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Kota Ezawa's *The Burghers of Calais*: Re-creating Rodin's famous sculpture

In this project students re-create the well-known 1889 sculpture by Auguste Rodin as a performance and video sculpture.

Assignment

Preparation

Your class will divide into groups of 8-10 students. Within each group, 6 of the students will be performers and the rest will be cameramen/women or directors.

- With your group, study photos of Auguste Rodin's *The Burghers of Calais*. These photos can easily be found on the Internet or in books about Rodin's work.
- Next, select a site for your group's version of the Rodin sculpture, such as the courtyard of your school or another place suitable for public art.
- With guidance from the directors, the six performers will reenact the poses of the figures in Rodin's sculpture, while the camera operators situate the camera in a way that captures the scene created by the actors.

(Costumes are not necessary.)

Recording

- Recording begins once the performers and camera are in place, and continues for 5 minutes. The performers hold their pose for an additional 5 seconds after the director gives a signal to stop recording, and then conclude their performance.

Media:

Performance, Video

Materials:

- + Blank DVD (optional)
- + Tripod
- + Video camera
- + Video monitor or TV
- + Video tape

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- Try transferring the recording to a looping DVD. This can be accomplished with DVD Studio Pro.

Exhibition

- The DVD or videotape is played back on a TV or video monitor.
- Depending on the number of groups in the class, 2 to 3 Rodin video sculptures are shown simultaneously on 2 to 3 monitors/TVs.
- The TVs and monitors should be set up in the school courtyard if weather permits, or moved to another public area of the school.



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Artist Biography: Kota Ezawa

Born in 1969 in Cologne, Germany
Currently lives in San Francisco,
California and Berlin

As a high school student Ezawa was the singer of a punk band named "The Plot." In those years he also began making large-scale action paintings inspired by Jackson Pollock. Ezawa went on to study art in Düsseldorf, Germany, and at the San Francisco Art Institute and Stanford University. He is now a film professor at the California College of the Arts and his work has been exhibited in many parts of the world.



Kota Ezawa, *Kota*, from the series *The History of Photography Remix*, 2006; Collection SFMOMA, Ruth Nash Fund purchase; © Kota Ezawa