

Participatory Project – Stan Douglas Abbott & Cordova, 7 August, 1971 & Bourke-White The Living Dead at Buchenwald photos

Presenters: Bruce Robbins and Joan Gilmore

THEME: Relationships

SUBTHEME: Posed vs. Unposed Art Photographs (real vs. recreated)

1. View Stan Douglas photo, Abbott & Cordova, 7 August, 1971, 2013.21 “What is going on here?”

Joan – Give intro to this posed/reenacted photo.

Activity -

Choose a person in the photo you feel is very unlike yourself. Stand by that figure. Point at that figure. Work with those pointing to a figure next to yours in the photo.

In small groups: Discuss with your teammates why you chose your figure. Adjust your pose and facial expression to mimic the person in the photo. Ask your teammates to help you show the desired expression, and pose in your small group. If everyone in your small group is willing, ask Bruce to snap a photo of your group. We will have you hold up a numbered card to match with your names on the clipboard.

After the photo: If desired, write your name and email address on the clipboard so that you can both receive the photo by email and get the email addresses of your teammates, at your discretion.

In large group: Have teammates stand next to their selected grouping. Show the Tablet photo taken. Ask:

“How did you feel posing?”

“What would it be like to be there during the protest, whether on purpose or inadvertently?”

“What did you learn about your character by posing?”

“How did your pose make you feel towards other members posing with you?”

“Did you feel more empathy or understand towards your figure after posing like them?”

2. View Margaret Bourke-White photo, The Living Dead at Buchenwald, 1945, 2012.47.1. “What is going on here?” Have group file past photo in a single file line to look at details.

Bruce – Give intro to this “unposed” photo (explain how it was posed after liberators arrived)

Activity -

Choose a person in the photo. Imagine their story. In 10 words, tell the group what they may be thinking or feeling.

Stand in front of the photo, imitating your chosen person’s stance and facial expression as much as possible. If you wish, be part of a group photo reenacting this photo. Joan will take photo, and convert it to black-and-white. Group compares Tablet shot with photo on wall.

Discuss:

“How did you feel posing?”

“How did your pose make you feel towards other members posing with you?”

"Try to imagine being liberated from all the horror and about to be released. What might have your person been thinking?"

Discuss differences in posed vs. unposed or real vs. recreated. Discuss intention of the artist in choosing to present photo as each artist did. Discuss: When does a photo become news? When does a photo become art?