

PROGRAM 3

Historical References in the Arts

Overview

How does art history inform and influence contemporary works of art? How do individual art forms impact or inform each other in a multi-arts work? Often, it is through historical context — images that evoke shared associations with certain people, places and times.

This section of the unit of study looks deeper into the concept of historical context that was introduced earlier. Learners will recognize the use of historical references in a work of art, investigate the many ways that historical references can affect a work of art, interpret and use historical references to convey important information, and see how art continues to shape history today. Video footage from *Quidam* and pictures of costumes from the 1917 premiere performance of *Parade* reveal how historical references in costumes and other aspects of a production help to convey ideas and emotions in these multi-arts pieces. The four lessons in this section focus on the visual arts and dance.

The Lessons

- Lesson 1: Influences of the Past
- Lesson 2: The Power of Costume
- Lesson 3: Magritte and Nikolais
- Lesson 4: Art Historian Role-Play

Note: Some books listed as resources in these lessons are out of print. If they aren't available through your library, try a used-book search engine on the Internet, such as www.bookfinder.com.

PROGRAM 3

Lesson 1: Influences of the Past

Overview

Learners will examine the multi-arts performance piece *Quidam* to identify historical references it contains and to consider their impact on the work.

Objectives

- View and analyze *Quidam* using a checklist of historical references.
- Describe where historical references occur in the video segment, using the checklist and follow-up discussion.
- Participate in a group discussion pertaining to historical sources used in *Quidam*, with the aid of the checklist and notes.

Materials and Resources

- *Quidam* video by Cirque du Soleil
- Handout: Viewing Guide for Cirque du Soleil's *Quidam*
- Handout: Cirque du Soleil
- Handout: *Quidam*
- Reading: Cirque du Soleil
- Reading: *Quidam*

Planning and Preparation

Read through the lesson to become familiar with the historical topics, vocabulary, and teaching procedures. Use the nine-minute segment from 9:40–18:50 of *Quidam*. (Set the counter on your VCR to 0:00 when you see the title *Quidam* on-screen.) View this segment using the checklist to become familiar with the various historical references. Adapt the checklist if needed.

Background Information for Teachers

Read the handouts, Cirque du Soleil and *Quidam*, at the end of this document.

Vocabulary

- *Fantasy*: a creation of the imagination, unlikely to exist in real life
- *Historical precedent*: a previous act, event, convention, or custom
- *Human Gyroscope*: a character who performs feats while turning inside a large wheel
- *Reality*: something that exists or could exist in real life
- *Symbol*: something that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention, especially a material object used to represent something invisible

Instruction

Warm-up/Motivation

Begin with a discussion focussing on the following question:

- Where do you think the creators of Cirque du Soleil get ideas for the plots and acts of their productions?

Body of Lesson

Distribute the handouts, Cirque du Soleil and *Quidam*, which can be found at the end of this document. Talk about how Cirque du Soleil draws on a number of historical references when designing shows. While students view the short segment of *Quidam*, ask them to mark the references they see. In order to remember where and what they saw for the follow-up discussion, they should write a brief description next to the checked references.

After viewing the segment, discuss what they found and why there might be discrepancies among viewer opinions.

After the discussion, you may wish to repeat the video segment, stopping the tape where each reference appears.

Ask students why art history is important to understanding works of art, even contemporary works.

A second viewing and summary discussion could focus around the following:

- How does Cirque du Soleil create its reality and fantasy worlds using historical precedents?

Assessment

Formative

Ask students to write about three historical references featured in *Quidam*. Discuss how the performers adapted the references and how knowledge about art history is imperative to understanding works of art.

Correlated National Standards

Visual Arts

Content Standard 4

Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

Social Studies/History

Content Standard 7

Understands selected attributes and historical developments of societies in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe

Language Arts

Content Standard 9

Using viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

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PROGRAM 3

Lesson 2: The Power of Costume

Overview

Students will examine the 1917 premiere in Paris of the multi-arts performance piece *Parade* to discover how the history of costume design makes its way into contemporary works like *Quidam*.

Parade was a collaboration of some of the great avant garde artists of the time, including Erik Satie (musical score), Pablo Picasso (settings and costumes), Léonide Massine (choreography) and Jean Cocteau (plot, or scenario).

Students will analyze and interpret historical costumes and how those costumes affect the development and movement of characters. They will then study Picasso's costume designs for *Parade*. Finally, they will create at hat as a one costume element or prop for themselves.

Objectives

- Engage in historical analysis by interacting with costumes representing 17th-century European, 1920s jazz, modern, and traditional Japanese sources (or other available costumes) using an inquiry-based method to compare them to *Quidam*.
- Analyze costume designs for *Parade*, focussing on how these convey character and dictate movement.
- Create a costume element and explore how that costume element affects character development and movement.

Materials and Resources

- Book: Rothschild, Deborah Menaker. *Picasso's "Parade": From Street to Stage: ballet by Jean Cocteau; score by Erik Satie; choreography by Léonide Massine*. London: Sotheby's Publications in association with the Drawing Center, New York, 1991.
- Costumes or period clothing
- Beads
- Fabric pieces
- Feathers
- Found objects
- Greenery
- Paper bags
- Pipe cleaners
- Ribbon
- Sturdy colored paper
- Tights or pantyhose
- Handout: Rubric for Costume History Research
- Handout: Rubric for Making Symbolic Hats in Groups
- Reading: Costumes Used in Program 3

Planning and Preparation

Out-of-date fashions from recent decades, such as bell-bottom jeans from the 1970s, can be brought from home or found at thrift shops. Old children's clothing or Halloween costumes also can be used.

Background Information for Teachers

See the reading, *Costumes Used* in Program 3, at the end of this document.

Vocabulary

- *Costume*: Clothes or accessories worn to look like someone else, to evoke a specific time or place, or to fit in with a group or occasion.

Instruction

Warm-up/Motivation

Place costumes in various places around the room and ask students to answer the following questions in a journal entry or worksheet using short written responses:

- What time periods are the costumes from?
- What can you tell about the characters who might wear these costumes?
- What countries or cultures do the costumes come from?
- Are the costumes for a man or for a woman?
- Describe the characters who would wear these costumes.
- What kind of jobs did the characters have and where did they work?
- Which costumes are for everyday wear, formal wear, or special events?
- What story does each costume tell?

Engage the class in a discussion comparing their written descriptions and ideas about the costumes. Use the handout, *Rubric for Costume History Research* as a guide.

Body of the Lesson

View pictures of Picasso's costumes for *Parade* (detailed drawings and photographs are included in *Picasso's "Parade": From Street to Stage* by Deborah Menaker Rothschild). Discuss the selection of color, shapes, and materials chosen for each character. Use the following questions to help focus the discussion:

- How do the costumes affect the movement of the Chinese conjurer? The acrobats? The American girl?
- Do the costumes help the character to move? If so, how?

Now, explain to the students that they are going to create their own costume piece. Begin by referring to the image of the hat from *Quidam* as it takes the little girl into the fantasy world.

- How does the hat act as a symbol?
- Does it set the scene for other small props that help lead the audience through the performance?

Hat-Making Activity

Students will design and create a hat.

Materials may be placed on tables or around the room in stations.

The class may work individually or in groups to brainstorm a list of symbols that represent fantasy or reality that will be used in making hats.

Students may begin by drawing sketches of their hats. When they are ready to begin construction, give each student a pair of nylon stockings. Cut the legs off and slip the stocking over the top of the head to form the base for the hat.

Students create symbols of fantasy and reality by tying and twisting materials with pipe cleaners and/or ribbon onto each stocking hat.

In the next lesson, the students will wear their hats, which represent the transition from fantasy to reality, to help create character and movements.

Summary and Closure

Ask students to model their hats for the class, discussing the following points:

- use of color, shape and size;
- what type of character would wear the hat; and
- possible movement/story behind the hat.

Assessment

Summative

Use the Rubric for Costume History Research to analyze student responses to the historical inquiry questions and the Rubric for Making Symbolic Hats in Groups to analyze student responses to the hat-making activity. The rubrics are available as handouts at the end of this document. Distribute these rubrics with the class prior to the lesson so that everyone is aware of the criteria for assessment.

Extensions

Design and create a costume to go with the hat. Create and define the character and movement story to go with the costume.

Correlated National Standards

Visual Arts

Content Standard 1

Understands and applies media, techniques, and processes related to the visual arts

Content Standard 2

Knows a range of subject matter, symbols, and potential ideas in the visual arts

Content Standard 4

Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

The Arts in Every Classroom: A Workshop for Elementary School Teachers

Program 3. Lesson Plans

Social Studies/History

Content Standard 7

Understands selected attributes and historical developments of societies in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe

Language Arts

Content Standard 8

Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

Content Standard 9

Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

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PROGRAM 3

Lesson 3: Magritte and Nikolais

Overview

Students will explore the work of two 20th-century masters, artist René Magritte and choreographer Alwin Nikolais, and will compare and contrast how these artists' works are reflected in *Quidam*. Students will then create a short movement sequence using a costume/prop element and historical references from this lesson.

Objectives

- Analyze and interpret the works of painter René Magritte and choreographer Alwin Nikolais, comparing the artists' works to *Quidam*.
- Create a movement sequence that incorporates an original prop/costume element and references to Magritte and Nikolais.

Materials and Resources

- Reproductions of *Golconde* (1953) by René Magritte
- Excerpts from dances by Alwin Nikolais on the Classroom Demonstration Materials videotape (onscreen counter 44:20-45:17):
 - *Suite from Imago*
 - *Effigy from Totem*
 - *Tensile Involvement*
- Prop (hat from previous lesson would work well)
- *Quidam* videotape
- Reading: René Magritte
- Reading: Alwin Nikolais

Planning and Preparation

See the readings at the end of this document to learn more about René Magritte and Alwin Nikolais. Look at *Golconde* and the Nikolais dance segments, and think about the artists' influences on *Quidam* prior to teaching. Among others, you may look for the following:

References to Magritte:

- the headless man with overcoat, umbrella, and bowler hat;
- the use of repetition, of similarly dressed characters inhabiting the stage; and
- the shrouded woman.

References to Nikolais:

- special effects lighting to enhance dancers' movements;
- electronic music; and
- combination of lights, props, and sounds to create a dehumanized effect.

Vocabulary

- *Surrealism*: an early- and mid-20th-century movement in the arts that explored the subconscious to create fantastic imagery; an example is juxtaposing recognizable objects with things that seem to be the opposite (contrast)

Instruction

Warm-up/Motivation

Explain to the class that they are going to study two artists, René Magritte and Alwin Nikolais, and their work, to further understand images and movement in *Quidam*.

Body of the Lesson

In small groups or as a class, look at *Golconde* quietly for a minute. Ask students to write down questions they may have about the piece in their journals or on sheets of paper as they look at the work.

Record the questions on a flip chart or chalkboard. Later you may want to use this checklist to be sure all of the questions were answered, or at least addressed, during the lesson.

Analyze *Golconde* using the students' questions and some of the following:

- What forms or shapes are recognizable in the work?
- Would you say the artist used mostly naturalistic or abstract forms?
- How did the artist use repetition to create a sense of space?
- Although the artist uses naturalistic forms, what seems unlikely or fantastical about this work?
- What is the overall feeling or mood?
- How does this artist incorporate costumes or props (a bowler hat, for instance) and what effect does this create?

Next, view the excerpts from the works by Nikolais. Ask students to watch silently, jotting down questions in their journals. Compare these questions to the ones asked about *Golconde*. Discuss what is similar and dissimilar about the questions for Magritte and those for Nikolais.

Use students' questions and the following for discussing Nikolais' work:

- What significance do the props have on the movement of each performer?
- Do color, size, and shape affect the movement?
- How do symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes affect the mood?
- Is a story being told? If so, what is the story?
- How do props affect the story of the dance?
- Is the story real or fantasy? Why?
- Identify the universal gestures that shape the identity of each character.

Next, watch the nine-minute segment of *Quidam* used in Lesson 1. This time, students will look for specific examples that reflect the influence of both Magritte and Nikolais, writing the references down as they watch. Discuss the following questions with the group:

- How were the creators of *Quidam* influenced by the two artists?
- Does it seem fitting that *Quidam* borrowed from these two specifically? Why?

Movement Activity

Divide the class into small groups. Each group will create a short phrase of movement incorporating the following:

- a prop (the hats from the last lesson would work) used to identify the character and the way that character moves;
- repetition of characters or other elements;
- symmetry and asymmetry;
- gesture; and
- juxtaposition of opposing elements for a surreal effect.

Students will now try out elements explored in this lesson. Following a leader, they will create shapes in time and space using the following additional elements:

- beginning, middle, and end;
- repeating patterns; and
- sequencing movements.

Various students may take turns leading as the group explores movement. Wearing their hats, each student creates a short sequence of movement with a beginning, middle, and end. Music may be played as the movement sequences are demonstrated.

Summary and Closure

Review the list of questions raised upon first viewing the Magritte and Nikolais pieces. Were all questions addressed during discussion and the movement activity? If not, when will the questions be addressed?

Assessment

Summative

During the movement activity, watch for the following behaviors as indicators of success:

- Creating a sequence with beginning, middle, and end.
- Improvising, creating, and performing dances based on the group's own ideas or other sources (historical).
- Using improvisation to discover and invent movement.
- Demonstrating the ability to work effectively with group members.
- Discussing reasons for the choice of a specific solution or multiple solutions to a given movement problem.
- Observing and discussing different dances in terms of the elements of dance by observing body shapes, levels, and pathways.

Correlated National Standards

Dance

Content Standard 2

Understands choreographic principles, processes, and structures

Content Standard 4

Applies critical and creative thinking skills in dance

Visual Arts

Content Standard 3

Knows a range of subject matter, symbols, and potential ideas in the visual arts

Content Standard 4

Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

Social Studies/History

Content Standard 7

Understands selected attributes and historical developments of societies in Africa, the Americans, Asia, and Europe

Language Arts

Content Standard 9

Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

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PROGRAM 3

Lesson 4: Art Historian Role-Play

Overview

Students will consider how artists other than those acknowledged by the traditional art world, such as street performers, influenced Cirque du Soleil.

More and more, art historians are including social historical influences in their research. To gain a taste of historical research, learners will assume the role of art historian during a small group research activity. Each small group will examine and analyze one type of performance and synthesize how the performance element is incorporated into *Quidam*. Discussion questions include:

- Is street performance art?
- Are these performances art?
- Should these types of performance receive the same historical examination as traditional historical art forms?
- How does *Quidam* incorporate this type of performance?

Objectives

- Conduct research into the history of street performance, happenings, circus, and puppetry, and see how their influences are felt in Cirque du Soleil's *Quidam*.
- Take on the role of an art historian discussing a specific type of performance.
- Incorporate an element from a specific performance style into an original performance piece.

Materials and Resources

- Photographs or video clips of street performers (see the Classroom Demonstration Materials videotape, at on-screen counter 45:37–46:42, for several street performers from the French Quarter in New Orleans)
- Internet research stations on each performance type
- Copies of research materials on circus, puppetry, street performers, and happenings from Michael Billington's *Performing ARTS: A Guide to Practice and Appreciation*. New York: QED Publishing Ltd., 1980.
- Handout: Research Guide for Street Performers
- Handout: Research Guide for Happenings and Events
- Handout: Research Guide for Circus
- Handout: Research Guide for Puppetry
- Handout: Symposium Invitation Letter
- Handout: Self-Reflection for Historian Role-Play

Planning and Preparation

In this lesson you can either allow students to decide what kind of street performance they want to study or you can choose the types and prepare materials ahead of time.

We suggest using circus, puppetry, street performers, and happenings as the focus of student research; copies of research guides for these topics are at the end of this document. Research

information on these topics can be found in *Performing ARTS: A Guide to Practice and Appreciation*, listed above. Information on these topics also is available at the following Internet sites:

- Magicians: www.conjuror.com
- Mime: www.performingarts.net/Trent/study.html
- Puppetry: www.cln.org/themes/puppetry.html

Be sure to preview the Web sites before you refer students to them.

Vocabulary

- *Street Performers*: Entertainers who perform in public areas, including musicians, mimes, magicians, puppeteers, dancers, acrobats, and daredevils

Instruction

Warm-up/Motivation

Show students video clips or photographs of street performers. Discuss the following questions:

- Is street performance art?
- How do you think the creators of *Quidam* may have been influenced by street performers?

Ask students to generate a list of who can be considered a street performer and where they may see that type of performance in *Quidam*.

Body of Lesson

Divide the class into small research groups. Ask each group to choose one performance type, or assign them a type. The small groups will generate a list of historical research questions to help them organize the information they will gather, or they can use the research guides prepared for this lesson.

The following questions are examples:

- Where did this performance type come from?
- In what time period did the performance originate?
- How has the performance type been adapted or changed over time?
- How has technology changed the performance type?
- Where would you see this performance type? Can it be seen in different cultures? How do cultures adapt it?

Once students have written research questions, they will research the answers using the Internet, library, or teacher-prepared materials.

After ample research time, students will share their findings with the rest of the class by engaging in a short, dramatic role-play.

Set the scene by passing out the handout, Symposium Invitation Letter, from the end of this document.

Assign one member from each group to serve on a panel so that all the performance types are represented. Each “panel member” assumes of the role of a historical scholar and advocate for his or her special kind of street performance.

One by one, ask panel members to make the case for why the art form they represent should be credited as a historical reference for *Quidam*. Each will argue based on their research findings that his or her performance type is significant to understanding *Quidam*. Panel members should be encouraged to create characterizations to add dramatic interest. Discuss in advance how these characters might act and interact with others, what the character’s posture would look like, and so on.

Summary and Closure

Debrief the role-playing activity. Ask students how they would assess their learning through this activity. What did they learn from others? (A student self-assessment rubric, Self-Reflection for Historian Role-Play, is included at the end of this document.)

Assessment

Formative or Summative

Ask students to use the handout, Self-Reflection for Historian Role-Play, to assess their involvement in the art historian role-play.

Extensions and Connections

During Lesson 3, students created a movement sequence that incorporated props used as symbolic transitional tools for communicating reality and fantasy. As an extension of this idea, ask students to revisit the movement sequence and add a sequence of movement inspired by street performance. Invite the class to discuss the influence of historical elements of each individual or group movement sequence.

Correlated National Standards

Theatre

Content Standard 2

Uses acting skills

Dance

Content Standard 4

Applies critical and creative thinking skills in dance

Visual Arts

Content Standard 4

Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

Social Studies/History

Content Standard 7

Understands selected attributes and historical developments of societies in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe

Language Arts

Content Standard 5

Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process

Content Standard 7

Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

Content Standard 8

Uses listening and speaking for different purposes

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Handout

Viewing Guide for Cirque du Soleil's Quidam

Categories

Notes

Children's Stories

- *Alice in Wonderland*
- *Wizard of Oz*

Characters

- Court jester
- Dancers
- Hero
- Jugglers
- Magicians
- Master of ceremonies
- Musicians
- Parents
- Street performers
- Tumblers

Settings/scenery

- Living room (real world)
- Fantasy world

Costumes/props

- Fabric
- Hat
- Human gyroscope
- Shoes
- Umbrella

Technology

- Computer generated lighting and music
- Projected images
- Special effects

Dance

- *Parade*
- Ballet
- Ethnic/folk
- Modern
- Modern multi-arts performance reference
- Musical theatre

The Arts in Every Classroom: A Workshop for Elementary School Teachers
Program 3. Lesson Plans

Art

- Dada (rejection of traditional art, focus on chance or improvisation)
- Modern multi-arts performance reference, *Parade*
- Realism (focus on the actual, natural world)
- Reference to 20th-century Surrealist artist, René Magritte
- Surrealism (focus on the subconscious or dream-state by creating fantastical and juxtapositions)

Handout

Cirque du Soleil

In the early 1980s, a group of young street performers in Quebec, Canada, pooled their talent and dreams and founded the “Club des Talons Hauts” or “High-Heels Club,” aptly named because most of them were stilt-walkers. The club also featured fire-eaters, jugglers, and other performers, who were known collectively as buskers. At that time, Quebec did not have a circus tradition, so the club organized a festival where street performers could come together to exchange ideas and techniques. They called it the “Fête Foraine de Baie St-Paul” (the Baie Saint-Paul Fair). That was all a few visionaries needed to hatch the idea of bringing all this talent together under one roof or — why not? — a big top! Cirque du Soleil was born.

Cirque du Soleil was officially created in 1984 with the assistance of the Quebec government, as part of the celebrations surrounding the 450th anniversary of Jacques Cartier’s arrival in Canada. Cirque was based on a totally new concept: a striking, dramatic mix of the circus arts and street entertainment, featuring wild, outrageous costumes, staged under magical lighting, and set to original music. With not a single animal in the ring, Cirque’s difference was clear from the very start. The show debuted in the Quebec town of Gaspé and then was performed in 10 other cities throughout the province. The first blue and yellow big top seated 800.

Since its creation, millions of people around the world have seen Cirque du Soleil’s productions. In 1996, the Cirque du Soleil International Headquarters was completed in Montreal. This \$40 million project made it possible for more than 500 permanent Montreal employees to work together. It is here that all of Cirque du Soleil’s shows are created and produced.

Cirque today runs several simultaneous productions worldwide. Some of the productions, such as *Mystère* and *O* in Las Vegas, *La Nouba* at Walt Disney World, and *Alegria* in Biloxi, Mississippi, enjoy permanent runs. Others, including *Quidam*, *Saltimbanco*, and *Dralion*, are touring in both the United States and Europe. Cirque du Soleil also has released its first feature film, *Alegria*, inspired by the show of the same name, and its first-ever large-format (IMAX) production, *Journey of Man*.

Cirque du Soleil also is known for its commitment to social causes, particularly youth at risk. One percent of potential revenues from ticket sales every year is devoted to outreach programs. Cirque du Soleil can identify with the situation at-risk youth are facing because, in its own way, the Cirque lifestyle is also a wandering, marginal one. The creators of Cirque du Soleil were young self-taught artists who couldn’t be pigeonholed, and before they began playing under sumptuous big tops, their only stage was the street.

Cirque du Soleil's social action knows no borders, reaching out to youth worldwide. This outreach is proactive and committed, since Cirque chooses its partners and undertakes to work with them long term for a common goal. Just as their shows seek to stimulate the imagination and inspire dreams, so they strive to work creatively with youth at risk, opening up new avenues to help them find their place in the community without forcing them into highly structured and disciplined roles.

Cirque du Soleil wants to achieve a multiplier effect for its social action by building a solidarity network centered around its chosen cause. Alliances have been forged with numerous partners from all sectors of society that share the commitment to helping youth in difficulty.

The international success story known as Cirque du Soleil is above all the story of a remarkable bond among performers and spectators the world over. For at the end of the day, it is the spectators who spark the creative passions of Cirque du Soleil.

Adapted from the Cirque du Soleil Web site, www.cirquedusoleil.com.

Handout

Quidam

In 1996, Cirque du Soleil premiered a work entitled *Quidam*. According to Cirque du Soleil's Web site, the character Quidam is meant to be "a nameless passer-by, a solitary figure lingering on a street corner, a person rushing past. It could be anyone, anybody. Someone coming, going, living in our anonymous society. A member of the crowd, one of the silent majority. One who cries out, sings and dreams within us all. This is the Quidam that Cirque du Soleil is celebrating."

This work is different from previous productions in that it contains a narrative story line. The performance opens with Zoe, a young, angry girl who already has seen everything there is to see. Quidam, the anonymous character, invites Zoe into a mysterious, magical world, and she discovers that there is a lot more out there than she ever could have imagined. She meets John and Fritz, who befriend her and dazzle her. She is very excited about her new discoveries in this world, but then she sees her parents. Her parents, though, cannot see her, just as they don't notice her in the real world. In the end everything works out for Zoe. She is reunited with her parents and is glad to see them again. She is much appreciated in the real world now but is sad to leave the excitement of *Quidam* behind. For just a second, Zoe is reluctant to leave and looks to John for advice. He hates to say good-bye to her, but he knows she must return to her own world and her own life.

Quidam was written and directed by Franco Dragone, who has been working with Cirque du Soleil since 1985. Dragone came to the circus from a background in theatre, working with several theatrical companies across Europe. It was his experiences in Europe that led Dragone to propose an integration of theatre and circus that is now the trademark of Cirque du Soleil. The rest of the creative team included Michel Crete, set designer; Dominique Lemieux, costume designer; Benoit Jutras, composer; Debra Brown, choreographer; Luc Lafortune, lighting designer; and Francois Bergeron, sound designer. *Quidam* has more than 50 performers, ranging in age from 12 to 43. The current cast members hail from Canada, United States, France, Russia, Ukraine, China, England, Argentina, Belgium, Australia, and Israel.

Cirque du Soleil means "circus of the sun." *Quidam*, like all of Cirque du Soleil's shows, can be considered a circus performance. A circus is a type of performance staged in a circle surrounded by tiers of seats, usually under a tent. While the tradition of traveling performers can be traced back to the Middle Ages, the first modern circus was staged in London in 1768 by Philip Astley. His circus included only one act — a show of trick horsemanship. Over time, circus performances expanded to include many different kinds of acts. Today, a circus performance typically includes displays of horsemanship; exhibitions by gymnasts, aerialists, wild-animal trainers, and performing animals; and comic pantomime by clowns. The founders of Cirque du Soleil loved the circus but wanted to change it. Cirque du Soleil is not about elephants and lion tamers. It is more the circus of the future, a fusion of street performance and theatre.

The structure of *Quidam* (circus acts linked by a storyline) imitates the style called vaudeville. The American tradition of vaudeville grew out of saloon entertainment during the late 1800s. The pattern of a vaudeville performance was always the same: separate acts to musical accompaniment by comedians, serious and comic singers, jugglers, dancers, magicians, trick cyclists, etc., all structured in a single program or “bill” to be performed twice nightly.

One of the comments you will hear about *Quidam* is that it is visually breathtaking. The set for *Quidam* is stunning. One of the production’s most spectacular features is a 120-foot overhead conveyor, whose five imposing rails take up the entire interior surface of the big top. This system is used to bring performers onto the stage and to create a multitude of special effects in various acts. The costumes for *Quidam* are colorful, spectacular, and unique. The costumes were designed to let the individual personality of each performer and character come through.

The music of *Quidam* is of remarkable dramatic intensity. Drawing on influences that range from classical music to the most eclectic and contemporary sounds, the music accompanies, envelops, and accentuates the magic of the show. The music is played live by six musicians using violins, cellos, percussion instruments, saxophones, synthesizers, samplers, electric guitars, classical guitars, and a varied assortment of other string instruments. For the very first time at Cirque du Soleil, the voices of a man and a child add texture and unique color to the music.

Adapted from the Cirque du Soleil Web site, www.cirquedusoleil.com.

Handout

Rubric for Costume History Research

Use this rubric to assess students' response to questions in their journals or worksheets as they examine several costumes.

| Criteria | 1 Below Expectations | 2 Meets Expectations | 3 Above Expectations |
|--|---|---|---|
| Answer questions in sentence form | Lacks completed answers for one or more questions; multiple sentence structure errors. | Completes all questions in grammatically correct sentence form with very few errors. | Completes all questions in sentence form with no grammatical errors. |
| Provide supporting evidence based on the costume elements and design | Rarely refers to the costume elements and design to provide supporting evidence for statements. | Provides evidence based on the costume elements and design for most of the questions. | Backs up all responses using evidence based on the costume elements and design. |

Handout

Rubric for Making Symbolic Hats in Groups

Use this rubric to assess student work designing and making symbolic hats.

| Criteria | 1 Below Expectations | 2 Meets Expectations | 3 Above Expectations |
|-------------------|---|---|--|
| Symbolic elements | Group hats lack consistent symbols visible in their hats or described and explained during the class presentation; fewer than two symbols are included. | Group incorporates two to three symbols that show delineation between reality and fantasy. If unclear from the hats alone, there are verbal descriptions and explanations during the class presentation that provide clarity. | Group incorporates more than three symbolic elements that show delineation between reality and fantasy. If unclear from the hats alone, there are verbal descriptions and explanations during the class presentation that provide clarity. |
| Group consensus | Group hats lack common symbols that were established collaboratively; group members acted independently from the group. | Most group hats contain the same symbolic elements consistent with the group's established goals. | All hats in the group contain the same symbolic elements consistent with the group's established goals. Even if the hats vary somewhat, there are symbols and colors that unite them. |

Handout

Research Guide: Street Performers

Discuss each question with your group. Write answers to the following using complete sentences (this will help you in a later activity). Continue answers on the back if needed.

Where did this performance type come from?

In what time period did it originate?

How has it been adapted or changed over time?

How has it been influenced by technology?

Where would you see this performance type?

How is it adapted by various cultures?

Handout

Research Guide: Happenings and Events

Discuss each question with your group. Write answers to the following using complete sentences (this will help you in a later activity). Continue answers on the back if needed.

Where did this performance type come from?

In what time period did it originate?

How has it been adapted or changed over time?

How has it been influenced by technology?

Where would you see this performance type?

How is it adapted by various cultures?

Handout

Research Guide: Circus

Discuss each question with your group. Write answers to the following using complete sentences (this will help you in a later activity). Continue answers on the back if needed.

Where did this performance type come from?

In what time period did it originate?

How has it been adapted or changed over time?

How has it been influenced by technology?

Where would you see this performance type?

How is it adapted by various cultures?

Handout

Research Guide: Puppetry

Discuss each question with your group. Write answers to the following using complete sentences (this will help you in a later activity). Continue answers on the back if needed.

Where did this performance type come from?

In what time period did it originate?

How has it been adapted or changed over time?

How has it been influenced by technology?

Where would you see this performance type?

How is it adapted by various cultures?

Handout

Symposium Invitation Letter

Dear Panel Member:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in our symposium. You will take part in a panel of esteemed colleagues, each presenting evidence that your performance type is a historical reference for *Quidam*. Using your persuasive talents, you are to convince your colleagues and those in the audience of the validity of your supposition.

During your three-minute presentation, please discuss the following:

- a brief history of your performance type;
- which art form it best fits into (theatre, dance, visual art, or music); and
- how knowledge of the performance type is significant to understanding *Quidam*.

Discussion and questions from the audience will follow the panel presentations. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Symposium Moderator

Handout

Self-Reflection for Historian Role-Play

Did you include the following information during your presentation?

- where and when the performance type originated.
- cultures where this performance type exists.
- how the performance type has changed over time.
- how technology has impacted the performance type.

Describe your character's traits.

Rate your performance:

- Inadequate
- Adequate
- Exceeded expectations

What would you do differently next time?

Reading

Costumes Used in Program 3

Contemporary Costumes (Parade and Quidam)

Costumes for these two works are representative of the real and absurd use of clothing, fabric, color, and design. Normal attire was juxtaposed with specific elements of cultural dress as well as fantasy “costumed” attire.

In *Parade*, the little American girl wears a rendition of schoolgirl attire: hat with long dangling bow, shirt with collar, full skirt, and matching stockings. The Chinese conjurer is dressed in clothing stereotypical of the Chinese culture: a side-button jacket, short pants below the knee, and a pointed hat. The acrobats are in geometric designed skintight body suits.

Quidam's schoolgirl figure is dressed in overalls and a T-shirt. The fantasy figure wears a white jumpsuit with a bulls-eye appliqué on the abdomen; the headless figure wears a recognizable bowler hat and suit.

The costumes in both pieces draw from costume attire that ranges from everyday clothing to bizarre character creations designed to define the movement, plot, and character.

Costumes of the 16th and 17th Centuries

In western dress, the early 16th century was dominated by loose, flowing garments, wide at the shoulders, rich in velvet and brocades, with low, simple headdresses and delicate white shirts. Women's hairstyles show braids with jeweled coifs and fillets.

At mid-century, style was much more flamboyant, with the use of puffs and slashes, large hats and plumes, and broad-toed shoes.

The latter half of the 16th century featured a more rigid look known as Elizabethan. During this period, clothing was exaggerated in form for both men and women and extremely elaborate in cut and material. The farthingale held skirts out in grotesque outlines. Brocades, satins, embroidery in gold, and velvets were used extensively. Also, the introduction of starch helped make possible the enormous ruffles of muslin, gauze, or lace.

The early 17th century is known as the Cavalier period. Clothing was romantic, graceful, simpler, and much more wearable than it was in the preceding period.

Late-17th-century styles are essentially French in character. Men's attire included lace ribbons, exaggerated wigs, and petticoat breeches, all symbolic of the frivolity of the times. Women's gowns were simple, beautiful, and delicate, often made out of satin with pearls and lace.

Costumes of the 20th Century

In the early 20th century, the costume trend was toward functionalism and away from formalism. Bust or waistline definition became less prominent in ladies' wear. Hemlines reached an all-time high, barely covering the knee. The cloche, a tight-fitting hat, was introduced and worn slipped down to the eyebrows.

Evening attire saw a return to more feminine contours with sweeping gown styles. Men wore standard attire, plain business suits of flannel or serge, as opposed to the bulky, broad-shouldered suits of preceding years. The zoot suit was popular in the 1940s. It consisted of a long, tight-fitting jacket, exaggerated padded shoulders, and baggy trousers extending above the waist, then tapering down to tight cuffs around the ankles.

Japanese Kimono

This traditional garb of Japan dates back 1,000 years. Kimono means "clothing," but the word usually refers to the traditional wraparound, full-length, one-piece robe worn by women and men.

Kimonos have gone through many transformations stylistically. During one period, a person would wear more than a dozen kimonos at a time for contrasting layered effects.

As the kimono evolved into outerwear so did its potential for creative and expressive design. Gold and silver thread were used to embellish the garments. Various scenes were displayed in brilliant colors. Design elements from nature, such as flowers, trees, and streams, were reflected in the decorative scenes along with bits of poetry and hand-painted characters. Men wore blue, black, brown, gray, or white kimonos. Bright colors were only for the young.

Reading

René Magritte

René Magritte was born in Lessines, Belgium, on November 21, 1898. His father was a tailor and his mother a hat maker. René was the oldest of three sons. When he was 13 years old, René's mother committed suicide one night by throwing herself from a bridge into the Sambre River. The next morning, René and his brothers found her corpse on the riverbank, her wet nightgown drawn over her face. The image of a shrouded face would appear in paintings throughout the artist's career.

The young Magritte took painting classes to feed his growing interest in art. At 15, he met Georgette Berger, who posed for many of his figure paintings. Following studies at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels and less than a year of military service, René married Georgette in 1922. At that time, he worked as a graphic artist, mostly drawing patterns for wallpaper. Aside from three years in Paris, the Magrittés would stay in Brussels for the rest of their lives.

Magritte was influenced strongly by avant-garde fashions in painting. Early on, he became interested in Cubism, a style of painting pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in which many sides of objects are rendered visible at once. Magritte was perhaps most powerfully affected by Dada, a stylistic movement that further rejected conventions of traditional art. Indeed, Dadaist musicians, poets, and visual artists were concerned mainly with recording the accidents of creativity that might occur on the way to making a work of art. These artists often aimed to shock, surprise, or amaze audiences, as when Marcel Duchamp took an ordinary toilet and titled it "Fountain."

The practice of showing something and calling it by another name is common in Magritte's work, where extraordinary paradoxes and contrasts are the norm. For example, in a painting called "La trahison des images" ("The Treason of Images"), an object is shown above the words "Ceci n'est pas une pipe." The object is, of course, a pipe. Another painting, *Golconde*, juxtaposes ordinary images in a fantastic way: Men in bowler hats appear suspended in the air like raindrops before a horizon of city buildings. Images of men in bowler hats, resembling both middle-class businessmen of the time and the artist himself, appear throughout Magritte's work.

Other surrealist artists include Salvador Dali, Giorgio de Chirico, Max Ernst, Frida Kahlo, Paul Klee, Joan Miro, and Dorothea Tanning. Magritte befriended many of these artists. He died in 1967.

For more information on Magritte, see Alden, T. *The Essential Magritte*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1999.

Handout

Alwin Nikolais

Alwin Nikolais (1910/12?–93) was a dancer, choreographer, director, teacher, and composer. He began his professional career in the theatre as a musician, then became a puppeteer, and finally a dancer. His principal dance teacher was Hanya Holm, and he also studied with Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, and Louis Horst. He attended Bennington College Dance Sessions (1937–39) and Colorado College (1947). He had his own studio from 1938 to 1942.

In 1948, Nikolais was appointed director of the Henry Street Playhouse in New York City. He built a company of dancers, later known as the Nikolais Dance Theater, for his very special form of abstract dance-theatre, in which lights, props, and sounds were of equal importance with the dancers. He frequently used electronic music, which he composed himself. The dancers themselves are dehumanized and become wonderful instruments for the formation of ever-shifting patterns.

Works of interest:

- *Tensile Involvement* (1953)
- *Mask, Props, and Mobiles* (1953)
- *Kaleidoscope* (1956)
- *Totem* (1960)
- *Imago* (1963)
- *Structures* (1970)
- *Crossfade* (1974)
- *Talisman* (1981)