

Art is... Beth Chucker

Photographic Triptych Portraits

By Mrs. Von Wiegen's 5th Grade Class

Art Is... Visiting Artist Program

Art Is... is a Visiting Artist program started by Karma Cloud, to help students explore what “Art is” through the artwork and life experiences of glo-cal contemporary Artists and through the lens of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging across ethnicities, economics, genders, abilities and generations. The purpose of this Residency Series is to:

- inspire students to express themselves artistically, socially & emotionally
- motivate students to excel in the Visual Arts & try new forms of expression
- connect students with professional contemporary Visual Artists locally and globally
- feature underrepresented artists from diverse backgrounds
- create opportunities for students to critique and exhibit their work
- spark student’s imagination for career possibilities &
- potentially raise funds for their school.

How it works:

Each year I invite 3-4 professional contemporary Artists as part of my integrated, interdisciplinary DEI&B Ubuntu Expressive Arts curriculum at NE School, what I like to call the “Glocal” Magnet-*Where Local meets Global*.

The Artists and their work will reflect and include local and global artists from all over the world. In alignment with the district’s mission to cultivate an inclusive, Anti-Racist school culture, The “Art Is..” Series will explore what Art Is... through the lens of of artists who embody Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging by virtue of who they are.

Our Visiting Artist for this project was Beth Chucker, a white female artist, adopted by Jewish parents, who identifies as someone with dyslexia and ADD. She resides in Montclair, NJ and has exhibited work nationally.

About Beth Chucker

I am fascinated on how many amazing and different ways photographers can tell autobiographical stories. So when I turned the camera into my world, my world of just me and my parents, my world of loss, my world of wonder, my world of discovery, my world trying to grow, my world through my neighborhood, my world through my kids, I always question is my story relevant to others. In the movie *the Holiday*, one character is told not to be the co-star, but the star of her own movie, isn't that what we all really want and need. I just hope that my work can add to that conversation and I empower others to make their world seen. Isn't that what art is, for the people to contemplate and learn what life really is. It's the random moments, the serendipitous moments, the moments of complete comfort, the moments of anguish that turn into comfort.

I am a mother, past/future instructor, and lens based artist. I extract from my immediate world to build an intimate photographic portrait of the familial and surrounding neighborhoods.

By altering and pulling from the world to play with the fictional and the nonfictional bounds of storytelling. I treat process oriented image making, constructed narratives, portraiture, documentary tableaux, and video work as strategies to examine the different modes in which familial narratives can be conveyed. My work ebbs and flows just like you and just like me.

The Assignment

Beth introduced students to the concept of using photography to tell a personal narrative through creating a triptych- a composition of three photos placed together to communicate a story or make a statement. Beth opened their eyes to look at the everyday objects and places around them and notice how these everyday moments, objects and gazes express something significant about their lives.

For this project, students were asked to take three categories of photos. One category would focus on the “evidence” of their lives and capture common objects or scenes that were evidence of their everyday, mundane existence. Another category was to intentionally compose self portraits that go beyond the typical “selfie” and show them in a different light, not necessarily looking directly at the camera. Another photo category consisted of “calm gazes” and required students to become self aware of when they “zone out” so they could take notice and capture those zoning out moments to show us where they look to rest their minds and find a moment of calm.

This slide show presents their final selections in the form of a Triptych of Evidence. Self Portrait. Calm Gaze. The results are powerful and give the viewer a chance to see portraiture through a different lens.







































