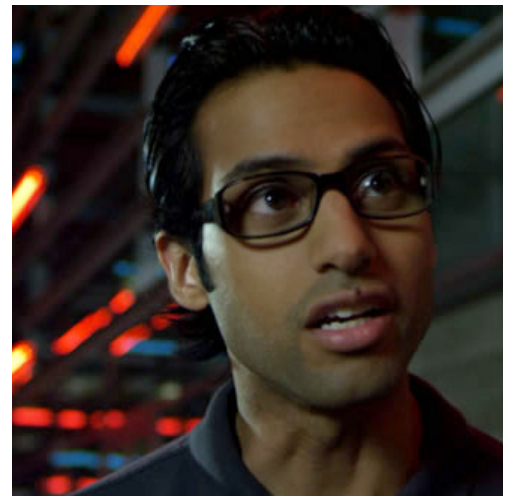


FUTURESTATES[®]



That Which Once Was

Directed by Kimi Takesue

[C] COMMUNITY CLASSROOM
ENGAGING STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS THROUGH FILM

PRESENTED BY:
[ITVS]
Public Media's
Independent Voice



FUTURESTATES.TV

ABOUT

FUTURESTATES

Imagining tomorrow's

America today,



SCENES AND BEHIND THE SCENES FROM *FUTURESTATES* FILMS.
TOP LEFT TO BOTTOM RIGHT: *Gunny* by Patrick Stettner, *That Which Once Was* by Kimi Takesue, *Laura Keller-NB* by Mo Perkins, and *Beholder* by Nisha Ganatra



Futurestates is a series of independent mini-features – short narrative films created by experienced filmmakers and emerging talents – transforming today's complex social issues into visions about what life in America will be like in decades to come. Now in its third season, *Futurestates*, which debuted in March 2010, is available online at futurestates.tv.

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Public Media's
Independent Voice

The Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy® Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on Monday nights at 10 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens, and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue, and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.



The issue of global warming is a significant one,

but to many of our students it seems like a distant problem: distant both in time and in geography. *That Which Once Was*, a gorgeously shot film, gives the issue an immediacy that allows students to connect with in meaningful ways. The story, set in 2028, revolves around the unlikely friendship between two environmental refugees, Vicente, an eight-year boy from the Caribbean, and Siku, an Inuk ice-carver. It is a beautiful and emotionally complex film that students find deeply engaging and moving.



TARGET AUDIENCE:

Grades 9–12
ENGLISH, SOCIAL STUDIES, AND SCIENCE

DURATION:

The main lesson is designed to be completed within a **55-minute class period**, with additional and extension activities that can expand to three or four class periods.

The film itself has a running time of about **20 minutes**.

STANDARDS:

Common Core State Standards for Reading Literature:

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Common Core State Standards for Writing:

Write informative or explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

BEFORE

(5–10) minutes

Based on the time available, ask students to consider one or more of the following questions and topics:

1. The day before screening the film, ask students to bring in a single object from home that has some significant meaning to them. This could be a medal, a photograph, a toy, a letter, and so on. In pairs or small groups, students will present their objects and explain their significance.
2. While there are so many topics to discuss about global warming, it would be most useful and relevant for this film to have students talk about how it can lead to people losing their homes and becoming environmental refugees. Ask students to read and discuss [this short article](#) from *The New York Times* about refugees from Bangladesh.
3. While it is not about global warming, the Academy Award® nominated short film *The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossoms* recounts the effects of a natural disaster that might provide students with more visual context for the destruction that could befall low lying areas due to rising sea levels. The trailer and screening information is available at: <http://thetsunamiandthecherryblossom.com/> Sections from another documentary, *Chasing Ice*, could be shown to students to provide additional background on the effects that global warming is having on the polar ice caps. Information is available at: <http://chasingice.com/>
4. Be sure that before beginning the film that students have a working definition of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is “a severe anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to any event that results in psychological trauma, overwhelming the individual’s ability to cope,” according to the American Psychiatric Association.
5. Show students a clip or two from YouTube about ice sculpting and discuss its role as an art form. What is its purpose, since it lasts so short a time?
6. Additional Previewing Activity: if students have not been asked to view film critically before, you may want to consider taking some time to review [film terminology](#) with students, using the lesson on the *Futurestates* For Educators page.

DURING

(20) minutes

Ask students to use the viewing guide to keep track of the character traits, including costumes, gestures, and actions, of the two main characters. The guide will help them to collect information to use on their assessment.



SIKU AND VICENTE IN *THAT WHICH ONCE WAS*.

AFTER

(8-10) minutes

Based on the time available, ask students to consider some of the following questions and topics:

1. Create a timeline of the significant events in Siku's and Vicente's lives before and after meeting each other. To make this task more challenging, students can be asked to locate or create an image for each of the points on their timelines.
2. It's clear that the characters affect the other, helping each to come to terms with their pasts and the effect that displacement has had on them. Direct students, in pairs, to role play Siku and Vicente by imagining that they were being interviewed on a TV talk show about their friendship.
3. Even though the characters do not say a lot aloud, the audience understands what's going on their heads. How does the filmmaker accomplish this? Why do you think the filmmaker chose to have so little dialogue?
4. Why did the filmmakers decide to have Siku be an ice sculptor? How does that choice of profession and type of art relate to the themes in the film?
5. What is the effect of the flashbacks? Why did the filmmaker keep the full truth about Vicente's experience from the viewers until near the end of the film? How would the effect of this revelation been different if it had been seen earlier in the film?
6. There are a number of objects that act as symbols in this film. Explain their significance to the theme of the film. Focus especially on the symbolic meaning of the fishing lure that Vicente keeps with him.
7. Both characters' home countries were destroyed by environmental disaster. What would this be like for you? What would you miss most about your hometown if it were suddenly gone?
8. Students may or may not have noticed the numbers tattooed on Vicente's arm, a clear reference to the Holocaust. What is the filmmaker suggesting about the ways that being the victim of an environmental disaster reduced people to numbers?

ASSESSMENT

(10) minutes

Have students write an analysis that compares the characters of Vicente and Siku. What is it about their similarities and differences that draw them together? How do they benefit each other?



FILMMAKER KIMI TAKESUE

ADDITIONAL MEDIA LITERACY ACTIVITIES

1. Using PowerPoint, Prezi, or a tool like iMovie, have students make a presentation that includes images of places, objects, animals, etc. that might disappear if the threat of global warming becomes reality. Students should use Creative Commons or a similar search engine to locate and use images that are appropriate and copyright free. If possible, students should add relevant music to make their presentations more engaging and persuasive to the audience.
2. View the *Making of That Which Once Was* documentary (9 minutes) available on the *Futurestates* website. Writer-director Kimi Takesue spends a good deal of time in the film discussing her actors and the motivations they have for their craft. What did you learn or find interesting about acting after watching the first part of this documentary? Why do you think that Takesue placed so much emphasis on the casting in this film?

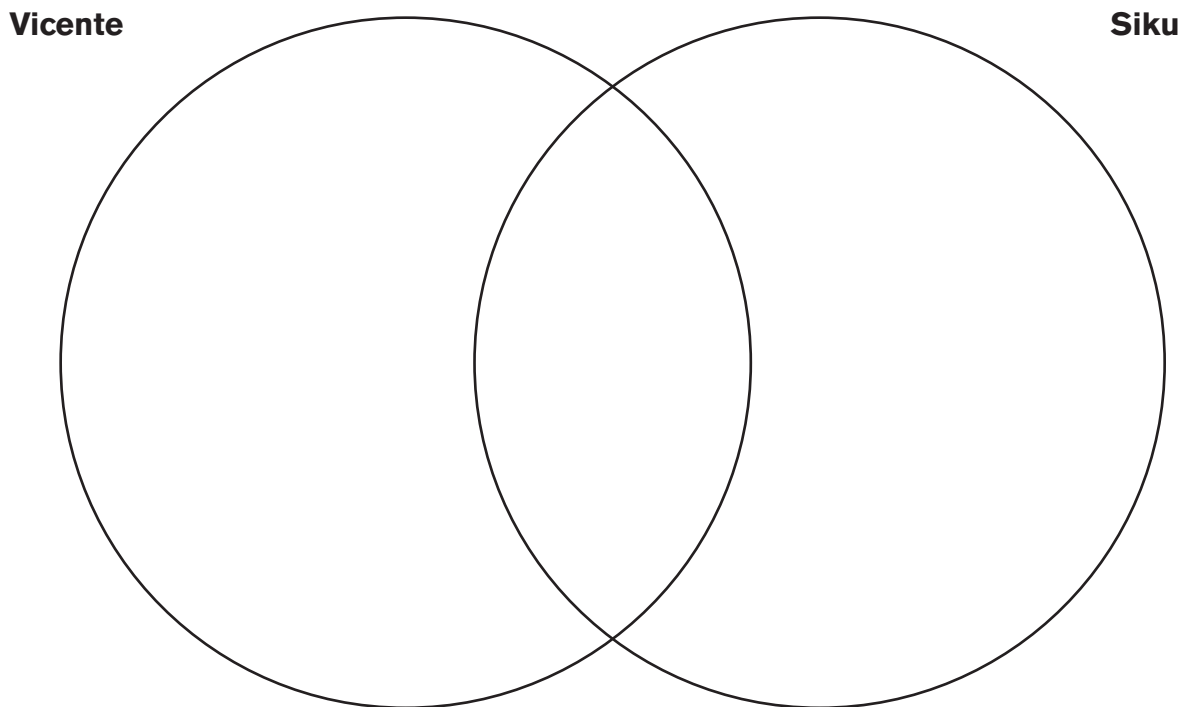
EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Have students use the Predict-O-Meter tool on the *Futurestates* website. First, using the forms at the end of this lesson plan, students will evaluate up to three predictions from this film based on scientific facts and their own knowledge. Then, they have an opportunity to make a prediction of their own about an issue raised in the film and have it evaluated by another student. Finally, if they have made an interesting and a likely prediction, they can have it posted onto the *Futurestates* website.
2. While there continues to be some political disagreement about the causes of global warming, much of the scientific community agrees that human development has played at least some role in the warming of the earth's temperatures. Ask students to try to identify the factors that their own activities may be contributing to global warming. You can use this article as a starting point: <http://planetsave.com/2009/02/02/how-humans-cause-global-warming/>. Then, ask students to create a piece of media—a song, a poster, a video, a podcast, an editorial—directed to students their own age and designed to raise awareness about one particular factor that may be causing the earth to grow warmer. You may also want to refer to the [lesson plan](#) developed for the *Futurestates* film called *Mr. Green*, which delves more deeply into the science of global warming.
3. Ice sculpting is considered an ephemeral art form since the duration of its existence is significantly less than, say, a painting or a sculpture made of bronze. There are a number of other art forms that could also be considered ephemeral that students would likely enjoy exploring further. Show students a portion of the documentary *Rivers and Tides*, which follows artist Andy Goldsworthy as he creates a number of his pieces out of sand, twigs, driftwood, and light, few of which last longer than a few minutes; clips of the film are widely available online. Additional information about this type of art can be found at: <http://www.ephemeralproject.com/an-introduction-to-ephemeral-art-andy-goldsworthy-richard-shilling/>. Then, ask students to create a piece of ephemeral art out of available materials that reflects a specific theme or tone. As a class, discuss how these art pieces would be different had they been made using more permanent materials.
4. There is no doubt that the threat of global warming is very real to the residents of low-lying island nations such as the Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Kiribati, and Nauru, whose entire countries could be submerged by the end of the century if the sea levels continue to rise. Ask students to select one of the low-lying nations of the world and to research the unique situation the residents there face, due to global warming. A good primer on the topic can be found here: <http://www.collegiateclimatecollab.com/the-perils-of-low-lying-island-nations/>. Students should then present their findings in a panel presentation with visual aides that demonstrate the growing threat. For additional background, consider showing a portion of the film *The Island President*: <http://theislandpresident.com/>, which is about President Mohamed Nasheed of the Maldives who tries to get the world's attention to the danger his country faces.

Keep track of the physical traits, costumes, backgrounds, personality, etc. for the two main characters.

Vicente	Siku

After viewing, compare and contrast the two main characters.



Futurestates

Predict-O-Meter

Log on to www.futurestates.tv. Go to the Predict-O-Meter. There are three rows of predictions. The row on the far left contains the predictions based on the *Futurestates* films, including *That Which Once Was*. The center row consists of predictions submitted by viewers. The far right row contains dates of known events. For this activity, click on the green *Futurestates* predictions. The number that appears in each green square is the number of predictions related to the specified year. Be certain to scroll down to see all predictions for a given year. At the end of each prediction is the tag for the film associated with each prediction. Find as many predictions as you can for the *That Which Once Was* film. Choose three predictions to evaluate using the rubric below. When the assigned evaluations are finished, create at least one prediction of your own. Your prediction will be evaluated by another student. If the evaluation is at least a "3", you may post it on the *Futurestates* website.

FILM: _____ YEAR: _____

PREDICTION: _____

KEY- No:1 Somewhat:2 Yes:3 Don't Know:4	VALUE
Is the prediction based on scientific possibilities?	
Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?	
Does the prediction directly lead to the next prediction?	
Do known events in the past support the prediction?	
Is this prediction plausible? (This is your opinion.)	
Overall Total: (add up the values)	
Score: (Overall Total ÷ 5)	

FILM: _____ YEAR: _____

PREDICTION: _____

KEY- No:1 Somewhat:2 Yes:3 Don't Know:4	VALUE
Is the prediction based on scientific possibilities?	
Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?	
Does the prediction directly lead to the next prediction?	
Do known events in the past support the prediction?	
Is this prediction plausible? (This is your opinion.)	
Overall Total: (add up the values)	
Score: (Overall Total ÷ 5)	

FILM: _____ **YEAR:** _____

PREDICTION: _____

KEY- No:1 Somewhat:2 Yes:3 Don't Know:4	VALUE
Is the prediction based on scientific possibilities?	
Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?	
Does the prediction directly lead to the next prediction?	
Do known events in the past support the prediction?	
Is this prediction plausible? (This is your opinion.)	
Overall Total: (add up the values)	
Score: (Overall Total ÷ 5)	

PERSONAL PREDICTION FOR _____ **(film name)**

NAME: _____ **EVALUATOR:** _____

FILM: _____ **YEAR:** _____

PREDICTION: _____

KEY- No:1 Somewhat:2 Yes:3 Don't Know:4	VALUE
Is the prediction based on scientific possibilities?	
Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?	
Does the prediction directly lead to the next prediction?	
Do known events in the past support the prediction?	
Is this prediction plausible? (This is your opinion.)	
Overall Total: (add up the values)	
Score: (Overall Total ÷ 5)	

Should this prediction be posted to the website? _____

Teacher's approval _____

Date posted _____

If not posted, explain the reason for declining.

CREDITS

CURRICULA WRITER

John Golden

John Golden is currently a curriculum specialist for high school Language Arts in Portland, Oregon. He is the author of *Reading in the Dark: Using Film as a Tool in the English Classroom* (NCTE, 2001) and *Reading in the Reel World: Teaching Documentaries and Other Nonfiction Texts* (NCTE, 2006). John has delivered presentations and led workshops around the country in order to help teachers use film actively in the classroom as a way for students to improve their reading, analytical and critical thinking skills.

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SCENES FROM FUTURE STATES FILMS.

TOP LEFT TO BOTTOM RIGHT: *Gunny* by Patrick Stettner, *Advantageous* by Jennifer Phang, *Asparagus* by Robby Henson, *Laura Keller-NB* by Mo Perkins, and *Worker Drone* by Sharat Raju

