says: "I am afraid of what has been happening to brown folks,

both young and old people of color who are brutalized, and their family members [who] are treated like they deserve what they got. There is a sense of collective mourning and fear that every person of color feels for their child. Every parent is terrified for their child.”

Ask students to explain how the Raimundi-Ortiz’s *Pietà* conveys this concern and sadness.

Closure:

[Slide 19]: Read aloud the question posed, reminding students what the word “empathy” means, if necessary. Ask students to write their responses in their student journals and, if time, ask for volunteers to share their thoughts in a whole-class discussion, in pairs, or in small groups.

Evaluation/Assessment

Engagement and participation in class discussion, critical viewing and analysis, reading, writing, and reflection activities.

In art classes, students can complete one of the art learning activities below.

Art Learning Activities

Performance art: ask students to create their own performance art work, in the style of Raimundi-Ortiz, incorporating elements of their culture.

Videography: students can either videorecord a performance art piece, or create a videorecording of their creation, including script/narration.

Sculpture/Textile Work: using textiles, created fabrics, or found objects, students can create a sculpture or piece of clothing in the style of Raimundi-Ortiz, reflecting a social issue important to them and/or their community.

Optional Extension Activities

1. Raimundi-Ortiz created the “Chuleta” persona in 2005. According to the artist, Chuleta is “a sassy, no-nonsense NuyoRican art enthusiast. [It] became my way of calling out biases of both the art world as well as my own people by becoming a sort of urban art translator, conduit, culture critic, interceptor and interrogator. It was a wild experiment that predates current YouTube styling and confessional style video format designed to breach the art world and reach out beyond the confines of the ‘white cube’ to talk to anyone that wanted to listen.”

Students can find out more about the Chuleta video series at:

<https://www.raimundiart.com/ask-chuleta>.

Teachers should preview to determine if language is appropriate.

2. Have students research the origins of *plena* and *bomba*, two important musical traditions in Puerto Rico. The Smithsonian provides an excellent overview: <https://folkways.si.edu/puerto-rican-bomba-plena-shared-traditions-distinct-rhythms/latin-world/music/article/smithsonian>. Carnegie Hall also offers educational extension activities: <https://www.carnegiehall.org/Education/Programs/Musical-Explorers/Digital/Program-Four/Juan-and-Julia>. Students can watch and listen to musicians on both sites.

3. *Landfall* is a PBS film that examines daily life on the island in post-Hurricane Maria, including the civil protests that ousted the governor in 2019 and the “collective trauma” experienced by the people as community and social services crumbled. The full 1 ½ hour film can be access online at: <https://www.pbs.org/pov/watch/landfall/video-landfall-bilingual-captions/>

Materials and Resources

- Computer
- Projector
- Screen
- PowerPoint presentation: “*Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz*”
- Paper (or student journal), pencils or pens for writing
- Handout 1 (HO1): “BIO: Raimundi-Ortiz”
- Highlighters (optional)

Special Learner Accommodations

Things to consider:

- Extra time for note-taking
- Translation dictionaries for ELLs
- Visually-rich PPT
- Graphic organizers
- Reading support
- If playing a song, provide written and/or translated lyrics
- Small group discussions/Cooperative learning
- Alternative assessment options

References

Dudenhoefer, N. (2019). Celebrating Puerto Rican culture through ‘Exodus/Pilgrimage.’ *UCF Today*. <https://www.ucf.edu/news/exodus-pilgrimage-performance-honors-puerto-rican-traditions-ucf-celebrates>

Raimundi-Ortiz, W. (2019). Exodus/Pilgrimage. *Raimundi Art*.

<https://www.raimundiart.com/exodus-pilgrimage>

Sandler, L. (2017). 'Pieta,' a performance by Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz, creates a space for radical empathy. *Orlando Weekly*.

<https://www.orlandoweekly.com/orlando/durational-performance-by-wanda-raimundi-ortiz-creates-a-space-for-radical-empathy/Content?oid=3184464>

Scott, M. (2018). Hurricane Maria's devastation of Puerto Rico. *NOAA Climate.gov*.

<https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/hurricane-marias-devastation-puerto-rico>