Rethinking Arts Integration
 Voorin Lin
Essence 2
brush paint on watercolor paper
9 x 14"
Expectations of visual arts education have changed dramatically over time. In the 19th century, art teachers prepared students for industrial work by teaching technical drawing and other artisanal skills. In the 20th century, emphasis shifted to self-expression informed by art history and criticism. Today, schools have broader expectations of art studies. Given the growing impact of images, forms and media on human experience, schools count on art teachers to help prepare all students for success in their fields of choice. SVA developed the course Curriculum: Arts Integrated with this goal in mind.

The belief that visual arts should enrich other studies dates to the 1930s. Some early arts-integrated curricula implored students to create artifacts associated with other subject areas (e.g. dwellings of indigenous peoples or portraits of historical figures). Other efforts addressed themes associated with specific time periods (e.g. the Romantic period in music, literature and visual art). These were largely teacher-driven approaches to arts integration.

In contrast, effective arts integration today requires a shift from teacher-driven instruction to student-driven inquiry, for it is the ability to investigate possibilities that will best prepare today’s students to embrace future challenges and opportunities. Accordingly, M.A.T. students have shaped course projects to address their own interests and concerns across content areas. Each undertaking has called for imagination, creativity, research and reflection. Consequently, the artworks featured on the following pages are at once aesthetic objects and embodiments of interdisciplinary understanding.

This catalog presents arts-integrated projects and reflections from the class of 2017. Thank you to Jamie Chan for production assistance and to Dr. Brittany Holmes for contributing to the class.
Rachel Diamond
Artist’s Statement

Yellowstone Park is one of the most beautiful places in the United States, with over 10,000 hydrothermal features. In its heart is a super volcano caldera with a large pocket of magma, which is responsible for these features. The reason Yellowstone Park is considered a super volcano is due to its last three eruptions that have emitted more than 240 cubic miles of volcanic ash. Despite the fact that Old Faithful is the most famous, the Grand Prismatic Spring is the most photographed because of its huge size and bright colors. The Prismatic Spring is my favorite of all the features of the park because of its colors, which come from the different species of extremophile bacteria, heat loving organisms that live in the spring.

I created this work by drawing the outer ring of the pool and then working my way into its center with mixed media, including paper, markers, and colored pencils. The outside box is made of balsa wood. My work integrates science, nature and art. I believe it is important to encourage students to study a subject that interests them in order to invoke a passion that combines art with their lives. Given my ongoing love and study of Yellowstone Park, my work incorporates these principles.
Cai Guo-Qiang is a contemporary Chinese artist who took his artwork beyond paper and canvas, using gunpowder on large scale pieces to make social and political statements ranging from drawings to installations and performances. Cai was born in Quanzhou in the Fujian Province of China in 1957 and studied set design at the Shanghai Theater Academy and at the PS1 Contemporary Art Center in New York. In 1986, he moved to Japan, where he began to use gunpowder in his work as a way of challenging the social and cultural repression of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The gunpowder drawing, which became central to his practice, established him as an internationally lauded “explosive artist.” I chose Cai Guo-Qiang as the focus of an arts-integrated project because he is one of the most influential international artists working today.

Integrating arts into the curriculum creates a more engaging and creative classroom for students of all backgrounds. My unit plan on Cai Guo-Qiang demonstrates how a solid knowledge of cultural, political, historical, philosophical, scientific and spiritual ideas can affect the outcome of artworks. Influenced by Cai Guo-Qiang and his explosive art, the lessons invite students to understand and learn about his works in an historical and cultural context. They will learn how scientific and political ideas can be developed into an artwork, reflecting the influence of diverse cultures and how art can be depicted using a variety of non-traditional media.
I am fascinated with the works of Edgar Allan Poe and the significance behind his stories and poems. I have always created work that is bright, colorful and cheerful. I wanted to challenge myself and pull away from these habits and attempt something different. I found myself doing further research on Poe to better understand who he was, and the meaning behind his writing. This process drew me to make an artwork that represents one of his most famous poems, “The Raven.”

I re-read the poem several times to understand the meaning behind it and thought about what aspect I wanted to focus on in my painting. I started off with sketching out how I wanted to represent the poem visually. Once I was satisfied with the sketch, I transferred it onto the canvas and began to paint the image, gradually combining light and dark colors, including black, brown, red, blue, white, grey and some hints of purple. I made it so that your eyes look from top to bottom and ultimately focus on the overall center, where the huge raven is illuminated by the moon behind it.

My interpretation of “The Raven” is related to arts integration because it combines literature with the visual arts. Research was an important part of the process, leading to a representational artwork that could be easily understood by a wide audience. In a classroom, students may choose a whole book, a chapter or a poem that interests them and then create a visual response as painting, drawing, sculpture or digital work. Students who may not respond to literature may find that creating imagery helps them to better understand what they are reading. Representing a literary work of their choice can encourage students to express creativity across disciplines, expanding the educational value of the experience.
My work was inspired by the Jamdani sarees of Bangladesh. Recently my culture has had a deep influence on my work. After researching the history and process of creating Jamdani sarees, my goal was not to recreate one, but to make an original saree reflecting my understanding of the Jamdani artists.

Jamdani sarees are all woven on looms and take from a month to a year to complete. Working intuitively, the artists create the designs themselves and do so right on the spot with no pre-determined guide. Training starts at a young age and is a family affair. There is one city in Bangladesh named Ningonz where Jamdani sarees have been traditionally made. The belief is that because of its geological position, the city gets a unique type of wind that dries the thread in a special way and that distinguishes it from other cotton sarees. Authentic Jamdani sarees are by far the most expensive sarees to buy in Bangladesh, but also very difficult to find because there are plenty of knock-offs being sold.

The way the Jamdani artists work is completely opposite from how I normally make art. I usually plan things out with multiple sketches to guide me; but for this project I worked liked the Jamdani artists. I bought a predominantly white saree and then just drew straight onto it. I drew non-figurative floral designs like the ones seen in mehndi designs. Using special fabric markers, I drew across the saree, from the part that gets tucked inside to the end of the garment. I did not go back to revise anything after I drew it. The process incorporated history and traditions from other cultures and is the type of arts integrated lesson I want to teach.
I discovered an interest in vinyl records when I was in high school. Growing up loving music from the 60s and 70s, I was fascinated by listening to songs in the way they were originally intended to be heard. I believe owning a record is like owning a piece of art. By purchasing this large vinyl disc you can also develop a connection to the artwork that contains the music in the album cover. Prior to the Internet, a compelling album design contributed much to a record’s appeal.

The artistic process involved researching some of the most popular and influential songs recorded in American history, then integrating aspects of musical exploration, interpretation and analysis. I painted a visual expression of my experience of Sam Cooke’s “A Change is Gonna Come” using a vinyl record not only as tribute to its original format, but also as a canvas. As intended, this arts integrated work combines my musical interests and the historical relevance of the song.

A Change is Gonna Come
(Sam Cooke, 1964)
12 x 12"
acrylic paint, vinyl record
Stephanie Ard
Artist’s Statement

I chose to create a three-dimensional model of a running shoe using a system of paper layers and tape. My background in marathon running and my interest in three-dimensional printing inspired this work. I wanted to do something that incorporated my passion for running, and would require a significant amount of focus and repetition. Each layer was carefully drawn and cut out; tape was placed strategically around each layer to provide support and elevation between layers.

The planning and execution of this project were rather labor-intensive. The initial planning required close observation of the anatomy of a running shoe. I analyzed and sketched every nook and cranny of its form to understand how the shoe fits the foot. I cut each layer of paper by hand, and added tape to align and secure the structure.

I think that this work represents arts integration because if students build a handmade model of an object, they would learn something valuable about how it functions. In this case, if students constructed an object in a parallel way to how a 3D printer functions, they would acquire a better understanding of how 3D printers divide and calculate the size of each layer and therefore, how to go about executing a three dimensional print. I would hope that the process would reveal how much planning and programming are required to create computer generated forms. I’ve always been fascinated by taking something apart and putting it back together. I think these are valuable skills for students to learn.

Running Shoe, Sliced and Sectioned
3 x 1 x 1.5”
paper, tape
Master of Arts in Teaching

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