

Innovative Art Education Programs Presented by Visual Artist Andrew Owen

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About the Artist:

Andrew Owen is a professional visual artist with a history of more than 50 solo and group art exhibitions in Canada, Korea, and Japan. Andrew is a pioneer in urban art, outdoor advertising, community-engaged public artworks, and school mural projects, producing many large-scale public art projects nationally and internationally for private clients, multinational brands, municipal and federal government agencies, public, separate and independent schools. Small images of select projects are available here: [Ad Murals](#) [Public Artworks](#) [School Projects](#)

Art Program Subsidies:

Art education programs can be financed and produced independently. Projects can also be subsidized by the Ontario Arts Council's Artists in Education (OAC AiE) program with additional funding from schools. A number of other grant programs are available to help support significant, large-scale student-created public art projects. Andrew's police record clearance, professional references, and additional information are available upon request.

Due to competition for limited OAC AiE subsidies, art programs may require up to a year to secure subsidized support. Schools are encouraged to read over the art programs described on the following pages and contact the artist regarding schedule and subsidy availabilities. Should subsidies be limited or unavailable for the current school year, schools are encouraged to draft a simple expression of interest regarding the art program they are interested in to be included in the next application for support from the OAC AiE program. This will ensure greater probability of securing funding the following year.

The standard artist fee is \$300/day, based on a five-hour day. Art programs subsidized by OAC AiE cover ~80% of the artist fee; the school's portion is ~\$60/day; \$300/week. In addition, schools must cover material costs, which average from \$350 - 800 depending on the duration of the program, number of students, size of artwork, and other factors. The balance of the artist's fee and material costs are usually paid in advance to cover project materials and expenses.

Common Project Components:

ART PROJECT STUDIO: Every art project requires a fixed location - a classroom or art room - to set-up materials and equipment that becomes a temporary Art Studio. Students and teachers come to work with the artists at the Art Studio according to a predetermined schedule developed with the teachers.

DOCUMENTATION: Art programs are photo documented from start to finish for the school's records, the artist's portfolios, and OAC project reports. Every student participating in the art programs must return a standard minor media release form signed by his or her parent/guardian. Opting out of photo documentation is okay; however, those students or parents opting out of photo documentation must be identified. Although every school has preauthorized media releases, the artist requires signed minor media release forms for his professional records, as per standard professional practice.

SCHEDULING: A preferred schedule is full 5-hour days for five consecutive days each week, ie, Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM; however, this is flexible. Art programs require sustained effort and activity; working with two small groups of students for half-day blocks is preferable, allowing two separate groups of about 15 to 30 students to participate each day. For art projects with senior grades it is possible to rotate different groups of students through the program at each school period.

Following are outline of some of the innovative art education programs presented by the artist:

SOLARGRAPHS: Large-format Camera-less Photographic Prints & Banners

SOLARGRAPHS involve students in creating large "camera-less" photographic prints by employing updates of the archaic cyanotype photographic process - first discovered by Sir John Herschel in 1842 - by using objects, flowers, and people exposed to natural sunlight and developed with water. The results are beautiful permanent photographic prints on fabric produced by sunshine and shadows, in a range of white and blue tones from cyan to deep Prussian blue. Examples of the artist's solargrahs can be viewed here: [Floral Solargraphs](#)

The program involves at least five half-day sessions with each group of students. Each student creates two small solargraphs on paper; and each group collaboratively plans, rehearses, and creates a large solargraph on fabric featuring five or more figures. The process of creating solargraphs is as follows:

Session 1: The artist demonstrates the entire process from start to finish: a) applying photosensitive solution to paper and fabric; b) allowing the sensitized paper and fabric to dry in darkness; c) exposing the photosensitized paper and fabric covered with flowers or objects to direct natural sunlight; d) developing the prints in water; and, e) hanging up the completed solargraphic prints to dry. The process of creating large-format figural solargraphs is introduced, and students are asked to collaboratively plan the theme and arrangement of figures (sports, gymnastics, playing, etc.), and determine who will volunteer to pose completely still for 15 minutes in direct sunshine. Planning and rehearsals take place during the first four sessions, leading up to producing the large-format figural solargraph on the fifth and final session.

Session 2: In a classroom with subdued light, students are each supplied with 2 sheets of good quality paper, and guided through the process of applying photosensitive solution to the paper, and hanging the coated paper on a clothesline to dry in darkness.

Session 3: Each student creates their first individual solargraph by arranging flowers or other objects on the sensitized paper; going outdoors in small groups to expose the paper and objects to direct sunlight for 15 minutes; developing the prints in water; and hanging the prints on the clothesline to dry.

Session 4: Each student is given a second opportunity to create another solargraph, as above.

Session 5: According to what has been collaboratively determined during the planning and rehearsals, large-scale figural solargraphs are produced outdoors. This process involved is described as follows:

- 1) A large (15 x 20') vinyl "ground" tarpaulin is laid down upon a grassy area; 2) several students suspend another large "shade tarp" ~4' above the ground tarp creating a soft and shaded work area; 3) after several on-site rehearsals, a large (~9 x 12') panel of photosensitized fabric (photo panel) is unfurled over the ground tarp under the suspended shade tarp; 4) students who have volunteered and rehearsed quickly get into position upon the photo panel; 5) students suspending the shade tarp then walk away, thereby exposing the photo panel covered with figures to direct sunlight; 6) the posing students remain completely still in direct sunlight for at least 15 minutes, allowing their shadows to be cast onto the photo panel; 7) after 15 minutes, the students holding the red shade tarp return to shade the photo panel and posing students, allowing the posing students to get up; 8) the exposed photo panel is quickly gathered, and developed by soaking and rinsing in plain water, and hung to dry.

And voila! Through this process, the students produce a massive, 9 x 12' figural photograph created with only natural sunshine and the shadows cast by the student's figures and props. This massive figural photomural can later be suspended as a banner indoors.



Irises Solargraph solargraph on fabric, wood armature 3 x 5 ft.



Swift Cyclist Solargraph solargraph on fabric, wood armature 5 x 7 ft

IMPRESSIONS: Naturalistic Floral Paintings & Murals

THE IMPRESSIONS program engages students in creating floral paintings with an original artistic process developed by the artist. The paintings are created by building-up successive layers of natural wildflowers and grasses (flora) and acrylic paint, when the flora is later stripped away and removed, very detailed and life-like impressions of the flora are revealed. Images of Floral Impressions can be viewed here: [Impressions Canada](#), here: [Nine Rivers Romance](#) and here: [Impressions Japan & Taiwan](#)

This program involves five to ten half-day sessions with each group of students, and can be presented in two versions, depending on the time and budget available: 1) a minimum of 5 half-day sessions for each group are required for each student to create individual floral paintings on paper; 2) a minimum of 10 half-day sessions for each group are required for each student to create individual floral paintings on paper, as above, to become familiar with the program, followed by all the students collectively producing a large-scale mural on canvas or signboard panels (~ 5 x 12' overall), that is later installed on a school wall. It is also possible to produce an Impressions mural directly on a school wall.

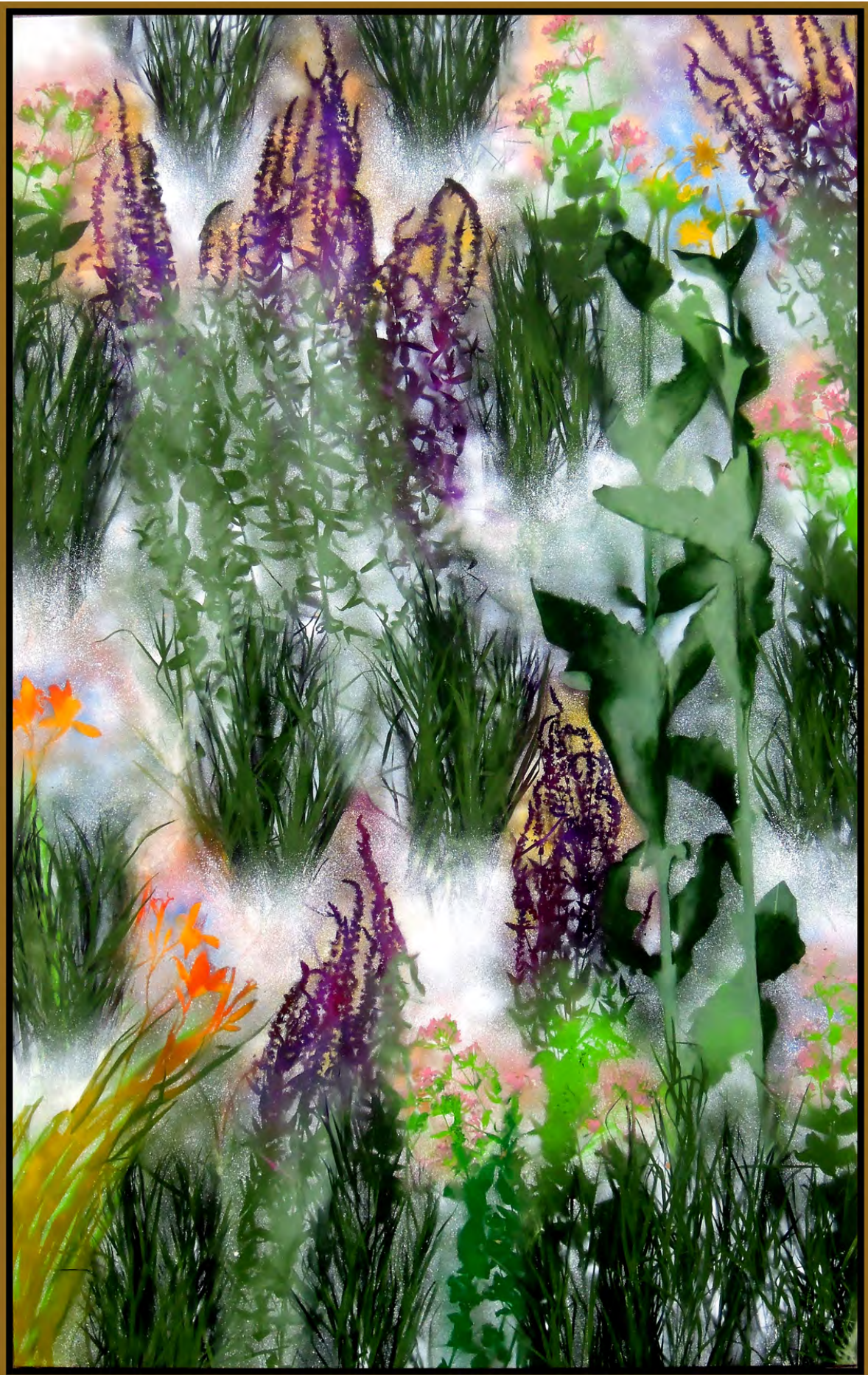
The flowers employed in this program can come from different sources: from late autumn through winter to early spring, cut flowers can be purchased in bulk from flower shops; as the flowers can be re-used for several paintings, employing store-bought cut flowers allows the program to be available year-round. From late spring through to late June, the artist can collect natural wildflowers from natural or re-wilded areas (riversides, empty lots, etc.) each day on the way to school.

If the school is located near a watershed, arrangements could be made for half-day field trips for the students accompanied with the artist and teachers to collect natural wildflowers and grasses from natural areas close to the school. During the field trips the artist can demonstrate on-the-spot creation of an Impressions painting on canvas with small amounts of wildflowers from the immediate area.

The impressions painting process develops as follows: 1) Each student is supplied with a large piece of heavy art paper and a plastic palette with acrylic paints; 2) students select several flowers to arrange on the paper however they choose; 3) each student brings their arrangements of flowers on paper to a dedicated area (such outdoors or as a stairwell landing) that is covered with a tarpaulin; 4) the artist applies a light coat of black acrylic aerosol paint over each student's arrangement to produce an "outline" of each student's flower arrangement on paper; [Note, the acrylic, water-based aerosol paints do not have toxic solvents or odours; nevertheless, filter masks are worn]; 5) Each student then paints-in the spray-outlined flowers on his or her paper with brushes and paints according to the colours of the flowers; 6) Once this under-painting is dry, the same flowers are then repositioned over the filled-in outlines and pressed down; 7) students return to the outline area to have their arrangements of painted paper and flowers completed with a final masking coat of acrylic paint in a "neutral" colour, such as black, white, gold or silver; 8) the flowers are then removed, revealing the under-painting that was masked by the flowers.

And voila! Through this process requiring only five sessions, each student will have created a very realistic flower painting on paper.

An additional five sessions can be devoted to creating a large-scale mural. Having gained experience with the Floral Impressions process during the previous sessions, the students can collaboratively repeat the Impressions process on a large canvas, signboard panels, or wall to produce a large mural painting with very detailed and realistic flowers.



Mimico Creek Wildflowers

aerosol acrylic enamel on canvas, wood armature

8 x 5 ft.

TRUE COLOURS: Primary Colour Paint Mixing Exercises

COMMON UNDERSTANDING of primary colours is oversimplified and out-of-date. It is widely believed that there are three primary colours "red, yellow and blue," and that tints and shades (lighter and darker colours) are produced by adding white or black respectively. This limited understanding of colours - although regrettably widespread and persistent - is in fact an inaccurate misconception, and produces only a very limited range of muddy, flat and opaque colours, which sadly result in poor quality cartoon-like paintings.

A more advanced understanding of primary colours has now become the new standard, which allows the production of an unlimited scope of vibrant colours, producing paintings with an unlimited spectrum of vibrant colours and incredibly flexible range of transparency and translucency.

Contemporary understanding of colour is there are in fact six primary colours in two interrelated groups: three "additive" primary colours of transmitted light: red, green, blue, known as RGB, and three "subtractive" colours of reflected light: cyan, magenta, yellow, known as CMY. Remarkably, the three primary colours (pure, colours) of the additive group are the secondary colours (mixture of two primary colours) of the subtractive group, and vice versa. Therefore, the two groups of colours are dual aspects of the same interrelated set of six primary and secondary, additive and subtractive colours.

The additive RGB group is employed for images created with transmitted light, such as stage lighting or the electronic displays of computers and phones. The subtractive CMY group is employed for images with reflected light, such as photographic, desktop and magazine printing, and photorealistic painting.

During the True Colours program, colour mixing with the red, green, blue additive primary colours is demonstrated to students with a special apparatus with pure RGB lights. Colour mixing with the magenta, cyan, yellow subtractive primary colours is demonstrated to students with transparent cyan, magenta, yellow and transparent acrylic paints.

Each student is provided with a specially designed set of 9 simple black and white outline charts photocopied on Letter size paper, a flower-shaped paint mixing palette, a basic Chinese paintbrush, and a clear plastic container of water. The paints are supplied as small dollops from squeeze bottles with primary cyan, magenta, and yellow paints, as well as clear (transparent) acrylic medium.

With only the three subtractive primary colours supplied, students fill-in the b & w outline charts, which transition from simple 6 colours, to 12, 24, and 48 colours. Completing the final two charts, students produce many tints and shades of each colour by using only transparent base and complimentary colours, *without using any black or white*, allowing colours to remain vibrant and translucent.

By participating in the True Colours workshop students learn highly sophisticated colour mixing, tinting and shading, transparent glazing, and pointillist painting techniques, as employed by high-level professional artists, and are able to achieve some of the techniques of master painters, and even produce photorealistic paintings that are simply unachievable with other colour mixing and painting methods.

Although completing colour charts may not sound very exciting or creative, the program is in fact very much so. Contemporary knowledge of colours, how they interact, and practical skills with mixing and handling colours are important scientific and artistic knowledge, and an empowering basic life-skill. Foundational knowledge of primary colours - RGB-CMY - is as important as ABC, 123, and Do Re Mi!

NOTE: The True Colours workshop is a mandatory foundation component for all students involved with creating Hand-painted Murals (see below), to create the small-scale artwork design, and to ensure they are knowledgeable, experienced and competent with mixing colours, tints and shades, and handling paints, and *before* painting at a large scale on the wall site.



True Colours Primary Colour Mixing Exercises: Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School, Vancouver.

This was one workshop component involving more than 200 students from grades 9 to 12 performed in preparation to design and produce the large [Vancouver Through the Seasons](#) mural on the school's exterior.

HAND-PAINTED WALL MURALS:

ALL YOUNG PEOPLE are very creative, and therefore schools are (or should be) centres of artistic creativity; however, visual arts education is seriously under-supported in schools. In addition, most schools have dreary institutional interiors with an overabundance of dull grey and beige wall colours that stand in stark contrast to the amazing creativity of student's artworks posted on bulletin boards. This prompts the question: how can the drab institutional decor of schools be enlivened by more fully integrating student artwork to become more expressive of student's amazing creativity?

Hand-painted school murals are a very popular activity worldwide, and most schools have student-created murals. Although always colourful and fun, many student murals are poorly produced and quickly become dated or damaged. The main issues affecting the quality of student murals include: walls are not properly cleaned and primed; murals are created ad-hoc directly on the wall without proper planning; not enough time is devoted to developing an artwork design program *before* painting on the wall; an artist is brought in to produce a mural, with students only "helping"; students have not learned professional mural painting techniques; and poor-quality, inappropriate, or even toxic pigments, paints and solvents are used. Regrettably, these issues are common and pervasive.

Murals painted on wood signboard panels can allow greater flexibility with where the mural is painted; for instance, in an art studio or classroom rather than directly on the wall site. Murals on panels however, require additional effort and expense, both to purchase the panels and to have the panels installed on the school wall by school board approved carpenters.

Years of experience have proven that overall, it is more efficient, rapid, and less costly to produce murals directly on school walls. By preparing the wall site properly and employing professional quality paints and techniques, murals can be produced directly on schools walls with the highest artistic and technical quality. For example, a mural that was designed and hand-painted by 12 high-school students for a government building in 1994 remains extant today, and looks as fresh as when completed more than 20 years ago; images of which can be seen here: [Metro Hall Student Mural](#)

High-quality student mural projects require significant time to design and produce. At least half of the project schedule must be devoted to an in-studio design programme with series of interrelated art skills workshops, leading to a small-scale artwork design on paper. The second half of the project schedule is devoted to painting the small artwork design at a large scale on the wall site. With a well-developed artwork design with all the main design issues well resolved in advance, the large large-scale wall mural proceeds quickly and efficiently, and with excellent artistic and technical results. In addition, new anti-graffiti coatings are available that can protect murals from graffiti or damage for many years.

Ten days is the minimum time required for students to design and produce a small wall mural [Small mural: 10 days / up to 30 students / 5' x 12' / ~\$3000 total]. A medium-size mural project is around double that [Medium mural: 20 days / up to 60 students / 8' x 12'- 16' / ~\$6000 total]. Large mural projects require significant time [Large mural: 90 days / up to 120 students / 8' x 50'+ / ~\$25,000+].

Two very large and complex student-created murals I produced on the exterior of schools that included hundreds of students for ~90-days, include [Vancouver Through the Seasons](#) for Charles Tupper Secondary, Vancouver, and [Chang An Then & Now](#) for Chang An Middle School, Taipei Taiwan.

Large-scale student-created wall murals are important projects requiring strong support for significant schedules and budgets. Usually, additional funding must be secured from multiple sources, which can include: the school budget, art class budget, school board, special program funds, parent's committee, alumni outreach, fundraising activities, and other sponsors. For those schools willing to properly support student-created murals, the amazing transformative results always prove the effort worthwhile!



Vancouver Through the Seasons Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School, Vancouver ~9 x 35 ft.



Chang An Then & Now Chang An Middle School, Taipei, Taiwan ~7 x 210 ft.

PHOTO-CUBIC TABLEAUX: Large-than-life Composite Photo Murals

PHOTO-CUBIC TABLEAUX are larger-than-life "photo-cubist" artworks employing digital photography and printing technology that can be installed on school walls as large-scale digital murals. Examples of these artworks can be viewed here: [Photo-cubic Tableaux](#)

These large-scale artworks can be considered a 21st century digital update of the Cubism of Picasso, Braque and Duchamp in the early 20th century, or the photo-cubism of Hockney in the 1970s. This program also references the Victorian pastime of "tableaux vivant" created by staging live actors to recreate a classical scene, as found for example, in classical paintings.

The process of creating Photo-cubic Tableau is as follows:

- 1) Basic photographic equipment is set-up, including two soft-box photo lights on tripods, digital cameras, instant photo printers, and assorted power and data cables. Several tables and chairs are required to arrange the printers and cameras, and for students to assemble the photographic prints.
- 2) The students collectively plan the theme, which can be recreating a famous painting or photograph, or presenting an original composition however the students determine.
- 3) Based on the chosen theme, the students dress-up accordingly and rehearse the composition of figures arranged in the scene.
- 4) Once the student actors are well rehearsed and composed, other students shoot digital images of the scene with series of individual close-up photographs shot at 1:1-scale, in a grid mapping sequence from top to bottom, left to right to photographically document the entire scene with close-up images.
- 5) These photographic images are then printed directly from the cameras to high-quality photo printer, live in the classroom - *without manipulation by computer* - producing many 1:1-scale prints.
- 6) Like the pieces of a puzzle, the many prints are temporarily assembled with blue tack into larger-than-life photographic tableaux on a classroom wall or on panels.
- 7) The final artwork is completed with one of several options: a) the assembled prints can be mounted on an interior wall of the school with removable paste to remain indefinitely before being later removed; or, b) the prints can be mounted permanently on a school wall, or on prepared signboard panels that are installed on a school wall.

Alternately, the many individually shot images can also be electronically assembled on a computer into a single large-scale composite file that is professionally printed at a large scale on any one of a variety of substrates, including signboard panels or self-adhesive vinyl, which is then installed on a school wall.

Photo-cubic Tableaux are related to the historical Cubism of Picasso, Braque and Duchamp, which remarkably, took place exactly a century ago. Therefore Photo-cubic Tableaux being produced at the centenary of the historical Cubism can be tied-in with studies in Modern art history.

Because digital technology and social media have become such important aspects of how young people interact with each other and the wider world, this project has great relevance and immediacy for students. I teach the historical, conceptual and technical foundations, and facilitate the student's expression of their own creative ideas and identities with the technology. Produced entirely in-class, relatively quickly and inexpensively, this program leads to immediate large-scale concrete artistic results in the form of amazing large-scale photographic artworks and murals.



Photo-cubic Vocal Music Academy

Downtown Vocal Music Academy, Toronto

~9 x 15 ft.



Photo-cubic Teens

Sir Charles Tupper Secondary, Vancouver

~6.5 x 14 ft.

UNITED DIVERSITY PORTRAITS: Hybrid Identity Artworks & Murals

UNITED DIVERSITY PORTRAITS is an interactive art program that engages students in collaborative creation of photo-based artworks in the form of hybrid portraits created with digital photo prints. The artworks are produced live, on-site, with a quick and entertaining process that produces immediate and remarkable artistic results. Examples of these artworks can be viewed here: [United Diversity Portraits](#) and here: [Elementary School United Diversity Portraits](#)

NOTE: As the final artworks are composed from close-up images of many people, no single person is clearly identifiable; therefore, the personal identity of individuals is not revealed.

The process of creating United Diversity Portraits takes place as follows:

- 1) Basic photographic equipment is set-up, including two soft-box photo lights on tripods, digital cameras, instant photo printers, and power and data cables. Two table and several chairs are required to arrange the printers and cameras, and for students to assemble the photographs. A wall is required to hang small coloured backdrop cards to photograph participants against.
- 2) Students are invited to sit in front of a backdrop card with the colour of their choice. Close-up images of facial features are photographed at 1:1-scale, and immediately printed at 1:1-scale as glossy 4 x 6 inch prints with a instant digital photo printer, *without employing a computer or Photoshop*.
- 3) A succession of images of many students' facial features are photographed in a circular pattern radiating outward from the nose so the most images of facial features can be combined.
- 4) As the program progresses, the many photographic prints with close-up images of different people's facial features are composed by the students into hybrid portraits of many people's facial features combined as single faces.

As more and more prints are created during the course of the program the many close-up images are rearranged and reconfigured into series of United Diversity Portraits composed from prints of features that work best together. The variations that can be combined are virtually endless; however, some combinations work better than others, so many are tried until excellent ones emerge.

- 5) Over the course of the program many excellent United Diversity Portrait artworks are created, and these are mounted with an interesting process of gluing the prints onto white acid-free mat board.

An expanded version of this program can produce large-scale artworks that can be mounted directly on school walls, or onto panels that are mounted on school walls as digital photographic wall murals.

Similar to Photo-cubic Tableau (above) United Diversity Portraits are related to historical Cubism, which remarkably, took place exactly a century ago. Therefore Photo-cubic Tableaux being produced at the centenary of the historical Cubism can be tied-in with studies in Modern art history.

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United Diversity Portraits

St. Vincent de Paul Elementary, Toronto

~4 x 3 ft.



United Diversity Portraits

Vocal Music Academy, Toronto

~4 x 3 ft.

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