

Goldsmiths- NRSCE conference

Playing with El Greco Workshop Plan

Materials: photos from paintings (see end of file), white paper A3, markers

1. Introductory activities

-Participants stand in the circle and clockwise they are asked to say their name using the greek expression Me lene (My name is) followed by their name. The rest of the group need to reply by saying Gia sou (Hello) and repeat the name of the person.

-Participants are asked to walk in the space. When they meet another person they stop, they greet each other saying. 'Me lene and say their name -the person replies hero poli (nice to meet you)

We use Greek as an example but any language can be used here.

The above activities were chosen because they allow participants who are coming together for the first time to meet each other. Any other game or introductory drama activity can be used according to the aims of the lesson.

2. Building a story -Presenting the story

The participants work in groups of five. They are given a series of images from portraits and paintings from EL Greco's work and they are asked to find a connection between them and build a story. Then each group presents its story to the rest of the class.

3. Giving titles to the pictures

The groups need to choose three of the pictures and give them a title according to the story they have created. (facilitator gives an example- The lady with the flower in her head) – The titles can be descriptive and more specific or general.

(Variation: With younger groups you can give the students titles that El Greco gave to the paintings in the target language and ask them to match them to the pictures)

4. Developing a character/Role on the wall

The participants work again in their groups. They are given one large figure each (the lady with the fur, the boy with the candle) and they are asked to write words in the target language that relate to the character of these people according to the story they have created.

People present their ideas.

(This is helpful as it makes the building of the character a collective activity. More explicitly, one person may have chosen the name but another person followed and gave the character other qualities or built on its character- development of language on adjectives and characterizing people)
(This activity could be also something in which you return to in different lessons)

Music

1. Introduction to aspects of 20th century music with the example of Kathy Berberian's Stripsody (vocal piece). Stress how music is not only what we usually perceive as such a practice/praxis and provide examples of 20th century pieces, such as *Stripsody*. Discussion on how different vocal and body sounds can be organised in order to create a short piece of music (youtube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dNLAhL46xM>)

2. Introducing participants to examples of 20th century alternative music notation based on verbal instructions: Christian Wolff – *Prose collection*, Karlheinz Stockhausen– *text pieces*, Kathy Berberian – *Stripsody*. The above can be found as pdf online. Discuss the links, here, between language and music notation.
3. Observe the painting of El Greco *Wedding at Cana*. The participants imagine that they are parts of the painting's scene and they try to identify sounds they can 'hear'. Subsequently, they try to use their body and voice in order to create sounds inspired from the painting. Each group presents their sounds to the other groups.
4. The participants organise their sounds with the aim of composing a short piece of music. Each group performs their composition to the other groups.
5. Now the groups are going to create music scores by providing mainly verbal instructions as well as symbols, following the examples presented earlier. Each group presents their music scores.
- 6.

More ideas to follow with your students

-Bring to life one of the pictures

In groups of four or five the participants take one of the images (preferably the myth) and they are asked to bring it to life. They add dialogue and present it . The improvisation should last no more than 10 sec. This can be video recorded and then used for reflecting regarding the use of language, its artistic aspect and/or the group work.

Short Dialogue to be written in the target language in the groups with the help of the teacher if necessary

-Study El Greco's biography in the target language

The students are presented with a short version of EL Greco's biography in the target language along with his self-portrait and they are let to discover that the pictures they have used are part of his work. They are then asked to write similar biographies for themselves. (Promote language used to describe, present key information etc)

-Extensions in Art

The students can examine other works by El Greco and discuss about the style, colours and thematics in El Greco's work. They can later take pictures of themselves. The teacher can print them out. The students can use their faces from the photos and create portraits in a similar way as El Greco did. Both the portraits used for the story and other portraits by El Greco can be used as a guide.

Notes:

- These are just some activities to help you develop a story and create material for your final video.
- Its not necessary to use all the paintings and portraits offered here
- The students don't need to know in advance that they are using portraits and paintings from El Greco as this might inhibit their creativity.
- Students could in different stages record themselves narrating their stories and then use this material to write the final text. With younger groups it is possible that the teacher works with the whole group to write the complete story.

In the links below you can access the paintings and portraits used for this project:

-The lady with the the fur

http://www.artble.com/imgs/8/6/8/436895/lady_in_a_fur_wrap.jpg

-The lady with the flower

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b5/El_Greco_-_Lady_with_a_Flower.jpg

-The boy with the candle

http://c300221.r21.cf1.rackcdn.com/el-greco-a-boy-blowing-on-a-ember-to-light-a-candlesoplon-151570-oil-on-canvas-1362953432_b.jpg

-A myth

http://www.russianpaintings.net/upload1/author/el_greco_domenikos_theotokopoulos_/El_Greco_Fable_c._1570-1575_large.jpg

-El Greco self-portrait

http://www.artble.com/imgs/3/1/6/85021/el_greco.jpg

-View from Toledo

http://www.theartwolf.com/landscapes/images/1596-1600-El_Greco-View_of_Toledo.jpg

-Marriage at Cana

http://www.wikiart.org/en/el-greco/marriage-at-cana?utm_source=returned&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=referral

-Mount Sinai

<http://www.historical-museum.gr/images/cache/0b994caaba680d77321216e224572471dca333bf.jpg>

-View and Plan of Toledo

http://www.wga.hu/art/g/greco_el/19/1903grec.jpg

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