

"Now and Then," by an unidentified student.

Reality REARRANGEMENT

by Keith A. Rosko



"The American Dream," by Dan Huizinga, grade 12.

The art of collage is an age-old process that nearly all well-known artists have utilized at one time or another. Its very nature has also meant that collage is an artistic technique that has been utilized by the "untrained" or folk artist.

I am a high-school art teacher, and I teach a Contemporary Crafts class. Given the history of collage, I use it as an introductory lesson in this advanced level class. Students seem to be able to jump into the class feeling a bit more secure when they are not worried about having to deal with the drawing or creation of subject matter. I also find this is an excellent way to encourage students to think more about concept, how to communicate through your image, and to force them to try and put seemingly unrelated found images together to communicate concepts or ideas.

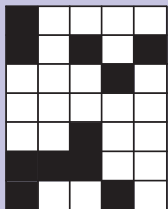
The emphasis is on finding a way to give an image a new meaning in the collage, different than its original meaning. I explain to my students that artists often put images into new contexts in order to jar people's perceptions and challenge

their preconceived notions about what certain symbols mean.

As an introduction to collage, and as a method of forcing them to really consider using found art and the context of the image, I begin by introducing students to a process called "reality rearrangement," where they try to put seemingly unrelated found images together to communicate new concepts or ideas.

After showing examples of past student work, as well as examples of the technique used in contemporary media, I demonstrate to students how to "get an idea." We flip through magazines as a group and look for images that are visually interesting and, at the same time, intriguing from an intellectual standpoint and for their narrative possibilities. After we have collected several images, we begin to discuss how two or more

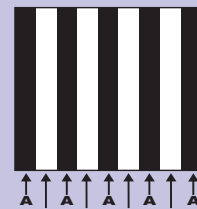
REARRANGEMENT METHODS



GRID METHOD
Divide the image into a grid and rotate each section.

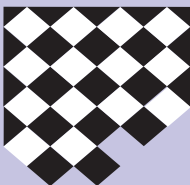


OFFSET METHOD
By cutting the image(s) into strips and pulling one set of strips off a bit, a jarring, frenetic image can be created.



DOUBLE IMAGE
Taking two or more copies of the same image (or multiple images) and placing them side by side using the same or different size strips.

WEAVING METHOD
Two images are woven together like a piece of fabric. Weaving with alternating size strips can also produce an interesting image.



RANDOM STRIPS
Create a more erratic look by using random strips.



DOUBLE EXPOSURE
Cutting two pictures using the same pattern and letting the bottom one peek through.





"The Other Woman," by an unidentified student.



"Untitled," by
Maureen Pompetti,
grade 12.



"September 11th Remembered," by Danielle Mills, grade 12.

MATERIALS

- Magazines
- Paper cutter
- StudioTac® dry adhesive
- Craft knives
- Removable tape
- Illustration board

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will ...

- understand and apply collage techniques and processes.
- be knowledgeable about and make use of art materials and resources.
- choose and evaluate a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.
- reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.

of them could be combined to create a mood or to tell a story.

Once students have a concept and images, we again come together as a group to discuss methods of cutting and splicing the images, fracturing and rearranging reality, that might help express the concept. There is a variety of methods for cutting and weaving the images together. Images are cut using a paper cutter for straight strips and a craft knife for odd shapes.

The diagrams in the side bar on page 36 illustrate a few of the many ways two or more images (or even one image with itself) can be recombined to fracture reality. I demonstrate to the students a few of the basic methods, such as cutting and pasting strips in rows, vertically or horizontally, weaving strips of the images, and cutting windows or patterns to allow parts of the image to peek through.

Students can also alter reality using only one image, by fracturing or offsetting strips, shaping areas of the image or by cutting and moving areas within the image. The negative space between the pieces of the image can also come into play as a design element, creating either a more open or claustrophobic feeling. An image can also be cut into concentric circles that are then rotated to help give a feeling of movement.

The students' final images are held together during cutting and construction with removable tape. Students then use StudioTac® dry adhesive to glue down strips onto illustration board for the final composition.

Students seem to be able to easily grasp the concepts and subtlety of this project with a great deal of self-confidence. And, I am always amazed at the level of sophistication their images convey. ■

Keith A. Rosko teaches art at Chenango Forks High School in Chenango Forks, New York.