



3DPRK: North Korean Portraits by Matjaž Tančič

School Tour Interactive Project

Exhibition Overview

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), commonly called North Korea, is one of the most restrictive societies in the world, rarely allowing western photographers in for projects. When Slovenian photographer Matjaž Tančič was invited to officially document the country, he aimed to portray something different by deliberately photographing with a special 3D stereoscopic technology. He used this technique to avoid cliché images of uniformed masses and military displays, and instead focus on individuals and their personalities. What emerges in his photography is a rare, humanistic glimpse at the people rarely seen outside of their geopolitical context.

Projects that correspond to this exhibition:

Partnered Portraits

Project Overview

The portraits in *3DPRK* humanize North Korean citizens, yet have a staged quality to them due to the restrictive nature of the country. How do we perceive the people we see in portraits, whether it's a painting or a photograph? If you had a portrait created of yourself, what would you want it to look like? Matjaž Tančič had some difficulty capturing his subjects due to them moving and some of them not wanting to be photographed.

Students will work in pairs or small groups to create portraits of each other. These portraits should reflect how the artist sees the other person, and may not necessarily be how the subject view themselves. When the portraits are complete, students will write a short statement reflecting how they feel about the portrait that has been created of them. Did they like having their portrait drawn? Is it how they see themselves? What would they change?

This project is appropriate for K – 12th, with materials and process adapted for K-5th and 6th – 12th.

Guiding Questions

- What is the purpose of a portrait?
- What would the ideal portrait of yourself look like?
- Do you think a portrait can ever show what a person is really like, both inside and outside?

TEKS Connections: Art

Elementary

117.102b, 117.105b, 117.108b, 117.111b, 117.114b, 117.117b

Middle School

117.202c, 117.203b, 117.204b

High School

117.302c, 117.303c, 117.304c, 117.305c



Socratic Seminar

Recommended for 7th grade through university students

Overview

The purpose of a Socratic Seminar is to gain a deeper understanding of ideas and values present in a text, and to examine issues related to specific content while articulating different opinions and points of view. Group conversation means students must bear the responsibility for the quality of the discussion, which requires they read the text closely, listen actively, and feel comfortable sharing their ideas and questions.

There are no right answers in a Socratic Seminar. Students are encouraged to focus on thinking out loud and exchanging ideas with each other in a thoughtful and respectful manner. Texts presented for reading relate back to concepts and ideas present in the exhibitions that students will see at Asia Society.

Seminar Structure

Students will address each other during the seminar, facilitating their own discussion. Key questions may be posed by the seminar facilitator, but students should move the conversation along on their own by using interpretive questions. These are questions that do not have right answers, although the text should be used to support differing opinions.

Discussion Norms

It is important that students listen carefully to one another, address each other respectfully without interrupting, and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak and contribute to the discussion. Students' thoughts and reasoning are important, and everyone should feel comfortable presenting theirs, but also be flexible and willing to listen to others.

Reading Options for 3DPRK:

Most readings are suitable for middle school and older. However, educators should always review for appropriateness before selecting the Socratic Seminar option.

TEKS Connections: Social Studies

113.18b1, 9, 11, 12, 13,
113.42c1f
113.43c10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

[A Day in the Life of Pyongyang](#) – The Guardian

“North Korean defectors often bear witness to torture and repression, and this week is no different. But what is daily life like for those who remain?”

[Understanding Kim Jong Un, the World's Most Enigmatic & Unpredictable Dictator](#) – Vanity Fair

“Everyone knows that North Korea's leader is a bloodthirsty madman and buffoon—or is he really?”

[North Korea's One Percenters savor life in 'Pyonghattan'](#) – Washington Post

“North Korea now has a 1 percent. And you'll find them in “Pyonghattan,” the parallel universe inhabited by the rich kids of the Democratic People's Republic.”