



Production still from the
Extended Play film,
"Alex Da Corte:
57 Varieties."
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art21.org/alexdacorte



Alex Da Corte

ABOUT
Born
1980

Education

University of the Arts, Philadelphia, BFA
Yale University School of Art, MFA

Lives and Works

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

About the Artist

Alex Da Corte creates vibrant and immersive large-scale installations that include wall-based works, sculptures, and videos. Colorful and surreal, his work combines personal narrative, art-historical references, pop-culture characters, and the glossy aesthetics of commercial advertising to reveal the humor, absurdity, and psychological complexity of the images and stories that pervade our culture.

TEACHING CONNECTIONS
Media and Materials
installation
sculpture
video

Key Words and Ideas

character
childhood
collaboration
community
family
love
material
memory
movies
neon

Related Artists

Matthew Barney
Meriem Bennani
Cao Fei
Nick Cave
Nathalie Djurberg &
Hans Berg
Trenton Doyle
Hancock
Tim Hawkinson
Anish Kapoor
Mike Kelley
Jeff Koons
Christian Marclay
Paul McCarthy
Elizabeth Murray
Bruce Nauman
Raymond Pettibon
Paul Pfeiffer
Mary Reid Kelley
Cindy Sherman
Jaimie Warren
William Wegman

**“If I were to make a portrait of a place,
maybe I would begin with TV.”**
—Alex Da Corte

How to Use This Guide

Art21 encourages active engagement when teaching with our films. The questions and activities below are recommendations for incorporating Art21 films featuring Alex Da Corte into your classroom. Each class will likely require different adaptations for best results.

Before Viewing

Establish key ideas, in anticipation of viewing the film(s):

- ① Name a favorite childhood character. What personality traits connected you to them?
- ② How has television played a role in your life? How has it influenced who you are?
- ③ What features make a home?
- ④ How can an artist's family influence their artwork?
- ⑤ Describe a color that has a specific emotional connection for you. How has that connection changed over time? What has influenced it?

While Viewing

Support active viewing, and pause the film to clarify or illuminate particular ideas:

- ① List the pop-culture characters you recognize. Note when Da Corte explains what a particular character means to him.
- ② What does Da Corte say about his home and family? What roles do they play in the creation of his work?
- ③ How does Da Corte use color in his work? Do any colors stand out to you?

After Viewing

Follow-up on key ideas and synthesize information learned from the film(s):

- ① Does Da Corte's use of pop-culture characters influence your interpretation of the work? How? Why might those characters be an entry point for viewers?
- ② In what ways does Da Corte's work address themes of home and family? What symbols in the film relate to these two themes?
- ③ Compare Alex Da Corte to Anish Kapoor, featured in the "London" episode. How does each artist use color? What similarities and differences can you notice between each artist's work?
- ④ Da Corte refers to Mike Kelley's "love hours" when he discusses the time put into physical creation. Ask students to contemplate a work they've completed and to consider how many love hours went into its creation.

Related Activities

Engaging students in creative activities after watching Art21 films can reinforce learning and stimulate ideas. Art21 encourages educators to adapt these activities to their classrooms.

- ✓ Music from a variety of genres is played in the film, such as "Light of a Brand New Morning" by Dolly Parton and "Blue" by LeAnn Rimes, to name a few. Choose one of these songs and look into how Da Corte uses it in the featured artwork. Then, in response, make a new artwork that utilizes the lyrics, melody, or emotions generated by the song.
- ✓ Ask students to list elements that evoke a dream space for them. Once the class has generated a list, encourage the students to collaborate on making an installation. If physical space is difficult to acquire, students can make a diorama, in ceramic or in digital form (using CAD, Photoshop, etc.).
- ✓ Choose a well-known cartoon character. Change some features of this character, and use the updated character to tell a story about home or family in an illustration, cartoon, or video.