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03.01.01 The Curiosity Cabinet: A Means of Social and Political Control

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The concept of the Curiosity Cabinet appeared in 16th century Europe and was appropriated into the homes and public spaces of the colonial elite in the United States in the 19th century. This paper focuses on the culture of collecting and displaying art of the Native Americans in curiosity cabinets by examining three collections of Native American artistic production: the Peabody Essex Museum, Thomas Jefferson's "Indian Hall" at Monticello, and William Clark's Indian Museum. First, the paper demonstrates the role curiosity cabinets played in creating societal stereotypes of the native population while enforcing ethnic and social inequalities, as well as strengthening the national identity of the United States. These concepts contributed to the emergence of the Indian as the embodiment of the primitive man. Second, the paper emphasizes how the curiosity cabinets served to control and frame the Natives culture as primitive through displaying an amalgam of collected artistic and cultural productions. Third, the paper will discuss the curiosity cabinet as a visual rhetoric, thus celebrating the collectors place in justifying the Western expansion and establishment of the new country, the United States of America. Understanding the role curiosity cabinets played in shaping the image of the Native Americans is important since similar reductionist images in popular culture and media accompany the social and cultural marginalization of the Native Americans.
The Scientific and Artistic Impact of Bioart

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Science and art. These are two words that are not often used together, except as opposites. Science is mathematical, quantitative, and methodical, while art is whimsical, visual, and allegorical. But are they really that different? When considering the human body, art and science are united in one organism. Artists have sought to represent the human body since the beginning of art history. From the Venus of Willendorf (28,000-25,000 BCE) to the conception of performance art, the human body has been a fascinating and integral part of the development of art. Now, in the past two decades, art and science are being united in bioart. What is bioart? Bioart: an artistic practice which utilizes tissues, bacteria, and other biological and life processes to inspire and create art. The implication of bioart, both scientifically and artistically, are extensive. Often times the artwork is created in laboratories, with extensive cooperation between artists and biologists. Not only are the distinctly different subjects merged, but the individuals are likewise encountering each other and their respective fields at a new level. In the last decade, laboratories and organizations dedicated to bioart have been founded throughout the United States and Europe. Using the model of other bioartists, I have created a body of work within the realm of bioart. This piece represents a study of the human body, particularly the organ system, on a microscopic level.

Art? or Artifact? A Thematic Art Curriculum

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This thematic unit explores the ideas and definition of the terms "art" and "artifact. Throughout history cultures have created objects. Often creations were and are simply for aesthetic purposes. However, many objects were created for other purposes. Some were created as functional objects, while others were created as narratives of people’s lives and history. The purpose of this unit is to focus on created works to determine the maker’s intent and purpose. Students analyze and make critical judgments about “art” or “artifact” and produce artistic works that in future years could be considered “artifacts”. Students are guided to make decisions and defend what constitutes an artifact, as well as what makes a work of art, “art”. In the unit lessons, students practice critical thinking and evaluation to be able to explain the difference between the two terms, which expands their abilities to process information as well as make connections in cultural relations between the past and present. These integrated art lessons address artistic, creative, research, and written components as well as utilize individual and collaborative efforts.
Singapore is known for its religiously and culturally diverse communities. The concept of hidden space is represented in Singapore through the regulation on sexuality. Under strict social control speaking about being gay or anything dealing with the hidden society of gay culture in Singapore is an automatic fine with the Singaporean government. In Singapore having a sexual partner or a relationship with someone of the same sex is illegal and action will be guaranteed to be taken when it is visible to the heterosexual public, by police or public on-lookers. Homosexuals living in Singapore are confined to specific areas that on the outside appear to be heterodominant, but on the inside the structures are homodominant creating a hidden space where gay men and women are able to be themselves. There is also a high rate of singlehood, having no interest in having a relationship or creating a family, in Singapore. In Singapore’s culture having a family as soon as possible is a priority due to the low rates of fertility. Gay people in Singapore use the concept of not wanting to have children, marriage, or a family as a cover up for societal norms to hide their sexuality. The major discussion will examine the construct of sexual minorities and how they developed sexualized spaces within Singapore, as well as Singapore as a sexualized prison.