



Driving Question: How can space and design be used to construct a meaningful and appropriate narrative about the human capacity for good and/or evil?

Project Description:

Students were challenged to redesign, or add an annex to, the Nanjing Massacre Memorial, one of the gravest human rights tragedies of the Second World War. The student teams took into consideration the historical, emotional, and political aspects of the event as they incorporated multiple disciplines into their projects. In addition, the final designs synthesized metaphor, motif, history, and the science of green building materials to provide a creative and thoughtful solution to the driving question. Ultimately, an exhibition night was held where the teams formally presented their designs to an audience of parents, professionals, and educators and defended their ideas through a follow up question and answer session as well as in-depth interviews.



Student Products

- ▶ Design a memorial space
- ▶ Present designs to an audience at an exhibition.

Teachers' Reflection

"The Nanjing Massacre Memorial redesign is arguably one of the most sophisticated, highly complex projects that we do all year. Students must first understand the historical, emotional, and design components of the task. They must then propose a creative solution to the problem that contextualizes one of the gravest human rights tragedies of the Second World War with empathy. And, if this is not hard enough, many of the viewing audience still hold considerable emotional sensitivity to this event. This requires the students to understand first, design second. We have had some very impressive reflective growth from this project, not to mention historical understanding. It is one of our favorite projects of the year." - Patrice Parks, James Linzel, Kim Sajan and David Wood

Student Reflection

"One of the hardest parts was the collaboration, and coming to consensus around not only the materials of the building, but also the overall ideas. We had six different buildings, while others might have one. We were initially going to divide into two groups, one exterior and one interior. Since we got six different buildings, it became difficult. We had to come together in our different buildings to settle on beautification decisions." - Student

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