

## EDUCATOR GUIDE

Artist/Organization: David Hevel  
Discipline(s): Visual Art

SECTION I - OVERVIEW.....	2
SUBJECT .....	2
CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS	
OBJECTIVE	
STORY SYNOPSIS	
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES	
INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES	
EQUIPMENT NEEDED	
MATERIALS NEEDED	
INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED	
SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT.....	3
CONTENT OVERVIEW	
THE BIG PICTURE	
RESOURCES – TEXTS	
RESOURCES – WEB SITES	
VIDEO RESOURCES	
BAY AREA FIELD TRIPS	
SECTION III – VOCABULARY.....	6
SECTION IV – ENGAGING WITH SPARK.....	7



Still image from SPARK story, 2007.

## SECTION I - OVERVIEW

### SUBJECT

David Hevel

### GRADE RANGES

6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Visual Art, Language Arts, World History

### OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the work of visual artist, David Hevel. Students will also learn about French painting styles from the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century, and about contemporary artists who work with the ideas of celebrity. Activities include creating subversive collages, and discussion about Americans' consumption of celebrity culture.

### STORY SYNOPSIS

David Hevel comments on the notions of celebrity with his glitzy, over-the-top, life-sized animal sculptures. Take a peak inside the artists kitsch-filled studio and watch as he dismantles one exhibit in San Francisco and prepares for another in Kansas City.

### INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

- Hands-on group projects, in which students assist and support one another
- Hands-on individual projects, in which students work independently
- Group oral discussion and analysis, including peer review and aesthetic valuing
- Teacher-guided instruction, including demonstration and guidance

### INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- To foster an understanding of the idea of "postproduction" in the visual arts,
- To introduce students to the work of David Hevel,
- To introduce students to 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century French painting styles and the term *Orientalism*,
- To analyze how historical art traditions influence contemporary art practices

### EQUIPMENT NEEDED

SPARK story on David on DVD or VHS and related equipment or Internet streaming capabilities. Computer with Internet access, navigation software, speakers and a sound card.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Access to libraries with up-to-date collections of periodicals, books, and research papers  
Pencils, pens, and paper  
Art supplies (optional)  
Magazines, Exacto knife, glue.  
Ceramics supplies (clay, glaze, kiln), Video production equipment, Photography equipment.

### INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED

- Logical-Mathematical – the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically
- Musical Intelligence – the capability to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones, and rhythms
- Interpersonal – awareness of others' feelings, emotions, goals, motivations
- Intrapersonal – awareness of one's own feelings, emotions, goals, motivations
- Bodily-Kinesthetic – the ability to use one's mind to control one's bodily movements



See more information on [Multiple Intelligences at www.kqed.org/spark/education](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education).

### MEDIA MATTERS

The following Spark Video segments can be used for compare and contrast purposes:

Jason Mecier's celebrity portraits  
<http://www.kqed.org/arts/people/spark/profile.jsp?id=4461>

Rene Garcia Jr.'s glitter paintings  
<http://www.kqed.org/arts/people/spark/profile.jsp?id=14701>

## SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

Growing up in Missouri, David Hevel was influenced by the inevitable and distinctly American force-feeding of pop icons and television culture. Hevel worked in film/video performance, commercial illustration and painting, eventually finding his niche in sculpture. Using unique materials, Hevel creates fantastical images of animals that represent such American celebrities as supermodel Tyra Banks and pop stars, Beyoncé Knowles and Britney Spears.



David Hevel dismantling his 12-foot tall sculpture "Smile with Your Eyes," based on supermodel Tyra Banks, 2006.

In the Spark Segment, Hevel dismantles his solo show, "Fierce," at Heather Marx Gallery in downtown San Francisco and prepares for his next exhibit, "Diva Hound Smack-Down at the Grammys," at Byron Cohen Gallery in Kansas City. Letting his conceptual imagination run wild, Hevel uses embellished dog forms to recreate a fictional fight among pop and hip-hop divas. In addition to his new body of work, Hevel simultaneously creates a new piece for the Pulse Contemporary Art Fair in Miami, representing rap artist Jay-Z as a vicious lion.

Hevel's unique form of art began when he became inexplicably infatuated with stockpiling plastic fruits and vegetables. Now, years later, he has found a way to channel his infatuation by developing a complex mixed-media operation that relies heavily on glitter, hot glue and his plethora of obsessively

collected kitsch -- including sparkling beads and butterflies, silk flowers, oversized rhinestones, and faux fur -- to embellish Styrofoam forms used by taxidermists. His work teeters precariously between grotesque and gorgeous, providing a humorous narrative that addresses the nature of Americans' excessive consumption of celebrity gossip.

David Hevel is based in Oakland, and his work has been exhibited internationally. He earned a B.F.A. from Central Missouri State University, a M.Ed. from the University of Missouri and an M.F.A. from California College of the Arts.

### THE BIG PICTURE

Art critic, Nicolas Bourriaud discusses a contemporary art practice, coined "postproduction," as artists who reproduce, re-purpose, or re-mix available cultural products in a process referred to as *cultural recycling*. Similar to hip-hop artists sampling previously created music or splicing together clips of video, postproduction is the act of synthesizing disparate artifacts from our lives to create a fresh, open-ended narrative. Hoping to reveal the absurdity of American consumerism, global economy and the chaos of mass media, Hevel creates work that juxtaposes mid-American aesthetics of taxidermy and floral arrangement with the gossip, glamour and glitz of Hollywood celebrities.

Society is flooded with this detritus providing consumers with a convenient distraction from more serious issues presented by the media. Hevel uses taxidermy and faux flowers to represent the decadence and artificiality of some celebrity lifestyles. In bringing his sculptures to life, the artist takes a snapshot of a moment in time addressing the complexity of the American experience in an entertaining fashion.

The abundance of seemingly luxurious objects in Hevel's sculptures recalls the Rococo style of art,

which emerged in France in the early 18th century as a continuation of the Baroque style. Opposing the darker themes and color palettes of the Baroque, the Rococo style was characterized by opulence, glorification, and playfulness. Rococo themes focused on the carefree aristocratic life; they also revolved heavily around natural environments. In the mid-late 18th century, Rococo was replaced by the Neoclassic style.

Hevel's "Celebrity Babies" digital photo series comments on the objectification of the children of Hollywood stars. The animal's poses in the series are reminiscent of the Odalisque figures used by 19th century French Neoclassical painters such as Ingres. Odalisque refers to the image of a female slave or chambermaids who, at the time, were the only types of women who could be represented nude in paintings. In Western culture during the 19th century, odalisques became common fantasy figures in the artistic movement known as Orientalism, and were featured in many erotic paintings from that era.



*Odalisque*  
Jules Joseph Lefebvre, 1874



*Baby Kingston (Rossdale-Stefani)*  
David Hevel, 2006

Contemporary artists such as Andy Warhol and Jeff Koons have also commented on the notions of celebrity. Warhol was admittedly obsessed with Hollywood stars and created numerous screen prints of Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, and Elvis Presley, among others. Many of Koons' extremely large-scale sculptures exaggerate commercial and kitsch imagery. As part of his "Banality" series, Koons created a life-sized, gold-leafed ceramic statue of Michael Jackson, which can be found in the collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.



Jeff Koons, 1988  
*Michael Jackson and Bubbles*  
[www.lancs.ac.uk/ug/fosterz/Koons/Jeff%20Koons.htm](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/ug/fosterz/Koons/Jeff%20Koons.htm)

## RESOURCES – TEXTS

Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*, 2000, New York: Lukas & Sternberg.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Relational Aesthetics*, 1998, France: Les Presse Du Reel.

Gombrich, E.H. *The Story of Art*, 16<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1995, London: Phaidon Press.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*, 1978, New York: Random House (Vintage).

## RESOURCES – WEB SITES

California College of the Arts  
Online Gallery – Images  
<http://www.cca.edu/gallery/index.php>

Heather Marx Gallery  
[www.heathermarxgallery.com](http://www.heathermarxgallery.com)

David Hevel at Byron C. Cohen Gallery for Contemporary Art - Images  
<http://www.artnet.com/Galleries/Exhibitions.asp?gid=246&cid=113707>

KQED Arts & Cultural Web site  
Review of David Hevel's "Fierce" Exhibit at Heather Marx Gallery  
<http://www.kqed.org/arts/visualarts/index.jsp?id=10582>

Information about Nicolas Borriard on Wikipedia  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolas\\_Bourriaud](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolas_Bourriaud)

## VIDEO/AUDIO RESOURCES

KQED Radio Streaming  
Forum with Michael Krasny:  
*The Intersection of Contemporary Art and Street Culture*.  
2004  
<http://www.kqed.org/epArchive/R408031000>  
*Art and Objects*, 2005.  
<http://www.kqed.org/epArchive/R507081000>

## BAY AREA FIELD TRIPS

The Richmond Art Center  
2540 Barrett Avenue  
Richmond, CA  
Tuesday - Saturday, 12 - 5 pm  
[www.therac.org](http://www.therac.org)

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art  
151 Third Street  
San Francisco, CA  
<http://www.sfmoma.org/>  
11:00am – 5:45am  
Closed Wednesdays.  
Open late on Thursdays.

Heather Marx Gallery  
77 Geary Street  
San Francisco, CA  
Tuesday - Friday 10:30 AM - 5:30 PM  
Saturday - 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Oakland Museum  
100 Oak Street  
Oakland, CA  
<http://www.museumca.org/>  
Wednesday – Saturday 10:00am – 5:00  
Sunday – Noon – 5:00

California College of the Arts  
5212 Broadway  
Oakland, CA  
[www.cca.edu](http://www.cca.edu)  
Call 510.594.3600 to schedule a visit

## SECTION III – VOCABULARY

### DISCIPLINE-BASED VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS IN THE SPARK STORY

#### **Collage**

A picture or design created by adhering such basically flat elements as newspaper, wallpaper, printed text and illustrations, photographs, cloth, string, etc., to a flat surface. Most of the elements adhered in producing most collages are "found" materials. Introduced by the Cubist artists, this process was widely used by artists who followed, and is a familiar technique in contemporary art.

#### **Commodification**

To turn into a commodity; make commercial.

#### **Deconstruct**

To break down into constituent parts; dissect; dismantle. In the case of discussing art, it means the act of breaking down an image to uncover its conceptual, technical or aesthetic elements.

#### **Found Object**

A natural or manufactured object that is perceived as being aesthetically satisfying and exhibited as such.

#### **Objectification**

To present as an object.

#### **Odalisque**

A female slave or concubine in a harem, especially in that of the sultan of Turkey. Any of a number of representations of such a woman or of a similar subject, as by Ingres or Matisse.

#### **Orientalism**

The study of near and far eastern societies and cultures, languages and peoples by Western scholars. It can also refer to the imitation or depiction of aspects of Eastern cultures in the West by writers and artists. In the former meaning, the

term has come to acquire negative connotations and is interpreted to refer to the study of the East by

Westerners shaped by the attitudes of the era of European imperialism in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. When used in this sense, it implies old-fashioned and prejudiced outsider interpretations of Eastern cultures. The viewpoint was most famously propagated by Edward Said in his controversial 1978 book, *Orientalism*, which was critical of this scholarly tradition and of modern scholars.

#### **Popular Culture**

Contemporary lifestyle and items that are well known and generally accepted, cultural patterns that are widespread within a population; also called pop culture.

#### **Post-Production**

A term referring to artists who reproduce, re-purpose, or re-mix available cultural products.

#### **Subversive or Subvert**

To undermine or corrupt in an attempt to overthrow or cause the destruction of an establishment.

## SECTION IV – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

### STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

#### Subversive Collages

Have students bring a magazine from home to contribute to a collage box. Next, have students select advertisements from magazines brought into class that are geared towards their age group. Ask students to work in small groups to discuss the methods in which the advertisement industry uses images and text to convince us to buy a product. The students should focus on answering the questions:

- What photographic “tricks” do you believe are employed in the image?
- What imagery is used in the advertisement that is alluring?
- Is the product something vital to your lives or is it a non-essential? How have they convinced you otherwise?
- What aspects of the image do you believe have been altered in Photoshop?

Invite each group to present one of their images to the class making sure to “deconstruct” the image for the class.

Now, ask students to take one of the advertisements they have selected and collage additional images and text elements found in magazines. Use an Exacto knife to carefully cut-out the images and glue the new image. The objective of this collage is to subvert the original image revealing or uncovering some hidden truth of the consumer industry. Images should appear as if they were printed, so craftsmanship is of the utmost importance. Examples: Alter teeth whitening toothpaste ads, exchange a model on the beach selling cigarettes and

replace it with a child, alter a pharmaceutical advertisement so it reflects side effects rather than the benefits, take a fat, juicy burger ad and reveal

how many calories are in it, put cosmetics on a monkey instead of a supermodel.

The power in subverting the advertisement is in telling an important message of your own. Reveal something about society in your creation.

Finally, ask students to write a 1 paragraph statement that explains the choices they made and how the work subverts the original advertisement.

#### RELATED STANDARDS

##### Language Arts

Grades 11 - 12

Writing Strategies

1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the elements of discourse (e.g., purpose, speaker, audience, form) when completing narrative, expository, persuasive, or descriptive writing assignments.

1.2 Use point of view, characterization, style (e.g., use of irony), and related elements for specific rhetorical and aesthetic purposes.

#### Points of Discussion

As a group, discuss the following questions regarding celebrities. What does it mean to be a Superstar? A Rockstar? A Supermodel? Why does our culture admire these individuals so much? Why do shows like America Idol, Cribs, and The Simple Life receive such high ratings?

Ask the students to watch the SPARK episode about David Hevel reminding them to pay close attention

to notions of celebrity and stardom. Ask the students to deconstruct the work.

Questions to consider:

- Why has the artist used taxidermy animal forms instead of the human figure?
- Is a work of art that uses found objects as successful or difficult to make as a piece where everything is made by the artist? Does using found objects change the meaning of the work?
- What comments about celebrity are made in Hevel's work?

## SPARKLERS!

### *Ceramics*

Have students make a Trompe L'Oeil (realistic) replica of a cultural product from their lives. Instead of simply making a copy of the object, ask students to subvert the object in some way. For instance:

- Recreate a McDonald's French fry box and fill it with miniature skeletons.
- Recreate a Gucci handbag spinning all the items Wynona Rider stole from a department store.
- Sculpt a collection of miniature celebrity heads modeled after their mug shots.

### *Photography*

Using traditional portraiture methods of studio photography, have students recreate themselves as celebrities from different era. Ask students to pay close attention to the formal qualities of celebrity portraits taken over the past six decades. Working in groups, ask students to select a decade they would like to mimic. Students will then recreate portraits of each other in that style. The final exhibition will include their original photographic references and their own work.

### *Video*

Create a Novela or Soap Opera that mocks the ridiculous plots of day-time television. Ask students to develop a plot, setting and storyboard an episode

of the Novela. If equipment is available, students can film and edit the episode and present it at a premiere opening.

### *Discussion*

Initiate a conversation with student's about Edward Said's writing about *Orientalism*. Display images of Jean-August Dominique Ingres' painting, *Odalisque and Slave* and Jean-Léon Gérôme's painting, *The Snake Charmer*. How do these paintings portray Eastern cultures? Are the images accurate, or an artist's interpretation?

As an extension to this discussion, initiate a conversation with students about the 18<sup>th</sup> century *Age of Enlightenment*. Discuss its philosophy and influence on both Eastern and Western cultures.

## RELATED STANDARDS

### **Visual Arts**

Grade 8

1.2 Analyze and justify how their artistic choices contribute to the expressive quality of their own works of art.

Grades 9-12, Proficient

1.5 Analyze the material used by a given artist and describe how its use influences the meaning of the work.

2.1 Solve a visual arts problem that involves the effective use of the elements of art and the principles of design.

2.6 Create a two or three-dimensional work of art that addresses a social issue.

3.4 Discuss the purposes of art in selected contemporary cultures.

### **World History**

Grade 10

10.2.1 Compare the major ideas of philosophers and their effects on the democratic revolutions in England, the United States, France, and Latin America.

For more information about SPARK and its educational content, including the Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the Web site at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/education>.



For more information about the California Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the CA Dept. of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/index.asp>