

# Recycled Lives Residency

## Artist Wendy Meyer

1999 Ubertalli award winner Wendy Meyer is an artist, graphic designer, educator, writer and entrepreneur who has exhibited locally, nationally and internationally. Her work has been featured in Hong Kong's *IDN* magazine, *Step-by-Step Electronic Design*, and the books: *Painter 5 Complete* and *Painter, Photoshop and Illustrator: Side-by-Side*. In 1999, she co-produced *Postcards on the Edge*, a multi-faceted, multimedia exhibition. In 1993, she co-produced *Design Electronica*, a large-scale digital art exhibition in South Florida at the Museum of Discovery and Science. As a Project LEAP artist for five years, Wendy used art to teach core curriculum to South Florida school children. She also taught computer graphics at Palm Beach Community College and the Palm Beach Photographic Center, as well as a painting and computer art program for teens and adults with developmental disabilities. She is the recipient of a 1998 Encore Award and her graphic design has appeared in the *HOW* and *PRINT* annuals. Her design studio, In You Wendo Design, has won over 150 ADDY awards, including several Best of Show Awards. Self taught as an artist, she received a BA degree in Psychology and Sociology from Emory University in 1984. Her work can be seen online at [www.inyouwendo.com](http://www.inyouwendo.com).

## Curriculum Connections

SCIENCE + SOCIAL STUDIES + ART + LANGUAGE ARTS

LANGUAGE ARTS: Writing • Spelling, grammar, and punctuation

Reading and reading comprehension • Public speaking and presentation

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE: Interpersonal • Intrapersonal • Spatial • Linguistic • Logical

BEHAVIORAL: Self-expression • Teamwork • Cooperation • Communication • Following directions

## Program Summary

In preparation for the residency, students will be instructed by their teacher to collect an assortment of interesting artifacts that have been discarded (on the side of the road, in a park or playground, perhaps even in their own trash cans) They should not be told in advance what the materials will be used for. In our initial session, we will sort and prepare the objects for assemblage and attach the selected objects to baseboards. In our second session, we will use our "storyboards" to begin creating the story of someone's life based on the objects each student has collected. In our third session, we will paint the assemblages. In our final session, we will integrate the stories and the paintings. Each student may create their own personal story or the entire class can collaborate on a larger project, with each student creating a "chapter."

## Program Objectives

Students will learn to think abstractly and creatively, improve their writing skills, challenge their imaginations, gain a better understanding of the serious impact of excessive waste on the environment and explore how discarded objects can find new uses. They will also gain an understanding of the process involved in creating a biography of a subject.

### Vocabulary Words

- assemblage - a work of art made of unrelated things joined together  
biography - the story of someone's life written by someone other than himself  
recycle - to convert waste material into a form in which it can be reused  
biodegradable - able to be broken down by bacteria in the environment

### Overview of Art Form

Assemblage, as we will execute it in this residency, is basically a merging of painting and sculpture. We will arrange and affix our collected items to a baseboard using wood glue, hammer, nails, tacks, twine, tape, plaster gauze and other simple carpentry supplies that are age appropriate to the class. After the base has had plenty of time to dry, we will paint the entire piece, creating a multidimensional painting. Assemblage was formally introduced as an art form by Picasso during his Cubist period and has strong roots in the Constructivist, DaDa and Surrealism movements. It was also quite popular in Pop Art, particularly in the works of Robert Rauschenberg. These constructions will serve as a springboard for developing and writing fictional biographies.

### Pre- and Post- Residency Activities

PRE: Artist and teacher will meet to go over the details of the residency and evaluate available supplies.

Artist will then draft a session-by-session outline detailing specific pre- and post-session classroom activities for each session and a complete supply list/budget for the residency. Prior to the initial session, students will need to collect an assortment of items that have been discarded. This works well if it can be done as a class activity outdoors - at a park, on the playground or some area adjacent to the school, or perhaps even within the school. If this is not possible, students could collect items that are being discarded in their own homes and neighborhoods as a homework assignment. It is important that they do not know in advance what the items will be used for. It is also a good idea to set a size and weight limit on objects and to avoid perishable or dangerous objects.

POST: Classroom activities should supplement residency sessions. Suggested topics include the impact of excessive waste on our ecosystem, a unit on how recycling works once it leaves the blue bin in the driveway, reading and studying biographies to get an understanding of how to create a life story, etc. Additional ideas can be formulated during our initial planning meeting, based on curriculum goals the teacher wishes to address. When completed, this project would be wonderful to display in the school or in a commercial or non-profit venue.

### Resources

#### For Students and Teachers:

ELEMENTARY: *Life Doesn't Frighten Me*, by Maya Angelou with paintings by Jean-Michel Basquiat

ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE: *You Have To Write*, by Janet Wong

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL: *Go To Your Studio and Make Stuff*, by Fred Babb

Any and all age/grade appropriate biographies.

#### For Teachers

*History of Modern Art*, by H.H. Arnason, Prentice Hall.