

ART OF DISSENT



The Language of Despair – “Nude” by Willy Fick

Themes

- Isolation
- Hopelessness
- The power of art

Before the Viewing

- What colours come to mind when you think of isolation, hopelessness and despair? Why?
- What symbols or images have you seen used to represent despair in art, advertising or literature? What others might be suitable?
- Describe the conditions in a society that would lead an artist to try to represent despair?

Discussion

- How does the frame within the frame make a statement about the power of art?
- Are the mountains anchored? What anchors the board? Why is nothing seemingly grounded?
- The mountains, sky, abyss and even the figure are shaded without much detail. Why is the board so detailed?
- Who are you the viewer in relationship to this despairing person? Is the despairing person the artist?

Activities

- Colour your copy of this photo to represent your language of despair.
- Place the copy on a larger piece of paper and extend out the lines/viewpoint so that there is a broader context. Do we see where the board is attached or who is standing where the viewer is?
- Write the note that the person left behind to reflect his/her sense of hopelessness with society.

Extensions

- Albert Camus' *The Plague* and Franz Kafka's *The Trial* are allegorical literary works that show the effects of totalitarianism. Read one of these novels and relate it to Willy Fick's "Nude".
- Francisco Goya, James Ensor and Frida Kahlo developed their own language of despair. Select one appropriate image from each to explain to your class what led to these works.
- The novels *Brave New World*, *1984*, *Animal Farm*, *Lord of the Flies* and Willy Fick's "Nude" are 'warning signs'. Select any two to answer the questions: Did society heed the warning signs? Why or why not?