

Art a form of expression, showing the audience something of meaning. Artistic skills maybe the backbone to making a piece of work, but the true meaning of art is expression the piece creates. You may think of Jackson Pollock, his works do not take effort to make. It is the details that make his work significant. The used band aids, strands of hair, drops of blood, sand, and glass intertwined in his choice of colored paint. His works are elegant, and he has physically put himself into his pieces. The written briefs describing war stories, his continuous struggle with depression and alcoholism, his use of turning dark moments into beautiful pieces of work is what makes his art so significant.

As an art educator it is not only my job to teach artistic skills and theory. Art is the only core academic reflecting on adolescent development. This idea being comparable to those of Professor Elliot Eisner and Dr. Viktor Lowenfeld. Art holds the power of voice for students, giving them freedoms unlike other subject areas. Art teachers explain how the choices of materials can have meaning. The use of cool colors verse warm colors. What color theory can bring to the emotional aspect of a piece. The focus being the combination of theory, history, skills, and interpretation to make a masterpiece. Digging into our lives on a personal level, manifesting opinions, and using art to communicate the ideologies we advocate to the audience as artists and student artists.

Art can be a tool for teaching social awareness, historical events, cultural differences, and emotional balance. Referencing historical and contemporary arts provides a timeline of social growth. Teachers can explore renaissance portraits of Jacques-Louis David, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* and Johannes Vermeer's, *Girl with Pearl Earring*, comparing them to more contemporary artworks of Kehinde Wiley. His art raises awareness about race, gender, and the politics of representation amongst African American men and women, using the formalities of conventional European portraiture. By combining these two eras we can see growth that history books cannot describe by reciting laws.

Teaching and making art, provides a combination that no other academic subject area could teach our students. Humans are surrounded by images created by designers and artist on a second-by second basis. Art allows students capacity for growth as human beings in a social format that other subject areas cannot provide. In many ways art is a historian, author, therapist, band aid, medication, and scientist combined into one curriculum.



Jacques-Louis David: *Napoleon Crossing the Alps or Bonaparte at the St Bernard Pass*, 1801-1805, Oil on canvas, 1.6x1.3



Johannes Vermeer: *Girl with Pearl Earring*, 1665, Oil on canvas, 261x221



Kehinde Wiley: *Napoleon Leading the Army Over the Alps*, 2005, Oil on canvas, 108x108



Kehinde Wiley: *Shantavia Beale II*, 2012, Oil on canvas, 60x48