SMALL SIMPLE OBJECT THAT YOU ADORE

A journal exercise

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AGE GROUP: high school – adult

OBJECTIVES: Encourage students to slow down and observe. Help them connect their art making to their personal interests. Build confidence in observational skills. Compose order out of chaos. Develop a strong 2 page spread in sketchbook. Combine visual art with literacy.

TIME: 3 hours, can be divided

MATERIALS NEEDED: Sharpie markers, oil pastels, colored pencils, watercolor paints, graphite pencils, etc.

A small, simple object, selected and provided by each student

Student sketchbook/journal

ACTIVITY: Students open sketchbook/journal to a new 2 page spread. With one drawing material, students complete a blind, continuous line contour drawing. Students change materials and complete 2 more blind, continuous line contour drawings. Each drawing is timed for 90 seconds. Students may look at their drawings in between, but do not stop the process any longer than it takes to get a new drawing implement.

After all three drawings are completed, students gather, placing sketchbooks on one table/area and objects on a separate table/area. Each student takes a turn matching one object to its drawing. When each object has been assigned, the group examines them as a whole to see if any are incorrect and take the time to make changes, still not interacting with their own object or drawing. My experience has been 100% matching accuracy!

Engage students in a conversation about the drawings (esp. wha they like, what they remind them of, etc.). Students often do not like their own blind contour drawings, but like their classmates work.

Students return to seat with belongings.

Next, the students complete a timed journal entry (7 minutes) where they physically describe the object, being thoughtful about writing material used. They use descriptors about its appearance **only** as if they were describing it to a friend over the phone.

After, students change the orientation of their sketchbook. Let them know that they will later complete a one hour observational drawing of the object on the same 2 page spread. They will need to select a space and keep it open for this.

Writing in a different orientation to the page, with a different writing tool, students complete a second journal prompt (7 minutes) where they tell the story of the object. Why did they bring it? Why do they adore it?

In a second sitting, students complete a 1 hour, sustained drawing in the space that they provided within their 2 page spread.

The final setting is to add color. Students can select a representational scheme (using colors from the object) OR they can select a symbolic scheme (such as using green to show the Irish heritage reflected in their object or using red to show passion, etc.)

This project can be critiqued in progress, to suggest unifying ideas. It can be critiqued to establish if it looks finished/complete.