

CURRICULUM PACKET

The Center for Art and Visual Culture, UMBC FALL 2003 EXHIBITION

White: Whiteness and Race in Contemporary Art curated by Maurice Berger

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CENTER FOR ART AND VISUAL CULTURE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, BALTIMORE COUNTY

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Directions

From I-95 Take exit 47B and follow Route 166 towards Catonsville. Signs will direct you to UMBC traffic circle. Follow * below.

From 695 Take exit 12C to Wilkens Avenue and continue for 1/2 mile to the entrance of UMBC on the left, which is Hilltop Road. Follow this road until it ends. The Fine Arts Building is a large brick building at the end of this road within the UMBC circle. Follow from ** below.

*At Hilltop Circle, turn left, and drive through stop sign to top of hill at Hilltop Road (traffic light). Turn Right at traffic light and drive until road ends. The Fine Arts Building is a large brick building with few windows at the end of this road within the UMBC circle. **Take gravel road (left) down hillside to main entrance at the side of the Fine Arts Building. Driver can park on the outer circle during gallery visit.

USING THE CURRICULUM PACKET

This packet is designed to help you connect the Center for Art and Visual Culture's (CAVC) fall 2003 exhibition with your classroom curricula and the **State of Maryland Fine Arts Essential Learner Outcomes**. CAVC visits and related activities developed for this packet address numerous subject areas that are often cross-disciplinary and therefore can combine two or more frameworks. CAVC is committed to visual literacy.

CAVC is glad to assist you in matching exhibition content with the **ESSENTIAL LEARNER OUTCOMES** listed below or others you may wish to match.

OUTCOME I: Perceiving and Responding – Aesthetic Education

-the ability to perceive, interpret, and respond to ideas & experiences in the environment.

OUTCOME II: Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts

-an understanding of the visual arts in historical, cultural, and social contexts.

OUTCOME III: Creative Expression and Production

-skills and attitudes to organize knowledge and ideas for creative expression and performance in the fine arts.

OUTCOME IV: Aesthetic Criticism

-the ability to apply criteria to aesthetic decision making.

HOW TO ARRANGE A CLASS VISIT

1. Decide whether this exhibition is relevant for your class or group to see based on this packet, viewing the exhibition, and/or talking with Education Coordinator for CAVC.
2. Select several possible dates and times to bring your class to CAVC, UMBC. (Tuesdays through Fridays from 9AM – 5PM). Visits, ranging from 45-90 minutes, may be accompanied by a creative writing and/or drawing activity. Up to 40 students can be accommodated at CAVC at one time.
3. At least two weeks in advance, contact **Renee van der Stelt** at **(410) 455-1440** or vanderst@umbc.edu to schedule the visit and discuss ideas for guided tours and related activities that are particularly suited to your group.
4. Directions given on the front page of this packet.

PLANNING YOUR CAVC VISIT

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CLASS FOR A VISIT TO CAVC, UMBC

1. Discuss the visit with your class before you come. This packet and a pre-visit to CAVC, UMBC can help inform students about what they will be seeing and doing on their trip.

2. Reproductions (photographs, slides, catalogs) are often available for your to look at with your class ahead of time. Students love to see images they recognize at their visits!
3. Additional information about the artists and exhibition is always available upon request.
4. In-class visits (usually including slide presentation and discussion) are available upon request.
5. Mention that students will need to keep in mind: Stay with the group, raise hands to ask or answer questions, no touching the artwork or the walls, no running, no food or gum.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU VISIT CAVC, UMBC

1. Call before leaving your school so that we can meet your group in the lobby of the CAVC, UMBC Fine Arts Building. One of us will greet you and direct your students where to place their backpacks and coats.
2. After a brief introduction in the lobby, your guide will bring students through the exhibition. Students will be asked to discuss, interact with, and raise questions about the artwork that they see. We strongly encourage teachers to engage in the discussion in order to strengthen the connection between classroom and museum learning.
3. If arranged in advance, the visit can conclude with a drawing or writing activity. (Paper and pencils provided upon request. We do not have art making facilities.)

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR VISIT

1. Pre- and post-visit activities are the best way to get the most out of your CAVC visit.
2. Project and discussion ideas provided at the end of this packet will help you determine the best approach for the grade and subject of your class. (If this packet does not include information relevant to your class, please call us and we will help you make the connections.)
3. If you find this packet effective, and you wish to work with us in the future, we would be pleased to assist you in developing and executing extended projects in the classroom.

INTRODUCTION

The Center for Art and Visual Culture presents *White: Whiteness and Race in Contemporary Art*, one of the first exhibition of art that explores race and racism from the perspective of white people. Over the past twenty years, the cultural and scholarly discourse around race has expanded to include the study of whiteness and white privilege.

The issue of whiteness and race in the visual arts has been virtually ignored by curators, art historians, and critics. Over the past decade, however, a number of visual artists—some white, some of color—have taken their lead from progressive writers and scholars who have used the concept of “whiteness” to denote the racial counterpart of “blackness.” To these artists, whiteness is something that must be marked, represented, and explored. While much art around issues of race inferentially touches on the issue of whiteness, these artists approach the subject explicitly and directly. The result of their efforts is a range of resonant, moving, and visually compelling aesthetic statements.

The visual arts can serve as an important catalyst for the discussion of race, a rare instance where contemporary art can have broad social relevance. This is true because much of what defines race in culture is innately visual. Ideas and observations about race are, more often than not, communicated through visual cues, symbols, and stereotypes. To talk about race is to talk about skin color: black, yellow, white, and brown. To talk about race is to talk about the shape of the eyes or of the nose or the texture of the hair. To talk about race is to talk about clothes, or hairstyle, or body type. The important inquiry into whiteness undertaken by these visual artists - Max Becher & Andrea Robbins, Nayland Blake, Nancy Burson, Wendy Ewald, Mike Kelley, William Kentridge, Barbara Kruger, Nikki L. Lee, Paul McCarthy, Cindy Sherman, and Gary Simmons - can help us to visualize and understand something that has ironically remained invisible in public discourse about race: whiteness. And in so doing, it can inspire us to think about race, and our attitudes about the color of our skin, in new and resonant ways.

-Maurice Berger, Curator

The exhibition, which will tour, will be accompanied by a 145-page catalog, the seventh in the ongoing CAVC series *Issues in Cultural Theory*, as well as by a public programming initiative that will include an extensive educational outreach program in partnership with area cultural institutions and schools in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. The exhibition is curated by Maurice Berger, Curator for the Center for Art and Visual Culture, UMBC, and Senior Fellow for the Vera List Center for Art and Politic at the New School University, New York. On October 9th, an opening reception will be held from 5 to 7 pm. No Admission fee. CAVC is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am to 5 pm and is located in the Fine Arts Building.

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION CENTER ACTIVITIES AND CLASSROOM PROJECTS

GROUP EXHIBITION ARTISTS

MAX BECHER & ANDREA ROBBINS: *White Exotic*

About the Artists:

Andrea Robbins born: 1963, Boston, MA. lives and works in New York

Max Becher born: 1964, Düsseldorf, Germany

Andrea Robbins and Max Becher have collaborated since 1984 on photographic projects that address cross-cultural influence, or, as they have phrased it, "the transportation of place." In documentary-style color photographs, Robbins and Becher explore the outward manifestations of how geographically disparate communities and cultures impact one another through "overlapping eras of slavery, colonialism, holocausts, immigration, tourism, and mass-communications." They research and document places and people that have been displaced or transported, such as the remnants of German colonialism in Africa; towns in America reconstructed to simulate European architectural and cultural themes; German fascination with American Indian culture; and the descendants of African-American slaves living in a secluded pocket of the Dominican Republic.

In one of the more bizarre cultural dislocations of the past century, there is no country more intrigued with Native Americans than Germany. In addition to the influence of Hollywood stereotypes, this fascination is rooted in the novels of nineteenth-century writer **Karl May**. May's portrayal of Native Americans as heroes and whites as villains was itself based not on firsthand experience but on his reading of **James Fenimore Cooper's** nineteenth-century work *The Leatherstocking Saga*, itself a highly imaginary version of Indian life. According to Robbins and Becher, May's stories are regarded by contemporary Germans as carrying a "progressive, anti-colonial message" that is also "anti-American/anti-capitalist." The artists also note that, "ironically, while **Hitler** was researching American Indian reservations as models for concentration camps, he made his generals carry around volumes of Karl May's writings."

For their series *German Indians* (1997-98), Robbins and Becher photographed the annual celebration of Karl May's birthday in his hometown of Radebeul, near Dresden. Here, German fans gather into tribes, camp in tepees, and dress in carefully detailed Native American regalia. Tourists visit the festival as though it represents a historically correct tableau. Robbins and Becher's photographs are reminiscent of the early twentieth-century portraits made by Edward Curtis of "real" Indians, whom Curtis asked to pose in staged reenactments of "war parties" and other traditional behavior. While Curtis often provided his subjects with skins and blankets to hide their "modern" European clothing, he also allowed glimpses of contemporary life to show through. This can likewise be seen in images by Robbins and Becher in which German Indians wear white socks, wedding

rings, and sit on aluminum and canvas folding chairs with their ice chests nearby. Such juxtapositions subtly destabilize the notion of authentic culture.

-from <http://www.colum.edu/museum/mocp/mocp062500/viewrobbins.htm>

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Germans pose and dress as Native American Indians? Where do they learn about Native Americans? What are your own thoughts about Native Americans? Are the things you have learned stereotypes or based on real experiences with Native American friends?
2. When Germans dress up and act like Native Americans, they divorce tribal imagery from its specific cultural, social, and stylistic contexts, are they co-opting it to serve the white man's curiosity, fascination and desire? Does this happen with us as well as we think about Native Americans in our country?
3. By admiring and respecting the Native American culture in the United States, many Germans feel they are supporting people who have historically been suppressed by those who settled this country (European immigrants). Some think this suppression persists today. By supporting Native Americans, these Germans express their anti-capitalist, and anti-American feelings about America. Do you think this is a legitimate way of criticizing American culture? How do you feel about the way Native Americans are treated in this country today?

Further in-Class Discussions and Readings:

Texts by **Karl May** and **James Fenimore Cooper** can be read by the students. Karl May's (1842-1912) Wild West novels have sold over 100 million copies and have shaped the way millions of Europeans view the American frontier. Discussion concerning who these two men were, why they wrote about Native Americans, and how perceptions about other cultures develop are encouraged.

Ironically, **Adolph Hitler** encouraged his top officials to read texts by Karl May. Hitler also studied Native American reservations when building concentration camps. What does this tell you about his attitudes towards Native Americans? How is this connected to contemporary Germans posing as Native Americans?

Images by photographer **Edward Curtis** can be viewed by the class, and a discussion about how his images differ and resemble the photographs taken by Becher and Robbins. *The North American Indian* by Edward S. Curtis is one of the most significant and controversial representations of traditional American Indian culture ever produced. Issued in a limited edition from 1907-1930, the publication continues to exert a major influence on the image of Indians in popular culture. Curtis said he wanted to document "the old time Indian, his dress, his ceremonies, his life and manners." In over 2000 photogravure plates and narrative, Curtis portrayed the traditional customs and life ways of eighty Indian tribes. The twenty volumes, each with an accompanying portfolio, are organized by tribes and

culture areas encompassing the Great Plains, Great Basin, Plateau Region, Southwest, California, Pacific Northwest, and Alaska. Featured here are all of the published photogravure images including over 1500 illustrations bound in the text volumes, along with over 700 portfolio plates.

Edward Curtis's photographic representations of Native Americans can be compared to George Catlin's earlier watercolor and drawn representations (below).

Artist **George Catlin (1796-1872)** was born in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. Even in his early years, Indians had a strong influence on Catlin's life because his mother had once been captured by them. He was educated at home and collected Indian relics. Catlin was trained as a lawyer, but devote his career to painting Indians in their native land and he spent the rest of his life championing their cause. Catlin was a self-taught artist who started painting portraits of political figures. Inspired by an Indian delegation passing through Pennsylvania in 1824, he decided that Indians and their culture would be his primary subject matter. In 1831 Catlin set off for St. Louis and became friends with General William Clark. Catlin sketched and painted Indians who visited Clark at his office. Catlin was in Nebraska twice; once in 1831 and again in 1832. In 1831, Catlin ventured with Major Jean Dougherty on a trip up the Platte River. While on this trip Catlin made numerous sketches of the Indians in the area. Later he traveled up the Missouri to Ft. Union on a steamboat but returned by canoe to sketch places he had missed. The paintings from this trip he presented to Congress in 1838, only to have them rejected. Catlin took his works to Europe where they were much more admired. The remaining years of his life he spent traveling and trying to persuade the American government to buy his paintings of the American Indians.

-from <http://monet.unk.edu/mona/artexplr/catlin/catlin.html>

NAYLAND BLAKE: *White Impurity*

About the Artist:

Birthplace: New York City, 1960

Education: Bard College, Annandale-On-Hudson, NY, B.F.A. 1982.

California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA, M.F.A. 1984.

Nayland Blake is an installation, performance and video artist who teaches at Bard College in New York. Nayland Blake's *Invisible Man* addresses one of the most fundamental issues of race and whiteness: the mutability and complexity of race itself. *Invisible Man* juxtaposes snapshots of the bi-racial artist's youth—the artist at age five, for example, sitting between his white mother and black father and holding a stuffed rabbit doll—with large cloth sculptures of rabbits. Like Blake's allusion to the history of his own interracial family, the image of the rabbit has served throughout his work as a metaphor of the fluidity of race.

This metaphor is at once personal and historical. When Blake was a child, his parents read him the tales of Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit, characters created by Atlanta newspaperman Joel Chandler Harris in the late-nineteenth century. Harris based these tales on stories he collected from African-Americans in the South. Uncle Remus, an elderly black slave, served as Harris's central, mythical storyteller. Brer Rabbit, in turn, served as Remus's hero, an animal represented by Harris as black even though his fur was white. In his blackness, Brer Rabbit simultaneously signified black oppression and black triumph over slavery and racism. On the one hand, Harris equated the black man with a weak and relatively harmless and unintelligent animal, a demeaning allusion at best. On the other, Brer Rabbit's ability to continually outsmart the animals of prey that stalked and threatened him—in part because of his ability to work against stereotypes and expectations—made him both wily and powerful.

Echoing the racial ambiguity of Brer Rabbit, Blake's ubiquitous rabbits speak to the alchemy of race as well as the power of blurring and transgressing its boundaries. They remind us that our generally rigid and tribal view of skin color, embodied by categories like "black" and "white," ignores the history of interracial sex and love—a history, like that of Blake's own family, that undermines the authority of such categories. *The Little One* (1994), for example, consists of a series of five faceless black porcelain dolls dressed in white cloth bunny suits. By existing simultaneously as white and black, these "bi-racial" rabbits challenge the subtle, though no less intensely motivated, notions of racial purity that continue to underwrite American race relations. Blake's *Reversible Bunny Suit* (1994)—a seven-foot rabbit costume composed of black cotton on one side, and white cotton on the other—similarly suggests the contingent and deeply personal nature of racial identity.

These works, by refusing to represent race in typical and stereotypical ways, prefigure the next wave of anti-racist thinking by imagining a broad, cross-racial reevaluation of the idea of race itself.¹ By representing race as essentially fluid and culturally constructed—an understanding often embraced by people of color but unknown to most white people—they challenge the polarized, divisive view of identity that drives the logic and emotions of racism.

– Maurice Berger, catalog text excerpt.

¹ FOR MORE ON THIS ISSUE, SEE DAVID ROEDIGER, “HOW OLD AND NEW WHITENESSES KEEP SHOWING UP, BUT NOT BY THEMSELVES,” IN THIS VOLUME.

Discussion Questions:

1. This artist uses child-like, storybook imagery to speak about issues that demand serious thought. *Invisible Man* uses a photograph of himself between his parents holding a bunny when he was five. How does this work speak about the racial identity of Nayland Blake? Why does he call this piece *Invisible Man*?
2. The artist also uses the rabbit as a symbol and a metaphore for deeper meanings. He draws upon the stories of Brer Rabbit to show these deeper, more complicated meanings. What do you think the rabbit means in our society today and historically, and why does the artist focus on the rabbit so much in this work?

Further in-Class Discussions, Readings, and Animation:

1. Read **Joel Chandler Harris**'s stories from the Late 19th Century of Brer Rabbit and discuss the characters in the class. What is the role of Brer Rabbit, and what does it tell us about perceptions of race and class in our country?

A native of Eatonton, **Joel Chandler Harris** gained fame a century ago as the writer of children's stories told in dialect by Uncle Remus, a slave who entertained a young white boy with American folktales. While scholars debate Harris's actual birth year, 1845 or 1848, the young boy born December 9 in Billy Barne's Tavern to the unwed Mary Harris suffered the pangs of illegitimacy by stammering in public and being self-effacing. Obviously bright, Harris received the attention of Andrew Reid who paid his tuition at Union Academy. He befriended elderly slaves George Terrell and Old Harbert who entertained him with trickster tales about Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox and the other critters in the Briar Patch. In 1862 Harris left Eatonton to work as a printer's devil on *The Countryman* published by Joseph Addison Turner on his Putnam County plantation, Turnworld. Here he studied the trade of the journalist under Turner's watchful eye and from a fence post at Turnwold witnessed Sherman's March to the Sea, an event he captured in his tribute to Turner, the 1892 memoir *On the Pantation*. With defeat, Harris left Putnam County for newspaper jobs in New Orleans and Savannah before landing at the Atlanta Constitution in 1879. The

next year appeared the collection *Uncle Remus, His Songs and Sayings* and in 1883, *Nights with Uncle Remus*.

A very helpful web site on **Joel Chandler Harris** is written by educator George Friedman at <http://college.hmco.com/english/heath/syllabuild/iguide/harris.html>

2. Read **Ralph Ellison's (1914-1994) *Invisible Man*** was written in 1952. He was influenced early by the myth of the frontier, viewing the United States as a land of "infinite possibilities. His close-knit black community in which he grew up supplied him with images of courage and endurance.

With things going so well I distributed my letters in the mornings, and saw the city during the afternoons. Walking about the streets, sitting on subways beside whites, eating with them in the same cafeterias (although I avoided their tables) gave me the eerie, out-of-focus sensation of a dream. My clothes felt ill-fitting; and for all my letters to men of power, I was unsure of how I should act. For the first time, as I swung along the streets, I thought consciously of how I had conducted myself at home. I hadn't worried too much about whites as people. Some were friendly and some were not, and you tried not to offend either. But here they all seemed impersonal; and yet when most impersonal they startled me by being polite, by begging my pardon after brushing against me in a crowd. Still I felt that even when they were polite they hardly saw me, that they would have begged the pardon of Jack the Bear, never glancing his way if the bear happened to be walking along minding his business. It was confusing. I did not know if it was desirable or undesirable...

--from *Invisible Man*

3. The exposure of **Walt Disney's 1946 animation "Song of the South"** has obscured the true Uncle Remus tales that are more complex than presented in the movie and represent only part of Harris's corpus of work. Unlike the moonlight and magnolias of the popular southern fiction of his day, Harris wove complicated stories filled with humor and pathos. In *Mingo, and Other Sketches in Black and White*, published in 1884, *Free Joe*, published in 1887, and *Daddy Jake the Runaway*, published in 1889, Harris presented a darker side to slavery than had previously appeared in the Uncle Remus tales. These stories epitomized the tragedy and realism of the age. Like his contemporary and friend, Mark Twain. Harris composed a national literature that used localism to describe the universal. This shy red-headed and freckled man understood more of humanity and the world because of personal circumstances which enables him to relate to those society deemed less fortunate. He died at his Atlanta home, the Wren's Nest. -from <http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwelf/elfjch.html>

NANCY BURSON: *White Purity*

About the Artist:

Nancy Burson is an American Digital artist, born in 1948. She lives and works in New York City.

For the past 25 years, I have been showing viewers the unseen, and /or asking them to shift their vision. From my earliest days as a painter, I have always been interested in the interaction of art and science. I am best known for my contribution to computer technology (the technique we now refer to as morphing) involving face compositing and techniques enabling law enforcement officials to age missing children and adults. These techniques were responsible for finding four children in the first year of their use alone.

-Nancy Burson <http://www.nancyburson.com/index.html>

Burson asks the big questions. What is beauty? What does health look like? What is seeing? What is believing? Her territory as an artist has been the human face. Across a broad spectrum of investigations in photography, drawing and computer imaging, Burson challenges us to examine the ways in which we judge one another and ourselves by our faces. In so doing, she pokes holes in such concepts as normality and abnormality, beauty and ugliness, sickness and health.

In 1981, Burson patented a revolutionary computer program – still used today by the FBI to help locate kidnap victims – to produce images of how people will look as they age. The Age Machine is one of four composite programs featured in the exhibition. The others include the Anomaly Machine, the Composite Machine, and the most recent, and perhaps most provocative, Human Race Machine. The programs enable viewers to scan their own faces and create digitally altered images at a different age, with a disability, or with other composite variations, or as a different race.

-from <http://www.wolfmanproductions.com/burson.html>

Guys Who Look Like Jesus parallels recent attempts by scientists, artists, and writers to challenge the myth of Christ as the Aryan ideal: a God with flowing long blond hair, pale skin, and blue eyes. Although such images are pervasive in Christian cultures throughout the world, they ignore the fact that far from representing Northern European whiteness, Christ was a Middle-Eastern Jew, a man no different from any other Semitic person of ancient times. Recently, a team of forensic scientists set out to render a more accurate depiction of the face of Christ. The result: a blunt, round face with olive skin, dark curly hair, and a prominent nose. While this new conception of Christ exchanges one set of stereotypes for another, it is, in the words of Alison Galloway, Professor of Anthropology at The University of California at Santa Cruz, “a lot closer to the truth than the work of many [of the] great masters.”

Traditional art-historical and religious depictions of Christ represent man in his purest and most divine state. Thus, in their depiction of Aryan perfection, such

images both mirror and reinforce the value and desirability of whiteness within society at large. By refusing to accept the mythic, Aryan ideal of Christ—indeed, by placing images of swarthy, dark-haired Jesus-wannabes next to a composite of their Aryan ideal—*Guys Who Look Like Jesus* questions deeply rooted cultural associations between whiteness and all things pure, good, and sacred. It challenges us to question our knee-jerk acceptance of these myths, beliefs consciously or unconsciously driven by the need to protect white power. – Maurice Berger, catalog text excerpt.

Discussion Questions:

1. When you think of Jesus, how would you describe how he looked? At what point in your life did you decide he looked this way, and who or what images taught you this about him?
2. What is the artist trying to say about our perceptions of each other by using the figure of Jesus and the human face? What is Jesus supposed to represent? If he represents purity, and is often portrayed as white, then what does that tell you about what race is supposedly most pure? How is he most often represented in our culture? Why is he represented in this way? What do people look like who live where Jesus lived? When we strongly identify Jesus with a specific look, or race, what does this tell us about who we are and who we relate to most closely?

Further in-Class Activities:

These exercises are intended to encourage the student to ‘read between the lines’ or to understand the assumptions and worldview of the artist or photographer. It encourages them to think about what lies behind pictures – just as they learn to look for the assumptions that lie behind a writer’s words. When students question the assumptions of visual world they are learning to be visually literate.

1. Students take a portrait of a classmate, and then reverse the camera one shot so the photograph is re-taken with another person on top of the previous image. The effect is an image combining the features of both students. Develop and hang the compiled images up for others to see. Write a story about this new person. What does this tell about identity and how we think about each other?
2. Collect images of religious figures from your home or library, and bring them in to class to share with other students. Research where the images may have come from, and discuss the importance of understanding that even photographers and painters have biases, and points of view that come out in the paintings, illustrations, and photographs they make for schools and churches. The question of what is reality and fiction comes up as well as the complexity of how we identify with/or don’t identify with religious figures.

WENDY EWALD: *White Complicity*

About the Artist:

For over twenty-five years, Wendy Ewald has been putting cameras into the hands of children. As an artist and teacher, she has developed a unique approach to combining photography, education, and young people. This approach came to her when she was working in a school in Letcher County, Kentucky. One day, trying to plan her photography class, she found herself staring out the window of her workspace and watching her neighbor's children play. The game they were playing provided a very vivid image. She wondered whether it might be possible to "ask [her] students to create photographs from their daydreams and fantasies and night dreams."

She went to her class and got them to start talking about their dreams and imaginings. Could they put them into words? How would they describe them? How would they act them out so that a picture could be taken? The students had plenty of ideas for composing pictures - some of those fantasies were scary, some were playful.

To become photographers, the students only needed to be encouraged to trust their own ideas and to be shown how to look at them from the outside, with the eye of the camera. Ms. Ewald's experience in Kentucky was the beginning of a long journey that has taken her around the world to introduce children to photography and photography to children. She has traveled to Colombia, South Africa, Mexico, and the Netherlands, as well as working in many places within the United States.

-Excerpts from introductory text of by Adam D. Weinberg – The Mary Stripp and R. Crosby Kemper Director, Addison Gallery of American Art.

Discussion Questions:

1. What aspects of their identity are the girls examining in "White Girl's Alphabet?"
SEE ATTACHE DOCUMENT FOR STUDENTS TO READ.
2. How do they use the alphabet? What does it tell you about them, and where they come from? Are the words very different from what you would select?
3. How does language affect and influence our preferences and prejudices, and how do they shape our personal identity? OR How does their use of words affect the way you use language in your daily life, and how does affect the way you see yourself?
4. If you were to make an alphabet of your own? What would be the words you would select to identify yourself?

Classroom Activities:

1. Read Texts from *White Girl's Alphabet*. In groups of two or three, identify words for each letter of the alphabet that best describe who you are, where you live, or how you think. How would you illustrate, or visualize these words?
2. Distribute an instamatic camera to each student, and ask them to enact or visualize their dreams or imaginary lives – what they wish for, or desire for themselves or others. Process the film, and then ask each student to briefly write about the pictures they see. The goal, as with Ewald's work is to encourage students to trust their dreams and imagined or hoped for goals.

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE: *White Complicity*

About the Artist:

William Kentridge was born in 1955 and lives in Johannesburg, South Africa. He earned a B.A. in politics and African studies in 1976 from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. From 1976 to 1978 Kentridge studied fine art at the Johannesburg Art Foundation, where he later taught printmaking, and during 1981-82 he completed a course in mime and theatre at L'Ecole Jacques LeCoq in Paris.

Beginning in the mid 1970's, Kentridge became active in film and theatre, working as a writer, director, actor and set designer for numerous productions. He was a founding member of the Junction Avenue Theatre Company, based in Johannesburg and Soweto from 1975 to 1991, and of the Free Filmmakers Cooperative, established in Johannesburg in 1988.

In 1979, Kentridge had his first one-person exhibition at the Market Gallery in Johannesburg. He is best known for his drawn animations depicting narratives that show social inequity, industrial pillage and personal pathos. He would continue to exhibit his drawings and prints throughout the 1980's. In 1989 Kentridge made *Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City After Paris*, the first in a series of short animated films featuring Soho Eckstein - Johannesburg 'property developer extraordinaire' - and Felix Teitlebaum, his alter ego - 'whose anxiety flooded half the house'. Created from the artist's successively reworked drawings, the film premiered at the Weekly Mail Film Festival in Johannesburg and was later screened at the Institute of Contemporary Art, London.

-from <http://www.goodman-gallery.com>

"Kentridge's visual commentary on the situation during and after apartheid in his native South Africa can be lyrical, darkly humorous, or brutally frank. His is an art of the palimpsest, an archaeology of memory."

-- Gregory Williams, Artforum, June 2001

"The crucial questions for the work of art today arise again from its expulsion into a space between the mediums of art. Kentridge occupies this interspace precisely, far from the "confusion of mediums" lamented by Clement Greenberg before the onset of the corrective that was modernism. Far too from "assemblage" or what was called "intermedia." Rosalind Krauss's notion that Kentridge is one of a series of artists involved today in "inventing" a new medium lies closest to the precision of his work."

-- George Baker, Artforum, November, 2001

Discussion Questions:

1. What do the animations make you think about? What stories are being told, and why has the artist decided to tell these stories? What do you think motivates him to tell these stories?

2. Do you know where South Africa is, and what Apartheid means? The artist comes from South Africa, and is showing things that have happened in his country. Do these things happen in our country as well? If so, describe the things you think are like what you have seen in the animation.

Classroom Activity:

1. Like in the video of the man behind the desk, **Body Language** tells us a lot about who we are, and how we are feeling. This activity encourages students to think about the stereotypes by having them act out the body language. As a class, create a list of 5-10 stereotypes of people they think about (such as executive, tourist, skateboarder, jock, construction worker, teacher, etc.) After the list is made, ask them to act out the characters without using words. After the class guesses the person from the list they have made, ask them to analyze the body language, and stereotypes. **WHY** do we think about people in the ways we do, and is it always true? What is missing? Ask them to consider further how important it is to think carefully about stereotypes and the body language of those around them.
2. **Flip Book Animation:** Each student should have 10 sheets of 8 1/2 x 11" paper should be cut in half and stapled together with 2-3 staples. Each student should think about a situation they wish to animate through drawing. Make 20 drawings that denote a figure and object over a period of time – moving in space. The narrative should include a figure, an object and a sense of space. When the book is flipped quickly with the fingers, the animation will come alive.
3. **Face Collage.** Students collage faces from magazine photographs which create new people who are more complex and diverse than the images typically seen in magazines in advertisements.
4. **Drawn/Collaged Portraits:** Ask students to draw a self-portrait, and then ask them to draw a portrait of a classmate. The two can be hung together for a composite image that will give a fuller picture of the person. The students can also cut and re-glue the two images together to make the final composite image. These portraits can be done from observation or imagination. What are the objects that may represent them or the person they are portraying – these objects can be used in the image. Collaged images along with the drawn image can be used in this activity.

BARBARA KRUGER: *White Power*

About the Artist:

Barbara Kruger was born in Newark, New Jersey, 1945 as an only child. She studied at Syracuse University, Parsons School of Design, and the School of Visual Arts in New York and has been exhibited world-wide.

After attending Syracuse University, the School of Visual Arts, and studying art and design with Diane Arbus at Parson's School of Design in New York, Kruger obtained a design job at Condé Nast Publications. Working for Mademoiselle Magazine, she was quickly promoted to head designer. Later, she worked as a graphic designer, art director, and picture editor in the art departments at House and Garden, Aperture, and other publications. This background in design is evident in the work for which she is now internationally renowned. She layers found photographs from existing sources with pithy and aggressive text that involves the viewer in the struggle for power and control that her captions speak to. In their trademark black letters against a slash of red background, some of her instantly recognizable slogans read "I shop therefore I am," and "Your body is a battleground." Much of her text questions the viewer about feminism, classicism, consumerism, and individual autonomy and desire, although her black-and-white images are culled from the mainstream magazines that sell the very ideas she is disputing. As well as appearing in museums and galleries worldwide, Kruger's work has appeared on billboards, bus cards, posters, a public park, a train station platform in Strasbourg, France, and in other public commissions. She has taught at the California Institute of Art, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the University of California, Berkeley. She lives in New York and Los Angeles.

-from <http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/kruger/>

Discussion Questions:

1. Barbara Kruger uses the world of advertising for her art work. She looks carefully at advertisements, and analyzes ads, and billboards. She asks how our identity is affected and shaped by the words, and images that we encounter every day in our lives. By focusing on these things, she asks us to look harder and ask whether what we read and see is really true. She tries to get us to be less passive, and more active in our minds about these things which normally we don't think about. What are the subliminal messages we read and see every day? What is she saying in this large wall piece?

Classroom Activity:

1. If your class was given money to design a billboard for Baltimore City, what would it be? What would it say, and what imagery would your class put on this billboard. Where would you hang this billboard?

NIKKI S. LEE: *White Privilege*

About the Artist:

Nikki S. Lee was born in Kye-Chang, South Korea in 1970. She lives and works as a photographer in New York City.

Nikki Lee's work investigates how fluid and situational identity can be. Born in Korea she has an immigrant's keen eye for the daily rituals of social identification. Lee researches specific communities: what they wear, where they go, the peculiarities of posture, gesture and facial set particular to a social group. She then transforms and documents herself with her "new" community. There is no deception -- Lee introduces herself and explains her project beforehand. Her projects to date have included The Hispanic Project, The Lesbian Project, The Yuppie Project, The Swingers Project and The Punk Project.

-from <http://headlands.org/Artists/NikkiSLee.shtml>

Of all of the series to emerge from Lee's enterprise, *The Yuppie Project* is arguably the most significant. For several months in 1998, Lee navigated her way through a world of young Wall Street professionals. While these photographs play on certain stereotypes—they depict a preppie, moneyed world peopled with fresh-faced, all-American WASPs—the clichés Lee tries to inhabit help also make visible a racial category that has, for the most part, remained invisible in American culture: whiteness. It is rare for any work of art to represent whiteness per se, for we live in a culture where whiteness is so much the norm that it does not have to be named. In *The Yuppie Project*, Lee captures the dress, the gestures, and the eating, work, and leisure-time habits of people who never have to think about their own skin color or the power it affords them. They work for the top stock brokerage houses and banks. They lunch at the World Financial Center. They work out at the Equinox gym. They pamper themselves with pedicures, massages, and trips to Barney's. They go out drinking with other traders, analysts, and money managers. And, in almost every shot, they wear their power and privilege as comfortably as their smartly tailored clothes.

– Maurice Berger, catalog text excerpt.

Discussion Questions:

1. If you were to become someone else for a while, who would that be? What would change in your life? Would your body language and clothes have to change? Would you be able to convince others that you really are that person? Would your language also change? Think of a person who lives very differently from you, and try to imagine realistically what you would have to do to become this person.

Classroom Activity:

1. Pair up students in the class, or allow them to work alone if preferred. Each student is given an instamatic camera to document themselves as another person. Take one or two weeks to allow them to photograph themselves in their altered state, Develop the film, and ask them to briefly write about who they represent in the photographs. Display.

MIKE KELLY & PAUL MCCARTHY: *White Normal*

About the Artists:

This work will not be shown with elementary school students. We encourage all high school instructors to pre-view the video 'Heidi' before taking students to see the work. Adult viewer discretion is advised, and encouraged. This piece can be temporarily turned off upon instructors request.

About the Artists:

Mike Kelley was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1954, studies at California Institute of the Arts, and lives in Los Angeles, CA

Paul McCarthy was born in 1945 in Salt Lake City, UT and lives in Pasadena, CA.

If you walk into a room and find everything you held dear in childhood degraded, chances are it's a Paul McCarthy installation. McCarthy is known for shocking, sexually charged pieces that feature benign cartoon and pop-culture characters -- Olive Oyl and Santa Claus, among others -- in a bacchanalia of blood and feces. McCarthy has collaborated with fellow artist Mike Kelley on a number of video pieces. Critics often compare his work with that of the Viennese Actionists whose performances were also characterized by gore, raw sexuality, and abused food.

The film *Heidi* from 1992 (60 min) by Mike Kelley and Paul McCarthy is based on a performance that develops surprising associations between Joanna Spyri's novel *Heidi*, American and European myths of purity, horror films and the media version of family life. Their work is based on an ironic combination of the media's biased presentation of present-day society and this darker side of violence and psychic aberrations. Both Kelley and McCarthy express a fascination with the apparently innocent world of childhood, revealing it as a theatre of repression, violence and lack of understanding.

"There is this thing about consumption, consumerism and the use of a fantasy figure to permeates our culture as a conditioner," he says. "I point that out through the use of these characters, such as Heidi, figures which are fabrications that don't exist but are related to some sort of child conditioning. They are all about the culturalization of innocence."

Discussion Questions:

(OPTIONAL AS DECIDED BY INSTRUCTOR BEFORE TOUR)

1. Why do these two artists turn the German story of 'Heidi' into something that is very difficult to view? Do they support and encourage the things they depict or are they criticizing them?

CINDY SHERMAN: *White Type*

About the Artist:

Cindy Sherman was born in 1954 in Glen Ridge, NJ. She lives and works in New York City. She emerged onto the New York art scene in the early 1980s as part of a new generation of artists concerned with the codes of representation in a media-saturated era. Having graduated from State University College, Buffalo, New York, in 1976, she moved to New York the following year, at a time when the authority of the Modernist paradigm was coming under increasing scrutiny. Amid debates surrounding authorship and the role of originality, the condition of the photographic image, and the increasing commodification of art, Sherman's work was quickly embraced in the early 1980s and framed within the contemporary feminist critique of patriarchy. According to photographer Cindy Sherman, "*The male half of society has structured the whole language of how women see and think about themselves.*" In "Untitled Film Stills" (1977-1980), Sherman featured herself in various guises that resemble stock characters from Hollywood melodramas, providing commentary on the stereotyped roles of women as depicted by men in movies, television, advertising, fashion spreads, and magazine centerfolds. Using makeup, wigs, costumes, props, and settings that imply a narrative or portray an emotional state, she displays astonishing versatility in her portrayals of diverse roles. "In a way, I'm a Performance artist," she has mused. "I was influenced more by Performance art than by photography or art."

-from <http://www.artandculture.com/arts/artist?artistId=147>

In *Bus Riders*, Sherman masquerades as a range of urban character types, people she had observed on New York City buses and subways. Alternating between black and white people, these images are at once humorous and canny: a black male street kid on his way to school, hood over his head, notebooks clutched to his chest; an uptight white businessman, legs crossed and an attaché case on his lap; an awkward, self-conscious white schoolgirl, replete with plaid skirt and knee socks; a hip black city girl, wearing a mini-skirt and platform shoes.

In its ability to give white and black types equal weight and emphasis, *Bus Riders* is one of the earliest examples of Conceptual Art to mark whiteness itself as an identity worthy of examination. By juxtaposing photographs of exaggerated racial types, Sherman not only draws attention to racial differences; she makes clear that whiteness, no less than blackness, is an identity subject to naming, categorization, and stereotype. In a more recent series, *Untitled* (2000), the artist impersonates a range of white, female character types, from chaste country girl and matronly WASP to trailer park mom. Once again, she marks whiteness, reminding us of the complex ways in which race—in concert with other aspects of identity, such as gender and class—mitigates power and privilege.

– Maurice Berger, catalog text excerpt.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the images in *Bus Riders*, and how they profile the people. Cindy Sherman studies people, and then dresses like them for the photographs: what does she reveal by doing this?
2. Discuss the images of the wealthy white women. Do you find them accurate?

Writing Activity:

1. Students can select a photograph and use their imagination to write a story about the person selected. They should tell who they are, where they live, and what they do for a living. They should give a story that tells about the character of this person, and how they think.

Classroom Activity:

1. Pair up students in the class, or allow them to work alone if preferred. Each student is given an instamatic camera to document themselves as another person. Take one or two weeks to allow them to photograph themselves in their altered state, Develop the film, and ask them to briefly write about who they represent in the photographs. Display.

GARY SIMMONS: *White Trash*

About the Artist:

Gary Simmons was born in New York in 1964. He attended the School of Visual Arts, New York City (BFA 1988), and The California Institute of Fine Arts, Valencia, California (MFA 1990). His work has been the subject of numerous solo and group exhibitions, including those at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

With extreme insight into subjects that address racial stereotypes in history and pop culture, Simmons creates extraordinary works with simple materials. Simmons is best known for his magnificent, expansive erasure drawings, which are executed in white chalk on slate-painted panels or walls, then smeared and smudged by the artist's hands. Simmons's earliest works presented blatant racially stereotypical images that he appropriated from popular visual culture. In recent works he uses imagery that carries multiple suggestions of meaning, but that continues to address personal and collective experiences of race and class. The act of erasure plays a central role in Simmons's work as a gesture of protest or critique. He does not attempt to completely eradicate his drawn images, but leaves their traces as signifiers of remembrance and persistence.

-from <http://www.sitesantafe.org/calendar>

In *Big Still* (2001), Gary Simmons's has moved away from the language and symbols of urban black history to explore the imagery of the Prohibition-era rural white South. The large-scale sculpture—a whitewashed fiberglass contraption of barrels, trashcans, tubes, and pipes—is meant to evoke a backyard moonshine distillery. Commensurate with the recent interest of artists and scholars in the most economically and socially marginal aspect of white America, so-called “white trash,” Simmons sees in the lives of the disenfranchised Southern hillbilly a sensibility and public image that is analogous to blackness. Thus *Big Still* explores what curator Thelma Golden calls the “make-shift resourcefulness” and the beauty of a “lean-to sensibility” that rural white Southern culture shares with urban black communities, or anyone who has to make do with available resources.

The work also reminds us that “whiteness” is not always synonymous with privilege and that not all white people are powerful or in positions of power within society and culture. While the lives of poor white people—the denizens of the Southern trailer park, the hills of rural Appalachia, or the urban project—are as irrelevant and foreign to most white Americans as the lives of black people, the concept of “white trash” ironically represents the most clearly marked and least invisible form of whiteness. Thus, *Big Still*—like the discourse of “white trash” that surrounds and defines it—emphasizes and isolates whiteness. It stands as a monument to whiteness's most marginal and disaffected subjects, marking it as something worthy of study and commemoration.

– Maurice Berger, catalog text excerpt.

Discussion Questions for Gary Simmons:

1. What is this sculpture supposed to represent?
2. What do you know about backyard moonshine distilleries in America? What kind of people made them?
3. Why is *The Big Still* painted all white? Seeing this all in white makes us think about what is lost with the removal of color: whiteness becomes a lack.

<p style="text-align: center;">PRINT AND MEDIA RESOURCES</p>

Web Resources and Art Books:

Center for Art and Visual Culture, UMBC

<http://www.umbc.edu/cavc/>

Maurice Berger:

<http://www.allbookstores.com/browse/Author/Berger.%20Maurice>

Press Release for Exhibition:

<http://www.umbc.edu/newsevents/arts/calendar/visualart.html>

Becher and Robbins:

<http://robbecher.www4.50megs.com/>

Nayland Blake:

In a Different Light : Visual Culture, Sexual Identity, Queer Practice, edited by Nayland Blake, Lawrence Rinder, Amy Scholder, San Francisco: City Lights Books, c1995.

<http://www.artnet.com/ag/artistdetails.asp?aid=2581>

Nancy Burson:

Faces, Nancy Burson, Santa Fe, N.M.: Twin Palms, c1993.

Nancy Burson : Faces, essay by Lynn M. Herbert, Houston : Contemporary Arts Museum, c1992.

Composites, Computer-Generated Portraits: Nancy Burson, Richard Carling and David Kramlich ; [book design by Keith Davis], 1st ed., New York : Beech Tree Books, c1986.

<http://www.nancyburson.com/>

Wendy Ewald:

Wendy Ewald, *Wendy Ewald: Secret Games: Collaborative Works with Children 1969-1999*, Scalo Press, 2002.

Retratos y sueños = Portraits and Dreams : Photographs by Mexican Children, by Wendy Ewald; curated by Wendy Ewald and Arthur Ollman., c1993.

Appalachia, a Self-Portrait, edited by Wendy Ewald; foreword by Robert Coles; text by Loyal Jones ; photos. by Lyn Adams, Frankfort, Ky. : Gnomon Press for Appalshop, c1979.

<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/Ewald/>

Mike Kelley:

<http://www.mikekelley.com/>

William Kentridge:

Dan Cameron and Carolyn Christov-Bakergiev, *William Kentridge*, Phaidon Press, London, 1999.

<http://www.carnegieinternational.org/html/art/kentridge.htm>

Barbara Kruger:

Control : Power, Cultures, and the World of Appearances, by Barbara Kruger. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, c1993.

<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/9747/kruger.html>

Nikki S. Lee:

Russell Ferguson, *Nikki S. Lee: Projects*, Hatje Cantz Publishers, Germany, 2001.

Paul McCarthy:

"Dimensions of the Mind": The Denial and the Desire in the Spectacle, by Paul McCarthy; Köln: Oktagon, c1999.

<http://www.artandculture.com/arts/artist?artistId=16>

Cindy Sherman:

Cindy Sherman, edited by Gunilla Knape. Göteborg, Sweden: Hasselblad Center, c2000.

Early work of Cindy Sherman, by Cindy Sherman with music/sound by The Glove Compartment ; foreword by Edsel Williams. 1st ed. East Hampton, N.Y.: Glenn Horowitz Bookseller, c2000.

Women Making Art : Women in the Visual, Literary, and Performing Arts Since 1960, edited by Deborah Johnson & Wendy Oliver. New York: Peter Lang, c2001.

Inverted Odysseys : Claude Cahun, Maya Deren, Cindy Sherman, edited by Shelley Rice ; with contributions by Lynn Gumpert ...; also including *Heroines*, a fictional text by Claude Cahun, translated by Norman MacAfee. New York : Grey Art Gallery, New York

University ; North Miami : Museum of Contemporary Art ; Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, c1999.

<http://www.artandculture.com/arts/artist?artistId=147>

Gary Simmons:

The Theater of Refusal : Black Art and Mainstream Criticism, artists, Jean-Michel Basquiat, curator, Charles Gaines; editor, Catherine Lord., Irvine: Fine Arts Gallery, University of California, Irvine, c1993.

http://www.moma.org/onlineprojects/conversations/g_s_f.html

History/Literary Books:

- *Winnetou*, by Karl May ; translated and abridged by David Koblick from the original 1892-93 edition of *Winnetou I*; foreword by Richard H. Cracroft, Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, c1999.

- *The Leatherstocking Saga: Being Those Parts of The Deerslayer*, by James Fenimore Cooper, edited by Allan Nevins; series Modern Library giants, c1966

- *The Master Prints*, by Edward Curtis, Sante Fe, N.M.: Arena Editions, c2001.

- *North American Indians*, by George Catlin; edited and with an introduction by Peter Matthiessen, New York, NY: Viking, c1989.

- *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, by George Catlin; edited and with an introduction by Michael Macdonald Mooney. New York: Gramercy Books, c1995.

Tar Baby : Tales of Brer Rabbit, by Joel Chandler Harris, London: Creation Books, c2000.

On the Plantation : a Story of a Georgia Boy's Adventures During the War, by Joel Chandler Harris; illustrated by E.W. Kemble; introduction by William C. McDonald. Fredericksburg, Va.: Sergeant Kirkland's, c1997.

- *Invisible Man*, by Ralph Ellison, 2nd ed., New York : Vintage International, 1995.

- *Stephen Biko*, by Donald Woods, New York, H. Holt, c1987.

The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness, edited by Birgit Brander Rasmussen ... [et al.]. published [Link] Durham [N.C.] : Duke University Press, 2001.

- *White Lies, : Race and the Myths of Whiteness*, Maurice Berger, Farrar Straus and Giroux, c1991.

Colored White : Transcending the Racial Past, David R. Roediger. Berkeley: University of California Press, c2002.

- *White Trash: Race and Class in America*, edited by Matt Wry and Annalee Newitz, Routledge, NY, c1997.

A Tennessee Legend with a Pictorial of Old Bottles & Jugs, by Pat Mitchamore. Nashville, Tenn.: Rutledge Hill Press, c1992.

Loretta Lynn: Coal Miner's Daughter, by Loretta Lynn with George Vecsey. New York : Da Capo Press, c1996.

Films:

- Coal Miner's Daughter
- Walt Disney "Song of the South", 1946