

ART OF DISSSENT



Diabolo*

*The juggling game diabolo was brought to Europe from China. Very popular in France around 1907, its popularity flared up Europe in the 1930s.

Themes

- The games of life
- Loss of control
- Disorientation, danger

Before the Viewing

- What skills does one have to have to do well at playing with a yo-yo?
- The expression, “It’s hard to keep all your plates up in the air,” derives from juggling. What is meant when this expression is used?
- There’s another expression, “It’s like moving deck chairs on the Titanic.” What is meant by this expression?

Discussion

- Why are we given the aerial perspective of watching the diabolo player?
- What is suggested by having the diabolo player on a chessboard and on a tall building, near an edge?
- As usual, Fick only gives us part of the picture. How does the fragment create a sense of disorientation?
- Why were the Nazi times in Germany like a game within a game?
- What symbolism is used to indicate the player is not in control of the game?

Activities

- Try to imagine the whole building on which the child is playing. Describe in drawing or in words what it looks like and what is around it. Does this child live in this building?
- Use the diabolo shape and the chessboard motif in a drawing of your own
- Just as there was no point moving deck chairs on the Titanic, living in Nazi Germany seemed equally doomed. Other than the game of diabolo, what images might be used to capture a sense of doom?

Extensions

- Research the history of the game diabolo and explain its present popularity
- The Nazis started changing the laws as soon as they came into power in 1933. Most of the changes were the ends to justify discriminatory means. Provide at least three examples about how the Nazis “changed the rules of the game” to suit their own ends
- The metaphors of life: The tree of life, life is a carousel
Research the history of at least three metaphors for life and draw one example