

Advanced Placement in *Action*

Janet Payne

Providing a rigorous visual arts program of studies for high school can be a challenge. Even with the best art curriculum, based on national and state standards and regularly revised, there is little opportunity for students and teachers to actually see artwork from other school divisions or states. As an art educator, is it important to you to know how your art students would measure up for a national comparison?

Advanced Placement

One way to gain some insight is to offer the College Board Advanced Placement Program. Through the AP program, school divisions can elect to offer AP Art History, Studio Art: Drawing Portfolio, Studio Art: 2-D Design Portfolio, and Studio Art: 3-D Design Portfolio. Over 21,000 portfolios from AP schools are submitted and reviewed each year using rigorous standards. This number represents the second-largest number of students participating in a single AP discipline.

The AP Studio Art programs set a national standard for performance that allows students to earn college credit while still in high school. Students are required to construct a portfolio that demonstrates a depth of investigation and process of discovery through three portfolio sections—concentration, breadth, and quality.

Work from all sections is photographed and submitted for evaluation as slides. In addition, an artist statement and five actual pieces of artwork are submitted and evaluated. A minimum of three and a maximum of seven readers score the student portfolio. Scores are then

assigned, converted to a composite raw score, and assigned a rating. Grades run from one to five with five being extremely well-qualified. Generally, colleges and universities accept a four or five as a three-credit college elective.

Offering AP Studio Art presents a challenge not only for the student but for the teacher as well. The AP program is a prescribed curriculum with precise deadlines, which requires a teacher to have outstanding organizational skills, a strong background in art history, a commitment to staying current with new

lio mailed on time.

Students involved in AP Studio Art tend to form close bonds with their fellow artists as they encourage and support each other's efforts. In our school division, we decided from the start to hold at least two evening all-county critiques. College professors, guest artists and educators lead the student discussions. This opportunity allows students and teachers to share works in progress and talk about intentions and direction.

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technologies and knowledge of contemporary and developing artists. The art teacher takes on the role of facilitator and coach, as students must stay on track in order to complete the requirements of the curriculum and get the slides processed, artist statement written, and portfo-





Teacher Advantages

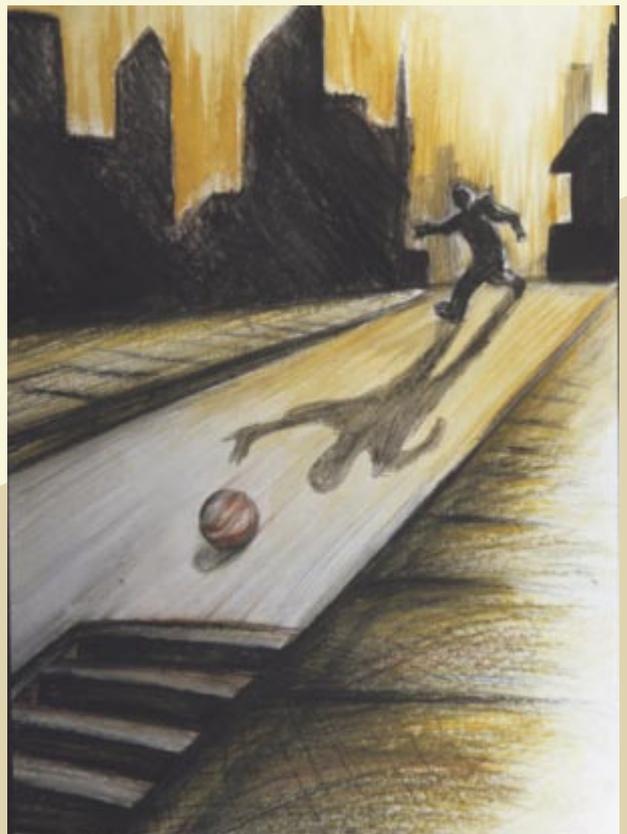
In our district, the advantage of the AP program has been realized through increased funding for resources for both our teachers and students. The AP Summer Teacher Institutes offer a great opportunity to recharge batteries and build peer relationships with art teachers from around the region and county. In addition, the AP Web site offers ongoing support. 🐞

Janet Payne is the fine arts and performing arts coordinator for Stafford County Schools in Stafford, Virginia, and a member of the SchoolArts Advisory Board.

WEB LINKS

apcentral.collegeboard.com
www.ibo.org/ibo/index.cfm

*Left: Gian Galang.
Above, Preston Simms.
Above right, Gian Galang.*



Our 24-Hour Art Odyssey

As the fine arts coordinator for my district, my primary responsibility is to serve as a resource for teachers. It was a high priority for me to provide that extra “ah-hah” experience for the teachers and students, something they would not get in the course of the school year. In the spring, high school art teachers and ten students from each school were invited to participate in a twenty-four-hour field trip to New York City—all expenses paid through our professional development fund.

Our first stop was to the Whitney Museum to see the Tim Hawkinson installation. After watching the PBS series “Art:21,” students were able to see the now-familiar and amazing work of Hawkinson.

Our next stop was the Brooklyn Museum of Art to see Jean Michel Basquiat’s explosions of line and color. Again, students and teachers were faced with a fearless expression of symbols and images. As the students worked their way through this provocative collection of work by the young genius, students were face to face with the question of “What is art?”

Our last stop was Hudson River Pier 54, the site of the Nomadic Museum designed and constructed by architect Shigeru Ban for the photographic exhibition “Ashes and Snow” featuring works of Gregory Colbert. Assembling over 150 shipping containers, Ban constructed a cathedral-like structure for the viewing of the oversized, sepia-toned photographs featuring images of people engaged in communication with animals. This isolated, quiet environment contrasted with the previous two museum experiences.

Our museum day took AP students and teachers out of their traditional art history experiences and plunged them into the heart of the contemporary art scene. Some students were perplexed—others frustrated as they wrestled to find meaning in these strange new art forms.