



Introduction

The Everson Museum of Art presents *Aftermarket: Art, Objects and Commerce*, on view from September 17, 2005 through February 19, 2006. This exhibition presents a unique forum in which art and general classroom teachers can explore art identity, consumption, culture and expression. This packet seeks to facilitate discussion in such a way that concepts can be easily translated for various grade levels and curricular interests.

Our Objectives

The EMA provides this packet to help educators adapt this exhibition to individual curriculum needs. In addition, this packet should enable each instructor to maximize the benefits of a guided tour of the exhibit. We hope that the benefits will be evident in your students' level of participation during and after their museum visit, as well as in your students' ability to transfer the information they learn from this exhibit to other projects.

Overview of Contents

This packet presents *Aftermarket: Art, Objects and Commerce* through a variety of projects that include writing, discussions, art making and exploration. Emphasis is placed on observation and discussion, along with suggestions for related projects that address New York State Learning Standards in the Visual and English Language Arts. A number of images have been chosen for inclusion in this packet for your classroom use.

At the end of this packet is a one-page survey. Please take a minute to fill it out and add any additional comments you may have regarding the usefulness of this packet. We rely on your feedback to best serve your needs.

Visual Thinking Strategies

The EMA utilizes the inquiry based, student-centered Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) curriculum in many of its tours and school-museum collaborations. We encourage educators to use VTS in the classroom to enable students to discuss works of art on their own terms, based on what they see and what they decide is interesting and important. A more comprehensive explanation of VTS can be found at the Visual Understanding in Education website, which we encourage you to visit at www.VUE.org. VTS is a useful tool to use for several works in *Aftermarket: Art, Objects and Commerce*. The role of the teacher as facilitator in this process is crucial to its success. If you would like to know more about VTS or are interested in receiving training, please call the Education Department at 474.6064.

Overview of *Surplus*

Surplus is concerned with mass production and disproportionate consumption. The museum-going audience is asked to view the clothing bales in a new, even revolutionary way, one that exposes the essentially unilateral commercial and economic relationship between the First and Third Worlds. *Surplus* is a perversely sublime monument of and to waste – one that is fundamentally about the social conditions of Capitalism.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, American and European sculpture was very traditional. Sculptures were figurative; carved out of stone, marble, or wood; or modeled from clay and cast in metal. Today, sculptures can be made out of almost anything, they can be built nearly anywhere, and they can even be performed. Sometimes they exist only as concepts in the artist's mind. And many sculptures being done today – like *Surplus* – are being created to express political or social concerns.

One can find links to minimalism in *Surplus* as well. Minimalism drew attention to the space in which the work was shown, and gave rise to direct engagement with this space as a work in itself. Experiencing the bales in a museum context is very different than viewing them at a distributor's warehouse or in a market in Africa where they arrive as second hand objects to be sold.

For many conceptual artists, the idea or concept, behind their art is more important than the way the work looks. Many conceptual artists feel that art is a part of life; just one more experience that can't be separated from any of the others.

Often conceptual art is based on the found object. Found objects can also be everyday items the artist transforms to make the viewer see them differently.

In addition to being conceptual art, *Surplus* is also installation art. Often installation art has four key aspects. It (a) is site-specific; (b) engages viewer participation, often in multi-sensory ways using theatrical means; (c) is a synthesis of diverse materials, tools, and disciplines; and (d) concerns self and societal issues. Freyer is one of many installation artists who use their art as to raise questions about consumption, exchange, and the market economy.

There are three specific concepts originating in contemporary art practice that are embodied in the lessons presented here: (1) process: art making is employed as a form of inquiry or research, (2) medium: common cultural artifacts are utilized as sources or mediums for critical inquiry and art making, and (3) intent: consciousness and understanding of critical issues such as identity and culture constitute the purpose of art making.

1. an amount remaining after the original purpose has been served or the original requirement met
2. an amount of money remaining after all liabilities have been met
3. the amount by which the net worth of a company's assets exceed the value of its owned stock

adj

not required to meet existing needs, or left over after these have been met

Synonyms – extra, excess, spare, leftover, remaining, additional, over, superfluous, not needed, excessive unnecessary

Many of the world's t-shirts begin life as cotton in Texas, before becoming T-shirts in places such as China. They re-enter the U.S. market for sale and are eventually donated to places such as the Rescue Mission or Salvation Army, made into bales, and shipped to third world countries such as Tanzania for resale.

NPR, All Things Considered, The World in a T-shirt, April, 2005

Questions to consider

What are things in your personal life, as well as things in your community, in the world, that fit the definition of surplus?

John Freyer did not assemble the bales in *Surplus*. The bales were purchased by the Museum from a bale distributor in Utah. Do you think that it is important that the artist actually draw or paint or build the work of art, or is it equally valid that the artist conceive of the work and have others execute it or simply use objects that already exist? How does this method of making art change what we mean when we call a work “an original”?

The fact that *Surplus* can be re-created many times using different bales in different settings and different configurations raises a key question: Must a work of art be unique? Explain.

Usually museums do not allow visitors to touch works of art on display. At the end of this exhibit, however, viewers will be encouraged to touch and even purchase the contents of the art bales on display. In what ways do you think John Freyer's method of involving the public in his work is meaningful?

In making work that can be replenished, such as clothing bales, John Freyer comments on the concept of originality in art. Does it matter that the clothes are replaceable? Is it still art if it can be reproduced? What happens to the work if a different kind of clothing or different objects are baled together?

How does the mass and placement in the gallery space affect the impact of this work? Although John Freyer stipulated that he wanted a certain number of clothing bales, the curators decided on how many and what size because of how much weight the museum could handle. How might changing the placement or number of bales affect the work's meaning? Is it important to see several bales together? What would it feel like if there were only one or two?

Freyer's work often deals with personal and global concerns such as consumerism, technology, and exchange. For instance, this installation of clothing bales is entitled, *Surplus*. What are some ways you can think of to link the concept of surplus to this work?

Brainstorm a list of words that come to mind when you look at these clothing bales. When done, compare your list with another student's. Is your word list consistent or very different? Discuss your responses.

List ten qualities that you value in a work of art. Does *Surplus* satisfy those criteria? How? How not?

Freyer's clothing bales may fit in to what conceptual artist Joseph Beuys coined as "social sculpture." Social sculpture is: 1) interdisciplinary 2) participative and 3) democratic. In what ways can you describe the clothing bales as being interdisciplinary, participative, and democratic?

Activities

Create your own bale

Assemble a chosen item (sock, pen, screwdriver) from each house in your neighborhood, from each student in your class, into a community bale. Take a photo of the owner with their object and record what the object means to them

Curate yourself into being

People produce evidence of their lives everyday through the things they consume and the things they throw away (food wrappers, drinking cups, papers, gum wrappers, soda cans, homework sheets, movie stubs, receipts, snack packages, etc). Save everything you would normally throw away for a specific time period (a day, a week) and create a collage or assemblage (or bale) representing your identity through these items. Consider the composition. Will you emphasize unity; cluster items close together; line up objects so edges meet; create a grid system; arrange by color, textures, or shapes?

What is your relationship with these objects? What do you tend to throw away the most? What do you recycle? Create a writing piece that lists every item in your collection and write about how the item came to be consumed/discarded.

Option: Photograph these objects and create a photomontage hung in the order you used and discarded the item, along with diary entries, noting the date and the time, about what you were doing with the item

Where do I come from?

If, as some say, clothes define a person, then perhaps where the clothes come from should count too! For this project, document the brand name and country where a select number of garments

you own came from (choose a shirt, pants, underwear, shoes); or cut out the labels to use as artifacts in your project. Research as much information as you can about each of your items; the store where you bought it, how much you paid for it, the company who distributed it, where the fabric might have come from, where the actual garment was manufactured and by whom, and how much it cost to make. Taking this new information, create a collage or research document tracing you and your clothes to their origin, helping others to understand the travels your T-shirt or pants went through to reach your house. What can we learn about the economy through this project?

Lost and Found

Where are there lost and found boxes?: a mall, a church, a school, a bookstore, a restaurant, a museum? What items are usually in a lost and found box? Many lost and found items can be obtained if no one claims them within a certain time period. Go on a scavenger hunt to collect items left behind in a variety of lost and found boxes in your community. Create an installation of your newfound items. How would you convey to the viewer that these items come from a variety of people, were found in a variety of places, and have very distinct histories? Could you make up the life these items had before they were lost? Who owned them? What were they like? How did they come to own the item? How could you get viewers to think about all of the items they have lost through this installation?

From Scratch

We often buy and consume things that could be made from scratch, wasting a lot of money and materials. For one week, make as many things as possible that you would normally purchase at a store, from scratch. Is someone's birthday or special event coming up that you could make a present for, instead of buying it at the mall? What foods do you consume that could be made at home? – bread, lemon-aid, soups, salad? Could you make a piece of jewelry similar to something you've wanted to purchase? Create a photo documentary of your creation. What are the differences between your homemade creation and a manufactured one? What are the advantages of making your own item? What are the advantages of purchasing the item?

Road Kill Art

How much waste ends up on the side of the road? Pick a location on the side of the road and go for a walk. Pick up everything that had once belonged to someone: a key, food wrappers, a tool, a rag, cigarette butts, shopping bags, etc. How might you get viewers to see these wasted items as precious objects? Could you embellish them with various decorations, create a display box or pedestal to exalt their presence, combine objects to create a sculpture?

Issues = Objects

John Freyer is concerned with how much excess is produced in our society, in the case of *Surplus*, particularly clothing. He explores how excess clothing is transported to Third World countries for sale at very inexpensive costs, which in turn has hurt these countries textile industries. People cannot afford to buy clothing made in their own country and instead, buy clothing from bales sent overseas.

What is a social issue of concern to you? How could you turn this into a compelling work of art? How can you communicate a powerful message about the social issue you choose to explore? Keep a journal or log about your own thoughts on your chosen topic for one week. Research on

the Internet, libraries, newspapers, through interviews with peers, and document your findings and thoughts. After a week or two of reflection, begin to brainstorm possible materials that could communicate your message. Explore some unique options to find your materials: hardware stores, found objects, discount supply stores, junk yards, as well as typical art materials. Give the piece a title and write an artist statement about the process you went through and some possible interpretations viewers may want to explore as they view your work.

Aftermarket: Art, Objects and Commerce
Walm-Art.Com

Lesson Plan:

Middle School or High School

This lesson plan could be adapted for intermediate elementary grades.

Background: Description of Museum Exhibition:

A small gallery on the first floor of the Everson Museum of Art contains *Walm-Art.Com*, a project artist John Freyer began while artist in residence at The MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire. *Walm-Art.Com* is a fully functional ‘museum store’—one that solely sells objects from a local Wal-Mart curated by the artist. Multiple editions of each hand-selected object will be displayed on shelves for sale at twice their retail price. A glossy, color brochure, reminiscent of retail store circulars, will be available in the exhibition space for viewers/consumers. This brochure functions as a catalogue and displays a photograph of each curated object accompanied by a short narrative about the object written by the artist. The web site, *Walm-Art.Com*, mirrors the sale circular and invites feedback on the selected objects. By removing and isolating the banal—a can of spam, a dog bowl—from the gray homogeneity of the super store shopping experience, *Walm-Art.Com* invites museum-goers, online participants and the legions of Wal-Mart shoppers to reflect on our personal and cultural relationships to the singular objects in an environment of near-suffocating mass production and consumption.

Concept:

How much is enough?

We are inundated with things! Sometimes we have so many choices that we become overwhelmed. Can we really appreciate individual items when they are seen in the context of the mega-store? How can we really “see” the value of a specific object?

Why are objects more valuable when purchased in a museum store?

The objects for sale in the *Walm-Art.Com* gallery cost twice as much as they do in the local WalMart store. Why would people spend more for an object being sold in a museum store than they would in another retail venue? Museum stores often offer items like t-shirts, umbrellas, or tote bags with images of artists or works of art currently on exhibition. People are willing to purchase these items at inflated prices. What is it about the museum store context that makes the items in the store more valuable or expensive?

Goal:

Students will understand that context is an important factor in determining the perceived value of a specific object. Students will explore the idea of excess, over-production, and personal desire to have “things.” Students will reflect on their own personal and cultural relationships to a single object in the context of the mega-store and the museum.

Activities:

- Students will go to Wal-Mart, Target, K-Mart, or another mega-store
- Students will choose one aisle that contains things of interest to them (maybe cosmetics, toys, house wares, stationary, videogames, etc.)

- Students will choose 1 item in the aisle that they find especially compelling, artistic, or interesting that is less than \$3.00.
- Students will purchase that item.
- Teacher Facilitated Class Discussion:
 - Debrief shopping experience. Discuss students' reactions to experience focusing on mass-production, the mega-store shopping experience and consumerism. Using a world map, plot the countries in which the objects were made. Create a class bar graph showing the nations creating goods for the American market.
 - Create a new context for purchased item: talk about the "preciousness" of items displayed in a museum. What makes an item a work of art? How does our culture determine the value of an item? Is the item worth the same in different contexts like a mega-store, specialty store, or museum?
- Students will write a description of the purchased item that would convince others of its inherent value. (Students will use e-bay descriptions or catalogue descriptions as a resource.)
- Students will bring the purchased item to class.
- Each student will display their item as though it was in a museum store, enhancing the presentation of their item—maybe a pedestal, cloth draping, colorful background. Include written description as "wall-text."
- Class will sell or auction the objects with proceeds benefiting a group/cause chosen by the class.

Alternate lesson plan, without visit to mega-store:

- Each student will bring in one object that is less than 6 inches in any direction and able to be hung on a wall with a thumb tack.
- Items will be put on a bulletin board in tightly spaced rows.
- Students will look at board for 1 minute and then list all the items they can remember.
- Teacher will remove items from board one at a time. Each student will make a list of each item on their own sheet of paper
 - Students will put a check mark next to each item that could have been in a store 100 years ago (before the advent of plastic).
 - Students will put a star next to each item that they would purchase, to bring with them, if they had to evacuate their home and could only bring one plastic grocery bag containing their most precious belongings.
 - Students will list the country in which each object is made next to that item.
- Teacher Facilitated Class Discussion: Debrief using check lists to begin conversation. See discussion suggestions above.
- Each student will write a description of the items they brought, convincing others of its inherent value. Students will use e-bay descriptions or catalogue descriptions as a resource.
- Class will sell or auction the objects with proceeds benefiting a group/cause chosen by the class.

AllMyLifeForSale.com – Introduction:

In 2001, John Freyer sold every single item in his possession on the Internet auction site eBay.com, and then drove around the country visiting his former objects and their new owners. For this exhibition, Freyer asked the worldwide participants in the *AllMyLifeForSale.com* project who purchased his personal belongings on eBay four years ago to loan his former objects to the Everson for the duration of the show. The objects have been reunited for the exhibition, identified with markers listing the original object description, the name of the current owner, the date of sale and value of the object, (based on the original sale).

The *AllMyLifeForSale.com* project prompts its viewers to consider the relationships between who we are and what we own. Can “my life” be sold at auction to the highest bidder, or is our personal identity rooted in something more substantial than the objects we choose to consume? How do we assign value to our possessions – and what part of that value is integral to the objects themselves? The project also explores the modern marketplace, whose global reach allows an artist from Iowa to sell a used typewriter to someone in Hawaii and a ski hat to someone in London. How has the Internet changed our ways of buying and selling, especially for second hand objects?

It also prompts us to contemplate our own definitions of art and the act of artistic creation. John Freyer’s work evokes that of Marcel Duchamp, whose Readymade sculptures presented mass-produced, everyday objects – a bicycle wheel, a urinal – as signed art objects. Students may and should ask what constitutes the artistic creation of *AllMyLifeForSale.com*: Is it the concept of selling one’s life on eBay? The actual objects sold? The photographs of the objects? The ephemeral listings on eBay and the performance of selling, packaging, and shipping the objects?

Activities:

Object/Identity/Value

In his book, *All My Life for Sale*, John Freyer writes about the personal connections he felt with some of the objects he auctioned. Although the auction was motivated, in part, by the feeling that his possessions were hampering him and restricting his mobility, at the same time, the objects came to represent him – “my life for sale.” In many ways, his project explores our relationship with our possessions – how they define and represent us and come to be embodied with significances beyond simple utilitarian and exchange value. He writes:

I borrowed these socks from Anna and Derrick after a cold and snowy trip to Utica... There were a few moments during this project that I stopped for a minute to think about what it was that I was doing. The day Jason bought my used socks was one such moment. They were just socks, right? I didn’t want to give them to him. I didn’t want to surrender the memory of where they came from. The simple thought of where they came from occurred to me each and every time I put them on. I haven’t talked to Anna or Derrick in a year or two now, and over the last year I haven’t thought of them as much.

Filters are things in your house that you test new acquaintances with to find out whether or not you are compatible... As for this sheet, I put it over my comforter on my bed. IT serves as a two-way filter: Either they like it and I think that I could go on another date

with them or they hate it and can't believe that a twenty-eight-year-old guy has *Star Wars* sheets. Either way this sheet has served its purpose.

Ask students to consider and/or write about these questions:

- What objects do you think represent you? How do we define who we are through the objects that we own?
- What constitutes identity theft? Could you “steal” someone’s identity by purchasing the same things as they have?
- Can you think of a time when you’ve made a judgment (positive or negative) about someone based on his or her possessions? In retrospect, was it an accurate judgment?
- Do people show how well they know us by the gifts that they choose to give us? How?
- Do advertisers encourage us to define who we are through our purchases? Can you show examples from magazines or television?
- Do you have any belongings that once defined you but now seem irrelevant?

Drawing on the answers and ideas that students have generated in response to these questions, ask them to create a “Museum of Me” using objects from their lives, or representations of those objects. Some questions to think about include:

- Are there objects that need to be on display to tell visitors about who you are?
- Is this the “real” you? Is there a private you that isn’t on display? If so, how will you represent this distinction visually?
- Do you think your friends, classmates and teachers will be surprised by the “you” on display?
- Is it immediately obvious why these objects are significant to, or representative of, you – or does their value stem from personal associations and memories that may not be visible in the objects themselves?
- How many objects will you need to display to make your exhibit genuine to who you are?
- Will the fact that they have been included in a museum exhibit change the value or meaning of these objects?
- How do you invoke who you are right now – who you have been? – who you’re going to be? Are there objects you’re ready to get rid of?
- What will you write in the label copy?

If your class has visited the *Aftermarket* exhibition, discuss what impressions they took away from the *AllMyLifeForSale.com* portion of the exhibition. What did they learn about John Freyer from this display of his possessions? Did they feel like the exhibition helped them to understand who John Freyer was/is? Why or why not? What did they learn from the way the photographs and actual loaned objects were laid out in the exhibition space?

Once students have thought about what objects they might choose to use for their exhibit, discuss how objects can be arranged in this exhibition to reflect their relationship to the student/curator’s personal identity. Are they central or peripheral to “the real you”? Do they reflect the “you” that people know, or a more private you? How will the placement of objects in the exhibition make these distinctions clear to viewers? Have students draw a sketch or plan, showing how they plan to arrange their personal museum. They may want to think about both the ideal location of their museum exhibition (the gym?

The cafeteria? On stage? Outside?) and how they will arrange their exhibition in an actual space, if space is available in your school building to display the exhibitions.

Internet Exploration:

The Internet, and the access that it provided to potential buyers both near and far, played a key role in the realization of John Freyer's *AllMyLifeForSale.com* project. Other artists have also utilized the Internet as both a medium to create art and a potential market to sell and promote their art. For this assignment, students will explore the online marketplace eBay along with conceptual art websites which deal with issues of consumerism and personal identity.

Divide students into teams of three or four. Each team should visit eBay (www.ebay.com) and be assigned to explore one of the following websites:

<http://www.allmylifeforsale.com/html/project/info1.html>

<http://www.mandiberg.com/shop/includes/personal.shtml>

<http://exchangeprogram.org/>

<http://www.all-consuming.com/>

For eBay:

In his “biography” of eBay, *The Perfect Store*, Adam Cohen describes eBay’s potential and impact. He writes:

Things a buyer would once have spent days, weeks, or a lifetime tracking down – the rocking horse he played on as a child, the exact buffalo nickel he needs to complete a collection – are suddenly available at any hour of the day or night, from a PC in the buyer’s home... For sellers, eBay’s impact has been just as profound. It has helped them circumvent the old order of high-priced retailing space, exclusive distribution channels, and costly advertising, and market directly to millions of buyers. In eBay’s democratic marketplace, an individual seller with few resources can compete on an equal footing with the largest corporation.

He quotes from the mission section of eBay’s first business plan, which suggested that eBay (then known as AuctionWeb) offered “the opportunity for mankind to recapture the lost ambiance of the town market, when personal interaction and personal attention was the key to a trade and to life in general.”

In a school computer lab or as a homework assignment, have students spend about an hour browsing the eBay website. They should investigate eBay’s history, mission, and the fee structure for listing and selling items on eBay. They should also browse several categories of listings – ideally areas with unique listings such as vintage jewelry and clothing, and the featured items section – and answer the following questions.

How did people sell these items before eBay? What do you see as the benefits and drawbacks of selling something on eBay versus using more traditional methods?

Do you agree with Adam Cohen that eBay creates a more “democratic marketplace”? Why or why not? Are there disadvantages to the instantaneous availability of objects on eBay? How would you compare

the methods of communication available for buyer and seller to the face-to-face interaction of a “brick and mortar” store?

What structures are in place to help buyers and sellers overcome the anonymity of the Internet? How can buyers and sellers avoid being cheated?

What was the most surprising thing you found for sale on eBay?

Do you know anyone who has bought or sold anything on eBay? Ask the adults in your life if they have had any eBay experiences or know of anyone who has. Interview that person about their experience – what did they buy, sell, or bid on? Did they consider it be a successful shopping experience? How was their eBay experience different from more traditional methods of buying and selling?

There are many books and websites that offer suggestions for making money on eBay. In your opinion, what characteristics do the most appealing item photographs and descriptions have in common? Can a seller make an item look less interesting with a bad photograph or more interesting with a good photograph? Print out or bookmark examples of strong item descriptions and weak item descriptions. In a paragraph, identify what you think makes or breaks these item descriptions.

Chose an item that you own that you would like to sell. Research similar items on eBay. What will your starting bid be? Will you set a reserve price? Photograph it and write an honest yet compelling item description for it. Use the html editor functions in Microsoft Word or a web page design program to format your listing. Then create a class web page to display your eBay listings.

For Internet Art Websites:

Ask your students what essential properties they think something must have in order to be considered a work of art. Does it need to be unique? Does it need to be aesthetically appealing? Who is the artist – the person who conceives of the work of art or the person who physically constructs it? Is it still a work of art if the artist does not use his or her own hands to create it? In his “Sentences on Conceptual Art,” Sol Lewitt wrote: “Ideas can be works of art; they are in a chain of development that may eventually find some form. All ideas need not be made physical.” Do your students agree with this statement? How does it change their ideas about what art is?

As students explore “their” website, have them think about and jot down answers to the following questions:

What ideas or concerns do you think might have motivated the creation of this work of art? What do you see that makes you say that?

How does the artist use the Internet in the creation of his/her artwork?

Could the art exist without the Internet? Does it exist without the Internet?

Is there a tangible art object created by/involved in this project? If yes, how is that object similar or different from other kinds of artistic products? Is the tangible object the ultimate artistic product of the project?

What role does the viewer play in this creating this work of art?

White Elephant Party:

John Freyer enjoys exploring the history of secondhand objects. What meaning might they have had for their original owner? What new meanings did they acquire while in his possession? And what meanings might they acquire for their next owner? Freyer writes: “Almost immediately after I sent it [his toaster], I wondered if Bill even cared about its history. I started to think about the history Bill would attach to my toaster – would it burn his toast as it did mine?”

Create some second-hand relationships in your classroom by having a white elephant party. (The name “white elephant” stems from a Thai custom, in which the king may give white elephants as gifts. As a gift from the king, the animals must be well cared for and cannot be used for any sort of labor. As a result, the gift often put a burden on its owner, who, despite its rarity and beauty, was grateful to be rid of this “gift.” Because of this, the term “white elephant” is frequently used to refer to a thing which is no longer useful to its current owner. While it may be useful to others, the owner is happy to dispose of it.)

1. Each student must contribute a WRAPPED gift. It should be an item that someone could possibly want or use, although it may be used. You may wish to establish a \$10 dollar value limit. No one should know which gift was brought by whom. Everyone sits or stands in roughly a circle around the pile of gifts.
2. Prepare slips of paper equal to the number of gifts with clearly written numbers. Be sure to distinguish 6 from 9, 1 from 7. Each participating student draws a number and holds onto that slip of paper.
3. On the first turn, the student with paper slip #1 chooses a gift, opens it, and all admire it.
4. On the second turn, the student with paper slip #2 gets the choice of "stealing" any unwrapped gift (#1's) or choosing a wrapped one. If #2 steals #1's gift, then #1 must open another wrapped gift.
5. On the third turn, the student with paper slip #3 gets the choice of "stealing" any unwrapped gift (#1's or #2's) or choosing a wrapped one.
6. The gift exchange continues until the last wrapped gift has been opened.

After the gift exchange has been completed, ask students to write a short story or draw a picture imagining what type of relationship the previous owner had with this object. Was it an unwanted gift from Great Aunt Esmerelda? A boring book? What relationship does the student anticipate having with this object? What will happen next on its journey?

Resources

Glossary

Capitalism – an economic system based on private ownership of the means of production, in which the laws of supply and demand in a free market determine prices for commodities.

Conceptual Art – art that is intended to convey an idea or belief to the viewer. The tangible art object may be less important than the ideas presented or the process used to present them.

Consumerism – an interest in acquiring and possessing material goods; an ethic in which people are defined by their possessions

Culture – a society and its way of life; values, norms, ideals, and rules for living; the socially transmitted behavior, artistic expressions, social and governmental institutions, etc. of a particular time and place, taken as a whole. See <http://www.tamu.edu/classes/cosc/choudhury/culture.html>

Fluxus – an art movement, most active in the 1960s and 1970s, whose name, taken from the root “to flow,” refers to blending of different artistic media to create spontaneous performances and art “happenings” which blurred the lines between the art object and the act of its creation.

Installation – a work of art made for a specific space. Installations may be short-lived and be known later strictly through documentary evidence such as photographs or videos.

Minimalism – an artistic movement which focuses on reducing the work of art to pure shape, line, color, etc. Minimalist artist Frank Stella explained: "What you see is what you see."

New Media Art – art work utilizing new(er) technologies such as computer graphics and programming, video and digital manipulation, and online and virtual reality experiences.

Readymade – an object manufactured for another purpose, recontextualized and presented by an artist as a work of art.

Definitions adapted from www.artlex.com

Web Links

Sol Lewitt’s Sentences on Conceptual Art

<http://www.franklinfurnace.org/flow/lewitt/lewitt.html>

Article about eBay use in conceptual art

<http://www.mediachannel.org/arts/perspectives/auction/index.shtml>

Whitney Museum – Internet Art Exhibition

<http://www.whitney.org/exhibition/2kb/internet.html>

Database of new media art

<http://rhizome.org/>

Bibliography

Buskirk, Martha. *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art*. Boston, MIT Press, 2005.

Cohen, Adam. *The Perfect Store: Inside eBay*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2002.

Freyer, John. *All My Life for Sale*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2002.

Hartzman, Marc. *Found on eBay : 100 Genuinely Bizarre Items from the World's Online Yard Sale*. New York: University Publishing, 2002.

Rosenthal, Mark. *Understanding Installation Art: From Duchamp to Holzer*. New York: Prestel Publishing, 2003.

Velthuis, Olav. *Imaginary Economics: Contemporary Artists and the World of Big Money*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2005.