

InsideART, Fall 2020 — *The Neighbors: A Slide Show for America*

**Title**

Zora J. Murff: “Complicated Grace”

**Estimated Time for Completion of Lesson**

1-2 class periods

**Concept/Main Idea of Lesson**

This lesson is an introduction to the work of photographer-artist Zora J. Murff who explores systematic racism and discrimination in communities.

**Intended Grade Levels**

Grades 9-12

**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.

SS.912.A.2.5: Assess how Jim Crow Laws influenced life for African Americans and other racial/ethnic minority groups.

SS.912.A.5.9: Explain why support for the Ku Klux Klan varied in the 1920s with respect to issues such as anti-immigration, anti-African American, anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish, anti-women, and anti-union ideas.

**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  
 Individuals, Groups, and Institutions  
 Power, Authority, and Governance

**Instructional Objective**

The student will:

- view and analyze selected works by Zora J. Murff;
- contemplate how the artist's concern and interest in social history has impacted his artistic expression;
- consider the concepts of redlining, slow violence, and intersectionality;
- select and reflect on an element of their neighborhood.

**Learning Activities Sequence****Pre-Active Teaching**

Review the information provided in the "Notes View" of the PowerPoint and then view the PPT in "slide show" mode to become acquainted with the animations embedded.

**Attention-Getter:**

Activate PPT and advance to slide 2.

Using a combined Visual Thinking Strategies (Yenawine, 2013) approach and stratified questioning, guide analysis and discussion of the image by asking the following questions, probing and prompting as required:

What's going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What else can we find?

When did this take place?

What kind of gathering or event might this have been?

The photographer-artist, Zora J. Murff, took a photo of a photo...this image is a cropped version of the original photo. What do you think Murff cropped? Why?

What are the differences between photojournalism and photography as art?

**Learning Activities:**

Slides 3-6: Explain to students that the image on slide 2 was taken at the lynching of William Brown in 1919 Omaha, Nebraska (fill in with details available in the Notes View of the PPT). Tell students about the civil disturbances during the summer of 1919 known as the Red Summer.

**Brief Artist Biography:**

Slides 7-9: Tell students that today they will be examining some of the work of Zora J. Murff, a photographer-artist deeply concerned about systemic racism, discrimination,

and the effects on communities and individuals. Share biographical information as well as the central themes of Murff's work.

### **Social and Historical Concepts:**

Slides 10-18: Present and discuss the concepts of redlining, slow violence, and intersectionality, pausing to examine and discuss the representative works.

### **Closure: Strange Fire Collective**

Slides 19-20: Tell students about the Strange Fire artist collective, co-founded by Murff. Ask students to reflect on the importance of artistic spaces such as this in promoting alternative forms of artistic expression.

### **Evaluation**

Slide 21: Ask students to reflect on an element of their neighborhood and articulate this reflection by doing one of the following:

- Writing a short story
- Creating a poem
- Composing a song or piece of music
- Drawing a picture
- Photographing their idea and writing a short supporting explanation
- Recording a video
- Creating a 3-D representation
- Making a map
- Other

### **Optional Extension Activities**

Interview with Zora J. Murff (Podcast): The interview can be listened to on Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9L5KbPM-3hE>, while viewing scrolling images from Murff's work, *At No Point In Between*. Alternately, the podcast can be heard in audio-only at: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/studio-visits-w-silver-eye/id1509836568>. Hosted by Silver Eye Center for Photography, Murff discusses how "slow violence" has influenced his work.

Strange Fire Collective: The website has archived material (art works, interviews, book reviews, etc.) that can be explored by students (<http://www.strangefirecollective.com>). Ask students to select one item to share with classmates.

### **Materials and Resources**

- Computer
- Projector
- Screen
- PowerPoint presentation: *Zora J. Murff*

- Paper, pencils or pens for writing
- Materials for evaluation (varies depending on the medium)

### **Special Learner Accommodations**

- Extra time for note-taking
- Translation dictionaries for ELLs
- Visually-rich PPT
- Graphic organizer
- Small group discussions
- Alternative assessment options

### **References**

Colorado State University. (2019). *Zora J. Murff artist talk*.

<https://artmuseum.colostate.edu/events/zora-murff-artist-talk/>

Houston Center for Photography. (2019). On redlining and photography's objectivity: An interview with Zora Murff and Kris Graves. *Spot*.

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Jayawardane, M.N. (2019). What can photographs tell us about the history of redlining in the US? *Aperture*. <https://aperture.org/blog/zora-murff-redlining/>

Murff, Z.J. (2020). *Zora J. Murff: About*. <http://www.zora-murff.com/about>

Prolago, P. (2020). *Zora J Murff photos tackle intersectionality*. *The Collegian*. <https://tucollegian.org/zora-j-murff-photos-tackle-intersectionality/>

Strange Fire Collective. (2020). *About the Strange Fire Collective*.

<http://www.strangefirecollective.com/about>

Waxman, O.B. (2019). 'It just goes on and on': How the race riots of 1919's 'Red Summer' helped shape a century of American history. *Time Magazine*.

<https://time.com/5636454/what-is-red-summer/>

Yenawine, P. (2013). *Visual Thinking Strategies: Using art to deepen learning across school disciplines*. Harvard Education Press.

Zinn Education Project. (2020). *The Omaha Courthouse lynching and riot*.

<https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/omaha-courthouse-lynching-riot>