

InsideArt, Spring 2018 — *Climate Change: Cuba/USA*

Title

Making Change: Exploring U.S.–Cuba relations through the artwork of Glexis Novoa

Estimated Time for Completion of Lesson

1 class period

Concept/Main Idea of Lesson

In this lesson, students will engage in a discussion of the history of U.S.–Cuba relations, be introduced to the artwork of Glexis Novoa, and will consider the use of art as a tool for social change.

Intended Grade Levels

Grades 9 -12

Infusion/Subject Areas

Visual Arts

Social Studies

Curriculum Standards

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

-Visual Arts:

VA.912.H.2: The arts reflect and document cultural trends and historical events, and help explain how new directions in the arts have emerged.

-Social Studies:

SS.912.C.4.2: Evaluate the influence of American foreign policy on other nations and the influences of other nations on American policies and society.

SS.912.A.1.4 Analyze how images, symbols, objects, cartoons, graphs, charts, maps, and artwork may be used to interpret the significance of time periods and events from the past.

SS.912.A.7.14 Review the role of the United States as a participant in the global economy (trade agreements, international competition, impact on American labor, environmental concerns).

National Standards for Arts Education

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

Global Connections

Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source

Instructional Objectives

The student will:

- explore the history of relations between the U.S. and Cuba;
- visually analyze the artwork of Glexis Novoa by completing a Think-Write-Pair-Share activity.

Learning Activities Sequence

Attention-Getter:

Activate prior knowledge: (Slides 2, 3, and 4)

Show students Cuba on the map of North America and on the map of the Caribbean. Invite students to comment about what they observe with regard to Cuba's location. Keep track of students' observation by taking notes on a whiteboard or chart paper. Ask students to share what events, names, or images come to when they think about Cuba. If necessary, prompt students to mention terms such as communism or Fidel Castro.

After generating a list, ask students to consider what they know about the relationship between Cuba and the United States. Allow time for a brief discussion. Then explain that the U.S. has had a complicated relationship with Cuba.

Learning Activities:

Timeline and Discussion: (Slide 5 and 6)

Provide students with copies of the Timeline of U.S.-Cuba relations. Alternatively, display the timeline graphic on Slide 6. Facilitate a review and discussion of the timeline. Some possible discussion questions include:

- What has the U.S. been involved in Cuba's affairs?
- What are some major events in the relations between the two countries?
- What role did the Soviet Union and the Cold War play in U.S. relations with Cuba?

Introduction of the Artist (Slide 7)

Glexis Novoa was born in 1964 in Havana, Cuba. He works in both Havana and Miami and is uniquely positioned as an artist to have experienced many years of U.S.-Cuba relations first hand.

Visual Analysis and Discussion (Slides 8, 9 and 10)

Have students view and consider Novoa's *CUC* (2014) and engage in a Think-Write-Pair-Share using the following question prompts:

- What do you see? List all of the detail that you notice in this this painting?
- What mood or tone is evoked by the style of this painting? What do you see that makes you say that?
- Does this painting remind you of other images or artwork you have seen in your study of history? Explain.

After allowing students to describe the artwork and make inferences about its meaning, ask students if they know what the letters CUC symbolize?

Inform students that CUC is the acronym used for the Cuban Convertible Currency, one of two official currencies available in Cuba and is the more valuable of the two. Tourists visiting the island use the CUC. The Cuban peso is worth roughly 1/20 of the CUC and most Cubans do not have access the CUC. The divided currency furthers class divisions between the powerful and the powerless in a communist society claiming equitable economic principles.

Students may also consider that when U.S. citizens travel to Cuba, they must use the CUC. How might the easing of travel restrictions between the U.S. and Cuba contribute to social unrest?

Student may be interested to consider the color scheme of the painting in comparison to the flag of the Movement of the 26th of July, the revolutionary movement led by Fidel Castro to overthrow Fulgencio Batista in 1959. (*Slide 10*)

Closure:

Quote and Reflection (Slide 9)

Display the quote by Glexis Novoa on his artwork during the 1980s, “We wanted to be revolutionaries in the way we tried to fix social and political problems through our art. We were trying to create a voice through our art”.

Ask students to write down their responses to the following questions:

- What social or political problems might be addressed by *CUC*?
- Do you think that art can be revolutionary? Explain your response.

If time permits, allow students to share their responses and discuss.

Evaluation

Informal evaluation conducted by observing student engagement, participation in class discussion, and completion of reflection.

Optional Extension Activities

Assign students to research various events on the Timeline of U.S.–Cuba relations in pairs or small groups and present their findings to the class.

Materials and Resources

PowerPoint Presentation: “*Making Change: Exploring U.S. – Cuba relations through the artwork of Glexis Novoa*”

Printed class set of Timeline of U.S. Cuba Relations

Paper/ Student Notebooks

Computer

Projector

Screen

References

Mestad, G. (2017). Visiting artist program hosts nationally influential artist Glexis Novoa. *Lipscomb Now*. Retrieved from <https://www.lipscomb.edu/news/archive/detail/101/31296>

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Cerejido, E. (2014). Exhibition close-up: Glexis Novoa: Painting on Canvas. *Cuban Art News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cubanartnews.org/news/exhibition-close-up-glexis-novoa-painting-on-canvas/4090>

David Castillo Gallery. (2017). Bad niños. Retrieved from <https://davidcastillogallery.com/exhibition/glexis-novoa-bad-ninos/>

Suarez De Jesus, C. (2014). To Cuba and back: Glexis Novoa dwells on the contradictions of the communist country. *New Times, Miami*. Retrieved from http://www.glexisnovoa.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=576&Itemid=1