GRAND MANNER MEMES:
THE JOHN SINGER SARGENT EDITION

Inspired by John Singer Sargent, Mrs. Abbott Lawrence Rotch, 1903, and Callot Souers, Evening dress, about 1900
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Grade Level Middle School (adaptable for upper elementary and high school)

OVERVIEW
Explore and interact with the visual narratives found in John Singer Sargent portraits and Neoclassical allegorical paintings using the contemporary image-based narrative device of Internet culture, the meme. Using a collection of paintings done in the Grand Manner tradition as backdrops, participants will create handmade memes to conceptually deconstruct how we communicate through images.

ANTICIPATORY SET
Grand Manner paintings were full of metaphors that were meant to imply that the subject sitting for the portrait had a certain sophistication, virtuousness, and wealth. Many of us are still concerned with presenting similar ideas of ourselves but in the photos and videos we share on social media. One thing that is different now is the meme. A meme can help you reframe the imagery used to signify the subject matter’s character to help understand the way we communicate how we think about ourselves and others.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
● Students will create a new message or idea by adding a phrase to an appropriated Grand Manner painting.
● Students will express an idea using simple word and image combinations.
● Students will investigate Grand Manner portrait painting and how it could be similar to current social media and selfie culture.

RESOURCES:
● The Evolutionary History of Memes, 13:04 minutes, YouTube video published by waveywebsurf, https://youtu.be/Wf_MXH0sUwE
● British and American Grand Manner Portraits of the 1700s (slideshow), National Gallery of Art https://bit.ly/2IUFveT
● Sargent Teaching Poster, Joslyn Art Museum*
  ○ www.joslyn.org > Education > Teachers > LESSON PLANS

*available through the Nelson Teacher Resource Center at Joslyn Art Museum
  ○ Preview all resources before sharing with students.
VOCABULARY:
- Grand Manner
- Neoclassical
- Meme
- Appropriated

MATERIALS:
- Printed copies of Grand Manner and John Singer Sargent paintings
- Sticker letters to create phrases
  - Note: These are found with scrapbooking supplies; for the September 2019, Adhesive Letters—IMPACT Upper Case Letter Kit in 1 inch were used; these adhesive peel and stick vinyl letters came from http://stickerz.com

LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction:
Explain Grand Manner painting and how the format of the meme will be used to create new meaning. Use external videos and imagery to inspire the students.

Start:
Each student will be allowed to pick three to four paintings to create phrases for from a bank of images. Each student will be given sticker letters to apply to their images to create their meme.

Create:
Give students enough time and space to brainstorm amongst themselves, the entire group, or with the instructor to come up with an appropriate message image combination for their Meme ideas.

Review:
After the students make a few different word and image combinations, let them share and explain them. Once they have shared their meme you can share the original subject and meaning of the painting for comparison.

CONTENT STANDARDS
NEBRASKA CONTENT AREA STANDARDS
IOWA CORE STANDARDS