



SCU•Presents Arts for Social Justice Program
Performing Our Environment Lesson Plan

PROJECT TITLE: *Performing Our Environment*

This project was made possible through a generous gift from the National Endowment for the Arts Grant

TEACHERS: David Popalisky and Jeffrey Bracco

1. David Popalisky has choreographed and performed all over the US, Italy, China and Korea and danced with Tandy Beal and Co. throughout California. His dance *Return From HJ Junction* (2012) was performed in San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York. Full evening works *The Fatherhood Project* (2006), celebrating fathers everywhere and *Barred from Life* (2004) exploring wrongful conviction, were seen throughout California and the Midwest.

2. Jeffrey Bracco trained in Paris at the Jacques Lecoq International School of Theatre and is a produced playwright and theatre director in both France and the U.S. He has performed on stage under the direction of Philippe Rondet of the Comédie Française, in film and in the French TV series, *Hard*. He directed two world premieres in Paris, *Code 40* and *Bonheur au Bar du Coin*, as well as his own play *ShakesPod* at the Edinburgh Fringe. He also wrote *The Futurists!*, winner of the Long Beach Playhouse New Works Festival (2011).

PROFESSIONAL SCULPTOR, COSTUME DESIGNER, AND FABRIC ARTIST: Regan Baumgarten

PROFESSIONAL PERFORMING ARTIST: Steve Trash

PROJECT SUMMARY: A multi-session theatre and dance workshop that will investigate and explore students' knowledge, attitudes and motivations for action on the issue of environment and weather, with a special focus on California and the drought.

Students will be introduced to the expressive performing arts of theatre and dance through warm-ups and interactive exercises. Students will grow in understanding of themselves, their peers, their community and CA as the larger environment. This workshop intends to build upon Sherman Oaks identification with the native Ohlone peoples who once inhabited our valley, as well as capitalize on the unique architectural features of the Sherman Oaks school and grounds.

Each session will proceed from introducing a daily concept, physical and vocal warm-ups, theatre and dance creative exercises and culminate with small performance problems to solve and share with the group. Each weekly theme will build upon the prior week's subject. Specific mini-performances from each week's work will join a building repertoire that will be refined and ultimately shared in a modular performance at the final session.

GOAL: To learn about theatre and dance by interacting with the immediate environment of the

school. Build awareness of the local environment - to expand beyond the digital world of phones, Internet and television. Build awareness of the potential to live in harmony with our various environments.

OBJECTIVE: Upon completion of this creative process, participants will have forged unique personal bonds, increased organizational skills and learned strategies to ask questions that build toward understanding and awareness. With these skills and through a creative performing arts process, students will have addressed community issues of concern and/or celebration.

MATERIALS: Natural objects found within the environment (leaves, sticks, etc.), glue gun, burlap sack bags, used tennis rackets

KEY VOCABULARY: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (as demonstrated in Steve Trash’s professional performance), environment, history, design, imagination, exploration

	Suggested Time	Procedures	Materials	Additional Notes
Day 1	90 minutes	<p><i>Subject of the Day - Weather/Environment*</i></p> <p>1. Introduction of concept - Question and Answer/Discussion to build content. Acting and Dancing - what and why are they?</p> <p>2. <i>Warm-up</i> - Introduction to the physical and vocal warm-ups that are the daily practice of actors and dancers. The human body will be discussed as our ultimate home/environment, needing understanding, care, nourishment and creative challenges to maximize our potential.</p> <p>2. <i>Session Exercises</i> - based on subject of the day. Accessing one’s <u>imagination</u> about particular spaces. <u>Feelings</u> - how does a given space make you feel? How do environmental constraints or possibilities make you feel? Exploration of performative responses to weather events. Full group will explore three responses together. Then small groups will add two more and build small performance sequences from five choices developed.</p> <p>3. <i>Small Group Work and Performance</i> - how can we express these feelings, thoughts and imaginative ideas through movement, dance, drama games, role-playing and acting</p>		<p>*Environment - association of a given space with larger environmental concerns such as drought, sustainability, Native American connections to nature Known environments to students - Home, School, Bay Area, CA Environment of the Body - instrument, active agent, interaction between body and environment (physical responses to environmental conditions)</p>

Day 2	90 minutes	<p><i>Subject of the Day</i> Form and Shape - Human Design</p> <p>1. History: Ohlone Native American origins in Bay Area. What is the connection of Sherman Oaks to the Ohlone culture? Build on students' knowledge of both Sherman Oaks and Ohlone culture.</p> <p>2. Sherman Oaks Architectural Design - the connection between form, function and art. Investigate and translate through the body and voice.</p>		
Day 3	90 minutes	<p><i>Subject of the Day</i> Form and Shape - Nature Design</p> <p>1. What structural adaptations have plants - from trees to chaparral to grasses - evolved to adapt to their environment? How have they responded to nature's cycle of dry and wet seasons, and specifically drought.</p>		
Day 4	90 minutes	<p>With guest artist Regan Baumgarten*</p> <p><i>Subject of the Day</i> Surfaces/Textures - Costumes</p> <p>1. Surfaces are sites of interaction between life forms sharing an environment. How are skin, bark, grasses and sand related? Explore creating and integrating simple costumes made from fabrics, paper, natural elements into performance studies. Tune into feeling states when "masked" in a costume.</p>		*Regan Baumgarten: Sculptor, Costume Designer, Fabric Artist
Day 5	90 minutes	<p>(Continuation of lesson from Day 5)</p> <p>With guest artist <u>Regan Baumgarten</u></p> <p><i>Subject of the Day</i> Surfaces/Textures - Costumes</p> <p>Surfaces are sites of interaction between life forms sharing an environment. How are skin, bark, grasses and sand related? Explore creating and integrating simple costumes made from fabrics, paper, natural elements into performance studies. Tune into feeling states when "masked" in a costume.</p>		
		<p>Guest Performance of Steve Trash</p> <p>Steve Trash is an award winning performer (EEAA - 2011 - Environmental educator of the</p>		Steve Trash had two performances at Sherman Oaks elementary School –

		Year Award Winner) and is also founding board member of Keep The Shoals Beautiful and is lifetime member of the Alabama Association for Environmental Education. He has appeared at the world famous MAGIC CASTLE in Hollywood, California, was a featured guest on LeVar Burton’s READING RAINBOW Magic Week, The ENCONTROS MAGICOS Street Magic Festival in Coimbra, Portugal, and was the features green entertainment at the 2011 KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL - Great American Cleanup national kickoff in Times Square, New York City. (stevetrash.com)		one during the school day for the students, and one in the evening that the entire school community was invited to attend.
Day 6	90 minutes	<i>Subject of the Day</i> Human influence on our environment 1. Responsibility, abuse, waste, restoration, recycling, sustainability - build from personal environment to school community environment to awareness of larger environment of CA. (Will be informed by performance of Steve Trash) 2. Historical positive and negative models Models and Action plans going forward		
Day 7	90 minutes	1. Review and build unified performance structure that reflects <i>Performing Our Environment</i> themes		
Day 8	90 minutes	Performance Sharing <i>Performing Our Environment</i> collected mini performances – “performance-share”		

TOPICS TO EXPLORE THROUGHOUT PROJECT:

1. How creative exploration of space and different environments through imagination, discussion, drama and dance lead to expression through performance
2. Understanding, appreciating and living in harmony with your environment –specific (school) and more general/larger – state in drought, planet earth
3. Native American culture – caretaker of the environment
4. Use their knowledge of Native American culture and funnel it through theatre and dance to arrive at performance
5. Performance is an active relationship. What is our active relationship with the environment – past and present.
6. History - Native American origins and associations with the school

7. Environment – association of a given space with larger environmental concerns such as drought, sustainability, Native American connections to nature
8. Design – the connections between form, function and art
9. Imagination – new and exciting uses for a given space
10. Feelings – how does a given space make you feel? How do environmental constraints or possibilities make you feel?
11. Performance –how can we express these feelings, thoughts and imaginative ideas through movement, dance, drama games, role-playing and acting
12. Observation and Association
 - Discussion
 - Exploration
 - Imagination
 - Performance

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE THROUGHOUT PROJECT:

1. When did it last rain? Where do you get food? How do you get information? Why do you need information? Where do you live (other questions about their world to the environment).
2. What shapes do you see around you? Why is it shaped that way? What other things use that shape?

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE ARTS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE PROGRAM COORDINATOR,
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