

## EDUCATOR GUIDE

Artist: Caleb Duarte

Disciplines: Sculpture, Painting, Installation

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Still image from SPARK story, 2007.

## SECTION I - OVERVIEW

### SUBJECT

Caleb Duarte

### GRADE RANGES

K – 12 & Post-Secondary

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Visual Arts (Sculpture, Painting and Installation)

### OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the methods and conceptual strategies of interdisciplinary artist Caleb Duarte.

### STORY SYNOPSIS

Oakland resident Caleb Duarte is a part of a new generation of Bay Area Chicano artists. Working in a combination of found materials, architectural building materials, painting and drawing, Duarte creates temporary installations and “sculptural paintings” that evoke ideas of home, shelter and displacement. SPARK follows the artist as he prepares for his first solo exhibition at Jack Fisher Gallery, called “Cuartitos” or “Little Rooms.”

### 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 provide context for the understanding of the work of Caleb Duarte.

To inspire students to explore sculpture and drawing as a means of creative expression.

To enhance the literacy and imaginative skills of students by leading writing assignments that are

linked to Duarte’s conceptual strategies as an artist.

To inspire students to think about what the built environment conveys about a given society.

To inspire students to make a connection between the materials and meaning in art and architecture.

### EQUIPMENT NEEDED

SPARK story on Caleb Duarte on DVD or VHS and related equipment and/or a computer with Internet access, navigation software, speakers and a sound card.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Magazines and newspapers

Scissors, glue, string and tape

Tempera paint, brushes and water containers

Found materials that can be used for building small sculptures such as twigs, branches, cardboard, paper, cotton balls, popsicle sticks, bottles, cans etc.

### 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](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education) at [www.kqed.org/spark/education](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education).

## SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

Oakland resident Caleb Duarte is a part of a new generation of Bay Area Chicano artists. As an artist, he works with a combination of found materials, architectural building supplies, painting and drawing to create temporary installations and "sculptural paintings" that evoke poignant narratives of home, shelter and displacement. Spark follows Duarte as he prepares for his first solo exhibition in San Francisco.

The theme of home and shelter is central to Duarte's work. Influenced by an interest in architecture and various forms of dwellings, Duarte uncovers how our living spaces speak to our realities and our relative placement in the so-called first and third worlds. His work explores what our homes say about the truth of our lives and the widening gap between rich and poor in the contemporary global context.

To create the temporary structures used in his installations, Duarte collects driftwood, old signs and other found materials that have had an existence as natural objects or in human habitats before he reuses them. It's important to him that these materials are imperfect, that they have had a life that predates his own involvement with them. This use of weathered materials expands the narrative implications of his work, evoking a sense of the past and of lived histories.

Spark documents the progression of Duarte's exhibition at Jack Fisher Gallery in San Francisco. The show, "Cuartitos" ("Little Rooms"), was inspired by the shantytowns of Mexico, and the beauty and sadness of these neighborhoods that are largely built out of necessity. These towns are constructed from whatever materials are available -- combinations of cement blocks, recycled wood and old signs. Duarte's own grandfather lived near the border town of Nogales, Mexico, where he built a cluster of makeshift houses for people to rent. On a recent road

trip through Mexico, Duarte realized the profound influence his grandfather's endeavors have had on his own work as an artist.

For his exhibition, in addition to a central tower-like form made of driftwood, Duarte fills the gallery space with sculptural wall paintings. To make these three-dimensional pieces, the artist delicately paints figures onto drywall from images he finds in newspapers and magazines, then mounts the images on boards. Some of the images were taken from newspaper articles on the disaster of Hurricane Katrina, others come from random photographs that convey a specific mood. By taking the figures out of their original context, Duarte's representations remain ambiguous but ever imbued with emotion and humanity.

Duarte creates intimate spaces that impart a sense of humanity's search for meaning, family, placement and home. The temporary aspect of his installations reflects the cyclical nature of life and the way in which the built environment is constructed and destroyed over and over again. By making changeable and evolving structures, Duarte evokes a ubiquitous aspect of our existence, which, alongside the inclusion of the figures, points to the beauty of human yearning.

Born in 1977, Caleb Duarte migrated from Mexico to the farm communities of the Central Valley of California when he was 4 years old. He began painting at a young age, then went on to attend the San Francisco Art Institute, where he earned a B.F.A. in 2003.

### THE BIG PICTURE

Rather than emerging out of a particular movement or group of artists, Caleb Duarte's work can be seen as connected to an array of art-historical influences. Like many contemporary artists, he engages with a variety of interdisciplinary methods and approaches

in his studio practice that link him to several artists and art movements throughout time.

In some ways, Duarte is a grandchild of artists from the time of the Mexican Revolution up to the Chicano Art Movement in the United States that began in the 1960's, in how he addresses issues of class, disparities between the lives the rich and poor, and struggles for social justice. The figures in Duarte's drawings relate to depictions of the working class found in the work of the Mexican muralists, like Diego Rivera, Jose Orozco and David Alfaro Sisqueros, and in the work of the well-known printmaker, Jose Guadalupe Posada. While Duarte admires the definitively political and culturally-identified work that came out of these movements, his representations are less specific. By purposefully taking images of people outside of a distinguishable context, Duarte pairs down his figures so that they come to symbolize a universal human struggle.

The materials Duarte uses are of great significance to the meaning of his work and connect him to other movements in art history. Using found, scavenged and re-claimed objects as the basis of his temporary sculptures links him to a number of artists who have integrated unconventional building materials, architecture and found objects in their practice. The French sculptor and conceptual artist Marcel Duchamp, one of the first artists to use found materials, shocked the art world when he presented his "readymade" sculpture of a signed toilet that he called "Fountain" in 1917. Duchamp was interested in challenging what we think of as suitable art materials, which paved the way for other artists to begin using everyday or unconventional materials in their work. Duarte has also been compared to Gordon Matta-Clark, an artist known for deconstructing architecture and whose most famous work involved slicing a house in half.



Marcel Duchamp, "Fountain". 1917.

Architecture and the sociological implications of home are central forces in Duarte's thinking. The dwelling-like structures he creates for his installations evoke ideas of shelter and placement, or displacement. By building these structures out of found materials, such as old driftwood, the sculptures are imbued with a sense of history in such a way that they engage in a narrative intimacy with the painted figures he shows alongside them. A similar relationship exists in the work of African-American artist Whitfield Lovell, who creates stage-like rooms with figures often drawn in charcoal directly on the walls of the edifice he assembles. Like Duarte, Lovell fabricates spaces that speak to the interconnection between place and human experience. Both artists express a vivid sense of how our lived histories are connected to the reality of the spaces we occupy.

Two other vital artists Duarte has been compared to are the German-born printmaker Kathe Kollwitz and African-American painter Charles White (see the article link in resources section on page 5: Ollman, Leah, [A Feel for Activism, a Deft Touch](#), Los Angeles Times, September 17, 2004.) Duarte, Kollwitz and White all possess a similar sensitivity to the pain of human suffering and the effective use of the figure as a means to express worldwide conditions of displacement, poverty and alienation.

The content of Duarte's work and the methods he employs connect him to artists across a spectrum of time and place. As a young contemporary artist, he skillfully makes use of the open-ended potential of utilizing a wide assortment of materials, techniques and approaches in his sculptural installations. What makes Duarte's work unique is his distinctly poetic and evocative way of dealing with issues of humanity's search for meaning and home.



An installation by Caleb Duarte.  
Still image from the Spark story, 2007.

## RESOURCES – TEXTS

Kollwitz, Kathe; Ziggrosser, Carl, Prints and Drawings of Kathe Kollwitz, Dover Publications, 1969.

Lovell, Whitfield, The Art of Whitfield Lovell: Whispers from the Walls, with an Essay by Lucy Lippard, Pomegranate Communications, Petaluma, 2003.

Marin, Cheech, Chicano Visions: American Painters on the Verge, Bullfinch Press, 2002.

Ollman, Leah, A Feel for Activism, a Deft Touch (review of Caleb Duarte), Los Angeles Times, September 17, 2004.

weblink to the article:

<http://calebduarte.com/LATimes.html>

## RESOURCES – WEB SITES

Caleb Duarte: Artist Website

<http://calebduarte.com>

Chicano Art Resource Guide

<http://cemaweb.library.ucsb.edu/chicanoArt.html>

Information about the artist Whitfield Lovell

<http://www2.kenyon.edu/ArtGallery/exhibitions/0304/lovell/lovell.htm>

[http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/gallery/whitfield\\_lovell/biographical\\_notes.htm](http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/gallery/whitfield_lovell/biographical_notes.htm)

Information about the artist Charles White

[http://www.aaregistry.com/african\\_american\\_history/792/Charles\\_White\\_a\\_lover\\_of\\_the\\_arts](http://www.aaregistry.com/african_american_history/792/Charles_White_a_lover_of_the_arts)

[http://www.artgallery.umd.edu/driskell/exhibition/sc3/whit\\_c\\_01.htm](http://www.artgallery.umd.edu/driskell/exhibition/sc3/whit_c_01.htm)

Information about the artist Kathe Kollwitz

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Käthe\\_Kollwitz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Käthe_Kollwitz)

<http://www.mystudios.com/women/klmno/kollwitz.html>

## BAY AREA FIELD TRIPS

Albany Waterfront Park (Albany Bulb)

510-562-PARK

Hours: everyday, dawn to dusk

Article's related to the Park:

[http://www.baynature.com/2002julysept/ott\\_2002julysept.html](http://www.baynature.com/2002julysept/ott_2002julysept.html)

[http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/blogs/sfgate/detail?blogid=3&entry\\_id=298](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/blogs/sfgate/detail?blogid=3&entry_id=298)

Galeria de la Raza

2857 24<sup>th</sup> Street (at Bryant)

San Francisco, CA 94110

415-826-8009

Hours Wed-Sat: Noon to 6PM (call to confirm hours)

<http://www.galeriadelaraza.org>

East Bay Depot for Creative Re-use

6713 San Pablo Ave.

Oakland/Berkeley Border

moving to 4695 Telegraph Ave. on May 19<sup>th</sup>

510.547.6470

Hours: everyday, 11am to 6pm

<http://www.east-bay-depot.org/>

The Mexican Museum

Fort Mason Center, Building D

San Francisco, CA 94123 [map](#)

415-202-9700

Hours: Wed-Sat 11am to 5pm

<http://www.mexicanmuseum.org/>

Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts: Mission Grafica

2868 Mission Street (between 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Streets)

San Francisco, CA 94110

415-821-1155

<http://www.missionculturalcenter.org>

The Red Poppy Art House

2698 Folsom Street

San Francisco, CA 94110

415-826-2402

Hours: call for info

<http://www.redpoppyarthouse.org>

SCRAP

(Scrounger's Center for Reusable Art Parts)

801 Toland Street

Entrance is on Newcomb Avenue

Between Toland & Selb

(415) 647-1746

Hours: Tues-Sat, 9am to 5pm

<http://www.scrap-sf.org/>

## SECTION III – VOCABULARY

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

#### **Aesthetic**

In philosophy, aesthetics is the study of beauty and taste.

#### **Aesthetic Value**

The concept of "aesthetic value" refers to that value which causes an object to be a "work of art," "beautiful," or pleasing in appearance. The exact nature of this value is a primary subject of debate among philosophers discussing the nature of aesthetics and beauty, because this type of valuing is always subjective.

#### **Architectural**

Applied to works related to the art or science of architecture, including the design of the total built environment, from the macro-level of town planning, urban design, and landscape architecture, to the micro-level of furniture.

#### **Contrast**

The dissimilarity or difference between things. (In fine art terms, contrast often refers to contrasting colors, or colors that are opposite each other on the color wheel. In this SPARK episode, the word is used in the context of "contrasting building materials," indicating that Duarte combines materials in his art that aren't usually used together.)

#### **Chicano Art**

The contemporary art that has emerged from the Chicano community in the United States, made by artists with a strong sense of Mexican-American identity and an accompanying political consciousness.

#### **Embedded**

Inserted as an integral part of a surrounding whole.

#### **Evoke**

To call forth (emotions, feelings, and responses). To

raise, summon into action or bring into existence, often as if by magic. To suggest or call to mind.

#### **Found Materials**

Objects found in the environment and used as tools or media in making art works.

Materials available from discarded objects; often packaging i.e: cans, shampoo bottles, cereal packets; sometimes referred to as junk materials or reclaimed.

#### **Installation**

Installation Art is the art that uses sculptural materials and other media to modify a particular space. It is not necessarily confined to gallery spaces and can be any material intervention in everyday public or private spaces. Materials used in contemporary installation art range from everyday and natural materials to new media such as video, sound, performance, computers and the internet. Some installations are site-specific, in that they are designed to only exist in the space for which they were created.

#### **Makeshift**

A temporary or expedient substitute for something else. Done or made using whatever is available.

#### **Representation**

A presentation to the mind in the form of an idea or image. An image or likeness of something. A creation that is a visual or tangible rendering of someone or something.

#### **Render**

To make visible; to draw. To create an interpretation or representation.

#### **"Sculptural Paintings"**

(In the case of Duarte) paintings created on a three-dimensional object or surface.

## SECTION IV – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

### STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

#### Reading and Creating Architectural Dwellings Part I

After watching the SPARK episode on Caleb Duarte, pass out images to students of various dwellings from different time periods around the world, from both small villages and large metropolitan sites. Hand out the images without giving out any information. Ask students the following questions:

- Who do you imagine lives in this dwelling?
- What historical period do you think this dwelling existed or exists in?
- What does this dwelling say about the lifestyle of the people who inhabit this place?
- What do you imagine goes on in the daily lives of the people who live here?

These questions could be answered in a creative or expository writing assignment, in discussion, or in some combination of both. For a creative writing assignment, ask students to write a first person narrative from the perspective of someone who they imagine lives in the dwelling, telling the story of a day in the life of this person. Alternately, a story could be written about an incident that takes place in or around the location. Either way, lead a group discussion where students can share the ideas that were generated by the questions.

#### RELATED STANDARDS

##### **GRADE 4: Visual and Performing Art** **3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT**

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of the Visual Arts

Students analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to the visual arts and artists.

*Role and Development of the Visual Arts*

3.1 Describe how art plays a role in reflecting life (e.g., in photography, quilts, architecture).

##### **GRADE 5: English/Language Arts**

###### **Writing**

1.1 Create multiple-paragraph narrative compositions: Establish and develop a situation or plot. Describe the setting.

##### **GRADE 8: English/Language Arts**

###### **Writing**

###### **2.0 Writing Applications**

2.1 Write biographies, autobiographies, short stories, or narratives. Relate a clear, coherent incident, event, or situation by using well-chosen details. Reveal the significance of, or the writer's attitude about, the subject. Employ narrative and descriptive strategies (e.g., relevant dialogue, specific action, physical description, background description, comparison or contrast of characters)

##### **Grades 9 - 12: Visual and Performing Arts**

###### **1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION**

Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to the Visual Arts

Students perceive and respond to works of art, objects in nature, events, and the environment. They also use the vocabulary of the visual arts to express their observations.

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

###### **3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT**

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of the Visual Arts

Students analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to the visual arts and artists.

3.1 Identify similarities and differences in the purposes of art created in selected cultures.

## Reading and Creating Architectural Dwellings

### Part II

This part of the project can begin in two ways. Have glue, tape and string on hand.

Hand out paper bags to each student filled with a variety of objects for building small structures, use things like cotton balls, popsicle sticks, string, small twigs, dried beans, etc.) and/or take students on a walk and have them pick up objects that might be used to make small quick sculptures.

When each student has sufficient materials, ask them to create a dwelling from whatever they have in front of them with the help of the glue, tape and string. This can be done in groups or individually and should take less time than a class period to complete. When the structures are finished, have students present their work and talk about their dwelling, asking:

- What does this dwelling evoke?
- What does it make you think of?

#### RELATED STANDARDS

##### **9-12: Visual and Performing Arts**

##### **2.0 Creative Expression**

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

### The Joy of Found Materials & Temporary Installation at the Albany Bulb

The Albany Bulb is a public waterfront park in Albany, California (just a couple of miles North of Berkeley) that was once a landfill. When this space was restored for the public, local artists began frequenting the park where to this day, temporary sculptures are created from the rubble and debris found scattered amidst the abundant growth of native and non-native plants on the site. This is a place that Duarte himself visits to scavenge for found materials to use in his installations.

Take students on a field trip to the Albany Bulb to discover what artists have created there. Before going, watch the SPARK episode on Duarte and lead a discussion of what it means to create work from found materials, rather than supplies that are purchased. Ask:

- What kind of feeling does Duarte's work evoke because it is made of salvaged materials?
- Would Duarte's installations have a different meaning if they were made entirely of purchased materials instead of found materials?
- What can you learn about the history of an object by looking at it?

At the Bulb, explore the sculptures (they are often at the very end of the park, on the right side as you walk through). Either lead a discussion or ask students to talk about the sculptures.

- In what way are the sculptures here different or similar to Duarte's sculptures?
- What kind of stories do these sculptures tell, if any?

Lastly, break students into groups of 5 and guide them in creating their own temporary structure from any materials found on site. Bring water-based paint, brushes and containers if appropriate to embellish the sculptures. Document the process with digital photographs.

#### RELATED STANDARDS

##### **Grade 7: Visual & Performing Arts**

##### **2.0 Creative Expression**

2.1 Develop increasing skill in the use of at least three different media.

2.3 Develop skill in using mixed media while guided by a selected principle of design.

##### **Grade 8: English/Language Arts**

##### **1.0 Listening and Speaking**

1.9 Interpret and evaluate the various ways in which visual image makers (e.g., graphic artists, illustrators, news photographers) communicate information and affect impressions and opinions.

##### **9-12: Visual and Performing Arts**

##### **1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION**

1.4 Analyze and describe how the composition of a work of art is affected by the use of a particular principle of design.

##### *Impact of Media Choice*

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

### Creating Drawn and Written Portraits from Newspaper or Magazine Images

Watch the SPARK story on Duarte and have students pay close attention to the process the artist uses to create his figurative sculptural paintings. After viewing the episode, have students select and cut out images of people from an assortment of

magazines and newspapers. The criteria for choosing the figures are that they convey an emotion, even if taken out of context. After cutting out the images (as silhouettes), collect all of the figures and pass them back out to students, so that they end up with a new figure.

First, lead students in a short writing assignment where they create a list of adjectives to describe the person and the mood that is conveyed in the image. As another option, ask them to compose a brief first person narrative about the figure they were given, imagining their history and the experience(s) leading up to the moment captured by the photograph.

Next, have students create a drawing based on the image of the figure they received. This could be done as a short assignment, with pencil or charcoal, in which the students attempt to capture the emotion or mood of the person. For more advanced students, this portrait assignment can take more time and involve completing a detailed portrait. In either case, ask students to focus on the feeling that the figure conveys. When finished, lead students in a conversation about their portraits in which they each have time to share their ideas and talk about the emotions they were working with in the portrait.

## RELATED STANDARDS

### **Grade 5: English/Language Arts**

1.1 Create multiple-paragraph narrative compositions:

Establish and develop a situation or plot.  
Describe the setting.

### **Grade 8: English/Language Arts**

2.1 Write biographies, autobiographies, short stories, or narratives. Relate a clear, coherent incident, event, or situation by using well-chosen details. Reveal the significance of, or the writer's attitude about, the subject. Employ narrative and descriptive strategies (e.g., relevant dialogue, specific action, physical description, background description, comparison or contrast of characters)

### **9-12: Visual and Performing Arts**

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

2.4 Review and refine observational drawing skills.

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>.