

Title

Bosco Sodi: *Muro*

Estimated Time for Completion of Lesson

1 class period

Concept/Main Idea of Lesson

This lesson introduces Mexican contemporary artist Bosco Sodi and his exhibit titled *Muro* (translation: “wall”). Students will explore the reasoning behind border walls through two historical examples and one contemporary.

Intended Grade Levels

Grades 6-12

Infusion/Subject Areas

Visual Arts
Social Studies

Curriculum Standards**Next Generation Sunshine State Standards**

- Visual Arts:

VA.912.C.1.2: Use critical-thinking skills for various contexts to develop, refine, and reflect on an artistic theme.

VA.912.C.1.4: Apply art knowledge and contextual information to analyze how content and ideas are used in works of art.

VA.912.C.3.1: Use descriptive terms and varied approaches in art analysis to explain the meaning or purpose of an artwork.

VA.912.C.3.3: Examine relationships among social, historical, literary, and/or other references to explain how they are assimilated into artworks.

- Social Studies:

SS.7.G.4.2: Use maps and other geographic tools to examine the importance of demographics within political divisions of the United States.

SS.912.H.1.6: Analyze how current events are explained by artistic and cultural trends of the past.

SS.912.H.2.5: Describe how historical, social, cultural, and physical settings influence an audience’s aesthetic response.

SS.912.G.4.3: Use geographic terms and tools to analyze the effects of migration both on the place of origin and destination, including border areas.

SS.912.A.7.11: Analyze the foreign policy of the United States as it relates to Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Middle East.

SS.912.A.7.16: Examine changes in immigration policy and attitudes toward immigration since 1950.

SS.912.C.3.13: Illustrate examples of how government affects the daily lives of citizens

at the local, state, and national levels.

National Standards for Arts Education

Anchor Standard 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

National Council for the Social Studies

Time, Continuity, and Change: Students will develop the skills needed to locate and analyze multiple sources, and to evaluate the historical accounts made by others. They build and defend interpretations that reconstruct the past, and draw on their knowledge of history to make informed choices and decisions in the present.

People, Places, and Environments: Students will analyze complex processes of change in the relationship between people, places, and environments, and the resulting issues and challenges, they develop their skills at evaluating and recommending public policies.

Global Connections: Students will be able to think systematically about personal, national, and global decisions, and to analyze policies and actions, and their consequences. They also develop skills in addressing and evaluating critical issues such as peace, conflict, poverty, disease, human rights, trade, and global ecology.

Civic Ideals and Practices: Students will increasingly recognize the rights and responsibilities of citizens in identifying societal needs, setting directions for public policies, and working to support both individual dignity and the common good. They become familiar with methods of analyzing important public issues and evaluating different recommendations for dealing with these issues.

Common Core

VA.912.C.2.2: Assess the works of others, using established or derived criteria, to support conclusions and judgments about artistic progress.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source.

LACC.1112.L.3.6: Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.7: Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Instructional Objectives

The student will:

- analyze two historical border walls (the Great Wall of China and the Berlin Wall) and one modern border wall (West Bank Barrier);
- view and discuss Bosco Sodi's *Muro*;
- reflect on his/her own personal beliefs, attitudes, and values on concepts of border walls.

Pre-Active Teaching

Review the information provided in the "Notes View" of the PPT and then view the PPT in "slide show" mode to become acquainted with the images and video embedded.

Read news articles on Bosco Sodi's *Muro* exhibit.

Learning Activities Sequence

Attention-Getter: (Slide 1) Activate the PowerPoint presentation, *Bosco Sodi's Muro: A Look at Border Walls through Contemporary Art*. Inform students that today they will be learning about Mexican contemporary artist Bosco Sodi whose latest artwork, *Muro*, focuses on the political narrative of border walls and societal agency.

Advance to slide 2. Think, Pair, Share. Ask students to think about border walls as national boundaries. What are some of the political arguments or reasons they have heard for border walls? After students share a few ideas, ask them to consider the following statements:

1) Walls are meant to protect and defend.

2) Walls separate or divide.

Direct students to find a partner (or teacher may assign partners) to discuss each statement. As students: Which statement do you agree with more? Why? Discuss responses with the class.

PPT-Guided Presentation: Advance to slide 3. Inform students that border walls are not a modern invention. Border walls have existed since antiquity. One example is Hadrian's Wall, which was constructed by the Romans during the 2nd century. Several other civilizations and nations have erected walls for different reasons. Briefly introduce students to the two images of the historical walls—The Great Wall of China (China) and The Berlin Wall (Germany), and the contemporary wall—The West Bank Barrier (Israel). Ask students to consider the following questions during the PPT presentation: What were the reasons for the wall? Was it effective? What effects may have resulted from the wall?, Do walls defend or divide people? Direct students to write their thoughts on the guided notes worksheet.

Advance to slide 4: Briefly discuss the Great Wall of China. Inform students that the Great Wall of China has an extensive history, which began with the Qin Dynasty (221-

206 BCE). It took hundreds of years to construct the expansive and continuous 5,500-mile-long barrier. One purpose for this structure was to defend China from Mongol and Manchu invaders. However, despite the magnitude of the Great Wall, Genghis Khan, leader of the Mongols, and other groups such as the Liao, the Jin, and the Manchus all managed to invade and conquer areas of China.

- Question: What do you think were socio-political effects of the Great Wall on Chinese citizens?

Advance to slide 5. Briefly discuss the Berlin Wall. Begin by stating, in August of 1961, Soviet-occupied East Germany began constructing the Berlin Wall with the intent of creating a barrier between pro-Democratic Western Europe and the Communist East of Europe and the Soviet Union. The intent was to stop emigration, or people moving, from East Berlin to West Berlin. Because of this wall, people were confined to suffer oppressive living conditions in East Germany. Many families were separated and many died trying to get over it. Ultimately, the Berlin Wall became a Cold War symbol that divided the world between the communists and pro-democratic, capitalist nations. The destruction of the Berlin Wall, November 9-10, 1989, signified a new era in global politics when nations of both sides decided to engage in international relations.

- Question: Why would a government want to build a wall to stop people from leaving?

Advance to slide 6: Briefly discuss the West Bank Barrier. Inform students that construction of this barrier began in 2000 and continues today. The Israeli government states that the wall is being built to protect Israeli citizens from suicide bombers and radical terrorist organizations. Israel's critics argue that the barrier is an attempt to further seize Palestinian territories. While construction of this barrier continues, many nations committed to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process believe the barrier creates obstacles to achieving peace between the two peoples. The Israeli government claims terrorist attacks have decreased as a result of this barrier.

- Question: Do you think the critics are correct in arguing the barrier creates an obstacle towards peace between the Israeli and the Palestinians?

Advance to slide 7. Transition the discussion to Bosco Sodi. Now that we have learned and briefly discussed the Great Wall of China, the Berlin Wall, and the West Bank Barrier, let's explore how Bosco Sodi uses contemporary art to communicate his idea of a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico. First, a little background of the artist, Sodi was born Mexico City in 1970 and currently lives in New York City, NY due to an artist's visa. This means he has permission to stay temporarily in the United States.

- Question: What do you see in the image below the picture of Bosco Sodi?

After students provide answers, explain: this is the image of Sodi's first installation of *Muro*. It was built in Washington Square Park, New York on September 7, 2017 in response to President Trump's proposed southern border wall. Sodi felt the need to artistically challenge the government's call for constructing a border wall between the United States and Mexico.

- Question: How does Sodi's personal life influence *Muro*?

Muro was constructed of 1600 clay bricks made in Mexico. Each brick had a unique color, which according to the artist, was purposeful to illustrate the metaphor of the dream that represents the United States.

- Question: What do you think of Sodi's characterization of a "colorful" United States?

Advance to slide 8. Inform students there is more to Sodi's *Muro*. The images show a critical piece of the work. As part of the exhibit, Bosco invited viewers to take one brick of the *Muro* between the hours of 3 and 8 p.m. The wall was "torn down" by people on both sides of the wall, suggestively breaking down physical and mental barriers.

- Question: What does this mean to you?

Closure: Advance to slide 9. Explain to students that the short (2:28 min.) video they are about to watch was taken during Sodi's *Muro* exhibit in London. Ask students to pay close attention to the viewers and their actions. Paste link into browser to play video. Following the video, ask students to read the Sodi quote and reflect on his thoughts regarding walls.

- Questions: What are your own personal thoughts on walls? What is your interpretation of the people tearing down the *Muro*?

Evaluation

Classroom participation during Think, Pair, Share activity and PPT discussion (formative), PPT-guided notes worksheet.

Optional Extension Activities

1. Assign students to review: Almkhatar, S. & Williams, J. (2018). Trump Wants a Border Wall. See What's In Place Already. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/02/05/us/border-wall.html?module=inline>
2. Ask students to write three previously unknown information about the U.S.-Mexico Border.

3. Upon completion of the three unknown facts about the U.S.-Mexico border, ask students to write a policy proposal for the southern border. This policy should detail current issues, short-term solutions, and long-term solutions. This policy must be supported by evidence and students must cite research.

4. Ask students to create an illustration that reflects the policy proposal. The illustration can be created through computer or by hand.

[Teacher may assign this as an individual or group project.]

Materials and Resources

- Computer
- Projector
- Screen
- PowerPoint presentation: *Bosco Sodi's Muro: A Look at Border Walls Through Contemporary Art*
- PPT Guided Notes Worksheet
- Pencils or pens for writing

References

Almukhtar, S. & Williams, J. (2018). Trump wants a border wall. See what's in place already. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from:

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