

A Collaborative, Interactive Sound/Light Sculptural Story Wall: BODY SCULPTURE NARRATIVES through Linda Stein's *The Fluidity of Gender* Adaptable for MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

Overview

In this encounter, students, using *The Fluidity of Gender: Sculpture by Linda Stein (FoG)* as a departure point to explore identity and protection through the creation of a body sculpture and incorporate sound and light interactivity as well as an accompanying voice narrative.

This encounter provides a way to visually represent an answer to the question, "What story do I want to share about protection?"

Rationale

This encounter captures the universal experience of all people who have used their own "armor" to hide something or to protect themselves. Sometimes the protection may only a façade used to survive and get ahead; sometimes it may be a cover used to hide pain and resentment at being treated unfairly.

Through making their own body sculpture and telling their own story, students will have the opportunity to define aspects of their identities to highlight as well as aspects of their identity to conceal. Sharing their body sculpture provides a way for students to express themselves in their own way as well as a way to counter the labels or stereotypes others may have placed on them.

STE(ARTS)M learning is incorporated into empowering, social justice themes. STEM learning tends to foster left-brain convergent thinking - one best answer. The Arts disciplines tend to foster right-brain divergent thinking - many 'right' answers. In this lesson we bring together both.

Learning Goals

1. Students will learn about artist Linda Stein's art and her exhibition *The Fluidity of Gender*
2. Students will apply the idea of protection to the self and interpret aspects of their complex identities— what they want to present to others and what aspects they want to conceal.
2A. Each Student or in Pairs with create a Visual Collaged Reference Board for Brainstorming-including cut outs of favorite super heroes, favorite song lyrics they listened to during moments when then needed to feel protected or song lyrics that helped motivate them to protect/stand up for themselves, brave role models, pics of people that are important in their life- to help validate their emotions.
3. Students will create visual symbols that represent aspects of their self with or without text.
4. Students will create a body sculpture by casting a part of their own body.
5. Students will create and record their own sounds, a series of short 10 sec sounds/noise/body movement choosing either a) what it sounds like when you have to protect yourself (like an alarm/ fast heartbeat/intensifying breathing) or b) what it sounds like when you are unable to protect yourself or someone you care about- These sounds can be layered into a final narrative in which students tell their own story by recording it, editing it, and transferring it to be used as an interactive part of their artwork as a touch point to animate sound.

6. Students will learn about interactivity and the role of sound and light in enhancing experiences with art through discussion and visual examples.

7. Students will learn basic circuitry and conductivity using LED lights and tiny lily microprocessors as well as touchboard for incorporating sound to their artwork.

Mode of Assessment and Communicating Feedback

Students will keep a Journal that will allow facilitators and students to read and write comments to journals/ start additional written conversations to help validate the students authentic and honest aspects of any personal narratives they are willing to share/ bring to this project-- each worksheet / art work viewed/ discussed will be glued into the journals

Materials for body sculpture making, including (but not limited to):

Journal

packing tape (lots),

vinyl adhesive (assorted colors) printer shops usually have scraps to give,
student-generated text, images, and symbols,

scissors and/or exacto knives

bare conductive touchboard: <https://www.bareconductive.com/shop/touch-board/>

twisty wire

coin cell batteries and holders

LED lights

switches

tiny lilies for light function available at <https://www.sparkfun.com/products/10899>

Speakers

USB Plug (for connecting touchboard to an electrical outlet)

Starting Points and Prompts

Day 1

View/Dialogue- Online *The Fluidity of Gender: Sculpture by Linda Stein*

Review artworks in FoG. What do you see? What does it make you think of? Questions: What is the artist conveying about protection? How are the materials and forms used to convey meaning? How are they fluid?

Encountering the FoG exhibition, students will contemplate the various ways one metaphorically armors oneself. Many factors shape identity. We define ourselves, but at the same time, others choose labels for us. How does one protect oneself from unwanted or false labels and at the same time confidently cultivate one's identity that feels authentic? Exploring notions of identity and protection through the art of Linda Stein, teachers can prompt students to answer: what is our role and responsibility as human beings to "protect" others?

READ the Artist's statement: The exhibition explores the continuum between the binaries of masculinity and femininity, while inspiring the compassion, empathy and bravery it takes to become an upstander rather than a bystander. HAWT asks people to re-invent and visualize bravery for themselves, to look at the armor they wear, the safety they seek. The artist says,

“with my androgynous forms, I invite the viewer to seek out diversity in unpredictable ways, to ‘try on’ new personal avatars and self-definitions, knowing that every new experience changes the brain’s structure and inspires each of us to a more authentic self.”

Day 2

Begin a narrative: To prepare students for making a body sculpture, ask them to think about the following prompts to begin to answer the question- What is my story of protection?:

(A) Written: each 1 to 2 paragraphs/ 1 page-

(B) For some who have experienced recent trauma from Bully Abuse/ Recovery or Self Harm Abuse/ Recovery may need to each be processed first in session
Ms.Carla Rice/HighSchool Social Worker-in private preliminary session before 12 person SafeSpace group- can arrange this for next week

Target

Describe a time when someone’s words or actions hurt you.

Perpetrator

Describe a time when your words or actions hurt someone else.

Confronter

Describe a time when you interrupted an act of prejudice.

Describe a time when you saw an act of prejudice and did not intervene.

Protector

Describe a time when you had to protect yourself or others.

Volunteers can share their responses. Given the personal nature of this prompt, it is best to allow students to keep this reflection private.

Optional: For more resources, Facing History Facing Ourselves provides short video narratives from the perspective of the bullied, the bully, and the bystander. See:

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/alex-film-bully>

<https://www.facinghistory.org/books-borrowing/group>

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/angelo-portillo-2013-los-angeles-benefit-dinner>

Explain that the purpose of the narrative body sculpture is to help answer the question, “What is my story- what is my protection?” Completing the “Body sculpture-making Preparation Worksheet” can help students answer these questions before they begin crafting their protective gear or armor. Students can start by exploring the question “Who am I?” as influenced by biographical characteristics, personal experiences and interests. Teachers can create a Body sculpture-making Preparation Worksheet to spur thinking with the following questions:

1. What aspects of your identity do you present to others?
2. What labels or adjectives would you like others to use when they think about you?
3. What are some aspects of your identity that you may not present to others but that you still want them to know about? (These are ideas students might want to include on the inside of their body sculpture.)
4. What are some symbols and text that can represent these ideas?

Process

Day 4

Explain to students that they will be making a collaborative sculptural mural composed of individual body sculptures and that they will be casting a part of their own bodies. Inform students that they can design both the outside and the inside of their sculpture. For instance, the outside can represent aspects of their identities they wish to reveal to the outside world and the inside can represent the more private aspects of their identities they wish to conceal. Show visuals of examples.

First- Students will contemplate and decide on what part of their body they want to represent and cast. Then they will use the vinyl adhesive and generate symbols, images, and text that represent their ideas for the outer and inner layers of the body sculpture and then set aside.

Second- Show students the materials they can use. View how-to video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XO7UM1UbJOk> (uses only packing tape) IF TEACHER ONLY PLANS ON CASTING A PART OF THE BODY, EXPLAIN TO STUDENTS THAT THEY ARE MODIFYING THE PROCESS THEY SEE ON THE VIDEO TO CAST JUST A PART OF THE BODY RATHER THAN THE WHOLE BODY.

Third- Students should find a partner to help create the armor shell.

Day 5

Review the how-to video on body casting with packing tape. After students have decided what part of their body they want to cast, with their partner, students will first wrap packing tape **sticky side up**, wrap it around (IN SECTIONS if necessary) then sticky side down. Layer 3-4 times on top (not too tight, so that you can cut it off CAREFULLY).

With your partner, once the part is covered with packing tape, CAREFULLY cut it off the body up the sides so that it keeps a shape and then re-tape areas that you want to secure if necessary.

Day 6

Switch partners

If necessary, review the how-to video on body casting with packing tape. After students have decided what part of their body they want to cast, with their partner, students will first wrap packing tape **sticky side up**, wrap it around (IN SECTIONS if necessary) then sticky side down. Layer 3-4 times on top (not too tight, so that you can cut it off CAREFULLY).

With your partner, once the part is covered with packing tape, CAREFULLY cut it off the body and then re-tape areas that you want to secure if necessary.

Day 7- 8 (9 if necessary)

Fifth- Use the materials provided to overlay symbols, images, and text on the outside and inside using tape to hold it in place- hint: prepare pieces of tape in advance (pre-cut) so that you have more stability while handling the sculpture.

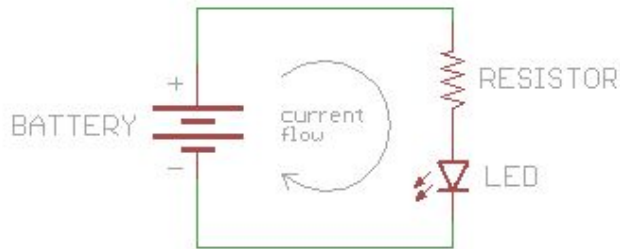
Sixth- Decide on a point on the sculpture where you want viewers to activate the sound and light. This is where you will incorporate sound and light. Think about where on the sculpture you want to direct viewers' attention.

Day 10-11

Seventh- WHAT IS A CIRCUIT?

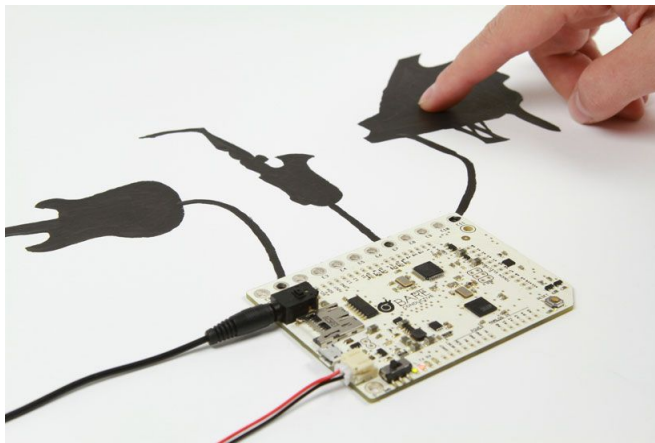
Thinking and Talking about Sound and Light

EXPLAIN that the Touch Board/Sound and LilyTiny/Light work with a circuit.



Energy flows in one direction. There is a positive (+) line/trace and a negative (-) line/trace.

SOUND: Since the introduction of digital technology, sound art has changed even more. Artists can now create visual images in response to sounds, and make sound art that the audience controls. How is sound working in the artwork? Where is the touch point for the sound? How does the viewer know to touch this point?



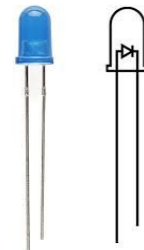
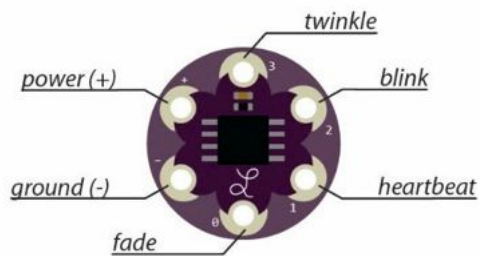
[Bare conductive touch board](#)

LIGHT: what function - Heartbeat? Slow fade? Why? One light? Many lights? How do the lights relate to each other? To the ambient light in the exhibition/classroom space?

LilyTiny Diagram

A microcontroller is like a miniature computer. It will act as the "brain" of a circuit.

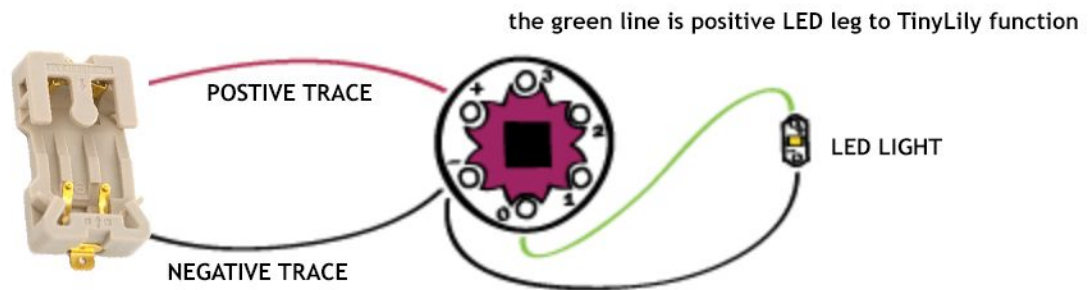
Each LilyTiny contains a microcontroller that has been pre-loaded with a program. The program can control the behavior of connected LED lights, causing them to blink, fade, twinkle, or pulse like a heartbeat.



LED (long leg + short leg -)



Battery Holder



Finding Sounds Online- Mp3 files to upload on the SD card of the touchboard

- <https://freesound.org/>
- <https://www.zapsplat.com/>
- <http://www.noiseforfun.com/>
- <http://soundbible.com/>
- Record your own!

Day 12-14 Closure before and after installation

Eighth- For the display, students write short artist statements about what their sculpture signifies to them and install for viewing. Put the body casts all together on the wall as a sculptural relief mural using the tape to stick it all together. Wire it with the sound and light for interactivity. NOTE: Teachers should provide time for dialogue and sharing their body sculptures before and after the installation. Students should reflect on the experience of making their armor and story. Review the central questions: How does one protect oneself from unwanted or false labels and at the same time confidently cultivate one's identity that feels authentic? How does one protect self and others?