



Utah Biennial: The Present as Influenced by the Past

Mapping Experience

Jason Metcalf's A Historical Tour of the Kingdom of Deseret, Volume III, Second Edition

Summary:

Students will create a conceptual map of their experience traveling from home to school.

Curriculum Ties:

English Language Arts- K-12: Writing Standards

Fine Arts- Visual Arts- 3rd-6th

Secondary Fine Arts- Visual Arts- Foundations 1 and 2

Secondary Fine Arts- Visual Arts- Drawing

Materials:

- Paper and pencil
- Colored pencils or pens

Background for Teachers:

Jason Metcalf is a Utah-born artist who explores themes of mythology, history and folklore by researching and recreating legends and myths for the viewer through objects and stories. Metcalf plays with the realism of the legends, suggesting that they become real through his recreation and the subsequent belief by the viewer, while at the same time naming them “forgeries.”

Metcalf found the book, *A Historical Tour of the Kingdom of Deseret, Volume III*, and re-published a second edition for the Utah Biennial documenting his personal journey of visiting the locations it chronicled. Completing the tour and documenting the process allowed Metcalf to make it his own story. The forward says, “It is my hope that as you travel and walk the paved

and dusty roads of the Kingdom as you complete this tour, that you will notice what you notice, and write these impressions and observations in the back of this book. It is then that you will write and record your own history within the Kingdom of Deseret.”

Mapping has been a part of human’s conceptualization of the world for thousands of years. The earliest known maps are cave paintings of the stars. In more recent times, different artists have explored the idea of mapping journeys in many different ways. Robert Frank’s *The Americans* documented the photographer’s journey across America in 1955 and 1956 through portraits. Richard Long creates art as he walks through landscapes, taking photos of sculptures made along the way. Mel Ziegler has created installations, objects and photographs exploring mapping through history, place and community.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the concepts of a map and a symbol
- Use symbols in constructing a conceptual map of personal experience
- Discuss and understand the value and role of personal experience in creating shared experience

Instructional Procedures:

Introduce the ideas of a guided tour, travel brochure or adventure journal to your students. *What stories have they read in which the author or a character was on a journey? What kinds of visual or textual cues indicate a journey? What are examples of different ways that people travel? What are some different ways that people share their experiences while traveling? What is a map? Can a map look different than a bird’s-eye-view?* Explain that they will be creating an artistic map of their personal journey from home to school by documenting what they experience.

Have students fold a single sheet of paper in half twice so that it forms a small booklet. Students should take this booklet with them to and from school, each day recording one experience they have through words or drawings. Each specific experience could range from how they feel when they get out of bed to noticing the color of the sky to a portrait of the neighbor’s dog. Time may be given during class to visually elaborate on (but not add to) each entry using colored pencils or pens.

When each page of the booklet has been filled, students should share their stories in small groups or as a class.

Extensions:

Lesson may be adapted for higher level students by allowing students more creativity in documenting their experiences. Students may take photos, record sounds, write poems, or find other ways to document their journey, and parameters for defining the journey itself may be expanded. Students can fill the pages of a longer journal or explore other creative ways for sharing their documentation.

Resources:

www.jasonmetcalf.com

www.utahmoca.org/portfolio/utah-biennial-mondo-utah



A Historical Tour of the Kingdom of Deseret, Volume III, 1997. Second edition, 2013, published by Jason Metcalf for the first Utah Biennial.