

## GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATION: 6-8

### THE BICYCLE AS ART

#### CONTENT AREA: VISUAL ARTS

**LESSON TIME:**

1 class period

**MATERIALS:**

1. Pictures of Picasso's "Head of a Bull" and Duchamp's "Bicycle Wheel"

**TAKE HOME:**

None

**OBJECTIVES:**

To have students analyze two famous works of art which were later copied by the original artist.

**6TH GRADE STANDARDS:**

1: Observe and Learn to Comprehend  
3. Specific art vocabulary is used to describe, analyze, and interpret works of art

**7TH GRADE STANDARDS:**

1: Observe and Learn to Comprehend  
2. Understanding works of art involves knowledge of historical and cultural styles, genre, and artists over time.  
3. Knowledge of art vocabulary is important when critically analyzing works of art

**2: Envision and Critique to Reflect**

2. Concepts, issues, and themes in the visual arts can be used to communicate ideas in various other disciplines

**8TH GRADE**

1: Observe and Learn to Comprehend  
1. Conceptual art theories explain how works of art are created

**BACKGROUND:**

Picasso's "Head of a Bull" (1942) sculpture is one of his most recognizable works. In it, he took two found objects, the handlebars and the saddle from a bicycle, and created a striking and memorable sculpture. Picasso later had this work cast in bronze (1943).

Marcel Duchamp is another artist who used bicycle parts to create a sculpture. In 1913 Duchamp took the fork and front wheel of a bicycle and mounted them upside down on top of a kitchen stool. Duchamp did not originally construct "Bicycle Wheel" as a work of art. Rather it was just a distraction for his workshop and he claimed he never intended to show it as a piece of art. In fact the original was lost, and the first "Bicycle Wheel" shown in a gallery was a replica.

**OBJECTIVE:** Discuss the concepts of symmetry, balance, scale, proportion and rhythm with respect to these two works of art.

Each of these works was later copied in some form by the original artist. In addition, "Bicycle Wheel" was not originally created as a work of art by Duchamp. Discuss the concepts of integrity, authenticity, and originality with respect to these works.

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VOCABULARY: symmetry, balance, rhythm, scale, proportion, integrity, authenticity

Setup

Display photos of the Picasso's "Head of a Bull" and Duchamp's "Bicycle Wheel"

PROCEDURE:

Discuss with the students the original creation and subsequent creation of replicas or recasting of the original works. In the case of "Bicycle Wheel" it should be noted that the artist did not intend it as a work to be displayed but rather a distraction for his studio; he considered watching the turning wheel to be much like watching a fireplace.

How can art be a distraction - a positive one for you?

When/how do you feel in balance?

ACTIVITY 1: Ask the students to discuss the vocabulary terms with respect to the original "Head of Bull" and "Bicycle Wheel."

How does the fact that "Bicycle Wheel" was originally created as a mere distraction impact the students' perception of its authenticity or integrity?

What impact does the recasting of "Head of Bull" in bronze, and the creation and showing of the replica "Bicycle Wheel," have on students' perceptions of their authenticity or integrity?

ACTIVITY 2: Have students draw examples of other creations that could be made from bicycle parts, for example a carnival Ferris wheel, a pizza, etc.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITY: Writing Assignment

The above questions could be posed to the students for them to answer in a writing assignment.