PAK Sheung-chuen

Suggested class activities for Senior Primary

Artist: PAK Sheung-chuen

Level: Senior Primary

Theme: Discovering Secrets in Words

Suggested length: 4 hours

Teaching concept:

Contemporary art encompasses diverse art forms, one of which, conceptual art, is particularly difficult for students to grasp. PAK Sheung-chuen is good at expressing his ideas through conceptual art. His works are closely related to daily life, giving them a human touch, and are easy to understand. He emphasises that his inspiration comes mostly from observing and recording everyday objects, reflecting on them and then transforming them into works of art.

This course aims to help students learn about a new art-making approach, using the concepts behind PAK's works instead of conventional art approaches. The students experience conceptual art through PAK's approach and style.

Required background knowledge:

1. Students should have learned about traditional art forms, such as painting, sculpture, printmaking and ceramics.
2. Students should have learned about graffiti.

Teaching goals:

1. Learn about and appreciate PAK's creative approach and style through his video.
2. Learn about the characteristics of conceptual art.
3. Find inspiration through the observation of people's names and book titles.
4. Examine the techniques of graffiti, and use printing or photography to record art works.

Suggested class activities:

1. **Introduce PAK Sheung-chuen and his artistic style (Suggested length: 5 mins)**
   Show the "Artist Introduction ppt" pp1-4
   Born in Fujian in 1977, PAK Sheung-chuen settled in Hong Kong in 1984. He obtained his B.A. degree in Fine Arts and Theology from The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2002. He was awarded the Oversea Exchange Prize (Chinese Performance Art) from the Macao Museum of Art in 2005 and 2008. In 2011, he was selected by ArtAsiaPacific as one of five Outstanding

Artists and Promising Figures. In 2012, he received the Best Artist Award in the Chinese Contemporary Art Awards, and the Award for Best Artist (Visual Arts) at Hong Kong Arts Development Awards. In 2009, he represented Hong Kong to participate in the Venice Biennale. He joined Frieze London and was awarded the Stand Prize in 2012.

PAK's works span photography, painting and conceptual art, addressing the connections between individuals, cities and nature.

2. **Appreciation of PAK's works (Suggested length: 5 mins)**
   Show the "Artist Introduction ppt" pp5-8

Description:
I live in a small house,
Breathing
Until I use up all the air in the whole house.

One night as I was sleeping on my bed, staring at the ceiling, thinking of nothing, I indistinctly heard my own breathing and suddenly asked myself, 'How long would it take to breathe in all the air in this room?' That's how this work was conceived. And then I had a chance to try out the idea at the Busan Biennial in Korea. I rented an 18 m^2 flat (195 ft^2), about the size of a very small flat in Hong Kong. I lived in this small flat as usual, but I collected the air I breathed in transparent plastic bags until the whole apartment was filled with these plastic bags filled with my exhaled air. The whole process took 10 days. It felt like the flat had become part of my life.

Breathing in a House: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XlTbW97F9mc
Retrieved from: http://oneeyeman.blogspot.hk/2006_11_01_archive.html

The Horizon Placed at Home
2004
Mixed Media Installation
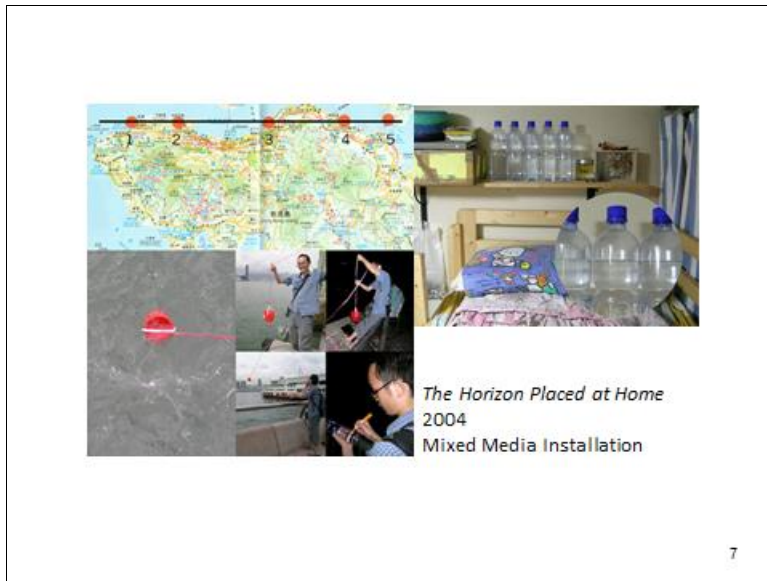
Description:

I drew a horizontal line on a map of Victoria Harbour. The horizontal line went through five parts of the shoreline. I collected a bottle of seawater from every part, ensuring each bottle had the same amount of water. I put the five bottles on a shelf at home, and a horizon emerged.

Reference:

http://www.vitamincreativespace.com/cn/?work=pak-sheung-chuen-that-light

Photo retrieved from:

http://pakpark.blogspot.hk/2007/03/horizon-placed-at-home-08.html

● Introduce the characteristics of conceptual art, using PAK's artworks as examples:

Characteristics of conceptual art

- Art can be used to express ideas.

- The ideas embedded in an artwork are more important than the materials used.

- Anything that can be used to express ideas can become an artistic medium.

3. **Play the "Artist Video mp4" (Suggested length: 15 mins).**

Before playing the video, remind the students to pay attention to PAK's sources of inspiration and the artistic media he uses.

Select parts of the video, depending on your chosen area of focus, pausing as needed to explain the content or ask questions.

Suggested Q&A:

● Where does PAK get his inspiration?

(From daily life. For example, *The Horizon Placed at Home* expresses his thoughts about city life, *Full Moon* expresses his homesickness about the Mid-Autumn Festival as he was away from home, and *Breathing in a House* was inspired by the living environment.)

● What are the characteristics of PAK's artworks?

(He seeks inspiration from daily life; he makes detailed observations, recordings and reflections, and transforms his thoughts into creative ideas; he creates artworks through continuous trials, without limiting the creative media possibilities.)

4. **Class activity 1 ー "Teacher, I've got an idea!" (Suggested length: 45 mins)**

Show the "Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt" pp2-12

● Designing a graffiti artwork with your Chinese name:

Show the students some graffiti designs from the streets and ask them to draw their names in the form of graffiti.
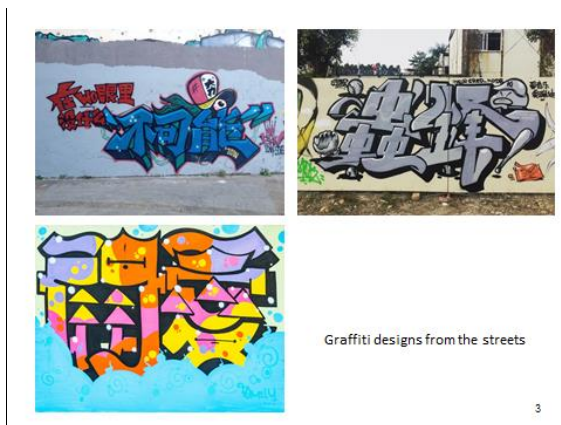
(images from websites)

Designing a graffiti artwork with your Chinese name

- to design graffiti characters in various fonts and colours
- to reflect the personal characteristics of yourself
- to reflect the meanings of your name

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● Creating a phrase with the Chinese characters from classmates' names:

Creating a phrase with the Chinese characters from classmates' names

- make use of the pronunciation or meaning of the classmates' names to form a meaningful phrase and present to the teacher or a classmate
- invite whose names are used to take a picture together
- Line up showing your graffiti cards according to the sequence of the Chinese characters in the phrase

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Examples:

敬愛偉大迪李 ➜ 敬愛偉大的你
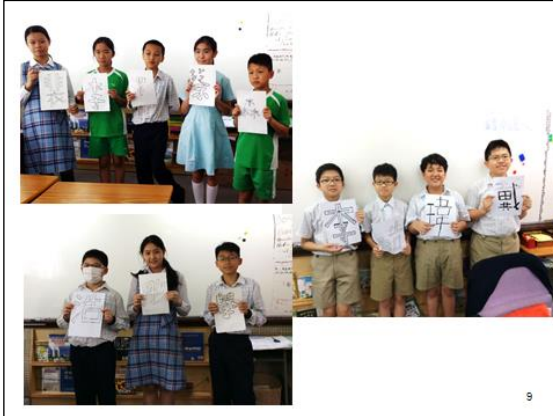
裴李澤蔡森→ 陪你摘菜心

浩彤學 → 好同學

李皓瑋戴 → 你好偉大
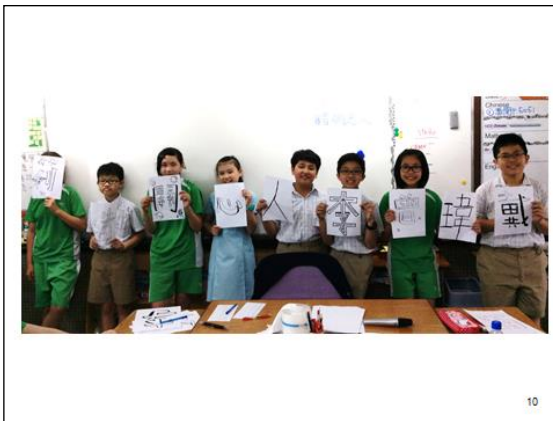
莉皓關心人李曾瑋戴 →
你好關心人你真偉大

- Appreciation of students' works and revision of conceptual art:

Evaluation, sharing and discussion

- What are the Chinese characters used for the pronunciation?
- How did you brainstorm the phrase?
- Why did you choose this phrase?
- Did you encounter any difficulties when brainstorming?
- Is the creative phrase a form of conceptual art? Why?
- Has your understanding of art changed after doing this conceptual art activity?

Revision of the characteristics of conceptual art

- Art can be used to express ideas.

- The ideas embedded in an artwork are more important than the materials used.

- Anything that can be used to express ideas can become an artistic medium.

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5. **Class activity 2 — "Miracles in the Library" (Suggested length: 160 mins)**
   Show the "Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt" pp13-26
   - Introduce the ideas behind PAK Sheung-chuen's *The Miracle of $132.30* and *A Love Letter to LC*.

The Miracle of $132.30
2009
Mixed Media

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A Love Letter to LC
2003
Mixed Media

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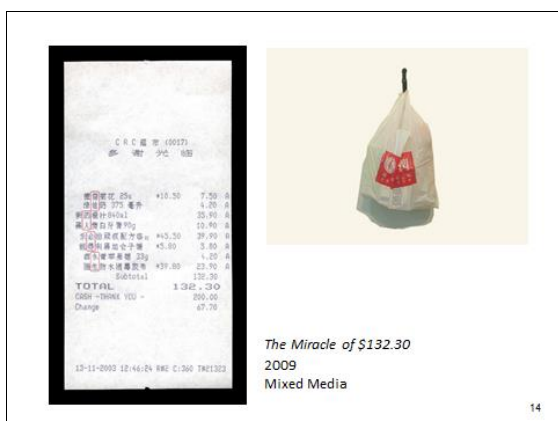
What do you think PAK reflected on before creating these works?

- the products being bought

- the sequence to pay for the products

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- Introduce the art-making process

- Introduce how to use the online search engine of Hong Kong Public Libraries:
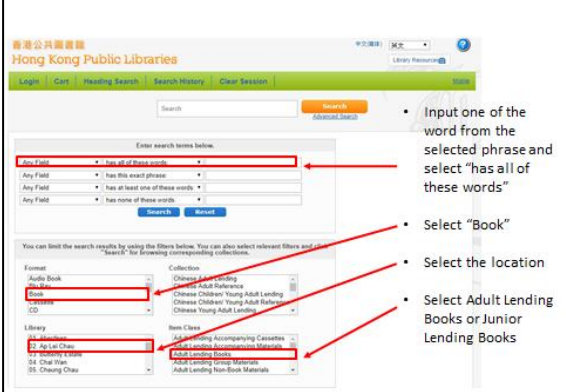
- Introduce how to use self-checkout machine to borrow books:

  Explain this with the YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hq4SFzNaAsY

- Sample of worksheet and borrowing receipt

More examples in **"Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt" pp27-32**

- Reminder to the students

- Have the students to complete the creation in the lesson or after the lesson

6. **Appreciation to the students' works**
    - Show the students' works in the powerpoint
    - Ask the students to share the learnings from the activity

Evaluation, sharing and discussion

- Why is the selected phrase or lyrics impressive to you?
- Did you find the books to form your selected phrase or lyrics?
- Did you make any discoveries or encounter any difficulties?

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Revision of the characteristics of conceptual art

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7. **Materials**

Camera, computer (tablet computer), list of student names, cardboard, marker pen, library card