



ART GUIDES FOR EDUCATORS:

ANNIE LOPEZ



After twenty-five years of national exhibition experience, Joe and Greta could not shake the “Emerging Artist” label.

Joe & Greta

Annie Lopez, *The Almost Real History of Art in Phoenix*, 2007. Cyanotype. Collection Phoenix Art Museum, Museum purchase with funds provided by Eva and Eric Jungerman Family Endowment, 2012.134.1-15. Visit www.phxart.org to view all 15 prints.

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MEET THE ARTIST

Annie Lopez is a fourth-generation Phoenician. Her work has been exhibited across the United States, but Lopez's subject matter remains predominantly tied to her experience in the Southwest. She creates pieces that are personal, but which she believes anyone can relate to. Lopez is primarily a photographer, but chooses to apply unique techniques when developing and displaying her images, like creating paper dresses out of cyanotype prints.

"My images come from my life and my imagination. I might incorporate words with the image as a clue to the meaning of the piece. When asked, I will give the story behind the work, but I will also allow the viewer to interpret it in their own way. My inspiration comes from life and death in the Southwest, television and from my family, who often serve as my subject matter." –Annie Lopez artist statement from 1989. Learn more about the artist by visiting her website <http://exploreartphoenix.com/2013/06/20/arizona-artist-profile-annie-lopez/>.

CONSIDER THE CONTEXT

The Almost Real History of Art in Phoenix consists of fifteen prints of photos and text. These monochromatic images are cyanotypes, a photographic printing process that creates a cyan (blue) colored print caused by a chemical solution and exposure to ultra-violet light. They have been enlarged, placed above text, and printed using the cyanotype process. Cyanotype printing is a contact form of printing, meaning you lay objects on top of the prepared paper, expose in the sun and once developed in a water bath, the blocked areas of the print will remain white while the exposed areas turn a vibrant blue. The chemicals undergo a reaction when exposed to ultraviolet light, and form ferric ferrocyanide, a blue dye known as Prussian blue. Each print is the unique result of how it is created. This process is more widely associated with blueprints in architecture.

Annie Lopez describes her work: "I work in photographic processes, specifically cyanotype prints which contain an image and text that may be a single word or a personal essay. Family has been a favorite subject, but I have also commented on experiences with prejudice, childhood and my many years in the art world. I try to have a sense of humor about it all."

The cyanotypes here began with vintage photographs Lopez found (often of her own family) that spoke to her experiences of the Phoenix art world. As Lopez states, "The stories in this series are true, though some are slightly exaggerated. Some pieces mention a bit of lost Phoenix history completely ignored or never learned by our transient population."

As a Phoenix native, Annie Lopez frustrated by assumptions and biases. She says, "My work is based on my personal experiences and family history. I am a native of Phoenix, Arizona and my work reflects the culture of this region. (...) Series of work that I have created, such as the Hispanic Series,

The Only Spanish I Know and The Story of My Infernal Life, reflect the absurd stereotypes and biases I have encountered, or bad experiences I have survived." – Artist statement.

LOOK CLOSELY

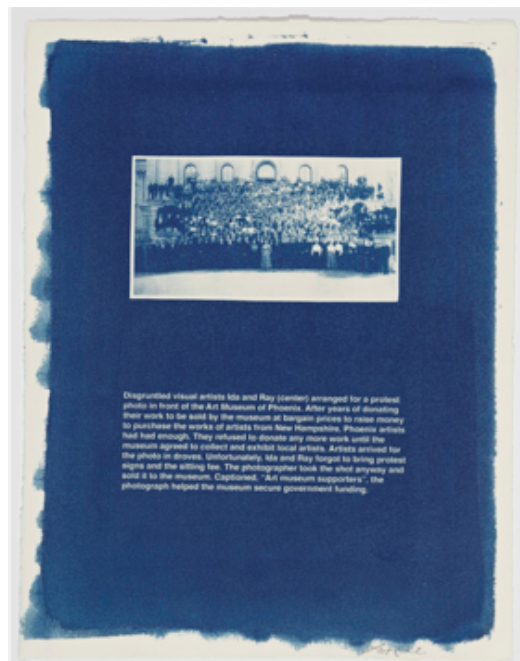
Ask students to read the below caption, without viewing the accompanying photograph:

Disgruntled visual artists Ida and Ray (center) arranged for a protest photo in front of the Art Museum of Phoenix. After years of donating their work to be sold by the museum at bargain prices to raise money to purchase the works of artists from New Hampshire, Phoenix artists had had enough. They refused to donate any more work until the museum agreed to collect and exhibit local artists. Artists arrived for the photo in droves. Unfortunately, Ida and Ray forgot to bring protest signs and the sitting fee. The photographer took the shot anyway and sold it to the museum. Captioned, "Art museum supporters", the photograph helped the museum secure government funding.

Questions to start a conversation:

1. What is the main idea of the text?
What did the student read to support this?
2. Ask students to make a hypothesis of what the accompanying image might be.

Show students the artwork, with both the text and the accompanying photograph.



Annie Lopez, *The Almost Real History of Art in Phoenix*. 2007. 2012.134

3. Students will cut out images and text and collage them together to create a satire. Collages will be similar to Lopez's artwork, combining images and text to create interesting commentary on social issues.
4. Take time as a class to discuss each student's work.

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Continue the conversation with the following questions:

- How does the idea change when the text and photograph are viewed together?
- What do you think the artist's intent is for using text and photographs together in her artwork?
- What is the artist telling us about the history of art in Phoenix?
- How does this artwork contribute to your understanding of the artists' life in Phoenix and the lives of others in your community?
- What we think is true often depends on what we see and care about from our own viewpoint. What are some of the alternative perspectives someone might have about the history of art in Phoenix? What circumstances might contribute to people having differing views on this subject?
- Have students closely observe additional prints from the artist's series. How does this additional information provide a broader picture of the artist's message?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

Understanding Cultural Bias

1. Ask students to consider what they think the artist wants us to understand about her experience as a Hispanic Phoenix native? What social and cultural biases does she address through her artwork?
2. Have students interview family members, classmates or community members from other cultures to learn how these biases can affect day-to-day life.

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

The Phoenix Art Scene

Annie Lopez has been an important member of the Phoenix art scene since 1984.

1. Visit <http://artlinkphoenix.com> to learn about local art venues and events.
2. Students write a persuasive essay encouraging classmates to attend.

Satirical Art

Satire is a genre of literature, and sometimes visual and performing arts, in which vices, follies, abuses, and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, ideally with the intent of calling individuals, corporations, government or society itself, into action that would lead to improvement.

1. Discuss examples of satire that students may be familiar with.
2. What makes an artwork satirical?
3. Does satire come from artist intent or from interpretation?
4. Discuss how Annie Lopez's artwork might be considered satire.

ART STARTS

COMMUNITY COLLAGES

Annie Lopez's artworks focus on local issues. The combined text and images are her way of interpreting the history of her community. Students research local issues about their community to create a collage.

1. Students will find images of events or people from within their local newspapers, online articles, or magazines.
2. Next, students will search for words or phrases from the same resources, or write their own, to create a new meaning when combined with the image.
3. Students will cut out images and text and collage them together to create a satire. Collages will be similar to Lopez's artwork, combining images and text to create interesting commentary on social issues.
4. Take time as a class to discuss each student's work.

ALTERED PHOTOS & FICTIONS

1. Provide students with a selection of black and white copies of found photographs. Photographs can be found online, in from thrift stores, or taken from magazines, and then photocopied.
2. Students alter photographs using colored pencils, markers, paint, or other media.
3. Have students write short, creative stories about the people in their photograph.
4. Glue the altered photographs to construction paper or cardstock, and glue the story underneath, as a caption.

CYANOTYPES

Materials

- Prepared cyanotype paper (this is available from many retailers- search for "Sun Print" or "Sun Art").
- Alternatively, you can coat watercolor paper with a mixture of potassium ferricyanide and ferric ammonium citrate. These can be obtained through a photography supply retailer. Note: While the DIY method is more flexible, and far less expensive, please note that the chemicals involved can be hazardous and should only be used by adults.
- Plastic transparency sheets (these are available from office supply stores, or online retailers)
- Access to a black and white photocopier
- A photograph of student's family member (photos will be returned, undamaged)
- Glass sheet (i.e. front of a picture frame)
- White paper
- Tub filled with clean water
- Optional: a small amount of white vinegar or lemon juice

Instructions

1. Have students bring in a photograph of a family member (clear, simple photos with high contrast work best).
2. Create a black and white copy of the photo onto a plastic transparency sheet.
3. Secure a flat, clean place outside to expose your

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photograph. Near this, set up a rinse tub, filled with clean water. Optional: Adding a small amount of lemon juice or white vinegar may improve your results

4. Working quickly, in a dimly lit space away from bright light or sun, place the printed transparency sheet on the cyanotype paper and then place the clear glass sheet on top, so the pages don't move or blow away (glass from a picture frame works well for this).
5. Move the project to the outside location you've set up. Watch that nothing is casting shadows over your paper. It is best to create prints on a clear, sunny day.
6. Leave your paper in the sun for 2-5 minutes. Watch paper closely – stop the exposure when the paper turns very light blue or white.
7. Quickly, remove the glass sheet, and transparency and rinse the cyanotype paper for 30-60 seconds in the tub of water.
8. Let paper dry. Placing between the pages of a heavy book when mostly dry will help keep it from wrinkling.
9. At the bottom of the white paper, have students write a short description of the family member from their photograph. This will serve as a caption for their artwork.
10. When the cyanotype is dry, have students mount their photo above the caption.

ANTHOTYPES

Anthotypes are photographs created using plant matter, painted onto paper, and then exposed in sunlight.

Materials

- 2 cups of raw spinach leaves
- 3 tbsp. of denatured alcohol
- Food processor or blender
- Sieve
- Thick paper (watercolor paper works well)
- Paintbrush
- Leaves or other small objects
- Acrylic or glass sheet (i.e. front of a picture frame)

Instructions

1. Rinse spinach leaves and place in blender or food processor with a small amount of denatured alcohol and blend until a smooth paste (children should perform this step under the supervision of adults).
2. Press spinach paste through a sieve with your fingers to extract the juice. Juice should be thick, but not chunky.
3. Paint the green juice onto white paper with a paintbrush and allow to dry overnight in a dark space- do not expose to bright light. You can repeat this step, for more vivid results. Any paper that will hold the emulsion can be used. Since it will be out in the sun for a few days or even weeks, it is best to use a sturdy paper: try a medium or heavy weight watercolor paper.
4. Arrange leaves or other objects on the coated paper to create your own design.

5. Place the acrylic or glass sheet over your paper to keep objects from shifting.
6. Leave in a sunny place for 4-6 hours. When the exposed areas of your paper are very light or white, remove from the sun.
7. No rinsing is required – however the print will fade if displayed in bright sun.
8. Experiment with other plants – exposure time will vary from hours to weeks but you can

LEARN MORE

Annie Lopez Artist Register <http://exploreartphoenix.com/2013/06/20/arizona-artist-profile-annie-lopez/>

Anthotypes, Alternative process photography <http://www.alternativephotography.com/wp/processes/anthotypes/anthotypes-making-print-using-plants>

Cyanotypes. Alternative process photography <http://www.alternativephotography.com/pdf/cyanotype-workshop-english.pdf>

Cyanotype process <http://artclubblog.com/2012/07/01/cyanotype-prints/>

Veggie Photos (Anthotype) <http://kids.tate.org.uk/pdf/Veggie-Photos.pdf>