

## Art & Activities / Death and Disaster: Newspaper Activity



### Overview:

Students look through contemporary newspapers to critically examine the use of photojournalism to report the news or to tell a story. Students create their own interpretation and story using Andy Warhol's processes of appropriation, cropping and repositioning.

**Grades:** 6 to 12

**Subjects:** Social Studies, Journalism, Art, Photography, Language Arts Writing

### Pennsylvania State Standards:

Arts and Humanities:

9.2.E Analyze how historical events and culture impact forms, techniques and purposes of works in the arts

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening:

1.6.8. F Use media for learning purposes.

Describe how the media provides information that is sometimes accurate, sometimes biased based on a point of view or by the opinion or beliefs of the presenter.

History:

8.1.9 B Analyze and interpret historical sources.

Visual data presented in historical evidence

### Objectives:

- Students will interpret visual data from art and source materials
- Students will differentiate between journalism and art
- Students will predict how the meaning of an image will change through journalistic and artistic editing
- Students will edit visual information to convey new meanings

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## Art & Activities / Death and Disaster: Newspaper Activity



Andy Warhol

TC 232

Contents of Time Capsule 232, date missing

cardboard with packing tape and felt-tip ink and graphite inscriptions

11 1/8 x 18 3/8 x 14 in. (28.3 x 46.7 x 35.6 cm.)

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh Founding Collection,

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### About the Art:

Andy Warhol loved all forms of daily media and collected various newspapers, magazines, and supermarket tabloids. He recognized the power of mass-circulated media images in American culture and appropriated these as source material for his artwork. To create the painting, 129 Die in Jet, Warhol used an image from the June 4, 1962 New York Mirror and an opaque projector. He omitted the photo's caption from this hand-painted work, leaving the context of the headline unknown. In his Death and Disaster series, Warhol explores the impact of cropped images taken out of a journalistic framework and placed repeatedly into the context of art. Some of the photographs that Warhol chooses as source images for this series depict horrific scenes, such as race riots, car crashes, suicides, and nuclear explosions. These focus on a narrative that may or may not be obvious, but is symbolic of death and disaster nonetheless, such as the Tuna Fish Disaster, Electric Chair, and Jackie series. In all of these works Warhol uses the repetition of images to mirror the repetition evident in society through media and technology.

## **Art & Activities / Death and Disaster: Newspaper Activity**

### **Points of View:**

In 1963, while Warhol was working on his Death and Disaster paintings, Art News published an interview with him by Gene Swenson:

G.S. When did you start with the "Death" pictures?

A.W. I guess it was the big plane crash picture, the front page of the newspaper: 129 Die. I was also painting the Marilyns. I realized that everything I was doing must have been Death. It was Christmas or Labor Day a holiday and every time you turned on the radio they said something like "4 million are going to die." That started it. But when you see a gruesome picture over and over again, it really doesn't have any effect.

Interview reprinted in, Andy Warhol: Death and Disasters, The Menil Collection, p. 19.

Warhol's art Death and Disasters will convey the range, power and empathy underlying his transformation of these commonplace catastrophes. Finally, one can sense in this art an underlying human compassion that transcends Warhol's public affect of studied neutrality.

Walter Hopps, foreword to Andy Warhol: Death and Disaster, p. 9

Warhol's repetitions of car crashes, suicides and electric chairs are not like the repetition of similar and yet different terrible scenes day in and day out in the tabloids. These paintings mute what is present in the single front page each day, and emphasize what is present persistently day after day in slightly different variations. Looking at the papers, we do not consciously make the connection between today's, yesterday's, and tomorrow's repetitions which are not repetitions.

Gene Swenson, art critic,  
What is Pop Art? Interviews with Eight  
Painters, Art News 62 (November 1963):  
24-2 , pp. 6 -63

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What do you think is conveyed in 129 Die in Jet?
2. How do journalists manipulate images by cutting and cropping out information in order to suit their story?(ex.: tabloids, magazines, internet, etc.)?
3. What is the difference between journalism and art?
4. How does the meaning change in these images when they are made into Warhol's art?
5. Do you think it is okay for artists to work from other people's photographs? Why or why not?

## Art & Activities / Death and Disaster: Newspaper Activity

### Activity: Appropriation and Manipulation of News Imagery

#### Materials:

Image of *129 Die in Jet*

Erasers

Pencils

Pens

Scissors

Current Newspapers/News Journals

Glue Sticks

Handout (page 8 of this PDF)



#### Activity Procedure:

##### 1. Explain and Discuss:

**Appropriation:** In the visual arts, the term appropriation is often used in a general way to refer to the use made of borrowed elements in the creation of new work. These borrowed elements might include images, forms, or styles from art history or popular culture, or materials and techniques from non-art contexts.

**Manipulation:** The modification of images such as cutting and pasting, tonal adjustments, cropping, moiré reduction, etc. using manual or image editing software.

2. Using Warhol's method of appropriation, look through current newspapers/news journals to find headlines and images you find interesting.
3. Cut or crop your image, editing out any information you don't want.
4. Glue your image into the template; choose either a horizontal or vertical layout.
5. Use an eraser to lighten areas of the newsprint. Use a pencil to darken or add contrast to areas of the newsprint.
6. Answer the questions on the handout.

#### Assessment and Wrap-up:

In small groups, students share their work with peers and explain the choices they made in the creation of their images. Students use a 1-5 rating scale to assess their artworks (1 = unacceptable; 2 = needs work; 3 = mediocre; 4 = well done; 5 = outstanding).





TC21.1

129 Die in Jet (Source Material)

printed ink on newsprint

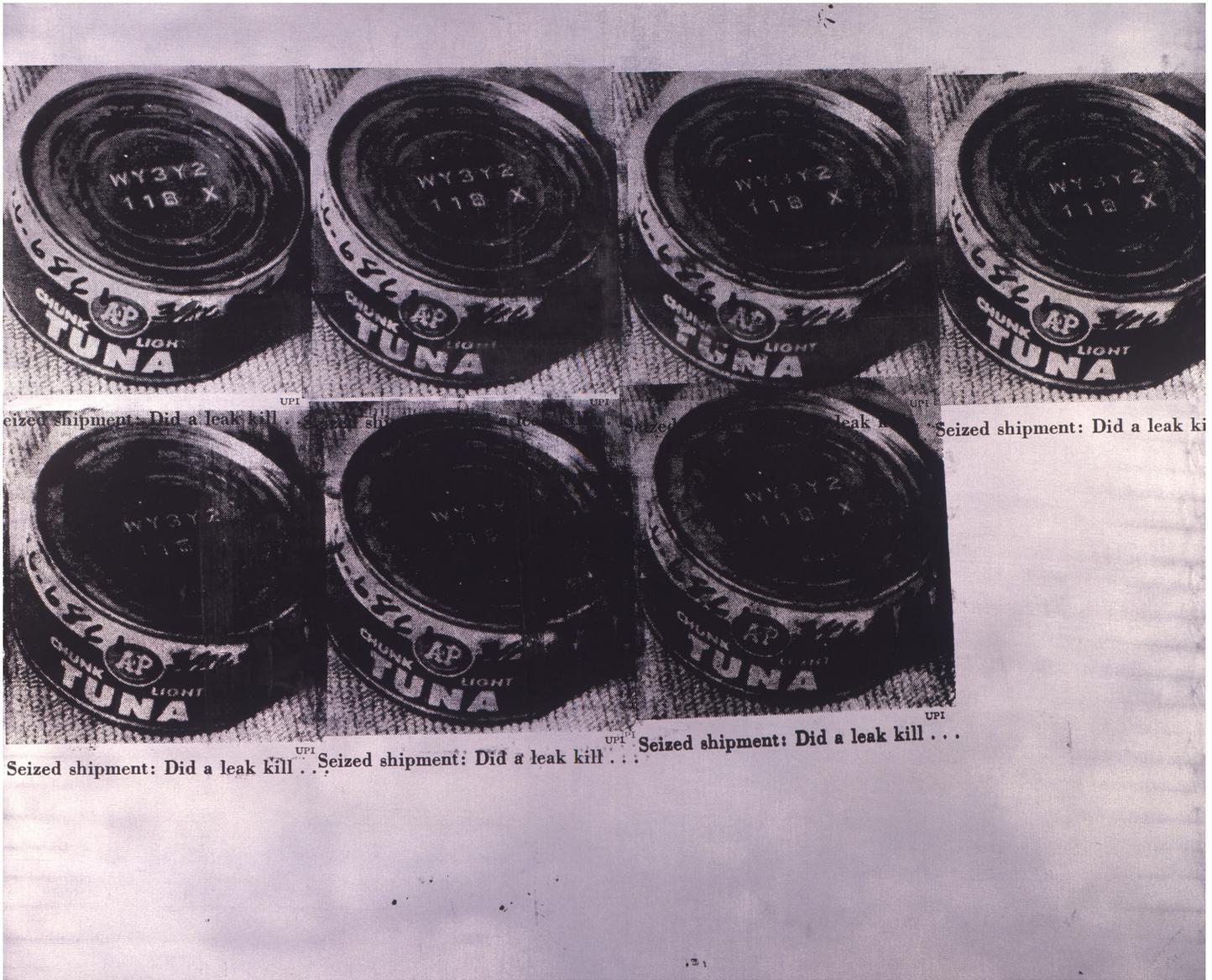
14 15/16 x 11 1/4 in. (37.9 x 28.6 cm.)

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh

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Andy Warhol, Tunafish Disaster, 1963

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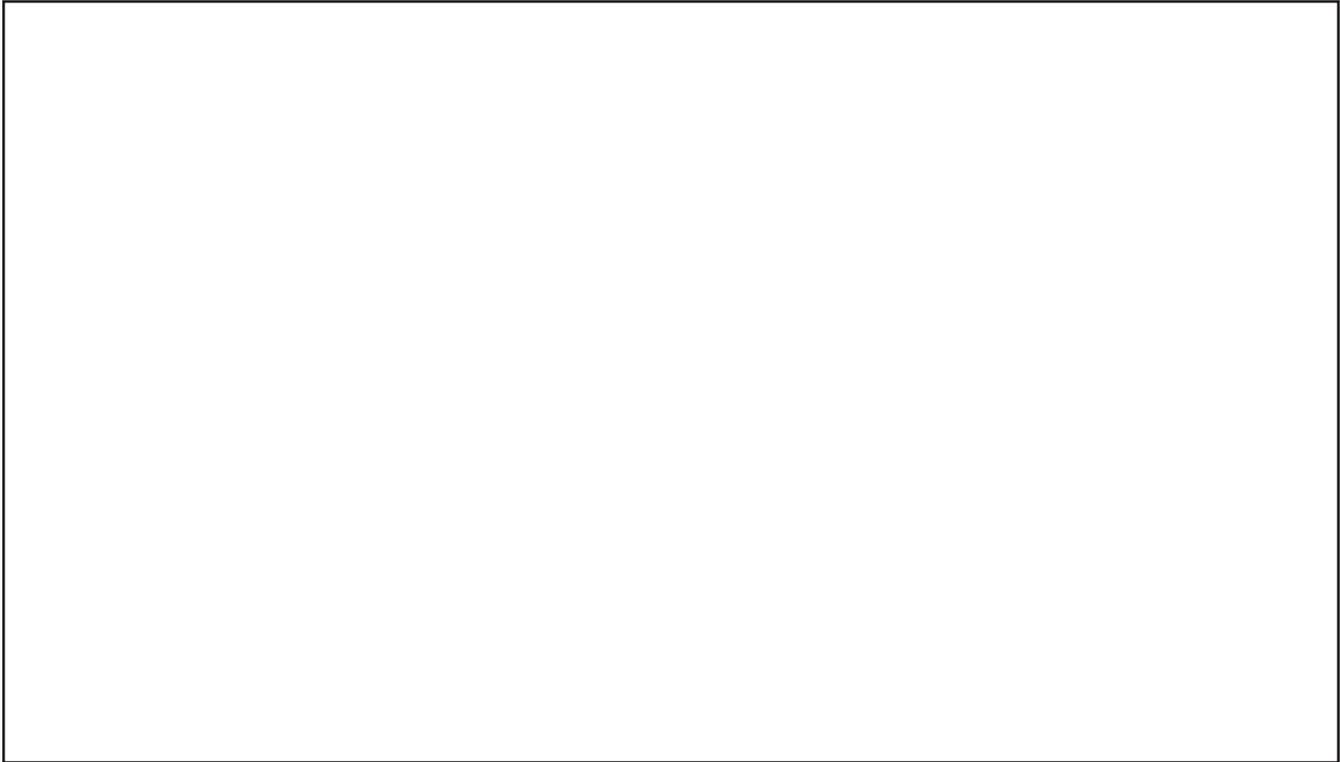
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**Art & Activities / Newspaper Activity / Handout:  
Appropriation & Manipulation of News Imagery**



Explain:

- Why you chose this photo
- The changes you made to it or would make to it given time technology (i.e. dimensions to enlarge, repetition, color)
- What you think the image might mean with your alterations

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## APPROPRIATION AND MANIPULATION OF NEWS IMAGERY

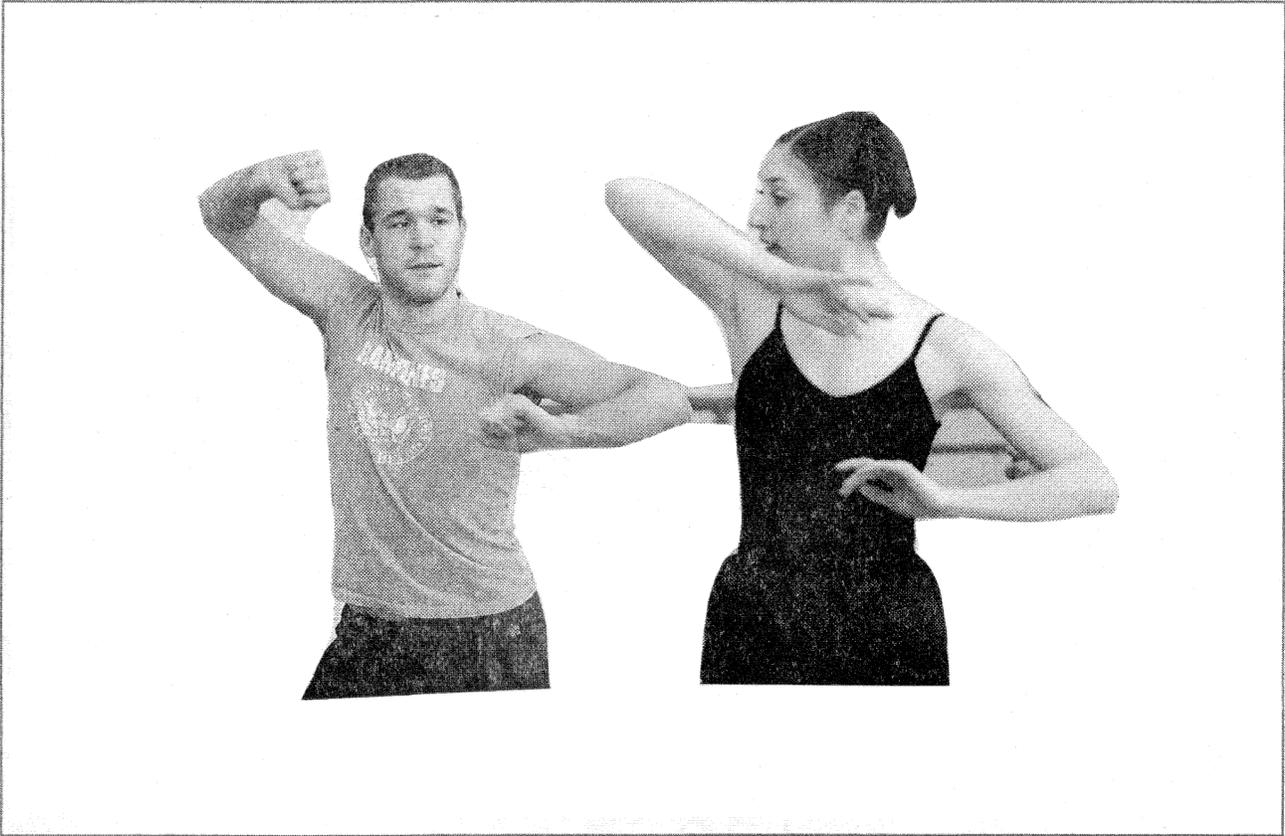


Explain:

- Why you chose this photo
- The changes you made to it or would make to it given time and technology (i.e. dimensions to enlarge, repetition, color)
- What you think the image might mean with your alterations

We chose this picture because this man is really in combat, but dressed in common clothes. We would like to take the dark areas out of the face area to make the soldier look younger. It would show that common people get involved in warfare.

## APPROPRIATION AND MANIPULATION OF NEWS IMAGERY



Explain:

- Why you chose this photo
- The changes you made to it or would make to it given time and technology (i.e. dimensions to enlarge, repetition, color)
- What you think the image might mean with your alterations

We chose the photo because after the background is removed, it's hard to tell what is actually happening. We would enlarge the photo and make a different background. It could look like the couple are fighting, or the man is attacking the woman (instead of dancing.)