

FACE TO FACE

HANOCH PIVEN



**A creative method
for discussing
moral issues**

Introduction / *Daniel Noah Moses*

"Art is the concrete representation of our most subtle feelings."

Agnes Martin

In the midst of the uncertainty, acrimony, and turbulence that we confront in our world today, it feels particularly relevant to introduce this booklet, which distills a practice developed by the celebrated artist Hanoch Piven.

In Piven's hands, metal scraps become elephants. Put together feathers, shells, a plastic monkey, and Charles Darwin appears. Barbara Streisand's nose is a microphone, Albert Einstein's a light bulb. Matches somehow conjure up the moustache of Saddam Hussein. Donald Trump's face is made from bologna. Your mother very well might have cookies for eyes.

All of this is part of a way of seeing, of playing, of expressing oneself and communicating in the midst of our conflict-ridden realities dominated so often by machines. The goal is to encourage the imagination and humane interactions in order to spark moments of learning, understanding, and growth.

Since the winter of 2015, Piven has been actively involved with Seeds of Peace. In June of that year,

he became part of the first cohort of Seeds of Peace Fellows. Since that time, I have seen him conduct workshops for a diverse range of educators, civic leaders, peace activists, artists, and social entrepreneurs, from across the Middle East, South Asia, and the United States. Piven has also worked with graduates of our various Seeds of Peace Educator programs to put together the curriculum, the toolbox, that you hold in your hands.

Piven's method, this curriculum, integrates the arts into education with the assumption that it's critical to take the time to look, to notice, to play - that we benefit from expanding and deepening our methods of expression and communication. This booklet is based on the idea that practice makes a difference, and that learning, like life, can be surprising and joyful. This book is for educators in the broadest sense. It is for those who actively learn and engage across difference with fellow human beings and the hurly burly of our world.

Piven's practice can be applied in a variety of contexts, from elementary schools to nursing

homes, from hospitals to community centers, from corporate headquarters to grassroots organizations and dialogue groups; it can be used wherever human beings want to express themselves and communicate.

Through this kind of work, which masterfully disguises itself as play, we become more effective at confronting what must be confronted and engage with the challenges we face.

When I think of what Hanoch Piven is doing, Charlie Chaplin comes to mind. Far longer than other stars of his era, Chaplin resisted "talkie" films. Then in 1940, at the brink of World War II, he came out with his first "talkie," a movie called *The Great Dictator*.

At the end of the film, Chaplin's character, much like his usual mustached everyman, that whimsical, acrobatic, kindhearted vagabond, opens his mouth to speak on screen for the first time.

"We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in," he says. "Machinery that gives

abundance has left us in want. Our knowledge has made us cynical. Our cleverness, hard and unkind. We think too much and feel too little. More than machinery we need humanity. More than cleverness we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities, life will be violent and all will be lost."

I hope that you, educators of all kinds, will find this curriculum, the booklet, and the accompanying video, helpful. Please test it out; practice it; play with it; enjoy it; make the best use of it that you can. "Teaching," said the artist Joseph Beuys, "is my greatest work of art." In your own ways, you are artists doing your part to create the future.

As you will discover in the video, Piven sees faces everywhere he goes. It is in the faces that we see among us (one another and ourselves) where hope resides.

SEEDS OF PEACE

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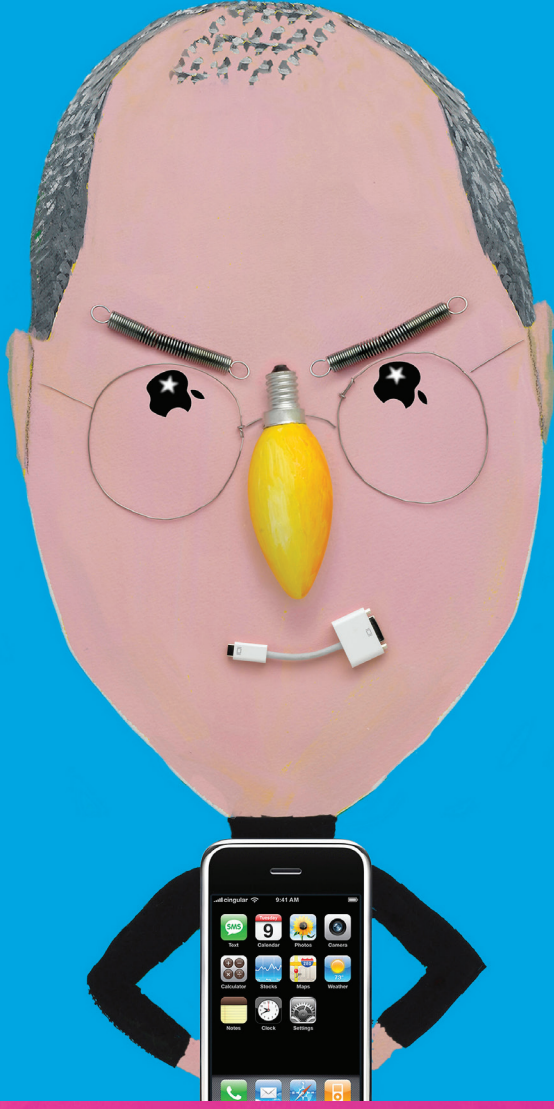
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Portraits: Steve Jobs, Sigmund Freud, Madonna, Nelson Mandela

I. Prologue

Hanoch Piven's workshops, based on expression through "the language of objects," offer an in-depth exploration of different aspects of personal awareness as well as the worldview of individuals or groups. Often we find that the available vernacular surrounding social issues runs into mindless controversy; ordinary language cannot be used without causing us personal pain, and direct verbal expression of perceptions and attitudes can implicate us in the production of dead language.

Piven's visual method goes beyond words to offer an alternative. It enables us to approach social issues safely with spontaneity and humor. His method equips us to search for new perspectives by playing with objects.

During Piven's workshops, participants express themselves through the objects, they formulate their positions, and clarify to themselves and one another what their own approaches are, in a process never experienced before.

The workshop is built on the ability and willingness of participants to approach inner issues, to reflect on and express themselves about them through the "spokespeople" that they choose: the objects. They allow the selected objects to represent parts of them: their world of emotions and beliefs.

The "translation" into words that define the feelings and attitudes only comes about after the work; the symbol is produced from the connection between imagination and thought.

This method makes use of materials lying in and around your home. The use of objects that are not normally used for presenting a social or political perspective is



likely to create a playful and humorous space, one that will lead to the consideration of new viewpoints that are only made possible by connecting the unconnected. Transforming ordinary objects into extraordinary moral expressions is Piven's innovation – and your pleasure.

2. Pre-Workshop

Duration: 2 weeks prior to workshop

At the collection stage, participants are asked to collect any object or item that they no longer need from its natural environment.

The greater the variety of materials, the better. Bits and pieces, tchotchkes, knickknacks, junk – call them what you will. The main principle for this collection is the more materials, the better! The secret of success lies in a large quantity of materials, and in their unique and surprising nature.

A list of examples might include: a broken doll, buttons, an old computer mouse and other computer parts, small loudspeakers, bottle tops of all kinds, other toys, pieces of broken objects, kitchen utensils, old glasses frames, ropes, laces, plastic flowers, natural objects like pebbles, stones, shells, and leaves.

We all have countless items like that at home. The objects can be diverse and completely different for each workshop. About two weeks before the workshop is held, we suggest setting up a crate, box, or bag in a prominent place, and writing a sign on it “Used Objects for Piven Workshop”.

The participants are invited to fill the box gradually, thus creating an energy of collecting and re-examining what each one has at home. The collection of materials and objects provides the tools for the participants. This is what we will call from now on: the “buffet of objects”.

Look at Appendix I for a list of materials and room arrangement needs.

To the facilitator:

Piven’s workshop models the reflective process and introduces a method, a practice, to confront social, political, and personal issues. Each workshop begins with an explanation of this method. The participants then create art, individually or in a group; this is followed by a discussion where individuals or groups share their artwork.

The workshop can take place in one or two sessions, either in a setting in which each participant creates an individual creation or in groups, where each group interacts and creates together. In the following pages, two tracks are presented:

a personal workshop track, and a group workshop track.

The two can be combined as necessary. When they are combined, it is preferable to hold two separate sessions.

Our recommendation is to hold an initial meeting for individual, personal, work, and a second meeting for group work.

3. Meeting Piven

Duration: 20 - 30 minutes

Each workshop starts with getting to know Hanoach Piven, his work, his language, and his method which will be used in the workshop. This familiarization will be achieved by watching a short film in which Piven invites us to enter "his world."

Following the screening of the film, a brief discussion can be held where the facilitator asks several questions such as:

1. What is special and surprising in this method of creation?
2. Can you point out a particular object in one of the pictures which resonates with you due to a successful matching the artist has succeeded to make to a facial feature both morphologically (structural, related to the shape, form) and conceptually?
3. Does each object have only one meaning, or can different meanings be applied to the same object according to the personal feelings of the viewer?

To the facilitator:

The technical needs to view the film are a computer connected to the Internet, a screen or projector, and sound amplification for the computer.

If there is no access to the film, the pictures in the following pages can be used, and the same questions can be asked at greater length.

It is important to remember and emphasize that the objects in Piven's work have both a morphological and a conceptual significance.

The film 'Face to Face' can be seen here:



English without subtitles:

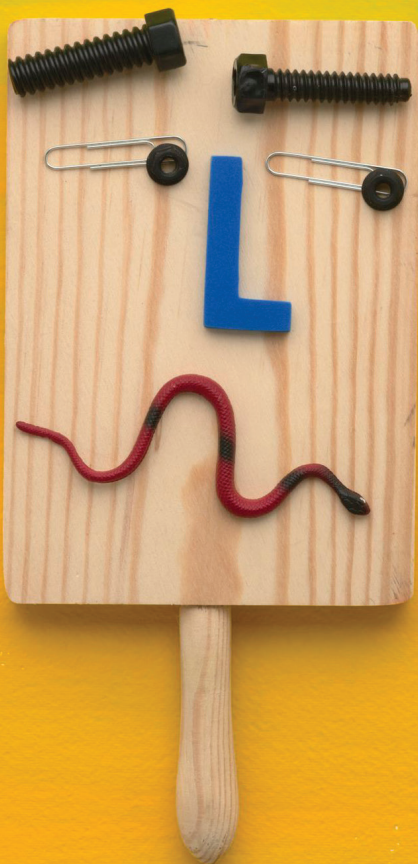
www.seedsofpeace.org/facetoface/

English with Hebrew subtitles:

www.seedsofpeace.org/facetofacehebrew/

English with Arabic subtitles:

www.seedsofpeace.org/facetofacearabic/



Objects 'speak' in Piven's art



Charles Darwin

Eyes: Shells

Nose: Toy monkey

Mouth and beard: Feathers



Barack Obama

Eyes: The American flag

Eyebrows: The arm of the Statue of Liberty

Nose: Aladdin's lamp

Teeth: Chewing gum



Angela Merkel

Eyes: Blue beads

Eyebrows: Piece of jewelry

Nose: Calculator buttons

Mouth: Doll's trousers



Albert Einstein

Eyes: Cog wheels

Hair and moustache: Electric cables

Nose: Light bulb

Duration: 20 - 25 minutes

Personal Workshop

Ask participants to approach the 'buffet' of objects and ask each one to choose three objects:

- An object that represents 'me'.
- An object that represents 'my family or my community.'
- An object that represents 'a dream' I have for the future.

The third object should always vary according to the workshop theme.

Allow 10 minutes for choosing objects and then ask participants to share with each other their choices and ideas in couples or groups.

To the facilitator:

Divide participants into groups of four to six in advance, so as not to take up more than 15 minutes. No questions or comments should be allowed among the members of the group as this is only a warm up intended to make the participants comfortable with the use of the language.

Group Workshop

Ask participants to approach the 'buffet' of objects and ask each one to choose three objects:

- An object that represents me.
- An object that represents a strength/quality of mine that relates to the workshop's theme.
- The third object will always connect us to the subject that the workshop is dealing with. Below are several examples:
 - An object that represents community.
 - An object that represents justice.
 - An object that represents peace.
 - An object that represents community engagement.
 - An object that represents my feeling towards Israel/Palestine/India/Pakistan.
 - An object that represents the American dream for me.
 - An object that represents education.

There is also the possibility of using the third object to represent the "other," if the aim is for the workshop to go in this direction.

Allow 10 minutes for choosing objects and then ask participants to share their choices within their group, limiting each member of the group to talk for 1-2 minutes.



To the facilitator:

The third object is aimed at the subject that the group will deal with at the next stage. Therefore when giving the instruction to choose the third object, the facilitator must be aware of the fact that this choice defines the topic of the workshop for the participants.

Each participant takes the objects to the group table. When all members of the group have returned with three objects, their choices are presented to the group. The group must choose a leader who will ensure that each member is given a maximum of two minutes to present his or her choices.

Each participant presents the selected objects to the group, explaining the reasons behind the choice.

After introducing them, the objects are left on the work canvas at the center of the table. In this way, a pile of objects gradually forms on the canvas, representing the members of the group, their strengths, and their opinions on the topic discussed in the workshop.

This stage has two main objectives. The first is to provide a first experience in “speaking through objects,” a space for each member of the group to introduce himself/herself and express his/her voice.



The second is to bring up before the group a range of ideas relating to the topic the group is going to be dealing with at the next stage. It is therefore worth paying close attention to the choices made by all the members of the group because the selected objects carry significance and ideas that will help them in their creation at the next stage.

The time for sharing in the group varies according to the size of the group. Allocate to each participant no more than two minutes. The optimal time to be given to this stage is around 20 minutes.



Duration: 60 - 70 minutes

Group Workshop:

At the end of the previous stage of the group workshop, we encountered a number of objects chosen by the group members to represent themselves, their strengths, and their personal or social positions on the predefined topic dealt with in this workshop. These objects are the basis for the work of art to be created, as they already carry diverse meanings relevant to the topic.

Formulating the group task: In front of you is a pile of objects that you as individuals have chosen. Examine the objects on the table, and try to create with them a visual image representing the theme of the workshop.

It's important to define a subject that will have personal relevance to the participants and, if possible, that will define a common ground for them.

Below are a selection of possible topics:

- A portrait of our family/community/class/organization/country.
- A portrait of a Christian/Muslim/Jew/Hindu/Buddhist, etc.
- A portrait of a leader/manager/educator/changemaker in my community.
- An abstract theme such as Peace/Education/Creativity/Coexistence?

To the facilitator:

At this stage, read out Piven's 10 rules for creating a collage of objects (see Appendix 2).

Please make sure the participants pay attention to the following:

- Before the group commits to a particular image, it is worth exploring different directions.
- As soon as a decision is taken with regard to a particular direction, more objects can be added without limit in order to emphasize and refine the chosen direction.

- The group work is based on discussion and agreement among the members of the group.
- After the group and the facilitator agree that the work is accurate, the objects are glued on the board using the hot glue guns (handle the glue guns with caution!)
- The members of the group formulate a title – a word or sentence – that represents the work. The title can be written on or alongside the work.
- The group chooses a representative to present the work to the entire assembly, and to answer questions.

6. Unique Emphases for the Process

The process of creating the collage is unique, and therefore the facilitator should remember the following principles – which will guide both the individual and group workshops.

- For the most part, people's inclination is to first think of a list of ideas or verbal concepts, and then put them into practice through action. In contrast, in this process, participants are asked not to formulate ideas with words using reason, but to try to provoke ideas through the juxtaposition of objects. This could be a challenging and confusing situation, yet it is important to allow it to happen and be contained.
- The clues for the answers are in the objects selected at the previous stage. Therefore, it is recommended to 'play' with the objects on the table; move them around, look at them from different angles, and observe the connections and ideas that arise from them.
- The more these objects are studied, the greater the chance of ideas organically emerging from them, and not from prefixed ideas in the participants' minds.
- At this stage, the participants explore possibilities, bring in new objects, take apart and adapt objects, and even make a fresh start.
- An important part in this process is the refining and focusing of all the objects into a central idea, an image whose essence or concept can be simply explained in a word or a sentence. For example: "a river," "a superhero," "tool kit," "an octopus."
- After the central image and its message have been defined, it will be easy for the group to edit and arrange the objects on the board, and leave only the essential items that communicate that message.
- Looking for and formulating the title, in a word or sentence, can be very helpful at this stage as the title helps focus attention on the central idea.



7. Sharing the Creations

Duration: 20 – 60 minutes (depending on the nature, age, and size of the group, and at the discretion of the facilitator)

At the end of the hands-on stage of creative work, the products are presented in an upright position, propped up against the wall, a chair back, or an easel. A few minutes will be devoted to looking at the works. Each individual or each group will look at their own work and share its essence with the assembly. It is important to pay attention to the insights and emotions that came up while creating it.

It is essential to find the balance between allowing time for the individual or group to share their creations in a personal way, and making sure time on stage is allocated in a uniform way.





To the facilitator:

During this stage of sharing, the creator can be asked clarification questions ("what did you intend by ..."). The focus must be on the meaning of the work, not critical opinions about the artistic design. Negative criticism should be avoided. Criticism may silence other participants, who may choose not to present their work to the group.

After sharing, hold a general discussion on the positions and viewpoints, as reflected in the works presented, and also on the unique process that the participants experienced in the workshop.

Here are some possible questions for discussion:

- What did you feel while you were creating this work?
- Were there any difficulties during the work?
What were the difficulties?
- How did you overcome them?
- What did you learn about yourselves?
- Have you ever made such a "translation" of your opinions or feelings?
- What did the activity contribute to you in this sense?
- Was there a piece that surprised you? What was it? Why?
- What conclusions can we draw from the works?
- What follow-on activity would you suggest after this meeting?
- Is there any relevance between this process and other experiences in your life?



An educator shares her own experience / *Galia Kovesh*

I arrived at the workshop feeling heavy, tired, and troubled. Just having to go up to the table was burdensome. But as I drew near, I felt the joy of playing that I did not know I still had in me. The variety of objects led me to touch, examine, pick up and put down. Hanoch's voice soothed my soul.

At first, I was still a little nervous. What is my neighbour taking, I wondered? What will they say if I take this object or that one?

I had taken many workshops. I made use of the technique that had always worked in the past: while collecting the objects, I began weaving a story in my head, one that would do, one that would suit, one that would be just what was asked for.

"Let's get this over and done with," I thought to myself. Yet curiosity stopped me short, and pleasure began to spread through my veins, a feeling I had not experienced for a long time. I began feeling, touching, smelling, turning over each object, discovering the renewed existence of an old tube of toothpaste, a doll's leg. My heaviness was replaced by a sense of fun. I no longer noticed what my neighbors were collecting.

I decided to set out on the voyage. For some reason, the feeling was stronger than me, and the objects were picked up and set down without any understanding of what I was actually creating. A moment of coherence came when Hanoch came by and suggested a few ideas. Just like that, with a smile, without judgement, he was there. From there, the barriers came down.

They came down with enthusiasm and cries of happiness to the excitement and understanding that the one peering out at me from the objects was me.

Even without my explaining everything, but just a small part, perhaps just the eyes or the nose, I shared the sense of connection with my fellow members of the group that had formed.

And there was inclusion, and pleasure, and connection – a magical moment when all the limitations of language came down. That new language that connected us all, allowed us to perhaps, start, something new.

Galia Kovesh is an educator who lives in the north of Israel.

Appendix I: List of materials

- Cardboard or foam board – as a sturdy basis to work on.
- For individual work, the recommended size is around 35 x 50 cm, or 14 x 20 inches. For group work, the recommended size is around 50 x 70 cm, or 20 x 28 inches.
- A variety of colored papers to cover the board or cut shapes with.
- Scissors. White plastic glue. Hot glue guns and refills (ideally one hot glue gun for every six participants) – make sure there are power strips and extension cables.
- Disposable plastic bowls or baskets for collecting materials.
- A variety of old objects. For example: a broken doll, buttons, old computer mouse and other computer parts, small loudspeakers, bottle tops of different kinds, broken toys, broken electronic devices, kitchen utensils, old glasses frames, ropes and laces, plastic flowers, natural materials, like pebbles, stones, shells, leaves.
- It is very important to stay away from the usual materials seen in 'craft and recycled materials workshops' such as pipe-cleaners, empty yogurt bottles, and egg cartons.



Room Arrangement

- Divide the place where the workshop is held into two areas (this can be in one room or two separate rooms).
- In one area, or in a separate room, arrange chairs so that the opening part of the workshop (watching the video about Piven) can be held.
- In the second area, set up tables where the participants will work. Work boards should be set out on these tables for each of the participants (or for each group in a group workshop). A few minutes should be allowed for each participant to choose his or her own “personal corner” in which to work. It’s important for participants to choose places that suit them.
- On each table, provide one or more hot glue guns. There should be an electrical outlet by each table, or an extension cable reaching each table. The cable should be taped down to the floor with gaffer tape to prevent anyone tripping or falling over it.
- On separate tables, place the boxes containing the different objects. This is the “buffet of objects.” We suggest designing a colorful, inviting, and exciting place, with the buffet of objects spread out over a number of connected tables.
- The objects should be slightly sorted, and spread out in a way that makes it easy to look at them, identify them, hold them, and move them.
- We suggest organizing the objects in such a way as to enable some kind of order within the muddle. The buffet of objects must not look like a heap of junk.



Appendix 2: The Piven principles for creating a collage

1. More – is MORE!

In the first stage, the more objects are available, the more possibilities you will have for creating.

2. Don't plan!

The more open you are at the outset, without prejudices, without any prepared ideas, the more you will be able to pay attention and focus on the things that appear before you.

3. Let them lead – listen to them.

Let the objects lead you. They will show you the opportunities and the way. There is nothing to worry about. At the end of the process, the work will be yours. You will decide exactly what it looks like, but the objects will show you the possibilities and help you choose the direction. In other words, it is important to restrain the obsessive need for control.

4. Help good accidents happen.

The more you open up to coincidences, the better; the most important thing is to increase the chance that “good accidents” will happen and to notice when they do.

5. Trial and error.

The more possibilities you try out in each situation, the greater the chances of finding the appropriate parts for each area and place.

6. Rome wasn't built in a day.

Even if the work looks terrible at first, it is just the beginning. The work will improve gradually, because your skills will develop. You will be the first to notice this!

7. Work on your feet.

By doing so, you will have more physical energy, your point of view in front of the work will change all the time, and you will be able to study it better at any given point.

8. Be flexible.

The great advantage of creating and expressing yourself through objects is that nothing is stuck down and fixed in ink or paint on the paper. There is considerable flexibility, and you can try many different options to improve your work. It is worth taking advantage of this flexibility. By doing so, don't be tempted to glue and fix the materials too quickly.

9. Don't be too easily satisfied.

Even if you think what you have done looks good, it is worth remembering that small changes could make your work look even better. Give yourself another opportunity to make an improvement.

10. Allow yourself to play.

The more you play, the more you give your brain the opportunity to free itself from its restrictions and enter a space that is less held back by self-awareness. The best ideas are born out of play and amusement.

About Hanoch Piven

pivenworld.com



Hanoch Piven is an artist whose work stimulates us to look playfully at our world and reconstruct what we are used to seeing in one preconceived way, and discover it in a fresh way.

Hanoch's colorful and witty collage portraits have appeared throughout the last 25 years in many international magazines and newspapers such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Rolling Stone*, *The Guardian*, *Der Spiegel*, and *Ha'aretz*.

In addition, Hanoch has written and illustrated many children books, including "What Presidents Are Made Of," elected by *Time* Magazine as one of the 10 Best Children's Books of 2004, and also created programs for Israel's Educational TV.

Schools and other education institutions throughout Israel, the United States, and other countries

have adopted his collage method to make art and visual communication more comprehensible and achievable for children and adults alike. Hanoch has taught this easily accessible collage method, which opens a window into the basic principles of visual communication and creativity, to groups in a variety of sectors such as education, business, government, and social entrepreneurship.

In the past years, Hanoch has used his playful workshops as an engaging space for Palestinian and Israeli youth and adults to meet, play, communicate, and create together.

Hanoch, a 2015 Seeds of Peace Fellow, was born in Uruguay, raised in Israel, educated in New York City, and currently divides his time between the two warm Mediterranean cities of Tel Aviv and Barcelona.



