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Title: Translating the Image into Poetry

Lesson Plan: Issue 19.1 The First Folio by Ella Flores

Audience: High School, College, or Continuing Education Writing or Art Class

Objectives:

1. Explore the different artistic choices and tools available for crafting images visually versus through language.
2. Practice analyzing the possibilities of translating a visual element into a written one.
3. Think critically about how the *sound* of a word can augment its descriptive and sensory qualities.
4. Consider how the various ways the visual appearance of a poem on the page influences the feeling it creates and how a reader approaches it.
5. Transfer all of the above objectives into generating their own image translations.

Lesson Suggestion:

1. Start with two pieces that share an obvious quality, for example “Bats,” then “Will Flowers Grow...” and have students make a list of each one’s respective visual qualities including both art and words.
2. As a class, compare and contrast the use of color, space, movement, texture, placement, style, font, etc.
3. Acknowledging their similarities first, discuss afterward how the other elements create the broadside’s distinct feeling and aesthetic.
4. Now read one poem aloud as a class and ask students to create their own list of elements of the poem that visually and sonically impact them. Share these as a class and discuss why those elements of the poem stand out.
5. Ask the students to consider the visual elements of the poem on the page, including its shape, length, font size, blank space, color, and discuss as a class how the meaning or theme of the poem is at play with its own visual elements and those of the broadside.
6. In groups of 3-4 have students analyze the second broadside along with its poem. While in groups, ask students in their groups to choose one visual element of that broadside and make a list of all the different ways they can describe or evoke that element, (ask them to limit these descriptions to a word or phrase.)
7. As time allows, ask a few groups to discuss their visual element and the different word choices they came up with. Jot some of these down on the board and discuss as a class the different effects those words produce in their meaning, feeling, and sound for the poem.
8. Generative exercise: Have students, on their own, create a new list of different descriptors for a single visual element of either broadside (or a different one!). Ask students to use this list as a starting point for generating their own work, either responding to, zooming in on, or contrasting a particular visual element of the broadside.

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Bonus challenge for them: have them create this list from an image used in the broadside's poem!