

Out of Place



Theresa McGee

There are different ways to interpret art that is “out of place.” Perhaps the artwork conflicts with our understanding of reality, uses improper scale or juxtaposition, or maybe the artwork just doesn’t match our own expectations. The following online resources will inspire your students to think beyond their own understanding of place and space.

Our Understanding of Reality

M.C. Escher is perhaps one of the best-known illusion artists. His visual tricks play with our understanding of reality. Connect with Escher through an iTouch app that fools the mind’s eye and engages your students (tinyurl.com/EscherApp). Visit the Escher website (www.mcescher.com) to download an interactive puzzle and take a virtual ride into an Escher masterpiece. Interact with an amazing 360° computer animation based on Escher’s *Relativity* at blog.360cities.net/tribute-to-escher.

Scale and Juxtaposition

Send your students back to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America with the National Gallery of Art: Faces and Places interactive online game at tinyurl.com/NGAplaces. Work with scale, perspective, and composition within a panoramic landscape. Blend the poetry of Jack Prelutsky’s *Scranimals* with technology and create your own juxtaposed creatures using Build Your Wild Self (buildyourwildself.com). Perhaps misplaced or out of place, these new creations can work as a foundation for student art production. You can also start from scratch with Google Sketchup (sketchup.google.com). This amazing (and free) tool lets you design three-dimensional functional objects, including anything from a can of soda to an armchair to architecture. These everyday objects are often overlooked as works of art.

Our Expectations About Art

Hosted by the American Visionary Art Museum (www.avam.org), the Kinetic Sculpture Race (kineticbaltimore.com) challenges traditional art perceptions through proportion, new use of materials, and subject matter. Also notable for creating the unexpected is the outsider artwork of Chris Roberts-Antieau, one of the Visionary Museum featured artists. Explore a documentary of her life and visionary work through a very entertaining animated video at www.brookbankproductions.com.

Integrating art into your curriculum that questions context can lead to thought-provoking art discussions. Instead of fitting “into place,” look beyond traditional approaches and embrace the “out of place.”

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