



“The arts must be taken no less seriously than the sciences as modes of discovery, creation and enlargement of knowledge in the broad sense of advancement of understanding ... [The] arts obviously play a prominent role in worldmaking; our worlds are no more a heritage from scientists, biographers, and historians than from novelists, playwrights, and painters.” – Nelson Goodman (Ways of Worldmaking, 1978)

The arts play a critical role in shaping a student’s worldview, providing access to and understanding of a global perspective that is on the one hand deeply personal and on the other, an opportunity to experience world cultures and traditions in unique and inviting ways. Through experiences in the arts, students explore dance, music, theatre, and visual arts representing diverse artists and cultures across time and place. An appreciative study of the arts provides students with an understanding of the human condition at its deepest levels. An appreciation of the arts of cultures foreign to us can effectively expand our understanding of the world and its peoples beyond.

The arts connect us to the world, no matter how we define the boundaries of our communities. It is an assimilation and fusion imbued in sounds and images sent and received across distant shores in an instant. From Bollywood spectacles to short independent films made on a personal computer—all shared around the globe on YouTube and Facebook and electronic downloads—the arts know no boundaries.

Exposure to global arts experiences has never been greater. As technology continues to leverage our ability to communicate, think, and learn on a global scale, it also provides unlimited opportunities to communicate, produce, and share creative and artful explorations with the world. Producing works of art in the visual and performing arts, students learn the necessary skills and techniques inherent in each art form to bring their ideas to life.

As we produce a work of art, whether presented as a live event, in situ, or through digital media, we can begin to imagine how these works, as Nelson Goodman suggests, may contribute to a vision of—and to the making of—a world. And what we discover about ourselves and our world (or worlds) is heavily dependent on what we seek. Through this creative (or re-creative) process comes understanding and knowing through a new version of what has already come before or currently exists or perceived.

Bringing clarity to a global issue through the arts can be a powerful experience (an act of worldmaking), both for the artist and viewer. The intent is to promote understanding of the world in, through and of the arts. We do that by asking:

- What are the arts skills and understandings our students need to know and be able to do to better investigate the world through artistic expression?
- What are the arts skills and understandings that students need to know and be able to do in order to recognize their own and weigh others’ perspectives?
- What are the arts skills and understandings that students need to know and be able to do in order to give personal and communal expression and communicate ideas in and about a complex world?
- What are the arts skills and understandings that students need to know and be able to do in order to take action and make a difference in the world?