

## Secondary Theatre Lesson Plan using DBP

**Facilitators:** Megan Allen, Kelli OBrian, Tori Gitten

**Strategies:** Artifact; Visual Dramaturgy; This Setting Needs

**Subject:** Theatre

**Topic:** Dramaturgy

**ITEAR:** Introduce

**Time Needed:** 75 minute lesson period

**Materials Needed:** Artifacts, Notebook, Pencils, Poster Paper, Painters Tape, Markers, Speaker, Graffiti Playlist, "This is Modern Art" PDF/Play

**Space Needs:** Medium to large open classroom space with room to move

**Grade(s):** 9th grade

### **MA Theatre Standards:**

- **CREATING: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.** Create theatrical ideas (e.g., plot, setting, character) that reflect characteristics of different artistic movements. (F.T.Cr.01)
- **PERFORMING: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.** Describe how decisions about a performance are connected to what the student wants to express, evoke, or communicate. (F.T.P.06)
- **RESPONDING: Perceive and analyze artistic work.** Analyze the style of a playwright and how it manifests in a given theatrical work. For example, examine how a playwright uses character relationships to assist in telling the story. (F.T.R.07)
- **CONNECTING: Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding.** Identify the connections between historical and cultural contexts and define stylistic elements of theatrical movements (e.g., how the existential movement and absurdist theatre are connected). (F.T.Co.11)  
Music and Dance Connection: Students examine how music and dance influenced the evolution of pantomime. (F.M.Co.11); (F.D.Co.11)

### **Essential Question (AKA Focus Question):**

- How can research and connection to real-life experiences be used to create the world of the story?
- Why do we need a dramaturg to help artists and audiences engage with a play?

### **Enduring Understanding:**

- It is crucial to research and discover the real-life connections within a theatrical production to help us better understand the world of the story.
- Dramaturgs use research, creativity, and connection to provide information to an artistic group that helps increase the depth, authenticity, and quality of their work; they help artists place their work in real-world context.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Students will identify and analyze the work of dramaturgy (both the process and products) by unpacking the dramaturg's materials through Artifact.
- Students will interpret the text with a visual lens to establish the world of the play through Visual Dramaturgy.

- Students will embody the environment of the play through This Setting Needs.

**Adaptations/Modifications:**

- Artifact:
  - Students can listen to artifacts such as interview audio clips, music, or soundscape recordings.
- Visual Dramaturgy:
  - Instead of putting the art paper on the wall, students can sit around a table to draw, or the poster paper could be placed on the floor.
  - [If poster paper is on the floor] Students can get up a few at a time to gallery walk to allow a calmer and more silent atmosphere.
  - Facilitators can place the text excerpt up on the smartboard (if one is available).
- This Setting Needs:
  - If a student is non-verbal, have a teacher or another student explain their ideas verbally.

**FACILITATION PLAN**

**ENGAGE: Artifact (15 Minutes):**

*Good morning everyone, please find a seat in a circle. Today, we're going to explore the role of a dramaturg in relation to the play "This Is Modern Art" by Kevin Coval.*

*In a moment, we will examine some different 'artifacts' we might find in a dramaturg's briefcase.*

**List of Artifacts:**

1. Briefcase

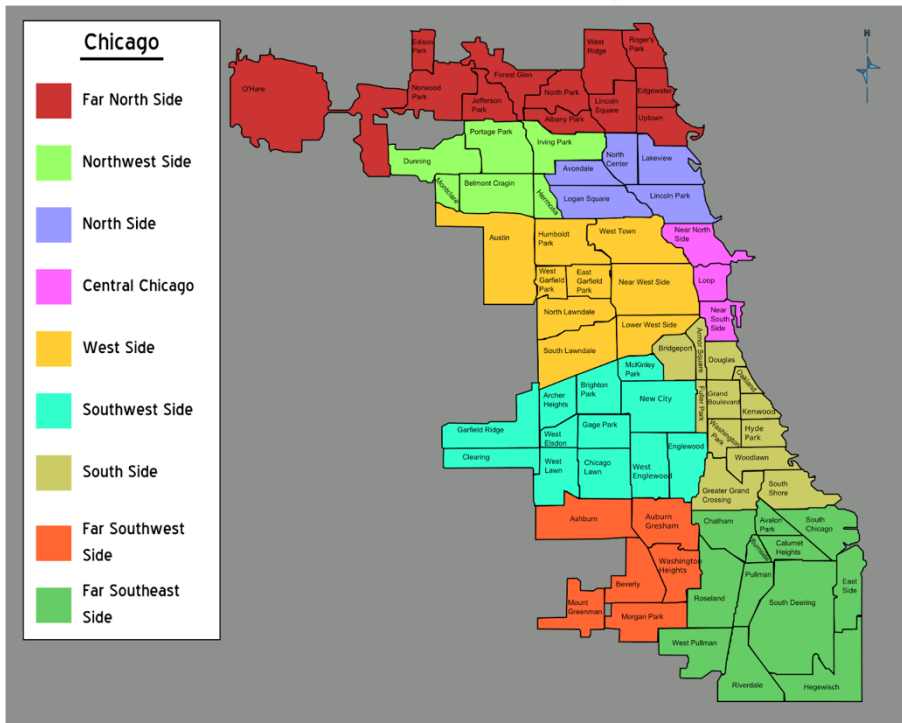


## 2. Maps of Chicago

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



3. Graffiti From Chicago Graffiti Artists





4. "Modern Art. Made You Look." Article [print entire article for class]  
[https://chicagoist.com/2010/02/25/if\\_you\\_walked\\_by\\_the.php](https://chicagoist.com/2010/02/25/if_you_walked_by_the.php)



Search icons for Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Below them is the text: "The Chicagoist will be launching later but in the meantime please enjoy our archives."

HOME NEWS ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT FOOD

## Modern Art. Made You Look.

By [Laura M. Browning](#) in [Arts & Entertainment](#) on Feb 25, 2010 8:40PM

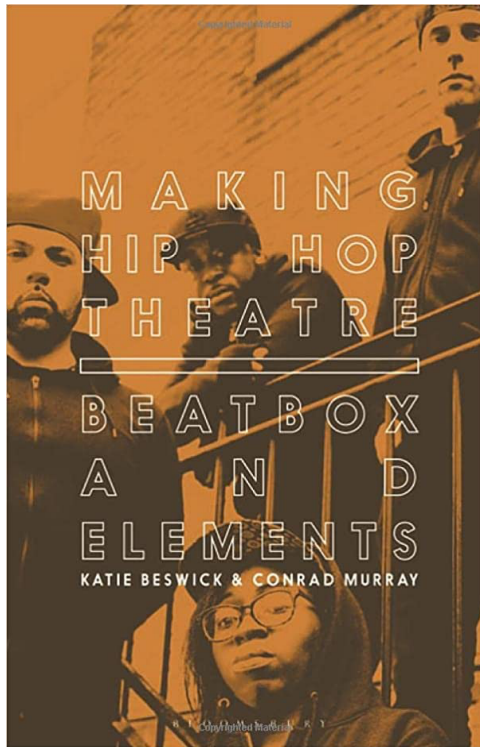


*Photo by [rpongsaj](#)*

If you walked by the Art Institute's Modern Wing earlier this week, you might have wondered if they were promoting a new exhibit on street art. Bright graffiti stretched for 50 feet along a light stone wall, bookended by the words "Modern Art" and "made you look." While Chicagoist in no way condones illegal activity of any sort, we have to admit that this graffiti raises some interesting questions about the accessibility of art. It's unlikely the tagging was gang-related, and it seems to be a pre-meditated, self-referential joke about art.

Though somebody should have told the graffers that the Art Institute is [free for a few more days](#), it's normally \$18 a pop, which, for many, is prohibitive for more than the occasional visit. And most of the art is,

5. "Making Hip Hop Theatre: Beatbox and Elements" by Katie Beswick (Author), Conrad Murray (Author)



## 7. Art Institute of Chicago Floor Plan [print entire floor plan for class] <https://www.artic.edu/visit/explore-on-your-own/museum-floor-plan>

2/22/22, 2:26 PM

Museum Floor Plan | The Art Institute of Chicago



### Museum Floor Plan

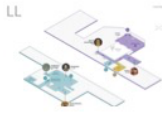


The Art Institute offers almost a million square feet to explore. Use the museum floor plan to help navigate a course for your visit.

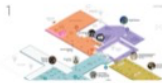
Planning your visit? Download our Visitor Guide. Printed Visitor Guides are also available at the museum.

If you or someone in your group has sensory sensitivities, consider using our sensory map of the museum as a guide for finding spaces that will likely be quieter and less crowded, as well as spaces with tactile engagements and activities.

#### LOWER LEVEL



#### FIRST FLOOR



<https://www.artic.edu/visit/explore-on-your-own/museum-floor-plan?print=true>

1/2

*Take time to walk around the room and look at these photos and items closely. I will give you about one minute to study them. Try to examine them silently - as we will talk about them as a class shortly.*

[Wait time]

*Ok, let's take a look at each artifact as a class and discuss what you see, hear, and think...*

### **Side-Coaching:**

- *What else do you **observe**?*
- *What do you notice about the artifact's **composition**; size and shape?*
- *What about this artifact makes you say that?*
- *What else might it mean?*
- *Are there any other possible interpretations for that **observation**?*

### **Reflection Questions (5 Minutes):**

[Ask this question after each artifact]



- **D:** *What do you see? What words or images are sticking out to you?*

[Ask the following questions after describing all of the artifacts]

- **A:** *What connections can you make between the different artifacts? Who might these artifacts pertain to?*
- **R:** *How might these artifacts help us better understand the world of the story in the play, “This is Modern Art”?*
- **R:** *What might these artifacts teach us about the work of a dramaturg?*

**Transition:** *Great reflections. Let’s jump into further exploring two artifacts.*

*Let’s start with the article: “Modern Art. Made You Look.” Can anyone tell me why a dramaturg would need to do deep research on this artifact?*

[Wait time]

*Yes, the dramaturg would need to research and analyze this article in order to connect “This Is Modern Art” to the real-life story the play was inspired by. By researching the real-life story behind the play, the dramaturg can provide the designers, directors, actors, and production team with tangible context so they can work together to tell the intended story. For example, the dramaturg can create research packets of relevant information, and articles to enrich actors’ understanding of the history, the dramaturg can also write program material to provide context for the audience.*

*The next artifact we will explore is: the Graffiti from Chicago Graffiti artists. Can anyone tell me why a dramaturg would need to do deep research on this artifact?*

[Wait time]

*Yes, the dramaturg would need to research and analyze this article in order to ensure the production of “This is Modern Art” uses authentic Chicago-based graffiti in its set and prop design. The dramaturg would also provide the actors with an authentic understanding of the graffiti their characters create, encounter, and reference throughout the play.*

*Dramaturgs are crucial to help develop the production concept and maintain the integrity of real and authentic references within the play.*

*Let’s continue to explore graffiti through the lens of a dramaturg.*

### **EXPLORE: Visual Dramaturgy (20 Minutes):**

*Graffiti is a type of art and visual communication in which writings and drawings are made on a public wall or surface, usually without permission. Even though graffiti can be considered vandalism, it is an important form of self-expression to many artists. Graffiti helps people to make a public statement about what they believe in, which is one of the main purposes of art. To quote the great Graffiti artist Banksy, “Graffiti is one of the few tools you have if you have almost nothing.”*

*In the play, "This is Modern Art" Seven, Dose, and JC use graffiti to make their voices heard and change the way people view art in the world.*

*Seven explains: "We wanted to make a statement, to change history, to fly our letters in a world they would never have writers or artists that come from where we come from. We wanted people to notice. And they did." ["This is Modern Art" p 104]*

*Now we are going to use visual art to explore more about dramaturgy and "This Is Modern Art." We'll be making our own Visual Dramaturgy graffiti wall.*

*For this activity, you'll need your markers, and I'll place these markers here for you to use as well.*

*Let's all gather around this big piece of art paper on the floor. Please make sure everyone has enough room to access the paper.*

*The prompt for our graffiti wall is: What is Art?*

*With your markers, please silently draw images exploring the question: what is art? You can be literal or figurative. Think about the graffiti artifacts we analyzed and let the graffiti styles inspire your art. What questions do you have?*

[Wait time]

*We will be playing some music in the background and will let you know when five minutes have passed. Get as many different images on the paper as you can.*

[Wait 5-7 minutes]

*Ok friends. Now that we've done our first round, please take a step back and let's take a silent "gallery walk" around the paper to see all the images created.*

[Allow 1-2 minutes for Gallery Walk]

*Great work everyone. You recalled so much detail in that first round alone! Now, please pick a different spot around the drawing paper; do not put yourself in front of your own work.*

*You are now placed in front of a classmate's work. In this second round, you will add to your classmate's image. Remember to incorporate values, themes, and perspectives that you remember most from the play. What questions do you have?*

[Wait time]

*We will play the music again and let you know when 5 minutes have passed. Keep diving deeper into the question: what is art?*

[Wait 3-5 minutes]

*Ok, now let's step back for another gallery walk to see what new images we've created together.*

[Allow 1 minute for Gallery Walk]

*Beautiful work, friends. Now please take a brand new place around the drawing paper for our third round.*

*Great. For our third round, we will use both **images and words** to connect the drawings. We will do this **without adding anything directly to images that have already been created**. Focus on filling the white space to make connections between one drawing and another. What questions do you have?*

[Wait time]

*We will work for 3 more minutes.*

[Wait 3 minutes]

*To finish our graffiti wall, I invite you to take your initials and create a tag beneath your current work. A tag is the artist's quick stylized signature or logo used to add ownership to their graffiti art.*

[Wait 1 Minute]

*Wow! Before we reflect, I will hang our drawing paper on the wall.*

[Hang the role of paper on to a wall of the classroom with tape]

*Let's step back and take one final look at our graffiti wall.*

[Allow 1-2 minutes for Gallery Viewing]

**Side-Coaching:**

- *Make big images, we are trying to fill the paper!*
- **How** do different characters in the story describe art?
- **Reflect** on the graffiti images in your mind that we've seen. How can you make your drawing as striking as a graffiti wall?
- *Make sure everything you remember is here.*
- **What** can you add to someone else's image to give more detail and context?
- *Think about how **color, shape, and line** communicates a feeling.*
- *What feeling sits between these images?*
- *Try to **stretch** your imagination to make **connections** between the drawings in front of you.*

**Reflection Questions (7 Minutes):**

- **D:** *What did we do in this activity?*

- **A:** What themes do we see appearing the most? Why?
- **A:** How did we use graffiti art to portray meaning?
- **R:** How is graffiti viewed in the play, “This is Modern Art”? Which characters view graffiti as an art form? Which characters view graffiti as vandalism? Why?
- **R:** How does visually representing concepts from the play help a dramaturg create meaning?

**Transition:**

*We just used a collaborative, visual art process to make meaning and reflect on the themes in “This Is Modern Art” through the medium of graffiti. Now that we’ve explored the artifact of graffiti like a dramaturg, let’s use a new strategy to explore another artifact from the play.*

**EXPLORE: This Setting Needs (20 Minutes):**

*Let’s all come and have a seat on one side of the room. For our next strategy, we’ll be creating an environment, or setting, using only our bodies.*

*In a play, what is the setting? What does that mean?*

[Students answer, “where the play takes place”]

*Yes, the setting is the place or location. It also includes the time period of a play. The setting is the when and where of the play. Let’s start by building a place we already know. We’re going to make a restaurant.*

*Everyone take a moment and think of the different things and people that you would find in a restaurant. When you have an idea, please raise your hand. I will invite you to come into our stage space and shape your body into a frozen action of something you do or might find in a restaurant, as you describe what you’ve become. For example, I could raise my hand and say “This setting needs someone eating” then I’d enter the stage and freeze in position of a person eating. Someone else might say “This setting needs a table” and become the table. Make sure you make specific physical choices that you can hold for a few minutes. Let’s begin building our restaurant!*

[The facilitator builds the restaurant until 5-10 students are on stage Once the image is built, ask questions to the audience:]

- *What do you see in this setting?*
- *What clues do the actors give you to help you understand who they are/what they are doing/how they feel about it?*
- *If you had to give this setting a title, what would you title it?*

[After the questions are completed, give students a round of applause and have them return to their seats]

*We’ll now be playing This Setting Needs using one of our artifacts from “This is Modern Art.”*

*Let’s take a moment to look at the Art Institute of Chicago floor plan. What do you notice and see?*

[Wait time]

*Yes, the floor plan has four levels including the lower level.*

*Looking closer at the floor plan, what types of artwork is highlighted?*

[Wait time]

*Great observations. As you can see the museum has many different styles of art from Georgia O'Keefe to Japanese Prints.*

*Who might go to the museum?*

[Wait time]

*Great inferences, the museum may attract many different people for many different reasons.*

*Who remembers what was on the outside of the museum?*

*Great recall. In the script, Seven mentions a sculpture garden outside of the Modern Garden by Michigan Ave and a high wall (maybe 40-50ft tall) off Monroe St. He also mentions the traffic pattern surrounding the building and that there is about 15 minutes between cars at night.*

*With these thoughts in mind, we're going to use our bodies to create the museum (inside and out) to present to the stage design team. What would the design team need to know? Take a moment and think about what objects and people this setting needs.*

[Wait time]

*Ok, let's begin!*

#### **Side-Coaching:**

- *How does your character feel about what they're doing? What's their point of view? Be as specific as possible.*
- **Observe** before you join. See what you notice when you look closely.
- *How can we use our **bodies** to create levels, **shapes**, and pictures that help tell the story? Think about what you can bring to the **composition**.*
- *Which specific art style are you representing? How might you **embody** visual art?*
- *Do you see somewhere that you can fill out the picture? How can you make use of the **space**?*
- *Is there a place where you can build off what another person is doing? Can you **collaborate** with them or support them?*

#### **Reflection Questions (5 Minutes):**

**D:** *What kinds of people and things did we make with our body to represent the Chicago Art Institute?*

**A:** *Who is the museum for? Who is this museum art for? Why?*

**A:** *In "This is Modern Art" what do Seven, Dose, Jose and Selena think of the Art Institute? Why? What does Rhonda and Marco think of the Art Institute? Why?*

R: Think about your own experiences with art, reflect on which character's opinions you most align with. Why?

R: *How does embodying the Art Institute deepen your understanding of the play?*

**Transition:** *We've just explored the many aspects of a setting by building the environment of the Art Institute with our bodies. Now, let's take a moment to reflect on our whole lesson.*

**REFLECT (5 Minutes):**

- **D:** *What are some of the ways we used our bodies and imaginations to explore the role of a dramaturg today?*
- **A:** *How can research and connection to real-life experiences be used to envision the world of the story? How does it stretch and explore our understanding of the play?*
- **R:** *Why do we need a dramaturg to help artists and audiences engage with a play?*

**Ending Statement:**

*Today we explored the role of the dramaturg in relation to the play "This Is Modern Art" by Kevin Coval. We unpacked the real-life connections within the play and explored how to build the world of the story through research, creativity, as well as illustration and embodiment. These strategies help the dramaturg answer the dramaturgical question 'Why this play now?' As we conclude our class today, I encourage you to think about why "This Is Modern Art" is a play for "right now."*

## Resources:

- “This Is Modern Art” by Kevin Coval.
- [https://chicagoist.com/2010/02/25/if\\_you\\_walked\\_by\\_the.php](https://chicagoist.com/2010/02/25/if_you_walked_by_the.php)
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- [https://issuu.com/steppenwolftheatre/docs/thisismodernart\\_studyguide](https://issuu.com/steppenwolftheatre/docs/thisismodernart_studyguide)