

# FOLK ART REVEALED

*A Curriculum Guide, Pre-K–Grade 5*



AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM  
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## COVER IMAGES:

### **BIRD OF PARADISE QUILT TOP** (detail)

Artist unidentified

Vicinity of Albany, New York; 1858–1863

Cotton, wool, silk, and ink with silk embroidery;  $84\frac{1}{2} \times 69\frac{5}{8}$ "

Gift of the Trustees of the American Folk Art Museum, 1979.7.1

Photo by Gavin Ashworth, New York

### **MAN WITH A PLOW** (detail)

Bill Traylor (1852/56–1949)

Montgomery, Alabama; c. 1939–1942

Poster paint and pencil on paperboard;  $15 \times 25\frac{3}{4}$ "

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.267

Photo courtesy Sotheby's, New York

### **BUTTON TREE** (detail)

Gregory "Mr. Imagination" Warmack (b. 1948)

Chicago; 1990–1992

Wood and cement with buttons, bottle caps, and nails;  $56 \times 34 \times 60$ "

Gift of the artist, 2000.13.1

Photo by John Parnell, New York

### **FLAG GATE** (detail)

Artist unidentified

Jefferson County, New York; c. 1876

Paint on wood with iron and brass;  $39\frac{1}{2} \times 57 \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ "

Gift of Herbert Waide Hemphill Jr., 1962.1.1

Photo by John Parnell, New York



# CONTENTS

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<b>Credits</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR	6
LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION	7
“FOLK ART REVEALED” STATEMENT	8
NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS	9
GUIDE TO LESSON PLANS BY GRADE AND NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS	11
<b>Lesson Plans, Pre-K-Grade 5</b>	<b>13</b>
WHAT IS FOLK ART?	15
EVERYDAY AND UNUSUAL OBJECTS	27
COMMUNITY	67
SELF AND STORIES	103
SIGNS AND SYMBOLS	145
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>Bibliography and Resources</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Visiting the American Folk Art Museum</b>	<b>195</b>

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# INTRODUCTION

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Letter from the Director	6
Letter from the Director of Education	7
“Folk Art Revealed” Statement	8
New York State Learning Standards	9
Guide to Lesson Plans by Grade and New York State Learning Standards	11

Dear Educator,

I am delighted to introduce you to *Folk Art Revealed: A Curriculum Guide*, produced by the education department of the American Folk Art Museum. Folk art captures the heart of American culture. It speaks to our diversity of heritage and shared national experience, individual creativity, and community values.

Relevant to a broad range of cultural identities, the study of folk art illuminates our nation's history in a unique way. *Folk Art Revealed: A Curriculum Guide* is an educational resource designed to enhance learning across the curriculum, nurture self-expression, and introduce young audiences to a lifelong appreciation of the arts.

The American Folk Art Museum is the premier institution devoted to the aesthetic appreciation of traditional folk art and creative expressions of contemporary self-taught artists from the United States and abroad. The museum preserves, conserves, and interprets a comprehensive collection of the highest quality, with objects dating from the eighteenth century to the present. Its collection includes more than five thousand artworks spanning three centuries of American visual expression, from compelling portraits and dazzling quilts to powerful works by contemporary self-taught artists in a variety of mediums. The museum serves as an important source of information and scholarship of the field and is committed to making the study of folk art a vital part of the curriculum for New York City Schools. The resources presented in *Folk Art Revealed: A Curriculum Guide* provide a way of looking into America's past and future.

Welcome to folk art.

Sincerely,

Maria Ann Conelli

**DIRECTOR, AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM**



Dear Educator,

Thank you for your interest in the American Folk Art Museum and *Folk Art Revealed: A Curriculum Guide*.

This guide is a multidisciplinary teachers' resource designed to integrate folk art into the school curriculum from pre-K to grade 5. Developed by museum educators, classroom teachers, and school administrators, this resource brings to life the relevance of the American Folk Art Museum's permanent collection to elementary students.

*Folk Art Revealed: A Curriculum Guide* includes twenty-one lesson plans, as well as images, worksheets, and other supplemental materials to make the integration of folk art easy and applicable for you as educator. The materials are organized by four themes—"Everyday and Unusual Objects," "Community," "Self and Stories," and "Signs and Symbols." You may also choose to explore our lesson ideas by grade level, subject, or New York State learning standard. We hope that, in conjunction with these lessons, you will bring your students to visit the museum and see the artworks in real life, as the first-person experience cannot be replicated.

The American Folk Art Museum is available as a resource and encourages school partnerships. Information on tours of the museum's changing exhibitions and permanent collection is found in the School Programs brochure. To receive a copy of the current brochure, please e-mail [grouptours@folkartmuseum.org](mailto:grouptours@folkartmuseum.org). We look forward to hearing your thoughts on *Folk Art Revealed: A Curriculum Guide* and seeing your students at the museum.

Sincerely,

Diana Schlesinger

**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM**



# FOLK ART REVEALED

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## AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM

“Folk Art Revealed,” an exhibition organized by the American Folk Art Museum in 2004 and continuously on view, invites visitors to contemplate the nature of folk art through four principles applied to a diverse range of artworks from the museum’s permanent collection. These four themes—**UTILITY**, **COMMUNITY**, **INDIVIDUALITY**, and **SYMBOLISM**—infuse all of folk art and speak to essential aspects of both traditional and unconventional expressions. “Folk Art Revealed” uses provocative visual juxtapositions and contextual information to help audiences understand the vital role folk art plays both as a carrier of cultural heritage and as a reflection of the synthesis between traditional ideas and new currents.

The exhibition grants visitors a rare, holistic view of the field. Objects range from New England portraits and painted furniture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to unorthodox works created by contemporary self-taught artists from the United States and abroad. The viewer will learn quickly that many—if not most—of the artworks in the show respond to more than one of the four themes, which becomes key to understanding folk art as a complex expression that emerges from patterns of living, at times affirming stability, at others resisting convention.

Whether they are newcomers or seasoned enthusiasts, audiences are drawn to folk art, which, in its many forms, manifests the shared human impulse to find beautiful and satisfying solutions to the needs and challenges of daily life.

Stacy C. Hollander

**SENIOR CURATOR AND DIRECTOR OF EXHIBITIONS,  
AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM**

Brooke Davis Anderson

**DIRECTOR AND CURATOR OF THE CONTEMPORARY CENTER,  
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“Folk Art Revealed” is made possible by leadership support from the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation and major support from the Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Fund. Additional funding has been provided by the Brown Foundation, Inc., of Houston, the Robert Lehman Foundation, and the Jean Lipman Fellows.

# NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS

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## THE ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS

**STANDARD 1:** Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts and participate in various roles in the arts.

**STANDARD 2:** Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in arts in various roles.

**STANDARD 3:** Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.

**STANDARD 4:** Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS

**STANDARD 1:** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

**STANDARD 2:** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

**STANDARD 3:** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

**STANDARD 4:** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.

## MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY LEARNING STANDARDS

**STANDARD 1:** Students will use mathematical analysis, scientific inquiry, and engineering design, as appropriate, to pose questions, seek answers, and develop solutions.

**STANDARD 3:** Students will understand mathematics and become mathematically confident by communicating and reasoning mathematically; by applying mathematics in real-world settings; and by solving problems through the integrated study of number systems, geometry, algebra, data analysis, probability, and trigonometry.

## SOCIAL STUDIES LEARNING STANDARDS

**STANDARD 1—HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES AND NEW YORK:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

**STANDARD 2—WORLD HISTORY:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

**STANDARD 3—GEOGRAPHY:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth’s surface.

**STANDARD 4—ECONOMICS:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and

associated institutions to allocate scarce resources; how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies; and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and nonmarket mechanisms.

**STANDARD 5—CIVICS, CITIZENSHIP, AND GOVERNMENT:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the necessity for establishing governments; the governmental system of the United States and other nations; the U.S. Constitution; the basic civic values of American constitutional democracy; and the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship, including avenues of participation.

## **NEW YORK CITY BLUEPRINT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE ARTS**

**STRAND 1:** Art Making

**STRAND 2:** Literacy in the Arts

**STRAND 3:** Making Social, Cultural, and Historical Connections

**STRAND 4:** Community and Cultural Resources

**STRAND 5:** Careers and Life-Long Learning in Visual Arts

# GUIDE TO LESSON PLANS BY GRADE AND NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS

## LESSON PLANS FOR PRE-K-GRADE 1

PRE-K-1

<b>What Is Folk Art?</b>	<b>21</b>
The Arts (2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 3, 4)	
NYC Blueprint (2, 3, 4)	
<b>A Tree Can Be . . .</b>	<b>31</b>
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 3)	
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 4)	
<b>Family Portraits</b>	<b>37</b>
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 3)	
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 4)	
<b>Going to School</b>	<b>73</b>
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 3)	
Social Studies (1, 5)	
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 4)	
<b>Imagining Animals</b>	<b>113</b>
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 2, 3)	
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 4)	
<b>Stories from My Life</b>	<b>119</b>
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 2, 3)	
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)	
<b>Counting Quilts</b>	<b>149</b>
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 3)	
Mathematics, Science, and Technology (1, 3)	
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)	

## LESSON PLANS FOR GRADES 2-3

2-3

<b>What Is Folk Art?</b>	<b>21</b>
The Arts (2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 3, 4)	
NYC Blueprint (2, 3, 4)	
<b>My Family Tree</b>	<b>45</b>
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 2, 3)	
Social Studies (1)	
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)	
<b>Art All Around: Found Objects in Folk Art</b>	<b>53</b>
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 2, 3)	
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)	
<b>Painting the Town: Picturing My Community</b>	<b>81</b>
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 3)	
Social Studies (1, 3, 5)	
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)	
<b>Coming Together: Creating a Community Quilt</b>	<b>87</b>
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 3)	
Social Studies (1)	
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)	
<b>Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry</b>	<b>123</b>
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 2, 3)	
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)	

<b>The Stars and Stripes</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>History Through the Eyes of Individuals: Bill Traylor</b>	<b>141</b>
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)		The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 3)		English Language Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
Social Studies (1, 5)		Social Studies (1)	
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)		NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)	
<b>Symmetry and Symbols</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>Community Symbols: Heroes and Leaders</b>	<b>167</b>
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)		The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
English Language Arts (1, 3)		English Language Arts (1, 2, 3)	
Mathematics, Science, and Technology (1, 3)		Social Studies (2, 5)	
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)		NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)	
<b>LESSON PLANS FOR GRADES 4-5</b>		<b>Situation of America: A Sense of Place</b>	<b>175</b>
		The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)	
		English Language Arts (1, 3)	
		Social Studies (1, 4)	
		NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)	
<b>What Is Folk Art?</b>	<b>21</b>		
The Arts (2, 3, 4)			
English Language Arts (1, 3, 4)			
NYC Blueprint (2, 3, 4)			
<b>Advertising Then and Now</b>	<b>63</b>		
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)			
English Language Arts (1, 3)			
Social Studies (1, 4)			
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)			
<b>A Shared Artistic Tradition: Pennsylvania German Pottery</b>	<b>93</b>		
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)			
English Language Arts (1, 3)			
Social Studies (1)			
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)			
<b>The Artist as Activist</b>	<b>99</b>		
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)			
English Language Arts (1, 3)			
Social Studies (1, 4, 5)			
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 3, 4)			
<b>Character Creations</b>	<b>133</b>		
The Arts (1, 2, 3, 4)			
English Language Arts (1, 2, 3)			
NYC Blueprint (1, 2, 4)			



# LESSON PLANS

## PRE-K-GRADE 5

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# WHAT IS FOLK ART?

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Comprised of more than five thousand works created by untrained artists between the 1700s and today, from furniture and pottery to drawings and paintings, the collection of the American Folk Art Museum celebrates the artistic achievements of “ordinary” people. By its very nature, folk art is at the heart of the cultural expression of all people and speaks directly to the diversity of our heritage and shared national experience. Because the objects presented in this curriculum were made, used, and appreciated by many different communities, the collection inspires awe yet feels familiar and connected to the interests and experiences of a diverse range of students.

Folk art lends itself to a variety of approaches. As rich primary sources, works of folk art provide a window into the lives of individuals and communities throughout history. Similarly, many of the objects have a narrative quality that invites exploration and discovery. In addition, the stories of the self-taught artists themselves fuel the imagination; students will learn how others have been compelled to create as they expand their understanding of artistic processes and materials.



## WHAT IS FOLK ART? (PRE-K-5):

Students will examine two works of folk art—a nineteenth-century painting and a sculpture by a contemporary self-taught artist. By comparing and contrasting them, students will begin to develop an understanding of the qualities associated with folk art.









## THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM

Edward Hicks (1780–1849)

Newtown, Pennsylvania; 1846–1848

Oil on canvas; 26 × 29 3/8"

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.59

Photo © 2000 John Bigelow Taylor, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

Edward Hicks was trained and worked as an ornamental painter, decorating carriages, coaches, and a variety of utilitarian objects, before starting to paint easel pictures such as *The Peaceable Kingdom*. Around 1816 to 1818, Hicks began to create a series of paintings illustrating the Peaceable Kingdom described in the Old Testament, which reads, in part, “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them” (Isaiah 11:6).

Sixty-two versions of *The Peaceable Kingdom* are known to exist. Like many of them, this particular version features animals that are natural enemies living in harmony, and children safely handling serpents. Here, Hicks also juxtaposed the biblical scene from the book of Isaiah with a scene from American history: William Penn, the Quaker founder of Pennsylvania, is shown signing a treaty with the Delaware Indians in 1682. The Quakers settled in Pennsylvania after having been persecuted for their religious beliefs in England. Penn and the Quaker community believed that it was important to treat the Indians with respect and live peacefully alongside them in the New World. *The Peaceable Kingdom* therefore reflects the Quaker values of living in harmony and unity, and of people of different cultures coexisting in peace.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “What Is Folk Art?” (pre-K–5)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)





## BUTTON TREE

Gregory “Mr. Imagination” Warmack (b. 1948)

Chicago; 1990–1992

Wood and cement with buttons, bottle caps, and nails; 56 × 34 × 60"

Gift of the artist, 2000.13.1

Photo by John Parnell, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

Gregory Warmack, also known as Mr. Imagination, lives in Pennsylvania. After having been shot in an attempted robbery in 1978, he made a conscious choice to become an artist. Warmack uses any materials he can find, such as bottle caps, buttons, and coins, to construct human and animal figures, masks, and canes. *Button Tree* was created from bottle caps, buttons, and the salvaged limb of a tree that had been a victim of urban development. The buttons were nailed one by one directly into the wood in a laborious process that took years to complete.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “What Is Folk Art?” (pre-K–5)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)

# WHAT IS FOLK ART?

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PRE-K-1

**GRADE LEVEL: PRE-K-5**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

**ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 45-MINUTE PERIOD**

2-3

4-5

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand the significance and history of folk art.
- Students will hone analytical and critical thinking skills.
- Students will understand varied reasons for which folk artists create.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *The Peaceable Kingdom* and *Button Tree*

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Introduction and Discussion

The students will think about and expand their preconceived notions of folk art.

- Ask the students what comes to mind when they think about folk art.
- *Hi folks!* What does *folks* mean? If *folks* stands for people, then folk art is art made by people—ordinary people who make extraordinary things.
- People have always had art in their lives, decorating their homes and workspaces with extraordinary works of art and beautifully crafted objects. The artists whose creations are on view at the American Folk Art Museum never went to art school. They learned their skills from someone in their family or community or from other professionals, or they used their own imagination to teach themselves how to create art.
- Folk art can be traditional or contemporary; it was made long ago, and it is being made today.

### Activity

Discuss two works of art from the museum's collection individually, then compare and contrast them.

- Allow for the students' interests and observations to guide the discussion. Ask open-ended questions to provoke responses and sharing.
- Encourage the students to use their own words to describe what it is they see in the artworks and where they see it, rather than just have them use their fingers to point.
- Share the background information on these objects as it pertains to the discussion and at a level appropriate for your students.

### THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM

- What do you see in this picture? What is happening?
- Do you think this event happened in real life? Why or why not?

- The artist, Edward Hicks, is portraying unity and harmony. What do you see that represents harmony?
- The title is *The Peaceable Kingdom*. What are other titles you could give this painting?

#### **BUTTON TREE**

- What do you see?
- What is this object made of, and how do you think it was put together?
- This is a sculpture made by Gregory Warmack, also known as Mr. Imagination. He often creates works of art he thinks of as acts of goodwill. How does he do good by reusing materials?

#### **COMPARISON**

- How are these two works different? How are they the same? Think about the artists' backgrounds, the materials used, and the subjects depicted.
- Which object surprises you most as a work of folk art?

### **PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS**

- This lesson is an ideal introduction to any of the lessons in this curriculum or a visit to the American Folk Art Museum.
- Tell the students that the various works of folk art have much in common. They all relate to one or more of the themes explored in this curriculum: utility, community, individuality, and symbolism. Ask the students to look at *The Peaceable Kingdom* and *Button Tree* and think about how the two works connect with these four themes.

### **ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS**

- In discussion, students were able to identify types of folk art in their daily lives.
- In discussion, students responded to the works of art with descriptive words and analysis.
- Students understood and found connections between the two discussed works of art.

### **RECOMMENDED RESOURCES**

#### **Recommended Books for Students**

Coleman, Janet Wyman, with Elizabeth V. Warren. *Baseball for Everyone: Stories from the Great Game*. New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with American Folk Art Museum, 2003.

A history of the sport illustrated with baseball statues, sculptures, balls and bats, paintings, and baseball-themed quilts.

*Critters A to Z in American Folk Art*. New York: American Folk Art Museum, 2003.

An alphabet of animals portrayed in folk art carvings, quilts, paintings, and many other media.

Esterman, M.M. *A Fish That's a Box: Folk Art from the National Museum of American Art*. Arlington, Va.: Great Ocean Publishers, 1990.

A children's introduction to folk art, featuring objects from the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., including works made from found materials. Encourages students to create their own works of art.

Lyons, Mary E. *Painting Dreams: Minnie Evans, Visionary Artist*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996.

———. *Starting Home: The Story of Horace Pippin, Painter*. New York: Scribner, 1993.

———. *Stitching Stars: The Story Quilts of Harriet Powers*. New York: Scribner, 1993.

Lyons, Mary E., ed. *Talking with Tebé: Clementine Hunter, Memory Artist*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998.

Picture-book biographies of folk artists, providing valuable historical perspective and context at a level appropriate for upper-elementary and middle-school students.

Nicholson, Nicholas B.A. *Little Girl in a Red Dress with Cat and Dog*. New York: Viking, 1998.

The imagined story behind this painting from the collection of the American Folk Art Museum from the perspective of the artist and the little girl that sat for the portrait.

Nikola-Lisa, W., and Grandma Moses. *The Year with Grandma Moses*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000.

Grandma Moses's paintings of landscapes through the seasons, accompanied by her own words, excerpted from her memoirs.

Panchyk, Richard. *American Folk Art for Kids: With 21 Activities*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2004.

A survey of American folk art for kids, exploring a breadth of materials, styles, and artists as inspiration for children to create their own projects. Includes a foreword by Mr. Imagination.

### **Recommended Books for Teachers**

Anderson, Brooke Davis. *Darger: The Henry Darger Collection at the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Full-color catalog of the American Folk Art Museum's Darger collection that offers an introduction to the controversial self-taught artist.

Arnett, Paul, and William Arnett, eds. *Souls Grown Deep: African American Vernacular Art of the South*. Atlanta, Ga.: Tinwood Books, 1999.

The definitive book on African American folk artists of the South. Volume 1 explores artists working in the years following World War II; Volume 2 focuses on artists working in the 1980s and '90s.

Bihalji-Merin, Oto, and Nebojša-Bato Tomašević. *World Encyclopedia of Naïve Art: A Hundred Years of Naïve Art*. Translated by Kordija Kveder et al. London: Frederick Muller, 1984.

A reference book on 19th- and 20th-century naïve art, including sections on specific geographic regions.

Fagaly, William A. *Tools of Her Ministry: The Art of Sister Gertrude Morgan*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Rizzoli International Publications, 2004.

The first monograph on this important self-taught artist, who considered her paintings and decorated objects tools for teaching the word of God.

Hollander, Stacy C. *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Catalog of this once private collection of American folk art, comprising hundreds of pieces of furniture, signs, ceramics, textiles, weathervanes, walking sticks, and other objects. *The Peaceable Kingdom* is illustrated and discussed on pages 88–89 and 412–413.

Hollander, Stacy C., and Brooke Davis Anderson. *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

An exploration of American folk art from the colonial period through the present as seen through highlights from the American Folk Art Museum's collection. *Button Tree* is illustrated and discussed on pages 282 and 402.

Horwitz, Elinor Lander. *Contemporary American Folk Artists*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1975.

Offers profiles of the lives and work of 22 American painters, carvers, and environmental artists.

Lipman, Jean, and Tom Armstrong, eds. *American Folk Painters of Three Centuries*. New York: Hudson Hills Press in association with Whitney Museum of American Art, 1980.

Catalog published in conjunction with a major retrospective of American folk art at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, in 1980.

Lipman, Jean, Elizabeth V. Warren, and Robert Bishop. *Young America: A Folk-Art History*. New York: Hudson Hills Press in association with Museum of American Folk Art, 1986.

A wide variety of folk art objects from the American Revolution to World War I presented chronologically, set within historical context.

Livingston, Jane, and John Beardsley. *Black Folk Art in America, 1930–1980*. Jackson: Published for the Corcoran Gallery of Art by the University Press of Mississippi, 1982.

Catalog published in conjunction with the groundbreaking 1982 exhibition “Black Folk Art in America, 1930–1980” at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

Maizels, John, ed. *Raw Vision Outsider Art Sourcebook*. Radlett, UK: Raw Vision, 2002.

A guide to art galleries, websites, organizations, publications, museums, and exhibitions of art of the self-taught, art brut, and contemporary folk art.

Rosenak, Chuck, and Jan Rosenak. *Contemporary American Folk Art: A Collector's Guide*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1996.

Includes biographical notes on 181 artists and lists of museums and galleries where one can see and buy their art.

———. *Museum of American Folk Art Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Folk Art and Artists*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1990.

A comprehensive look at 257 American folk artists, including biographical data and complete background information.

Sellen, Betty-Carol, with Cynthia J. Johanson. *Outsider, Self-Taught, and Folk Art Annotated Bibliography: Publications and Films of the 20th Century*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2002.

A guide containing entries for books, including reference books, biographies, exhibition publications of all kinds, picture books, and books geared to children, as well as periodicals, newspapers, and films about folk artists and their work.

———. *Self-Taught, Outsider, and Folk Art: A Guide to American Artists, Locations, and Resources*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2000.

A reference book listing individual artists, galleries, and museums organized by state, publications, exhibitions, festivals, art centers, organizations, and educational opportunities.

Ward, Gerald W.R., et al. *American Folk*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2001.

Highlights everyday life in 19th-century America through the folk art collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Warren, Elizabeth V., with Margaret S. Smeal. *The Perfect Game: America Looks at Baseball*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2003.

Captures portraits, watercolors, carvings, painted signage, lithographs, and a wide variety of everyday objects from the 1840s to the end of the 20th century that are reminders of baseball the way it used to be.

Wertkin, Gerard C., ed. *Encyclopedia of American Folk Art*. New York: Routledge in association with American Folk Art Museum, 2004.

A comprehensive reference book comprised of more than 600 entries, many of which refer to objects from the collection of the American Folk Art Museum.

### **Recommended Websites**

American Folk Art Museum:

[www.folkartmuseum.org](http://www.folkartmuseum.org)

Contains information about the museum's exhibitions, collections, programs, and events, as well as an online catalog of the museum's noncirculating research library.



The de Young Museum, San Francisco:

“Teachers’ Guide to American Art”

[www.thinker.org/fam/education/publications/guide-american/index.html](http://www.thinker.org/fam/education/publications/guide-american/index.html)

Online teachers’ guide produced by the de Young Museum, San Francisco, which shows another of Edward Hicks’s *Peaceable Kingdom* paintings.

# EVERYDAY AND UNUSUAL OBJECTS

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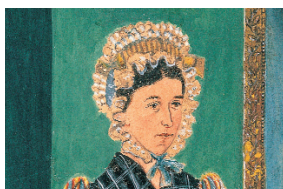
The earliest objects we now term folk art were mostly utilitarian in nature, made to meet the basic demands of daily life. At the same time, they were expressions of their makers' creativity, elevating everyday objects into works of art.

The idea of utility that is often associated with traditional folk art forms is also prevalent in twentieth- and twenty-first-century works and demonstrates the endurance of utility as an impulse for creative expression. Mundane materials—from tree branches to chicken bones—are transformed into fantastical creatures or shimmering towers.

Within this unit, educators choose from a variety of focus objects and subjects ranging from family trees to advertisements and from reuse to recycling.



**A TREE CAN BE...** (PRE-K-1): A tree can be just about anything in the hands of self-taught sculptor Bessie Harvey. Students will look at Harvey's work, which is constructed from found wood, and explore the creative possibilities of found materials in their own artmaking.



**FAMILY PORTRAITS** (PRE-K-1): Students will create a series of portraits that together represent a family, taking inspiration from painter Jacob Maentel, whose detailed and descriptive pairs of portraits depict couples and families in their homes, preserving family memories in a time long before photography.



**MY FAMILY TREE** (2-3): Students will explore family history and genealogy through observation and discussion of a hand-painted family record. They will then create family trees as informational documents and works of art.



**ART ALL AROUND: FOUND OBJECTS IN FOLK ART** (2-3): Students will look at objects created from a variety of unusual materials, while considering the various reasons for which artists work with found materials—including economic, environmental, and creative impetuses. They will then make original works from found objects.



**ADVERTISING THEN AND NOW** (4-5): Students will compare and contrast handcrafted trade signs and show figures from the world of nineteenth-century advertising to contemporary advertising and design original advertisements for historical or contemporary trades or products.





## FACES OF AFRICA II

Bessie Harvey (1929–1994)

Alcoa, Tennessee; 1994

Paint on wood with wood putty, glitter, found objects, marbles, and beads; 31 × 34 × 12"

Gift from the Mendelsohn Collection, 2002.20.1

Photo by Gavin Ashworth, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

Throughout her career, Bessie Harvey worked predominantly with found wood—tree limbs, stumps, driftwood, branches, and roots. She created her sculptures by joining tree branches or embellishing single pieces of wood with paint, glitter, fabric, beads, and wood putty. Rather than beginning with an idea and then realizing it with the help of found wood, Harvey said, the tree limbs themselves, by their size, shape, and particular features, often suggested the subject matter of the sculpture. In *Faces of Africa II*, Harvey added wood putty to enhance the facial features evoked by the tree's natural shape and glass beads to define the eyes.

Although Harvey was not wealthy and at points in her life struggled financially, she did not choose to work with found wood for economic reasons alone. She explained that she had always found comfort and inspiration in nature: As a child, she considered the trees to be her friends; she talked to them and loved playing among them. As an adult artist, Harvey said, she felt that there were spirits and souls within the trees, and that she worked to free them.

"I was always finding ways of making something out of nothing when I was little," the artist stated. When she was a child, Harvey built many of her own toys from things she found or things others had thrown away. She said that the ability to be creative and to make things with her own hands made her childhood and life happier.\*

### RELATED LESSONS

- "A Tree Can Be ..." (pre-K–1)
- "Art All Around: Found Objects in Folk Art" (2–3)
- "Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry" (2–3)

\* The Bessie Harvey Homepage ([www.sunsite.utk.edu/bessie/](http://www.sunsite.utk.edu/bessie/)).



# A TREE CAN BE...

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PRE-K-1

**GRADE LEVEL: PRE-K-1**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

**ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 60-MINUTE PERIOD**

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Students will consider that alternative and unusual materials, including found objects from nature, can be used to create art.
- Students will experiment with transforming tree branches into original works of art.

## **MATERIALS**

- Images of *Faces of Africa II*
- A copy of *The Perfect Purple Feather* by Hanoch Piven
- Tree branches (students may collect their own branches, or the teacher may provide branches of a variety of sizes, shapes, and weights)
- Additional art supplies to embellish and transform branches, such as cardboard or pulp trays for platforms, glue, string, beads, fabric, wire, feathers, glitter, paint, or any other materials that are available or desirable

## **LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES**

### **Introduction**

- Do a read-aloud of Hanoch Piven's *The Perfect Purple Feather*.
- Discuss the many things that the feather could become with the illustrator's imagination and the help of some additional supplies.
- Share the feather enclosed at the end of the book with the students and encourage them to brainstorm other ideas that the feather might inspire.

### **Discussion**

Look at a reproduction of *Faces of Africa II*. Note that it is a photograph of the sculpture, not a picture or painting the artist made. If your class is visiting the museum, show them the actual artwork. Allow the students to consider the object and guess at the materials used before sharing the background information.

- What is this sculpture made from?
- How did the artist turn the tree branch into a sculpture, into a face?
- Why use tree branches as materials to make art?
- Why might the artist have turned the tree branch into a person?
- Encourage the students to describe their feelings about *Faces of Africa II*. Is it happy, scary, magical, etc.?

- Share some of the background information on Bessie Harvey and her work. You may wish to look at additional works of Harvey's with the students. Images of her sculptures can be found at the Bessie Harvey Homepage ([www.sunsite.utk.edu/bessie/](http://www.sunsite.utk.edu/bessie/)).

#### **Activity**

- Allow the students to choose a tree branch.
- Remind the students of all of the different things that one feather could become in the book *The Perfect Purple Feather*.
- Before handing out additional materials, encourage the students to spend a few minutes looking at their branches, turning them around in their hands, and imagining what they could become; it need not be a person or have a face.
- Have the students share their initial ideas with a partner or as a group.
- Introduce some of the additional materials that can be used to transform the branches. Brainstorm how these materials could be utilized.
- Distribute the materials and assist the children as they create their work. While the students' works may depart from their initial ideas as they progress, remind the students that their branches should remain an important part of their artwork.
- Have the students write or dictate a title or a sentence explaining their objects.

#### **PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS**

- Look at artworks focusing on trees from a variety of cultures and time periods as an inspiration or conclusion to creating paintings of trees.
- Create artworks using both natural and man-made found objects. Encourage the students beforehand to observe the objects and classify them as man-made or natural.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- Further explore folk art sculptures by teaching the "Imagining Animals" lesson (pages 113–116) in conjunction with this lesson.

#### **ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS**

- Students were able to discuss a sculpture made from found objects, offering their thoughts about the materials, subject matter, and feeling of the artwork.
- Students were able to brainstorm ideas answering the question, What else could this tree branch have become?
- Students produced an original finished work of art employing tree branches. Students used problem-solving skills and imagination to discover or invent new ways of using various materials.



## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Students

Collins, Pat Lowery. *I Am an Artist*. Brookfield, Conn.: Millbrook Press, 1992.

An artist's description of finding natural beauty and seeing the world in a creative way.

Ehlert, Lois. *Leaf Man*. San Diego, Calif./New York: Harcourt, 2005.

Featuring illustrations of the "leaf man" and of chickens, geese, and hills composed of fall leaves.

Piven, Hanoch. *The Perfect Purple Feather*. Boston: Little, Brown, 2002.

Shows how a single purple feather is transformed into a whisker for a cat, a quill for a porcupine, and many more imaginative ideas with the addition of art supplies and various other objects.

Shindler, Ramon, and Wojciech Graniczewski. *Found Alphabet*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.

An alphabet book illustrated with collages made from leaves, twigs, matchboxes, buttons, and other found materials, accompanied by poems that highlight the objects used in each picture.

Udry, Janice May. *A Tree Is Nice*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1956.

A classic and quiet picture book that gives many reasons for which a tree can be nice.

### Recommended Books for Teachers

Arnett, Paul, and William Arnett (eds.). *Souls Grown Deep: African American Vernacular Art of the South*. Atlanta, Ga.: Tinwood Books, 1999.

The definitive book on African American folk artists of the South. Volume 1 explores artists working in the years following World War II; Volume 2 focuses on artists working in the 1980s and '90s, including Bessie Harvey.

Beardsley, John. *Gardens of Revelation: Environments by Visionary Artists*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1995. Twenty-five "visionary environments" from around the world and their creators, explored in depth in photographs and text and viewed from both folk art and environmental perspectives.

Hollander, Stacy C., and Brooke Davis Anderson. *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001. An exploration of American folk art from the colonial period through the present as seen through highlights from the American Folk Art Museum's collection. Another version of Bessie Harvey's *Faces of Africa—Faces of Africa I*—is illustrated and discussed on pages 281 and 401–402.

### Recommended Website

The Bessie Harvey Homepage:

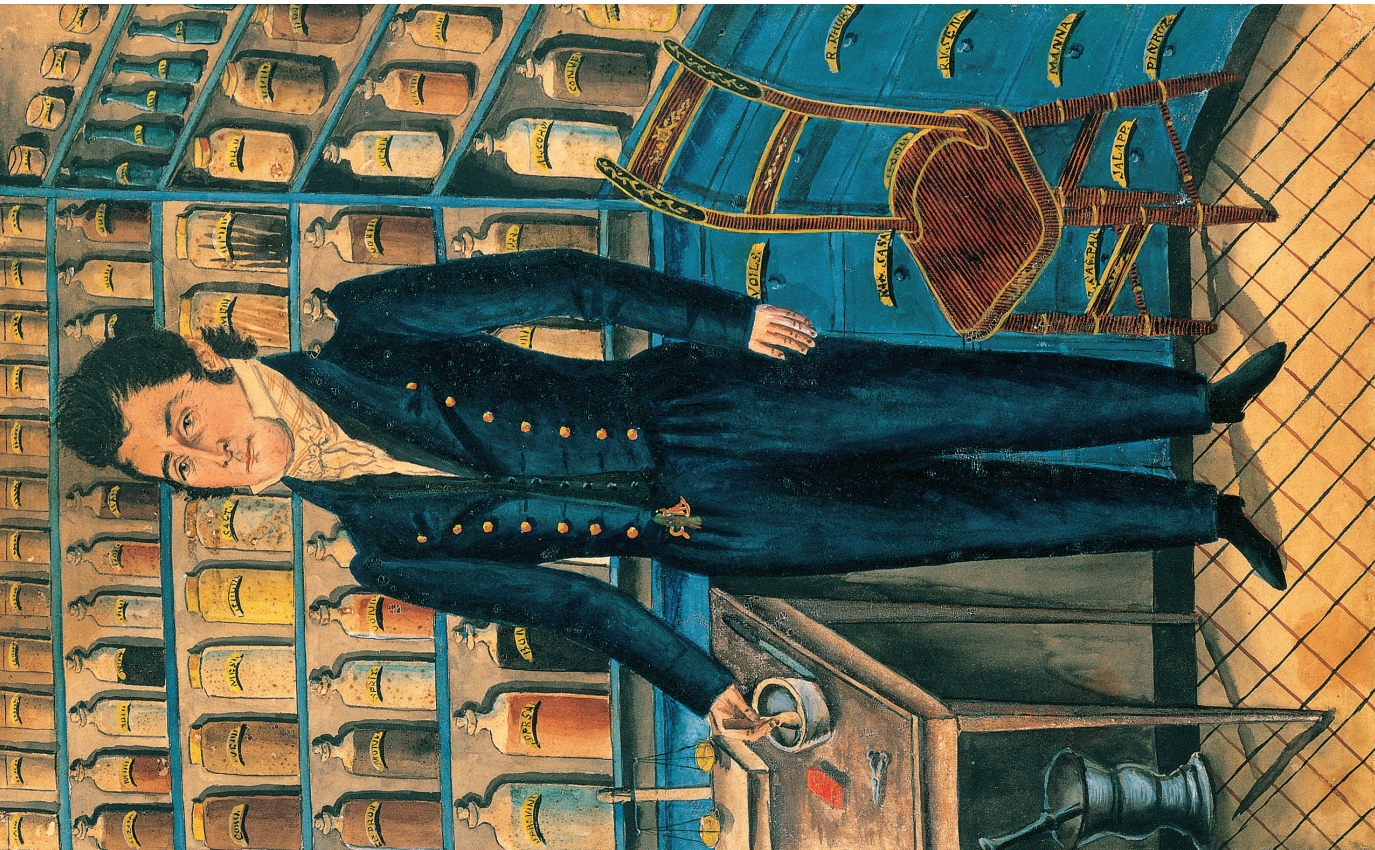
[www.sunsite.utk.edu/bessie/](http://www.sunsite.utk.edu/bessie/)

A comprehensive online resource about Bessie Harvey and her work.











## MARY VALENTINE BUCHER and DR. CHRISTIAN BUCHER

Jacob Maentel (1778–?)

Schaefferstown, Pennsylvania; c. 1825–1830

Watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper; 16 ½ × 10 ⅛" and 16 ½ × 10 ½"

Promised gifts of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.15 a, b

Photos by Stephen Donelian, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECTS

Before the invention of photography, drawn or painted portraiture provided the only means to preserve a likeness for posterity. Jacob Maentel was a Pennsylvania German artist who painted more than two hundred portraits of friends and neighbors in southeastern Pennsylvania and Indiana, providing a window into the homes in his community and into the lives of its people.

Many of Maentel's works were portrait pairs of married couples painted on separate sheets of paper. The couples are united through the same wallpaper or furnishings present in each pair of portraits that situate the couple in the same room. While the backgrounds are different in the portraits of Mary Valentine Bucher and Dr. Christian Bucher, they are most likely in the same house, as the chairs in both paintings appear to be identical. The doctor is depicted in his home office; medical tools and medicines surround him. Mrs. Bucher, in a parlor setting, is holding a book that is likely a Bible.

### RELATED LESSONS

- "Family Portraits" (pre-K–1)
- "Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry" (2–3)

# FAMILY PORTRAITS

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PRE-K-1

**GRADE LEVEL: PRE-K-1**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

**ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 45- TO 50-MINUTE PERIOD**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn that family has been important to people throughout history and is a popular subject in art.
- Through observation and discussion, students will learn that portraits contain information about the people depicted in them.
- Students will create portraits of their own family members.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Mary Valentine Bucher* and *Dr. Christian Bucher*
- Copies of the Family Portrait Pairs Worksheet (one for each student)
- White or colored construction paper
- Drawing materials (oil pastels, colored pencils, or markers)

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Introduction

- Ask the students to think about their own family pictures or portraits. Do their families take family photographs or home videos? Do they have family portraits taken by photographers?
- Discuss the idea that family photographs capture how somebody looks, remind us of past events, and can be shared with other people. At the time these portraits were painted, photography had not yet been invented; paintings and drawings were the only kind of portraits available to families.
- Introduce and have the students complete the Family Portrait Pairs Worksheet. Each of these paintings is one of a pair of portraits; the students should match the paintings that belong together. Ask them to match the family members, connecting one family member to another with a drawn line between the pictures.
- How were the students able to match the family members? How did they know who belonged with whom?
- Tell the students that all of these portraits, or paintings of people, were created by the same artist. Now they will take a closer look at two of his paintings of members of one family.

### Discussion

The students will view and discuss reproductions of *Mary Valentine Bucher* and *Dr. Christian Bucher*.

- Ask the students to look closely at each of the paintings and describe what they see and what they think about these portraits and the people in them.
- What do you see in each painting?
- Compare and contrast: What is the same in each portrait? What is different?
- Share some of the information regarding *Mary Valentine Bucher* and *Dr. Christian Bucher* and regarding the artist, Jacob Maentel, as is appropriate to the discussion.

### Activity

- Tell the students that they will be creating family portraits; each member of their family will be drawn on a separate piece of paper.
- Borrowing a device from Maentel, at least one element will be repeated in each portrait to link the family members. Ask the students to think about something that their family shares—a favorite activity they enjoy doing together; a place where they like to spend time together; or something that everyone in the family likes, for example, a color, an animal, or a specific food item.
- It may be helpful for you, the teacher, to model this concept by sharing your own simple sketches of a series of family portraits with a common element.
- Have the students choose a separate piece of paper on which to draw or paint each member of their family.
- Assist the students as they execute portrait drawings of each relative, reminding them to draw or paint each person on a separate page. Encourage the students to use the maximum level of detail that is consistent with their individual abilities.
- Share and/or display the completed portraits. Mix up the portraits and challenge the students to match the pairs that belong to the same family.

### PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- The students may explore portraits from the past and/or other cultures, comparing and contrasting these portraits to the portraits of *Mary Valentine Bucher* and *Dr. Christian Bucher* and expanding their knowledge and understanding of portraiture and the continuing importance of the family throughout time and around the world.
- Ask the students to bring in one or two family photos. Display all of the pictures together and discuss what these family photos reveal about the families' lives. What can we learn by looking at them about how families are different and similar? Chart the students' observations and conclusions.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The "My Family Tree" lesson designed for grades 2–3 (pages 45–47) also concerns the importance of art to the documentation and preservation of family history in the nineteenth century. It may be adapted for use with younger students and taught in conjunction with this lesson.



## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students were able to correctly match the discussed portrait pairs.
- Students thoughtfully observed, described, and discussed the portraits.
- Students were able to describe their family members and the way they chose to depict them in their own portrait series.
- Students included one recurring element in each of their portraits to visually link them.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Students

Roalf, Peggy. *Children*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 1993.

A collection of paintings of children from a wide variety of cultures, time periods, and artistic movements. Part of the *Looking at Paintings* series.

———. *Families*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 1992.

A collection of family portraits and paintings of family scenes spanning 2000 years of art history. Part of the *Looking at Paintings* series.

### Recommended Books for Teachers

Black, Mary. *Simplicity, a Grace: Jacob Maentel in Indiana*. Evansville, Ind.: Evansville Museum of Arts & Science, 1989.

A catalog accompanying a 1989 Maentel exhibition at the Evansville Museum of Arts & Science.

Hollander, Stacy C. *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Catalog of this once private collection of American folk art, comprising hundreds of pieces of furniture, signs, ceramics, textiles, weathervanes, walking sticks, and other objects, including fourteen Jacob Maentel portraits. *Mary Valentine Bucher* and *Dr. Christian Bucher* are illustrated and discussed on pages 42, 43, and 383–384.

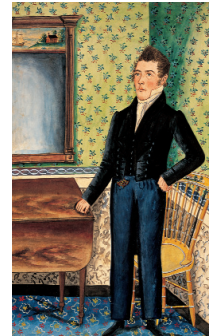


# FAMILY PORTRAIT PAIRS WORKSHEET

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Match each portrait on the left with a portrait on the right. How can you tell which family members belong to each other?





**MOTHER AND DAUGHTERS OF ELIZABETHTOWN,  
PENNSYLVANIA**

Jacob Maentel (1778-?)

Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania; c. 1815-1820

Watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper  
10  $\frac{3}{4}$  × 8  $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.10 a  
Photo © 2000 John Bigelow Taylor, New York

**JOHN BICKEL**

Jacob Maentel (1778-?)

Jonestown, Pennsylvania; c. 1815-1825

Watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper  
19 × 12"

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.13 a  
Photo by Stephen Donelian, New York

**MARIA REX ZIMMERMAN**

Jacob Maentel (1778-?)

Schaefferstown, Pennsylvania; c. 1828

Watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper  
17 × 10  $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.14 a  
Photo © 2000 John Bigelow Taylor, New York

**MARY VALENTINE BUCHER**

Jacob Maentel (1778-?)

Schaefferstown, Pennsylvania; c. 1825-1830

Watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper  
16  $\frac{1}{2}$  × 10  $\frac{1}{8}$ "

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.15 a  
Photo by Stephen Donelian, New York

**PETER ZIMMERMAN**

Jacob Maentel (1778-?)

Schaefferstown, Pennsylvania; c. 1828

Watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper  
17 × 10  $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.14 b  
Photo © 2000 John Bigelow Taylor, New York

**DR. CHRISTIAN BUCHER**

Jacob Maentel (1778-?)

Schaefferstown, Pennsylvania; c. 1825-1830

Watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper  
16  $\frac{1}{2}$  × 10  $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.15 b  
Photo by Stephen Donelian, New York

**CATERINA BICKEL**

Jacob Maentel (1778-?)

Jonestown, Pennsylvania; c. 1815-1825

Watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper  
19 × 12"

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.13 b  
Photo by Stephen Donelian, New York

**FATHER AND DAUGHTER OF ELIZABETHTOWN,  
PENNSYLVANIA**

Jacob Maentel (1778-?)

Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania; c. 1815-1820

Watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper  
10  $\frac{3}{4}$  × 8  $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.10 b  
Photo © 2000 John Bigelow Taylor, New York





**FAMILY RECORD**

*Done by J. Pool*



## FAMILY RECORD FOR ANDREW BICKFORD AND OLIVE CLARK

Joshua Pool (1787–?)

Gloucester, Massachusetts; c. 1820

Watercolor, pencil, and ink on paper; 15 × 12"

Gift of Ralph Esmerian, 1998.17.6

Photo by John Parnell, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

Before family histories were recorded on standard printed forms, records were often created by hand in a variety of mediums. Women frequently set down their own family histories in embroidered or watercolor family trees; at other times, professional artists such as Joshua Pool were hired to produce hand-painted and -calligraphed family documents.

This family record documents Olive Clark, Andrew Bickford, and their eight children. Eleven fruits were included on the family tree to record children already born at the time the tree was painted and to accommodate children who might be born in the future. A close inspection of the entries reveals that the names of three children seem to have been added to the original five. The tree emerging from two intertwined hearts is a common motif in family records made in parts of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut during this period. The farmhouse and stone wall are consistent with the architecture of the time and area and probably give an accurate depiction of this family's home.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “My Family Tree” (2–3)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)

# MY FAMILY TREE

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2-3

**GRADE LEVEL: 2-3**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, AND SOCIAL STUDIES**

**ESTIMATED TIME: TWO 45-MINUTE PERIODS, ONE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about genealogy, and in particular about family trees, through the observation of an artwork and a read-aloud.
- Students will hone their interviewing and recording skills by interviewing a relative about the family's relationships and history.
- Students will create their own family trees as both informational documents and artworks.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Family Record for Andrew Bickford and Olive Clark*
- A copy of *Me and My Family Tree* by Joan Sweeney
- Drawing materials (white drawing paper, pencils, and waterproof markers or colored pencils)
- Painting materials (watercolor paints and brushes)

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Day One

#### Introduction

- Do a read-aloud of Joan Sweeney's *Me and My Family Tree*.
- Discuss the story, relating the characters' experiences to experiences the students may have had with their own relatives.
- Discuss the idea that our families and our family histories shape who we are—our identities.

#### Discussion

Show the students a reproduction of *Family Record for Andrew Bickford and Olive Clark* and discuss the work, beginning with a more general approach to the record as an artwork and leading into a more focused dialogue concerning the object as a family record, or vice versa.

- What can we tell about this family by looking at the record? There is written information as well as information contained in pictures.
- Why would a tree symbolize a family?
- Are there any other symbols in this painting besides the tree?
- Do you have any ideas about how this artwork was produced and used?

### Activity

- Compare and contrast the *Family Record for Andrew Bickford and Olive Clark* to a simple informational family tree (a sample family tree or the teacher's). Explore how the relationships between family members are visually conveyed.
- Introduce a homework assignment in which the students will interview a family member and record the information obtained, including names, birth dates, and birthplaces of the relative.

### Day Two

- Have the students create their own family records, first as an informational document and then as an original artwork.
- Students may use pencils to create sketches of their family trees and fill in the family information.
- After the composition and writing have been worked out, waterproof markers or colored pencils may be used to trace over the sketches and writings before painting.
- The works can be completed in watercolors.

### PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- Students may investigate their own family records at home with a parent or relative. Students and parents may look at and discuss birth certificates, marriage certificates, baby books, or any other records their family may keep.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The "Family Portraits" lesson designed for pre-K–grade 1 (pages 37–39) may be adapted for use with older students and taught in conjunction with this lesson.

### ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students were able to accurately record their family history in a family tree.
- Students were able to explain the decisions they made in organizing the information presented in their family trees, as well as the creative decisions they made in the design of the family tree.

### RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

#### Recommended Books for Students

Schreck, Karen Halvorsen. *Lucy's Family Tree*. Gardiner, Me.: Tilbury House Publishers, 2001. The story of an adopted girl's struggle to present her family history during a family-tree school project, and of her discovery that she isn't the only one with an "alternative" family.

Sweeney, Joan. *Me and My Family Tree*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1999.

A simple introduction to family structure and family trees, in which a young girl uses her own drawings and diagrams to explain the relationships between her family members.



Wood, Michele, and Toyomi Igus. *Going Back Home: An Artist Returns to the South*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1996.

The illustrated story of Wood's trip to the South to learn about her ancestors' lives, her family's history, and herself.

#### **Recommended Book for Students and Teachers**

Wolfman, Ira. *Climbing Your Family Tree: Online and Off-Line Genealogy for Kids*. New York: Workman Publishing Company, 2002.

A comprehensive guide to researching and recording genealogy, useful and interesting to a wide audience from older elementary students to adults.

#### **Recommended Website**

Nantucket Historical Association:

"Nantucket Roots: The 'Vine and Hearts' Family Registers"

[www.nha.org/digitalexhibits/roots/index.html](http://www.nha.org/digitalexhibits/roots/index.html)

An online exhibition of seven watercolor family records from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, including one depicting a blended or stepfamily from the 1700s. Each record offers opportunities for comparison and contrast to *Family Record for Andrew Bickford and Olive Clark*.







## **GOLD TOWER**

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein (1910–1983)

Milwaukee; c. 1970s

Paint on chicken and turkey bones; 47 × 6 × 7"

Gift of Lewis B. Greenblatt, 1999.22.1

Photo by John Parnell, New York

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### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT**

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein and his wife, Marie, often struggled financially just to make ends meet. Out of the leftover bones from the couples' chicken or turkey meals, the artist built towers, spires, and chairs, gluing them together into complex and intricate structures and painting them with metallic paints. It is possible that Von Bruenchenhein created these sculptures during times when he did not have the money to purchase art supplies. Whenever he was able to, however, the artist worked in more traditional mediums, such as painting and photography.

### **RELATED LESSONS**

- “Art All Around: Found Objects in Folk Art” (2–3)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)



## MINIATURE DRESSING BUREAU

Attributed to Hanson B. Y[on]g (c. 1858–1878)

Conesville, New York; 1872–1878

Paint on cigar-box wood, cigar-box cardboard, and mirror; 15 1/8 × 7 3/4 × 4 1/2"

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.88

Photo by Stephen Donelian, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

This miniature bureau, created in the late nineteenth century, would most likely not have existed were it not for the Revenue Act of 1865, which mandated that cigars be packaged in wooden boxes and that these boxes be used only once. The resulting surplus of wooden boxes soon led to a variety of artistic projects, such as this miniature bureau. By cleverly adapting the individual boxes as drawers, using parts of boxes for the case, and adding an imaginative coat of grainpainting and a small mirror, the artist transformed a discarded item into a useful and original object.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Art All Around: Found Objects in Folk Art” (2–3)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)

# ART ALL AROUND: FOUND OBJECTS IN FOLK ART

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2-3

**GRADE LEVEL: 2-3**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS AND ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE ARTS**

**ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 60-MINUTE PERIOD**

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Students will consider that alternative and unusual materials, including found objects, can be used to create art. Students will view and discuss three folk art objects created from unconventional materials.
- Students will experiment with transforming everyday objects into original works of art.

## **MATERIALS**

- Images of *Gold Tower*, *Miniature Dressing Bureau*, and *Faces of Africa II*
- Found objects (in addition to supplying found objects, ask the students to bring their own found materials; encourage them to collect unique or unusual objects and to think beyond the typical cardboard boxes and plastic containers they may have already used in other school projects)
- Additional art supplies to attach and transform found objects, such as clear packing tape, colored tape, glue, string, wire, paint, and any other materials that are available or desirable

## **LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES**

### **Introduction**

- Artists have worked with found objects—materials not specifically created for art production—throughout history.
- Ask the students to recall times when they have worked with found objects, such as fall leaves, images cut from magazines or newspapers, boxes and containers from home, etc.

### **Discussion**

The students will view and discuss reproductions of *Gold Tower*, *Miniature Dressing Bureau*, and *Faces of Africa II* (page 29). Allow the students to respond to their interest in the objects, discussing their observations and ideas, before focusing on more directed questions.

- Can you tell, just by looking at it, what found materials were used to create this work of art?
- How did the artist transform, or change, the materials?
- Could these objects have been made from other materials? How would they have been different?
- Does knowing what materials the objects were made from change the way you look at these works or your ideas about them?

- Discuss the idea that artists use found objects for different reasons. Some artists don't always have the money to buy art supplies and therefore look for free materials that may be found in nature or that may have been thrown away by someone and then use their creativity to transform these materials into artworks. Other artists choose to work with found materials even when they can afford to buy art supplies because they are inspired and excited by them.
- Address the idea that reusing found materials in art is beneficial to the environment, as well as to the artist. Why is it good to reuse something rather than throw it in the garbage? How is reuse good for the environment and the Earth?

### **Activity**

- Introduce the activity by sharing images from one of the books recommended for students on page 55. The found objects featured in these illustrations will be easily recognizable to students and may even include some of the materials that will be available for their own art projects.
- The students will have already collected an array of found materials from home. In addition, supplement these materials with found objects gathered from the classroom, local businesses, and/or Materials for the Arts.
- Ask the students to take their time looking through the found objects and brainstorming ideas about how these materials may be turned into art. Remind the students that the possibilities are endless; the students' artmaking may be representational or more abstract. Experiment with different objects and ideas before settling on and beginning work on one idea.
- The students may need to invent ways to change their objects and attach different objects to one another. Prepare the students for the fact that working with found objects can be frustrating, as they often behave differently than conventional art supplies.
- A concluding reflection may consider the students' experiences and feelings about working with found materials. What were the challenges? What were the benefits? Do the students have any new insights into why some artists prefer working with found materials?
- The finished artworks should be shared with the class in presentations or displays.

### **PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS**

- Research and report on New York's waste-disposal system. Where does our garbage go? What are some of the problems created by garbage—for people, for animals, and for the environment? What are some of the ways in which the city, organizations, and individuals try to reduce the amount of garbage produced in New York?
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.



- The “Coming Together: Creating a Community Quilt” lesson plan (pages 87–90) may be adapted for use in conjunction with this lesson. Many patchwork quilts are a form of reuse, as cloth scraps or bits of old clothing are employed to make new quilts.

## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students analyzed and discussed the artworks, engaging with the ideas and with the materials and processes used to create the objects.
- In discussion, students considered the creative, environmental, and economic impetuses for working with found objects in folk art.
- Students produced an original finished work of art employing found objects. Students used problem-solving skills and imagination to discover or invent new ways of using materials.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Students

Esterman, M.M. *A Fish That's a Box: Folk Art from the National Museum of American Art*. Arlington, Va.: Great Ocean Publishers, 1990.

A children's introduction to folk art, featuring objects from the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., including works made from found materials. Encourages students to create their own works of art.

Konigsburg, E.L. *The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2004. The story of a 12-year-old's struggle to save her uncles' creations, three towers constructed from broken glass and watch mechanisms, from demolition.

Piven, Hanoch. *What Presidents Are Made Of*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2004. A funny collection of portraits and biographical sketches of the presidents of the United States, made from found objects and everyday items.

Shindler, Ramon, and Wojciech Graniczewski. *Found Alphabet*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.

An alphabet book illustrated with collages made from leaves, twigs, matchboxes, buttons, and other found materials, accompanied by poems that highlight the objects used in each picture.

Slaymaker, Melissa Eskridge. *Bottle Houses: The Creative World of Grandma Prisbrey*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2004.

The true story of a house built from thousands of bottles scavenged from the city dump and the woman who became an unlikely folk artist and environmentalist. “I guess there are different kinds of art,” said Grandma Prisbrey.



### Recommended Books for Teachers

Beardsley, John. *Gardens of Revelation: Environments by Visionary Artists*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1995. Twenty-five “visionary environments” from around the world and their creators, explored in depth in photographs and text and viewed from both folk art and environmental perspectives.

Cerny, Charlene, and Suzanne Seriff, eds. *Recycled, Re-Seen: Folk Art from the Global Scrap Heap*. New York: Harry N. Abrams with Museum of International Folk Art, 1996.

The role of recycling in the folk art of Mexico, Ecuador, Trinidad and Tobago, India, Senegal, and several cultures and communities in the United States, including Texan-Mexican culture.

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein. *Obsessive Visionary*. Sheboygan, Wis.: John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 1988.

Catalog of works by self-taught visionary artist Eugene Von Bruenchenhein in the permanent collection of the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Documents Von Bruenchenhein’s life and work, which includes not only chicken-bone sculptures such as *Gold Tower* but hundreds of oil paintings, pinup-style photographs of his wife, Marie, as well as a variety of other objects. The book also presents a selection of poetry and theoretical writings by the artist.

Hollander, Stacy C. *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*.

New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Catalog of this once private collection of American folk art, comprising hundreds of pieces of furniture, signs, ceramics, textiles, weathervanes, walking sticks, and other objects. *Miniature Dressing Bureau* is illustrated and discussed on pages 117 and 426–427.

Hollander, Stacy C., and Brooke Davis Anderson. *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

An exploration of American folk art from the colonial period through the present as seen through highlights from the American Folk Art Museum’s collection. *Gold Tower* and another bone construction by the artist are illustrated and discussed on pages 254 and 392–393.

Manley, Roger, and Mark Sloan. *Self-Made Worlds: Visionary Folk Art Environments*. New York: Aperture, 1997.

An international tour of folk art environments constructed with an endless variety of materials and methods.

### Recommended Websites

The Bessie Harvey Homepage:

[www.sunsite.utk.edu/bessie/](http://www.sunsite.utk.edu/bessie/)

A comprehensive online resource about Bessie Harvey and her work.

Grandma Prisbrey’s *Bottle Village*:

[www.bottlevillage.com](http://www.bottlevillage.com)

Photographs, history, and news about Grandma Prisbrey’s *Bottle Village* in Simi Valley, Calif.



*Grandma's Bottle Village: The Art of Tressa Prisbrey*, a 1982 documentary film by Allie Light and Irving Saraf, downloadable for free at:

[www.folkstreams.net/film,102](http://www.folkstreams.net/film,102)

A 28-minute documentary of a tour conducted by Grandma Prisbrey of her remarkable *Bottle Village*, including a trip to the town dump to scavenge for inspiration.

Public Broadcasting Service online:

“Off the Map: A Look into Backyard Paradises Created by Visionary Artists Around the World”

[www.pbs.org/independentlens/offthemap/](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/offthemap/)

An interactive site for teachers (and students) to explore the visionary environments of folk artists such as Grandma Prisbrey and American Folk Art Museum exhibition subjects Nek Chand and Howard Finster. Includes video, photographs, lesson plans and resources, and online activities for students.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

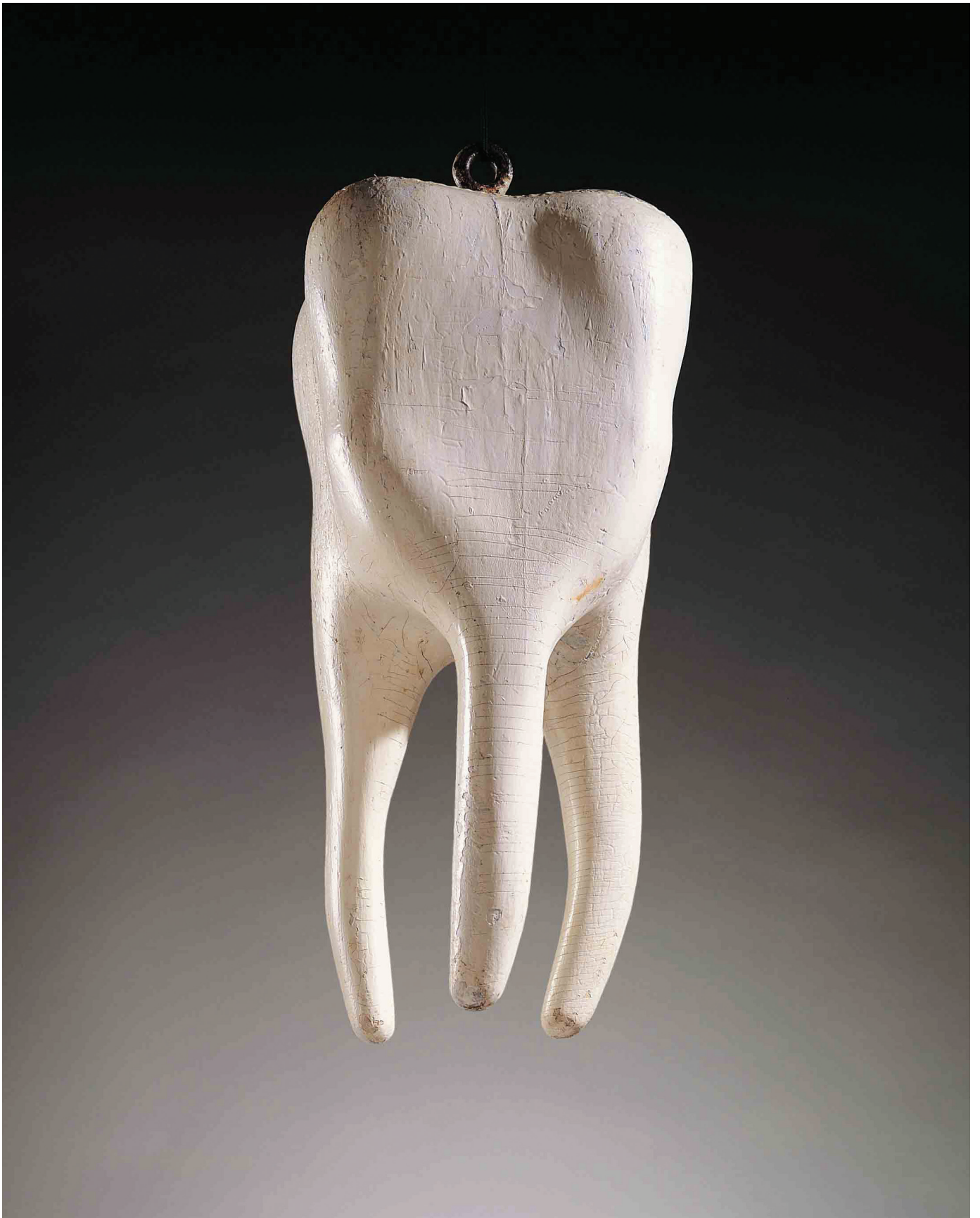
Educational Resources

[www.epa.gov/epaoswer/education/students.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/education/students.htm)

Offers grade-specific facts, lesson plans, worksheets, and resources introducing and explaining the issues, processes, and reasons for waste reduction, reuse, and recycling. Links are provided to state agencies and additional resources.







## TOOTH TRADE SIGN

Artist unidentified

Probably New England; c. 1850–1880

Paint on wood with metal; 26 × 12 ¼ × 11 ¼"

Gift of Kristina Barbara Johnson, 1983.8.1

Photo by John Parnell, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

Three-dimensional trade signs and show figures represent early forms of advertising. Essentially fulfilling the same functions as contemporary signage, these sculptures caught the consumer's eye and communicated the service or product for sale. In contrast to today's advertising, however, trade signs and show figures were generally handcrafted. The graphic and iconic impact of these objects was perhaps of even greater importance than today's logos, as large portions of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century public were not literate.

Symbols used in trade signs needed to be widely known and easily recognizable. Trade signs as a means of advertising date back to the Middle Ages. The earliest American signs were flat and painted on both sides to stand in front of a building or hang off the façade. Through the nineteenth century, more and more three-dimensional carvings could be found hanging off façades to catch the eyes of passersby. These carved signs were often oversize versions of everyday objects immediately associated with the trade they advertised, such as eyeglasses or a sheep. Their size helped to draw attention, especially as towns became congested with competing businesses fighting to attract the consumers' attention. Many of the early signs became symbols that remain with us to today, such as this tooth, which was used to advertise the services of a dentist.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Advertising Then and Now” (4–5)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)



## SULTANA

Attributed to the workshop of Samuel Anderson Robb (act. 1876–1903)

New York; c. 1880

Paint on wood with iron; 86 × 26 ½ × 28"

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.349

Photo © 2000 John Bigelow Taylor, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

The nineteenth century saw an explosion in three-dimensional lifelike and life-size show figures that were used to advertise a variety of businesses, especially shops that sold tobacco. Often, these figures took the form of popular characters from history, literature, and theater, or were caricatures of ethnic and cultural stereotypes, notably Native American. As shipcarving was dying out as a livelihood, many of these skilled artisans turned their attention to show figures. In New York, a distinctive show-figure style emerged from three generations of shipcarvers who shared master-apprentice relationships. Samuel Anderson Robb was among the five master carvers primarily responsible for the style; Robb operated the most successful workshop during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, situated in Downtown Manhattan.

This monumental *Sultana* has survived intact; its original paint surface shows almost no evidence of retouching. This is rare among nineteenth-century tobacconist figures, which were frequently installed outdoors, exposed to the elements. The form echoes the famous pose of the Statue of Liberty. Although the statue wasn't installed in the New York harbor until 1886, it had already been well known through publicity and fund-raising efforts years before.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Advertising Then and Now” (4–5)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)

# ADVERTISING THEN AND NOW

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4-5

**GRADE LEVEL: 4-5**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, AND SOCIAL STUDIES**

**ESTIMATED TIME: TWO 45-MINUTE PERIODS**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the history of advertising in the nineteenth century.
- Students will compare and contrast historical forms of advertising to contemporary advertising.
- Students will design an advertisement that reflects the concepts explored in discussion.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Tooth Trade Sign* and *Sultana*
- Examples of contemporary advertising
- Marker board, chalk board, or chart paper
- Writing paper and pencils
- Drawing paper
- Colored pencils and/or markers

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Day One

#### Introduction

- Gather examples of advertisements and/or logos, removing any text that identifies the brand or product.
- Show the students the images one at a time and survey the students as to which company, product, or service the ad or logo is related to. Tally how many students were able to successfully identify each item.
- Ask the students to think of a popular jingle—a song advertising or selling something. How many students can sing the entire song?
- Ask the students if this exercise gives them any ideas about why advertisers and businesses might use music and art to help sell products.
- Introduce the reproductions of *Tooth Trade Sign* and *Sultana* without divulging the titles or any of the background information on the objects. Follow the same procedure as before, surveying the students as to which product or service the objects are relating to, and tally the students' responses.
- Were the students more, less, or equally successful at determining the products, services, and businesses associated with the contemporary advertisements compared to the historical advertisements? Why do they think these differences or similarities occurred?



## Discussion

The students will view and discuss reproductions of *Tooth Trade Sign* and *Sultana*, first individually and then together.

### TOOTH TRADE SIGN

- What do you think about when you see this object?
- What message might this object communicate?
- How do you think this object was made; how can you tell?
- Would this be an effective advertisement today; why or why not?

### SULTANA

- Who is this person; how can you tell?
- How do you think this object was made?
- What could this object have been used for; what do you see that makes you think that?
- Do you have any questions about this object?
- Share the background information on the objects. Ask the students if they think that *Sultana* and show figures like her were effective at advertising and drawing people into the stores they stood in front of. Why or why not?
- Follow-up discussion: Why did imagery and symbols remain an important part of advertising even after the population became predominantly literate? Compare and contrast the media-saturated world of today to the past's handcrafted world of advertising.

## Day Two

### Activity

- Instruct the students to work in small groups to create an advertisement for a product of their choice. If this lesson is conducted within a unit on nineteenth-century New York or American history, advertisements can be created for the typical trades and businesses of the era.
- The students' ideas do not need to be limited to two-dimensional advertisements; their chosen means of advertisement may take any form—historical, contemporary, or imagined. However, these ideas will be sketched and presented in drawings.
- Encourage the students to keep in mind the characteristics of advertising that were discussed—both those of the past and the present—particularly those they said make advertisements effective.
- Observe and assist the students as they work collaboratively to plan, design, and draw their individual advertisements.
- Have each group (or each student) write an explanation of their advertisement. The students should be able to support their artistic decisions with references to the discussion and/or the objects viewed at the beginning of the lesson.



## PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- *Sultana* and show figures like her were created in the America of the nineteenth century, a very different place than the America of today. The most popular type of show figure was the cigar-store Indian, but other cultural and ethnic stereotypes were also depicted. Discuss the controversial nature of turning ethnic stereotypes into advertising icons. Why would someone consider cigar-store Indians offensive? Could *Sultana* be construed as offensive? Although it may be a controversial object, it is also a historical and artistic artifact of a very different time in our city and country's history.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- Both this lesson and the "Situation of America: A Sense of Place" lesson (pages 175–178) could be conducted within an extended unit on the industrial revolution, nineteenth-century New York, or American history.

## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students were able to extrapolate characteristics of effective advertising through the observation and discussion of contemporary and historical works of advertising.
- Students were able to compare and contrast nineteenth-century advertising to twenty-first-century advertising.
- Students employed imagery and symbolism related to their chosen products or services in their own original designs of advertisements.
- Students' designs and writings reflected and expanded on the ideas and concepts raised in the observation and discussion.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Teachers

Hollander, Stacy C. *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Catalog of this once private collection of American folk art, comprising hundreds of pieces of furniture, signs, ceramics, textiles, weathervanes, walking sticks, and other objects. *Sultana* is illustrated and discussed on pages 357 and 547.

Hollander, Stacy C., and Brooke Davis Anderson. *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001. An exploration of American folk art from the colonial period through the present as seen through highlights from the American Folk Art Museum's collection. *Tooth Trade Sign* is illustrated and discussed on pages 113 and 335.

**Recommended Website**

*Antiques and The Arts* online archive:

Ralph Sessions, "The Image Business: Shop and Cigar Store Figures in America"

[www.antiquesandthearts.com/archive/image.htm](http://www.antiquesandthearts.com/archive/image.htm)

Article written on the occasion of a traveling exhibition of the same name organized for the American Folk Art Museum by curator Ralph Sessions. (Originally published in *Folk Art* 21, no. 4 [winter 1996/97]: 54–60.)

# COMMUNITY

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A community is not merely a function of proximity in a particular neighborhood. Communities are formed through a variety of circumstances whose common bonds may be of time, place, belief, or experience. In folk art, this is reflected in the wide range of objects that emerge from the shared system that is a community. Expressions may point to a common cultural heritage, such as the decorative arts of the Pennsylvania Germans, or they may indicate a national sense of community and demonstrate an awareness of popular culture or contemporary issues.

Students consider their personal communities, from their school or neighborhood to a national identity. Analyzing their belonging to their varied communities, students have a greater understanding of their role and responsibility within.



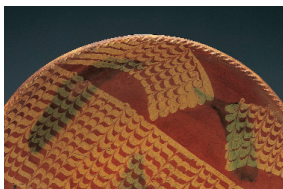
**GOING TO SCHOOL (PRE-K-1):** Communities of learners and friends have always formed in classrooms and schools. Students will relate the experiences of their class community to those of students and teachers in America's past through looking at and making art.



**PAINTING THE TOWN: PICTURING MY COMMUNITY (2-3):** Students will look closely at two paintings of communities and compare and contrast the depictions of urban and rural life. They will then paint their own community—its places and its people.



**COMING TOGETHER: CREATING A COMMUNITY QUILT (2-3):** A nineteenth-century friendship quilt frames this investigation of quilting as a communal art form. Students will collaboratively plan, design, and create a quilt as a class or in small groups.



**A SHARED ARTISTIC TRADITION: PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN POTTERY (4-5):** Students will explore the bonds and artistic traditions that define communities through a hands-on study of Pennsylvania German pottery techniques.



**THE ARTIST AS ACTIVIST (4-5):** For decades, self-taught artist Purvis Young has painted protests against the injustices and oppression that trouble his community. Students will discuss Young's work as artistic activism and create their own activist art.







## LEARNING THE ABCs

Attributed to Mary B. Tucker (dates unknown)

Probably Massachusetts; c. 1840–1844

Watercolor and pencil on paper; 19 ¼ × 23"

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.45

Photo © 2000 John Bigelow Taylor, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

This double portrait pictures a school-age boy and his baby sibling. In the mid-nineteenth century, even very young children were sent to local district schools. There they learned the ABCs and other simple lessons with primers—books like the one the boy in the picture has in his hand. The toddler is holding a rattle, a typical item babies were portrayed with at the time. The older child is wearing a buttoned suit with pants, indicating that he is “breeched” and therefore over the age of 5. In addition, his side-parted hair suggests his gender as male; it is less clear whether his younger sibling is male or female.

The school the boy attended was probably quite different from the preschools and elementary schools children attend today. Most likely he went to a single-room schoolhouse, where four- to nineteen-year-olds all shared one classroom. Single-room schoolhouses were crowded and loud, with as many as twenty-five different classes being conducted at once by only one teacher.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Going to School” (pre-K–1)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)





## JOHN F. DEMERITT

Joseph H. Davis (act. 1832–1837)

Probably Barrington, New Hampshire; 1836

Watercolor, pencil, and ink on paper; 9  $\frac{11}{16}$  × 11"

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.33

Photo © 2000 John Bigelow Taylor, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

John F. Demeritt, a schoolmaster or teacher, is painted here sitting at a desk, surrounded by the tools of a nineteenth-century teacher—quills and paper, books, and a map of the world. At the time this portrait was painted, it was not unusual for the school year to be divided between male and female teachers, as the male teachers were often also farmers and couldn't leave to teach during the harvest. Schoolmasters were considered important members of the community.

The painter, Joseph H. Davis, is noted for having portrayed his sitters in profile, often seated at a table. He usually included a bright decorative floor cover across the bottom and a hand-calligraphed legend identifying the sitter and the date.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Going to School” (pre-K–1)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)

**GRADE LEVEL: PRE-K-1**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, AND SOCIAL STUDIES**

**ESTIMATED TIME: TWO 45-MINUTE PERIODS, ONE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT**

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Students will look at portraits of children and teachers from the nineteenth century, relating these portraits to their own life experiences as students and with teachers.
- Students will explore and record their parents' memories of school, looking for similarities with and differences from their own school lives.
- Students will consider the concept of a class or a school as a community of learners and friends bonded together through shared experiences.

## **MATERIALS**

- Images of *Learning the ABCs* and *John F. Demeritt*
- Chart paper and markers
- Homework assignment letters or worksheets
- Drawing materials (paper, crayons, markers, or colored pencils)

## **LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES**

### **Day One**

#### **Introduction**

- Tell the students that over the course of time, some things stay the same, while others change. In the United States, children have been going to school for hundreds of years; however, schools have changed a great deal during that time.
- Introduce a homework assignment in which the students will interview their parents about their school experiences.
- Each student must write down or have their parent record "Three things that were the same when I went to school" and "Three things that were different when I went to school." The students will share their parents' responses the following day.
- The students may encourage their parents to think about how they got to school, what they wore to school, what they learned or didn't learn, their school friends, etc. For younger students, a letter from the teacher or a handout may suggest topics to think about.

### **Day Two**

#### **Discussion**

- Chart the parents' responses as the students share them in a class discussion.



- Looking at reproductions of *Learning the ABCs* and *John F. Demeritt* individually and then together, discuss the students' observations of the paintings. Begin the discussion with the students' interests and ideas about the paintings, offering information as questions surface or after an initial open-ended discussion.
- Tell the children that these paintings were created more than 150 years ago—long before their parents or even their grandparents were born. Throughout history, though, schools have always had students and teachers. “School portraits” such as these were painted in the days before photography was commonly available; classes did not have school pictures taken the way we do today.
- Introduce the background information as a “story” about the children and the teacher depicted here, at a level appropriate for your students.
- In which ways are the portrayed children and teacher similar to the students and teachers in their own school; in which ways are they different?

#### **Activity**

- Establish the idea of a class or school as a community of adults and children that work together, share things, and help one another.
- Ask the students to consider how they each contribute to the community of their classroom (or school). How do they support one another, help one another, and learn together, and how are they good friends and community members to one another?
- Have each student choose one of the ways he or she contributes to the class community, illustrating it in a drawing.
- Instruct the students to write captions for their drawings that explain how they make their class (or school) a better community. Younger students can dictate their explanations.
- You should also contribute a drawing and caption, as teachers are integral members of class communities.
- Drawings can be assembled into a class book or displayed in the classroom.

#### **PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS**

- For the homework, have students ask their parents to share a story or memory from their own school days. The students should write the story, with the parents' help if necessary. The story can be illustrated either by the student or both the parent and the student, creating individual or collaborative drawings. Create a classroom exhibition combining children's and parents' school-memory drawings.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The “Family Portraits” lesson plan (pages 37–39), in which students create individual portraits of each of their family members unified by one recurring visual element in the manner of folk painter Jacob Maentel, can be used in conjunction with this lesson.



## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students related their own experiences to the observation and discussion of the artwork.
- Students were able to recognize and identify differences in schools and education in the past and present.
- Students considered themselves as members of a classroom or school community, identifying and illustrating one way they individually contribute to this community in a drawing-and-writing project.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Students

Barasch, Lynne. *A Country Schoolhouse*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.

A picture book in which a grandfather shares his recollections of going to a three-room schoolhouse in 1940s Illinois. Based on the author's own family history.

Nelson, Robin. *School Then and Now*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company, 2003.

Features historical and contemporary photographs to illustrate how school in the United States has changed through the years. Transportation, school supplies, and subjects learned are compared and contrasted.

Pringle, Laurence. *One Room School*. Honesdale, Pa.: Boyds Mills Press, 1998.

The story of the last year of the one-room school of the author's childhood—School 14 in Monroe Co., N.Y.

Roalf, Peggy. *Children*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 1993.

A collection of paintings of children from a wide variety of cultures, time periods, and artistic movements. Part of the *Looking at Paintings* series.

Taulbert, Clifton L. *Little Cliff's First Day of School*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2001.

The story set in the rural South of the 1950s of a boy's anxiety approaching his first day of school and the joy he finds in his classmates—a timeless book despite the differences to modern-day schools.

### Recommended Book for Teachers

Hollander, Stacy C. *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*.

New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Catalog of this once private collection of American folk art, comprising hundreds of pieces of furniture, signs, ceramics, textiles, weathervanes, walking sticks, and other objects. *Learning the ABCs* is illustrated and discussed on pages 71 and 402–403. *John F. Demeritt* is illustrated and discussed on pages 58 and 394.









## BERKS COUNTY FARMSCAPE

John Rasmussen (1828–1895)

Berks County, Pennsylvania; c. 1879–1886

Oil on zinc-plated tin; 26  $\frac{3}{8}$  × 35  $\frac{3}{8}$ "

Gift of Ralph Esmerian, 2005.8.15

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

This pristine view of a prosperous Pennsylvania farmstead presents an idyllic scene of verdant fields receding into the distance in a patchwork of color. A locomotive chugs across the foreground, promising continued progress. The sense of stability communicated through this crisp rendering is far removed from the difficult circumstances of the artist who painted it.

John Rasmussen arrived in New York from Germany in 1865, and was listed as a painter and “fresco painter” in the Reading, Pennsylvania, business directories from 1867 through 1879. By June 1879, widowed and suffering from chronic drinking problems, he was committed to the Berks County almshouse. Here he met fellow inmate and painter Charles Hofmann, whose portraits of the almshouse and its environs inspired Rasmussen to create landscapes that were similar in composition. On the thin sheets of metal available through the institution’s wagon and machine shops, Rasmussen painted a wide range of subject matter, such as views of the almshouse as well as this farmscape.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Painting the Town: Picturing My Community” (2–3)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)





VESTIE DAVIS.  
1964. ©



## BETHESDA FOUNTAIN

Vestie Davis (1903–1978)

New York; 1964

Oil on canvas; 18 × 24"

Gift of Gloria Bley Miller, 2002.28.2

Photo by Gavin Ashworth, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

Vestie Davis captured the New York community both at work and at play. His compositions of Wall Street, Times Square, and Coney Island charmingly illustrate life in the city. Working with oil on canvas and quickly establishing a flat, colorful style, the artist documented the busy, congested landscape of twentieth-century urban America.

This painting of Central Park's popular Bethesda Fountain, though made more than forty years ago, looks like it could have been painted today because Davis gives in to generic fashion statements and adopts a sameness with his figures, creating a sense of timelessness. The lack of a multicultural crowd, on the other hand, would be a glaring omission to most twenty-first-century viewers.

### RELATED LESSONS

- "Painting the Town: Picturing My Community" (2–3)
- "Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry" (2–3)



# PAINTING THE TOWN: PICTURING MY COMMUNITY

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2-3

**GRADE LEVEL: 2-3**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS, ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE ARTS, AND SOCIAL STUDIES**

**ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 60-MINUTE PERIOD**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will observe two works of folk art depicting rural and urban communities and will compare and contrast their observations.
- Students will consider the concept of community in the creation of paintings of their own community.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Berks County Farmscape* and *Bethesda Fountain*
- Construction paper or oak tag, watercolor or tempera paints, paintbrushes in assorted sizes

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Introduction

- Introduce or review the concept of community. As a group, determine some of the characteristics of the community in which the students live. Emphasize the idea that community consists of both people and places.
- Either chart the students' ideas about their community or be prepared to recall and reinforce these ideas later, when the students begin work on their paintings.
- If community is a new concept to your students, *On the Town: A Community Adventure* by Judith Caseley provides a simple introduction.

### Discussion

View reproductions of *Berks County Farmscape* and *Bethesda Fountain* and discuss the students' observations.

- What do you see in each of these pictures?
- What can you tell about the places depicted?
- Compare and contrast the two paintings and the communities featured in the paintings.
- What would these places sound like?
- Which place would you rather visit? Why?
- What would it be like to live in these communities?

### Activity

- Relate the conversation around the paintings to the students' earlier discussion of their community.
- Each student should identify a particular place that will be illustrated in his or her own painting and think about the people that will inhabit this place.

- Who are the people and what are they doing?
- Have the students create paintings of their own community with paints.

## PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- As an extension of this lesson, students may work in groups to create “murals” or larger paintings, combining elements of their individual paintings with new ideas into fuller pictures of their community.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The “Going to School” lesson designed for pre-K–grade 1 (pages 73–75), which explores the concept of a school community, may be adapted for use with older students and taught in conjunction with this lesson.

## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students expressed understanding of the idea that a community is a group of people bonded together, often by a place.
- Students used their observation skills to recognize similarities and differences between the two paintings and between the places depicted in the works.
- Students identified particular places that exist within their own community and created paintings based on the idea of these places.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Students

Caseley, Judith. *On the Town: A Community Adventure*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2002. The story of a young boy and his mom out exploring their neighborhood, notebook in hand, for a class project on community.

Collier, Bryan. *Uptown*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000.

A personal tour of Harlem, given by a boy from this New York neighborhood. Collage illustrations capture its many shades.

Sís, Peter. *Madlenka*. New York: Frances Foster Books, 2000.

The story of a New York girl with a loose tooth traveling through her diverse, multicultural community to share her good news.

### Recommended Article for Teachers

Bley Miller, Gloria. “Vestie Davis, Brooklyn Painter: In His Own Words; Interviews from 1961–1965.” *Folk Art* 28, no. 2 (summer 2003): 40–51.



**Recommended Book for Teachers**

Hollander, Stacy C. *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*.

New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Catalog of this once private collection of American folk art, comprising hundreds of pieces of furniture, signs, ceramics, textiles, weathervanes, walking sticks, and other objects. *Berks*

*County Farmscape* is illustrated and discussed on pages 95 and 417.

**Recommended Websites**

The Official Website for Central Park:

Bethesda Terrace and Angel of the Waters Fountain info pages

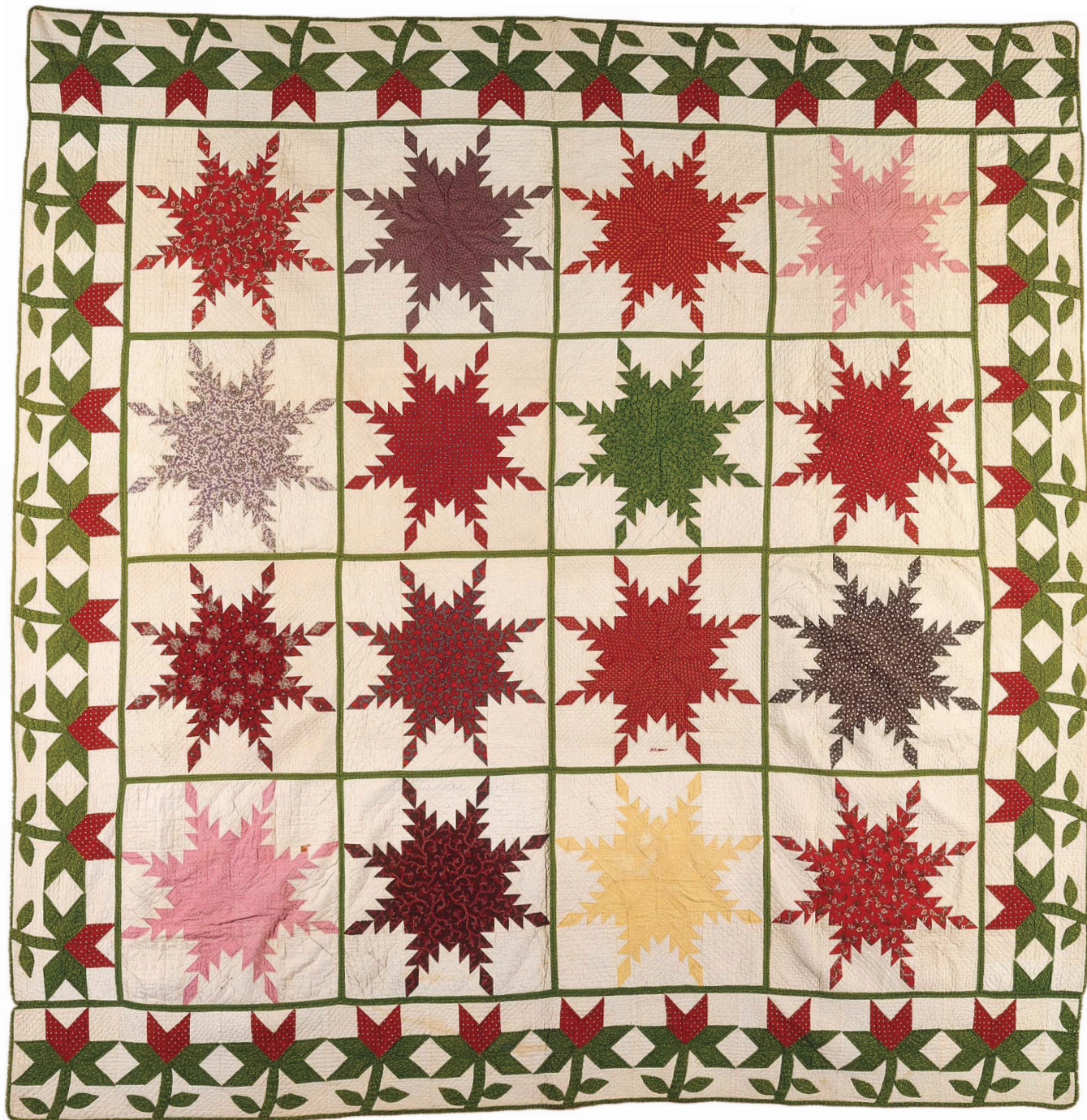
[www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/southend/bethesdaterrace](http://www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/southend/bethesdaterrace)

[www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/southend/bethesdaangel](http://www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/southend/bethesdaangel)

Features photographs of Bethesda Terrace and the Angel of the Waters Fountain depicted in Vestie Davis's painting.







## SURPRISE QUILT PRESENTED TO MARY A. GROW

Various quiltmakers

Plymouth, Michigan; 1856

Cotton with inked and embroidered signatures; 87 × 82 ½"

Gift in memory of Margaret Trautwein Stoddard and her daughter, Eleanor Stoddard Seibold, 2003.2.1

Photo by Gavin Ashworth, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

Quilts have a long history in the United States as both functional objects and artistic creations. The types, styles, and techniques of quilting are as diverse as the communities of quiltmakers that can be found throughout history and across the geographic United States.

During the nineteenth century, occasions for members of a community to come together were as varied as the nature of their living circumstances, and were different still for men and for women. Relationships within the social networks in cities, where the population was dense and transient, were not the same as those in established rural communities in New England, in widely scattered homesteads in the West, or on plantations in the South. Although quilts were made by individual women, and sometimes men, quilting bees or gatherings in which women collectively worked on a single quilt were popular and efficient. In quilting bees, quiltmakers were able to share not only the resources but the workload, accomplishing more in a shorter period of time than an individual quiltmaker could. Quilting bees also provided a forum for socialization, relaxation, and a respite from the busy, hard, and sometimes lonely life on the farm or frontier.

Oftentimes, quilts were made to commemorate special occasions, such as weddings and births, or as farewell gifts when community members moved away. Such types of quilts represented a gesture of friendship from many members of a community to one of its own. When the quilt was a participatory

project intended for presentation to a friend or neighbor, it also enhanced the traditional opportunity for quiltmakers to gather in a communal act.

It is not known why this particular quilt was made. Like the pages of an autograph album, each block bears the name of a friend who contributed to this “surprise” for Mary A. Grow, as the quilt is inscribed in ink on the back.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Coming Together: Creating a Community Quilt” (2–3)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)
- “Symmetry and Symbols” (2–3)



# COMING TOGETHER: CREATING A COMMUNITY QUILT

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2-3

**GRADE LEVEL: 2-3**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS, ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE ARTS, AND SOCIAL STUDIES**

**ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 60-MINUTE PERIOD**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the quilt as an artifact of early American experience.
- Students will work collaboratively to plan, design, and create a community quilt.
- Students will practice collaborating, planning, negotiating, and problem-solving in their artmaking.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Surprise Quilt Presented to Mary A. Grow*
- Paper and pencils for sketches
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Fabric or paper collage (a mix of prints and solid colors)

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Introduction

- Ask the students to share their knowledge and understanding of quilts and quiltmaking.
- Define a quilt and identify some of the differences between quilts and other bedcovers. A quilt is primarily defined as having three layers stitched, or quilted, together, generally including a top layer of fabric, a layer of cotton or wool batting for warmth, and a bottom layer of fabric.

### Discussion

The students will view and discuss a reproduction of *Surprise Quilt Presented to Mary A. Grow*.

- What do you notice about this quilt?
- Ask the students to choose one individual quilt square and study it closely. Then choose another square and study it. Do the students notice anything different when looking at the quilt this way?
- Share some of the background information about friendship quilts and the *Surprise Quilt Presented to Mary A. Grow* in particular. Does this information make the students think about the quilt in a different way?
- How is the experience of making art different when it is done individually versus collaboratively, with several people working together on one shared project?

### Activity

- Have the students, as a class or in smaller groups, plan and create one or more quilt(s).
- Each student will create an individual square; however, the class or the group will decide on a common design that will unite these squares. Remind the students that while all of the squares in the *Surprise Quilt* bore the same shape, they were not all identical. The students may opt to follow this model, choosing something that remains the same in each of their designs and something that is unique to each quilt square.
- Facilitate negotiations and agreement on a common element. If the quilt is being created to celebrate or commemorate a certain event or occasion, this may suggest a common element.
- Sketches should be used in the planning and design process.
- Assist individual students, or groups of students, as they execute their quilt squares in fabric or paper collage.
- When the squares are complete, decide on the overall composition—the sequence and arrangement of the squares—as a group or as a class.
- Join the quilt squares by “sewing” them with a hole puncher and yarn or by taping the paper quilt squares together on the backside. The students should participate in the assemblage of the quilt.
- Have a concluding discussion addressing the process and experience of working on a communal art form, and sharing the finished work.

### PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- This lesson may be conducted within an extended unit on nineteenth-century American history.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The “Counting Quilts” lesson designed for pre-K–grade 1 (pages 149–152), which explores the symbolism of an appliqué quilt through math concepts, may be adapted for use with older students and taught in conjunction with this lesson.

### ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students closely and thoughtfully observed and discussed the presented quilt, relating the background information provided to their own observations and questions.
- Students successfully collaborated to plan and design their own quilt(s), either in groups or as a class.
- Students selected, agreed on, and executed a shared element in their quilt squares.



## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Students

Hines, Anna Grossnickle. *Pieces: A Year in Poems & Quilts*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2001.  
Poems about the four seasons accompanied by photographs of quilts made by the author.

Lyons, Mary E. *Stitching Stars: The Story Quilts of Harriet Powers*. New York: Scribner, 1993.  
A picture-book profile of Harriet Powers, who was born a slave in 1837 and stitched biblical stories into appliqué quilts, written at a level appropriate for upper-elementary and middle-school students.

Paul, Ann Whitford. *Eight Hands Round: A Patchwork Alphabet*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.

Introduces the letters of the alphabet with names of early American patchwork quilt patterns and explains the origins of the designs by describing the activity or occupation they derive from.

Polacco, Patricia. *The Keeping Quilt*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1988.  
An autobiographical picture book about a handmade quilt, and the memories that it preserves, passed down through four generations of a Russian Jewish family.

### Recommended Book for Teachers

Warren, Elizabeth V., and Sharon L. Eisenstat. *Glorious American Quilts: The Quilt Collection of the Museum of American Folk Art*. New York: Penguin Studio in association with Museum of American Folk Art, 1996.

Describes the American Folk Art Museum's quilt collection with chapters on whole-cloth quilts, chintz quilts, signature quilts, appliqué quilts, pieced quilts, log-cabin quilts, show quilts, revival quilts, Amish quilts, African American quilts, and contemporary quilts.

### Recommended Websites

EDSITEment Lesson Plan "History in Quilts":

[www.edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=241](http://www.edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=241)

EDSITEment Lesson Plan "Stories in Quilts":

[www.edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=242](http://www.edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=242)

EDSITEment Lesson Plan "Family and Friendship in Quilts":

[www.edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=346](http://www.edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=346)

National Endowment for the Humanities lesson plans with links to online resources.

International Quilt Study Center at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln:

[www.quiltstudy.org](http://www.quiltstudy.org)

Database of images and information regarding historic and contemporary American and international quilts.

National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C., Quilt Collection:

[www.americanhistory.si.edu/collections/quilts/](http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/collections/quilts/)

A selection of images of quilts, including those categorized as patriotic quilts, album quilts, Amish quilts, and more.

The Quilt Index:

[www.quiltindex.org](http://www.quiltindex.org)

An online research and reference tool with contextual information and images of quilts held in private and public collections. Browse by category: collection, time period, style/techniques, purpose/function, or location.





## **SGRAFFITO PLATE OR DEEP DISH WITH DOUBLE-HEADED EAGLE**

Attributed to George Hubener (1757–1828)  
Limerick Township, Pennsylvania; 1792  
Glazed red earthenware; 2 ¼ × 12 ⅝" diam.  
Gift of Ralph Esmerian, 2005.8.24  
Photo © 2000 John Bigelow Taylor, New York

## **SLIPWARE CHARGER WITH COMBED DECORATION**

Artist unidentified  
Southeastern Pennsylvania; c. 1800–1840  
Glazed red earthenware; 2 ⅞ × 15 ½" diam.  
Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.112  
Photo © 2000 John Bigelow Taylor, New York

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### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECTS**

A distinct Pennsylvania German culture developed over the course of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, as large numbers of German-speaking immigrants from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and other European countries settled in Pennsylvania and its environs.

One of the crafts brought from Germanic homelands and continued in America was the tradition of pottery-making. Pottery dishes and containers fulfilled a community's practical needs and also reminded the people of the countries they had left behind. Potteries, the workshops where pottery was made, were often passed down within a family. From one generation to the next, the same style, techniques, forms, and designs might have been continued to be employed, distinguishing one pottery from another.

One of the most popular Pennsylvania German techniques for decorating pottery was sgraffito. In this technique, the clay form is covered with a layer of liquid slip (liquefied or watered-down clay that can be mixed with minerals or metals to create different colors). Patterns or designs are incised or scratched through the slip, revealing the clay body beneath. Just as popular was the trailed-slip technique. The slip may be poured from a small cup with a spout, dripped, or brushed over the clay forms to produce designs. Moving the slip cups while pouring produces different qualities of lines, such as wavy, straight, or zigzagging lines. A wet comb, quill, or stick can also be dragged through slip lines to create swirled or wavered designs. A potter working with slip has to work quickly, before the slip dries.

Sometimes the sgraffito and trailed-slip techniques were used together by Pennsylvania German artisans to decorate one piece of pottery. Traditional Pennsylvania German motifs include birds, hearts, flowers (especially tulips), and pinwheels.

### **RELATED LESSONS**

- “A Shared Artistic Tradition: Pennsylvania German Pottery” (4–5)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)



# A SHARED ARTISTIC TRADITION: PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN POTTERY

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4-5

**GRADE LEVEL: 4-5**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS, ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE ARTS, AND SOCIAL STUDIES**

**ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 90-MINUTE PERIOD**

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Students will recognize that shared traditions, including artistic styles, bond community members together.
- Students will experiment with traditional Pennsylvania German clay techniques in the creation of a piece of pottery.

## **MATERIALS**

- Images of *Sgraffito Plate or Deep Dish with Double-Headed Eagle* and *Slipware Charger with Combed Decoration*
- Self-hardening clay
- Powdered tempera paint
- Paintbrushes, paper cups, pencils
- Optional: funnels, squeeze bottles, toothpicks, small branches, nails, and other implements for incising sgraffito designs, and plastic combs to swirl slip designs

## **LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES**

### **Introduction**

- Introduce the idea that communities have shared traditions and art forms. Many cultures celebrate their heritage through the arts and seek to preserve and continue the traditional artistic practices of their people.
- Illustrate the discussion with examples of the art forms of other cultural communities studied in class or through an example of art found within the local community.

### **Discussion**

Look at and discuss the reproductions of *Sgraffito Plate or Deep Dish with Double-Headed Eagle* and *Slipware Charger with Combed Decoration*.

- Share some of the background information on Pennsylvania German culture and arts.
- Ask the students to describe how they think these objects might have been made, particularly the decorative motifs. Two particular techniques are often used in Pennsylvania German pottery, and sometimes they are used in combination.
- Introduce the techniques of sgraffito and slipware by expanding on the information the students have gleaned from their observations.

### Activity

- Share the techniques and tools the students will use to make their own clay pottery.
  - Any pointed implement may be used for sgraffito. Sharpened pencils, toothpicks, nails, or pointy branches all work, each of them producing a different size and quality of line.
  - In place of traditional handmade slip-pouring cups, funnels, paper cups, squeeze bottles, plastic combs, or paintbrushes can be used to pour or drip slip onto the clay pottery.
- Have the students sculpt their forms from clay. Plates and shallow dishes lend themselves most easily to being embellished with sgraffito and slip decorations. Remind the students not to make their plates or dishes too thin or delicate; thicker, more stable forms will be easier to decorate, and flatter forms may offer more surface area to decorate. The forms will be decorated while they are still wet, before they harden.
- Each student may mix his or her own slip as well as share different colors of slip with others. Slip is mixed from clay and water; color may be added to the slip by mixing powdered tempera paint into the clay-and-water mixture. Mix the ingredients well until the slip drips or pours easily, yet slowly. Add more water or more clay, if necessary, until the slip is the consistency of thick paint.
- The students must work relatively quickly when working with slip, as it will not pour as fluidly once it has begun to dry. Pulling a wet comb, stick, or toothpick through the poured slip while it is wet will create a wavy pattern similar to the pattern in the *Slipware Charger*. If the slip begins to dry out, more water may be added, and the slip may be remixed to the right consistency.
- Paintbrushes may be used to apply slip to the clay forms in a more controlled fashion.
- Once the slip designs have begun to harden slightly, they can be pressed lightly into the clay form to ensure that the designs adhere to the plates and dishes.
- Sgraffito designs can be incised, or carved, into the clay forms before the clay hardens, using clay tools, sharp pencils, toothpicks, or similar materials. The students should carve just deep enough for the lines to be seen clearly; the sgraffito lines should not penetrate through the clay. Experiment by using different degrees of pressure to create different results.
- If the students would like to use both techniques on one piece, it is generally best to first work with the slip, let the design set for a few minutes, and then carefully add sgraffito on top of the slip.

### PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- If the students have not worked in clay before or have had little experience with clay, an exploratory lesson may be conducted before this lesson for the students to familiarize themselves with the properties of clay, experiment with the material, and practice manipulating it.



- Learn more about the Pennsylvania German community and culture. Additional arts and culture projects can be found in Mary Herd Tull, Sharon Franklin, and Cynthia A. Black's *North America: Understanding Geography and History Through Art*.
- Explore the arts and crafts of other immigrant communities in the United States or in your local community. How do these communities preserve and celebrate their cultures through the arts?
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- Communities are bonded not only by cultural traditions and arts but also by their shared ideals, beliefs, and heroes. Further explore community ties with the "Community Symbols: Heroes and Leaders" lesson (pages 167–170).

## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students formed and expressed their own ideas about the meaning and significance of cultural and artistic traditions to communities.
- Based on their observations, students were able to infer the materials and processes employed in the works of pottery. Students were able to evaluate and adjust their understanding based on their observations in response to the background information.
- Students experimented with traditional Pennsylvania German decorative pottery techniques in the execution of a clay object.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Book for Students

Andrews-Goebel, Nancy. *The Pot That Juan Built*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2002.

A rhyming story on noted Mexican potter Juan Quezada's work, which preserves and celebrates the techniques of an ancient Mexican people, accompanied by a more advanced text that recounts the artist's process and purpose.

### Recommended Books for Teachers

Hollander, Stacy C. *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Catalog of this once private collection of American folk art, comprising hundreds of pieces of furniture, signs, ceramics, textiles, weathervanes, walking sticks, and other objects, including Pennsylvania German drawings and pottery. *Sgraffito Plate or Deep Dish with Double-Headed Eagle* is illustrated and discussed on pages 142 and 441. *Slipware Charger with Combed Decoration* is illustrated and discussed on pages 137 and 437.

Tull, Mary Herd, Sharon Franklin, and Cynthia A. Black. *North America: Understanding Geography and History Through Art*. Austin, Tex.: Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 2000.

Describes the cultures of the Haida Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands, the German settlers of Pennsylvania, the Cherokee and African Americans of the Southern United States, and the Pueblo of New Mexico, and provides instructions for projects that introduce these peoples' crafts.

**Recommended Website**

National Gallery of Art:

Tour: Pennsylvania German Folk Art from the Index of American Design

[www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/iadpenn/iadpenn-main1.html](http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/iadpenn/iadpenn-main1.html)

Tour an image gallery of Pennsylvania German Folk Art, including pottery.







## ASSEMBLAGE OF CROWD SCENES

Purvis Young (b. 1943)

Miami, Florida; late 1970s

Paint on found wood; 98 ½ × 58 × 2 ½"

Gift of T. Marshall Hahn Jr., 1995.22.2

Photo by Gavin Ashworth, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

Purvis Young has spent almost the entirety of his sixty-three-odd years living in Overtown, an African American neighborhood in Miami, Florida, a community struggling with the issues common to many inner-city neighborhoods—poverty, unemployment, drugs, and crime. Early in his life, Young himself spent a few years in prison for armed robbery. Rather than hide his prison term, or speak of it with shame, Young lists his years spent in the Florida State Penitentiary under “Education” on his résumé—after all, it was there that he discovered and began to study art, which would change his life forever.

The movement that brought to life politically inspired murals, which flourished in Latino, Chicano, and African American communities in the 1960s and ’70s, inspired Young. These murals, created by artists and ordinary people alike, both celebrated the cultures of minority communities and protested the hardships, injustice, and prejudice that plagued them.

Young’s first artwork was a mural composed of hundreds of painted wood fragments and panels collected from the streets of his neighborhood; it stretched over three blocks, ground-to-roof, on the façade of an abandoned warehouse. The style and subject matter of the paintings in the mural were similar to *Assemblage of Crowd Scenes*. “My feeling was the world might get better if I put up my protests. Even if it didn’t, it was just something I had to be doing,” explained Young.\* The mural has since been torn down. However, Young, a highly prolific artist, continues to create public and community works.

*Assemblage of Crowd Scenes*, a large-scale work that employs found wood, is characteristic of Young’s work in both dimension and materials used. It is also typical in subject matter: In his works, Young often depicts crowds of people with arms raised in protest, parades, pregnant women, buildings, trucks, and horses. Young has developed his own personal symbolism in his imagery—trucks signify the dispersal of goods manufactured in Overtown for consumption elsewhere; horses represent freedom. In one panel in *Assemblage of Crowd Scenes*, the all-seeing eye, also a recurring motif in Young’s work, is apparent; according to the artist, when painted blue, the eye represents oppression by the white man upon people of color. Young’s fast, loud, and crammed compositions call to mind the urban environment. Of his inspiration, Young says, “The street is real life. . . . You come out here and feel the workings of the world. . . . That’s all you need to be an artist.”†

### RELATED LESSONS

- “The Artist as Activist” (4–5)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)

\* Quoted in Paula Harper, “Urban Expressionist: Three Area Shows Highlight a 35-Year Outpouring of Exuberant, Justice-Haunted Paintings and Assemblages by the Self-Taught Artist Purvis Young—Report from Miami,” *Art in America* 91, no. 1 (January 2003): 37. (Available at [www.purvisyoung.com/news.cfm](http://www.purvisyoung.com/news.cfm).)

† Quoted in Lynda Roscoe Hartigan, “Going Urban: American Folk Art and the Great Migration,” *American Art* 14, no. 2 (summer 2000): 26–51. (Available at [www.purvisyoung.com/news.cfm](http://www.purvisyoung.com/news.cfm).)

# THE ARTIST AS ACTIVIST

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4-5

**GRADE LEVEL: 4-5**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, AND SOCIAL STUDIES**

**ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 75- TO 90-MINUTE PERIOD**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will investigate the notion of artists as social or political activists through observation and discussion of a painting by Purvis Young.
- Students will consider the idea that artists develop their own personal symbols that become a part of their artistic repertoire.
- Students will choose issues around which to create their own activist art, expressing their ideas and messages through the use of visual symbols.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Assemblage of Crowd Scenes*
- Drawing paper and pencils for sketches
- Paper or cardboard panels, painting or drawing materials, masking tape or colored tape to join the individual panels into an assemblage

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Introduction

- Encourage the students to spend some time looking closely at the reproduction of *Assemblage of Crowd Scenes*.
- Instruct the students to choose one panel of the work to sketch. Explain that these sketches are meant to be an aid to observing this busy and complex work, rather than a polished drawing. It may be helpful to demonstrate a quick sketch.
- You may also ask the students to think of a title for either the whole work or the panel they sketched.
- The students may share their sketches in pairs, comparing and contrasting their panels and discussing their ideas about the work.

### Discussion

- Discuss *Assemblage of Crowd Scenes* as a class, allowing the students' interests and questions to guide the conversation. Begin with general questions before focusing on more difficult ones. Encourage the students to refer to their observations and sketches over the course of discussing their ideas about the artwork.
  - What is going on here?
  - Can you identify things that are repeated more than once in the work?
  - What do these things mean to you? How do they make you feel?

- Why would an artist use the same subjects or images repeatedly in one or even several different artworks?
- How are the figures in this picture posed? Can you position your body the same way? How do you feel in this position?
- How would you describe the mood of this painting?
- Purvis Young's work has been called protest art; what do you think this means? What specifically do you see in this work that supports this idea?
- Generate a list of other terms that might describe Young's art.
- What is the message of this work?
- Introduce the background material about Purvis Young and his work, sharing the quotes from the artist (see page 98).
- The discussion may be expanded to more generally consider the idea of activist art. Is artmaking an effective way to raise awareness of a social or political cause? Can an artwork change your opinion or beliefs on an issue? Are the students aware of other artists who have addressed social or political causes or issues in their work, taking on the role of artists-activists?
- Discuss parallels between the issues engaged in Purvis Young's art and the issues and struggles that the students are aware of today.

### **Activity**

- Introduce the idea of creating activist art in the manner of Purvis Young. Explain that each student will create his or her own individual panel, using painting or drawing materials, and that the panels will then be assembled into a group mural.
- Spend some time brainstorming what issues specifically the students' works will engage and considering the messages of their artwork.
- Students may choose to all create works of art around the same issue or to choose to focus on different issues.
- Revisit the idea that Young uses the same subjects—crowds of people with their arms raised, horses, and the blue eye, for instance—as symbols to represent his ideas.
- What visual images or symbols will the students use to represent their ideas and messages? Encourage the students to choose or create their own symbols that will represent their ideas.
- Allow the students to work on their individual panels, joining their panels into a mural once they are finished.
- The students should share their finished works with one another, discussing the messages they chose to promote and the symbols they used to represent their ideas.

## PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- Research another artist-activist or a political form of art. Additional possibilities may include the Mexican *muralista* art movement of the 1930s, the Chicano mural movement of the 1960s, and Chicago's *Wall of Respect* (which was an influence on Young).
- Create "Living Activist Art": In small groups, enact human tableaux or living sculptures, creating scenes that express messages through the poses and positions of the students' bodies.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- Explore another aspect of Young's work, his use of found materials, by adapting the "Art All Around: Found Objects in Folk Art" lesson designed for grades 2–3 (pages 53–57) for older students and teaching it in conjunction with this lesson.

## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students closely observed and sketched the presented artwork.
- Students applied the background information on the artist in their engagement with the work.
- Students choose an issue that concerns them around which to create their own activist art.
- Students employed symbols to represent their ideas and messages.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Book for Teachers

Arnett, Paul, and William Arnett (eds.). *Souls Grown Deep: African American Vernacular Art of the South*. Atlanta, Ga.: Tinwood Books, 1999.

The definitive book on African American folk artists of the South. Volume 1 explores artists working in the years following World War II; Volume 2 focuses on artists working in the 1980s and '90s, including Purvis Young.

### Recommended Websites

Purvis Young website:

[www.purvisyoung.com](http://www.purvisyoung.com)

Includes slide shows of artwork, links to articles and reviews, and exhibition listings.

The *Wall of Respect* on the Web:

[www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu/wallofrespect/main.htm](http://www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu/wallofrespect/main.htm)

A "re-creation" of Chicago's *Wall of Respect*, a mural created by visual artists from the Organization of Black American Culture in 1967, featuring images, history, biographies, lessons, and online activities.







# SELF AND STORIES

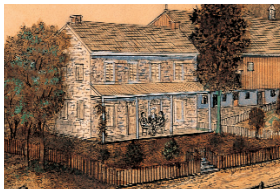
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Folk art is an effective means of reinforcing conventions, but it also provides a powerful forum for individual self-expression. At first glance, it may seem that the work of contemporary self-taught artists is the most individualistic, even idiosyncratic. However, individuality is found in the unique signature every artist, self-taught or not, brings to his or her work, even when creating within a conventional form, tradition, or medium. At times, this singular voice is expressed through a sense of whimsy or a highly developed aesthetic identity. Other works reveal a distinctive sensibility that is derived from an artist's strong personal convictions or visions, or from a life lived in isolation.

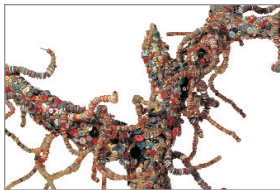
These lessons charge students to consider themselves as individuals with identities, idiosyncrasies, and self-expressive and artistic choices. By telling stories through artmaking, artists and students illustrate their individualism.



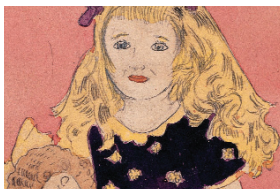
**IMAGINING ANIMALS (PRE-K-1):** Students will explore individual artists' interpretations of animals and create a drawing in response to a description of an unfamiliar and unusual animal.



**STORIES FROM MY LIFE (PRE-K-1):** Students will look at an artwork inspired by events in the artist's life and engage in writing and artmaking based on personal experience.



**EXPLORING FOLK ART THROUGH POETRY (2-3):** Students will observe, analyze, and interpret an object of folk art, using writing and drawing as observational tools. They will develop these responses into poems that reflect their individual reactions to the artwork.



**CHARACTER CREATIONS (4-5):** Self-taught artist Henry Darger envisioned an epic adventure for a character he depicted in a portrait. Students will write character descriptions and fictional narratives inspired by their individual analyses and compare and contrast Darger's version of this character's story to their own imaginings.



**HISTORY THROUGH THE EYES OF INDIVIDUALS: BILL TRAYLOR (4-5):** Students will study individual accounts of slavery and emancipation through discussion of an artwork by Bill Traylor, a former slave, and of ex-slave narratives. They will then write a work of historical fiction from the artist's perspective.





## KANGAROO

Artist unidentified

Probably Pennsylvania; mid-nineteenth century

Paint on wood; 28 × 49 ½ × 5"

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.160

Photo © 2000 John Bigelow Taylor, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

This spotted kangaroo may originally have been intended to be a toy, but its appearance is as apt to frighten as to amuse a child. Seemingly ready to pounce, with sharp claws and bared teeth, the creature seems arrested in midmotion.

Little is known about this carving, which was found in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania. Early depictions of exotic animals were sometimes based on books of beasts, so-called bestiaries, and the work of engravers such as Thomas Bewick, who included an image of a kangaroo in his *General History of Quadrupeds* (1790). By the time this *Kangaroo* was carved, traveling menageries were not uncommon. In 1835, the Zoological Institute, a consortium of itinerant menageries, advertised a show that included a pair of kangaroos. Despite the availability of such visual sources, and the dynamic pose that suggests a familiarity with animal movements, this kangaroo carving appears to be based more on imagination than reality.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Imagining Animals” (pre-K–1)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)





## TIGERE

Felipe Benito Archuleta (1910–1991)

Tesuque, New Mexico; 1970s

Paint and gesso on cottonwood with straw; 32 ½ × 71 × 17"

Gift of George H. Meyer, 2000.17.1

Photo by Paul Primeau, Michigan

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

New Mexican self-taught artist Felipe Benito Archuleta, a carpenter by trade, carved wooden animal sculptures such as this tiger for more than twenty years. He often used pictures of animals found in magazines or books as references for his sculptures. His materials and techniques were inspired by the Southwestern Hispanic *santero* tradition of carving wooden saints; in turn, his sculptures have inspired other carvers, including his son, Leroy Ramon Archuleta. Archuleta also incorporated found materials into his carvings: This tiger's whiskers are made from the bristles of a broom.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Imagining Animals” (pre-K–1)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)



## MONKEY

Artist unidentified

United States or Canada; late nineteenth/early twentieth century

Paint on wood with metal, glass, and tape; 21 1/2 x 12 1/2 x 14 3/4"

Gift of Dorothea and Leo Rabkin, 1988.20.3

Photo by John Parnell, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

This rather threatening *Monkey* is one of several carvings of figures and animals made around the turn of the twentieth century. It is not known who made them or why, or even where, though there is some indication that they may hail from Nova Scotia, Canada. What is striking about the group, which also comprises a wrestler, a horse, and several standing figures, is the use of tin to fashion ears and tongues, and dark glass used for the eyes. The *Monkey* presents a ferocious aspect, its sharp teeth and dark gaze emerging from a smear of white paint across its face. The sense of animus is intensified by the taut body with puppetlike, articulated arms and legs.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Imagining Animals” (pre-K–1)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)





## PREHISTORIC LIZARD

Q.J. Stephenson (1920–1997)

Garysburg, North Carolina; c. 1980s

Wood with sawdust, paint, and mixed media; 4 ½ × 27 ½ × 15"

Blanchard-Hill Collection, gift of M. Anne Hill and Edward V. Blanchard Jr., 1998.10.50

Photo by Gavin Ashworth, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

Q.J. Stephenson knew a great deal about animals and nature—he was a trapper, hunter, and naturalist.

Before beginning to make animal sculptures in the 1980s, he created his own “Earth Museum,” the Occoneechee Trapper’s Lodge in Garysburg, North Carolina, in the 1970s, hoping to teach local youth traditional trapping and hunting skills. Most of Stephenson’s sculptures, like *Prehistoric Lizard*, are imaginary creatures inspired by prehistoric animals. He often used found materials or construction materials, such as the sawdust that gives this lizard’s skin its rough texture.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Imagining Animals” (pre-K–1)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)



# IMAGINING ANIMALS

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PRE-K-1

**GRADE LEVEL: PRE-K-1**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

**ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 60-MINUTE PERIOD**

## OBJECTIVES

- By looking at and discussing folk art images, students will recognize that different artists imagine, interpret, and depict animals differently.
- Students will create animal drawings in response to a read-aloud describing an unusual and unfamiliar animal.
- Students will recognize that both artists and students create unique works of art and will be respectful of the diversity of outcomes that result from creative thinking and artmaking.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Kangaroo*, *Tigere*, *Monkey*, and *Prehistoric Lizard*
- Drawing paper and drawing materials
- A book containing an animal description (see “Recommended Books for Students” on page 115).
- Photographs of kangaroos, tigers, monkeys, lizards, crocodiles, and dogs from picture books, magazines, posters, or online sources

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Introduction

- Ask the students what words come to mind when they think about dogs, and record their descriptive words.
- Show images of various dogs, such as pugs and Chihuahuas, and ask the students to share their opinions of them, encouraging them to use increasingly specific descriptive language.
- Respect for different interpretations and multiple outcomes should be encouraged in this discussion and in subsequent conversations and artmaking projects.

### Discussion

The students will view reproductions of *Kangaroo*, *Tigere*, *Monkey*, and *Prehistoric Lizard*.

- What animals are these? What do you notice about each of these animals?
- What materials do you think these animals are made from? If you could touch them, how do you think they each would feel? What colors do you see in the animals?
- Which sounds might these animals make?
- In what ways might these animals move?

- Each artist chose to make his or her animal look the way it does. How would you make these animals look different?
- After looking at the *Kangaroo* sculpture, discuss how the students know what a kangaroo looks like—have they seen one at the zoo, on television, in a book, or in a movie? Remind the students that a long time ago there weren't many zoos, there was no TV, and photographs were rare. The artist who made *Kangaroo* probably never saw a real kangaroo but used what he or she knew and finished the rest by imagination. Introduce the activity as an opportunity to do what this artist did—to use imagination and some information to create an artwork of an animal.

### Activity

- Have the students listen to a read-aloud describing an unusual and unfamiliar animal. Any descriptive writing that does not reveal the identity of the animal being depicted may be used; see “Recommended Books for Students” on page 115.
- Ask the students to listen closely and draw what they imagine the animal looks like. The name of the animal should be withheld if there is some concern that the children may be familiar with the animal.
- Read the description several times as the students draw.
- As a class, discuss the results of the project, comparing and contrasting the students' varied interpretations of the text. Remind the children that they all listened to the same description, yet each drawing based on that description is unique. What are the differences in the students' drawings, what are the similarities? What ideas stemming from imagination did the students contribute to the drawings?

### PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- Explore more artists' animal depictions in *Critters A to Z in American Folk Art*.
- Ask individual students to take turns describing animals for their classmates to draw.
- Write short poems or prose that challenge the students to guess what animal is being described.
- Conduct this lesson before or after a trip to the zoo; compare the real-live animals to their artistic counterparts.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- Extend this lesson with an exploration of more folk art sculptures in the “A Tree Can Be ...” lesson (pages 31–33).

### ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students closely observed and discussed the animal sculptures, answering open-ended questions and forming their own opinions and responses to the artwork.



- Students' drawings and discussions of drawings reflected that they listened and responded to the read-aloud in their drawings and also used their own imagination to fill in missing details or expand on the description.
- Students were able to share their work in a class discussion and were respectful of the different ideas and interpretations of their classmates.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Students

Belle, Jennifer. *Animal Stackers*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2005.  
A collection of 26 short acrostic animal poems.

*Critters A to Z in American Folk Art*. New York: American Folk Art Museum, 2003.  
An alphabet of animals portrayed in folk art carvings, quilts, paintings, and many other media.

Jenkins, Steve, and Robin Page. *What Do You Do with a Tail Like This?* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003.

A playful picture book illustrating the diversity and adaptability of the animal world to explore the similarities and differences of animals and their bodies.

Prelutsky, Jack. *If Not for the Cat*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2004.  
Animals described in haiku poems and illustrated by watercolor paintings. Each haiku is a riddle to be solved.

Watts, Claire. *A First Look at Animals: On Safari*. Minnetonka, Minn.: Two-Can Publishers, 2001.  
An exploration of African animals in story form, illustrated by numerous photographs.

Young, Ed. *Seven Blind Mice*. New York: Philomel Books, 1992.  
A version of the classic fable in which seven blind mice each describe a different part of an elephant and disagree on the appearance and identity of the “something” they have found.

### Recommended Book for Students and Teachers

Lowe, Warren, and Sylvia Lowe. *Leroy's Zoo: Featuring the Folk Art Carvings of Leroy Ramon Archuleta*. Montgomery, Ala.: Black Belt Press, 1997.  
An alphabet of Leroy Ramon Archuleta's carved cottonwood animals, each accompanied by an informative text. Leroy Archuleta is the son of Felipe Benito Archuleta, the artist who carved *Tigree*.

### Recommended Books for Teachers

Hollander, Stacy C. *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.  
Catalog of this once private collection of American folk art, comprising hundreds of pieces of furniture, signs, ceramics, textiles, weathervanes, walking sticks, and other objects. *Kangaroo* is illustrated and discussed on pages 169 and 457.

Hollander, Stacy C., and Brooke Davis Anderson. *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001. An exploration of American folk art from the colonial period through the present as seen through highlights from the American Folk Art Museum's collection. *Tigere* is illustrated and discussed on pages 236 and 386–387.





### Homeslead of Jacob H. Landis,

From a sketch taken by Jacob Stauffer, July 17, 1879, during a visit, in company with Dr. S.S. Rathvon, and enjoyed the kind hospitality of their host and his family. Presented in commemoration of that day by the humble deliverer, not as a matter of skill or beauty—but as a token of fond memories.

July 22, 1879, aged in his 71 Year of age, Lancaster, Pa.



## HOMESTEAD OF JACOB H. LANDIS

Jacob Stauffer (1808–1880)

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania; 1879

Watercolor and ink on paper; 9 5⁄8 × 13 3⁄8"

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.63

Photo © 2000 John Bigelow Taylor, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

Artists often take inspiration for their artwork from events in their own lives. Having created this painting as a thank-you present, Jacob Stauffer probably never expected it to find its way into a museum. *Homestead of Jacob H. Landis* records the memory of a pleasant day spent visiting a friend at his farm and was presented as a gift to the farm's owner. We know that the painting was made after the trip but was based on sketches made at the farm. On the porch of the house, we see the artist, his traveling companion, and their host enjoying a conversation. The drawing is inscribed not just with Stauffer's signature but also with a message stating whom the painting is for and the reason why it was created—as "a token of fond memories." The house is still standing today.

### RELATED LESSONS

- "Stories from My Life" (pre-K–1)
- "Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry" (2–3)

# STORIES FROM MY LIFE

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PRE-K-1

**GRADE LEVEL: PRE-K-1**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

**ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 45-MINUTE PERIOD**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will look at a folk art painting created to capture the memory and experience of a particular day in the artist's life.
- Students will tell the story of an event or experience from their own lives in words and pictures.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Homestead of Jacob H. Landis*
- Paper, tempera or watercolor paints, small and medium paintbrushes
- Writing materials

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Introduction

- Discuss the different types of stories—stories that are read in books, narrated in movies, or told aloud. Often people tell stories about their own lives—stories about their families or friends and about places they've visited.
- Tell the students a simple story of your own, based on a memory from your life, and record this story on the board.
- Ask the students to share a story about their own memories of life events or experiences. You may guide the students' thinking by offering a more directed motivation. For instance, "Tell me a story about a time you were surprised or a special place you visited." Write down these ideas to refer to later in the lesson.
- Introduce the idea that in their works, artists also tell stories about their lives.

### Discussion

Have the students look closely at a reproduction of *Homestead of Jacob H. Landis*, attending to the many details in the work. Because of the detailed composition of the painting, it may be best to work with multiple reproductions and have pairs or small groups of students share a reproduction. Have small groups or pairs of students discuss their observations of the artwork and the stories contained in it.

- What do you see? What is happening in this picture?
- Tell a story about this painting.
- Where's the artist in this picture?

- During or after the discussion of the artwork, introduce the information about the artist and the purpose of the painting, including the fact that the artist painted this picture after his visit to the farm based on his memory of the day.

#### **Activity**

- Revisit the students' previous ideas about stories they might like to tell in their own artwork.
- Discuss choosing a specific part of each student's story he or she would like to depict. Jacob Stauffer, for example, chose to paint himself, his friend, and the farmer sitting on the porch talking rather than another moment during the visit at the farm.
- You might demonstrate a picture that would illustrate an aspect of the story you told earlier, quickly sketching an image on the board.
- Have the students create a painting based on the story of their memory. Encourage the students to use the maximum level of detail consistent with their abilities, reminding them of the fine detail included in *Homestead of Jacob H. Landis*.
- Have the students write their stories in words as is appropriate for their grade level and writing ability. Transcribe the stories of younger students.

#### **PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS**

- Storytelling is an exciting and accessible way for young children to develop an understanding of works of art. Choose other artworks that lend themselves to discovering or imagining narratives to explore with your students.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The "Painting the Town: Picturing My Community" lesson designed for grades 2–3 (pages 81–83) explores artists' paintings of their own communities and may be adapted for use with younger students and taught in conjunction with this lesson.

#### **ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS**

- Students closely observed the presented artwork and related their observations and ideas to one another in discussion.
- Students chose a memory about which they could tell a story, either verbally or in writing, depending on age level and writing ability.
- Students created paintings related to a story from their lives.



## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Students

Aliki. *Marianthe's Story: Painted Words/Spoken Memories*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1998.

An autobiographical picture book comprised of two stories in which the author shares her memories of beginning a new school and undertaking a new language. With her teacher's encouragement, she learns she can share her stories through her art and eventually through her words.

Lyons, Mary E., ed. *Talking with Tebé: Clementine Hunter, Memory Artist*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998.

A picture-book exploration of Clementine Hunter's vivid, colorful paintings of her life memories, written at a level appropriate for upper-elementary and middle-school students. The artwork illustrations will appeal to younger children as well.

Nikola-Lisa, W., and Grandma Moses. *The Year with Grandma Moses*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000.

Grandma Moses's paintings of landscapes through the seasons, accompanied by her own words, excerpted from her memoirs.

### Recommended Book for Teachers

Hollander, Stacy C. *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Catalog of this once private collection of American folk art, comprising hundreds of pieces of furniture, signs, ceramics, textiles, weathervanes, walking sticks, and other objects. *Homestead of Jacob H. Landis* is illustrated and discussed on pages 92 and 415.





# EXPLORING FOLK ART THROUGH POETRY

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2-3

**GRADE LEVEL: 2-3**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

**ESTIMATED TIME: TWO 45-MINUTE PERIODS**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will closely observe, analyze, and interpret an object of folk art. Students will differentiate facts from opinions in their responses.
- Students will acknowledge and be respectful of the diversity of opinions and interpretations that art can elicit.
- Students will use drawing as an observational tool.
- Students will write poetry inspired by their observation and reflection on the discussed artworks.

## MATERIALS

- Images of a selection of folk art objects (at least one reproduction for every two students)
- Copies of the Observation Worksheet (one for each student)
- Writing paper and pencils or pens
- Drawing paper and colored pencils

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Day One

#### Introduction

- Introduce the idea that people have different interpretations and opinions about art. Begin with a discussion of fact versus opinion. A fact is an objective, indisputable truth; you cannot disagree with a fact. An opinion is personal and subject to interpretation; it concerns an individual's feelings, beliefs, thoughts, or ideas about a given topic. Different people have different opinions.
- Make a statement and ask the students to decide if it is a fact or an opinion.
- Have the students briefly observe and describe an ordinary everyday object in the classroom.
- Record the descriptive words and phrases that the students offer.
- Once a relatively accurate and complete description has been formed, review each of the words or phrases, categorizing them as either fact or opinion.

#### Discussion

- Follow the same procedure of observing and describing a work of art. Encourage the students to closely and carefully observe, looking long and hard at the work, before and during the discussion.

- Ask the students to offer their observations and responses, both facts and opinions, and to identify their responses as one or the other. While their responses should be rooted in the observation of the object, the students may also share their associations about what the object reminds them of, what it makes them think about or imagine.
- Record these responses in two separate lists headed “Facts” and “Opinions.” Encourage the students to continue observing and discussing the work until they have developed an exhaustive list of responses.

### **Activity**

- Each student or pairs of students will select a reproduction of one of the artworks included in this curriculum.
- Working individually, the students should observe the illustrated object and create detailed and descriptive drawings. Remind the students that drawing can be used as a tool to improve our viewing skills and help us see details we might not have noticed just looking at the objects. If the students are uncomfortable with drawing, urge them to consider sketching as an exercise rather than as artmaking. Pencils and colored pencils may be used to execute sketches.
- After the students have completed their drawings, they should write their verbal responses to the objects on the Observation Worksheets (while looking at both their drawings and the reproductions of the presented artwork).

### **Day Two**

- Using their drawings and their Observation Worksheets as resources, the students should compose poems inspired by their responses to their objects.
- The students may begin by editing their Observation Worksheets, deciding which of their observations and ideas they would like to develop into poems. Are any of their words or phrases repetitive? Are some ideas and observations more interesting than others? Students may cross off the words and phrases that will not be used in their poems. You may model the process of using the Observation Worksheets as a starting point for writing poetry.
- If the students are not familiar with writing poetry, additional preparation may be required.
- Assist the students as they compose their poems.
- Share the finished poems with the class. While the poems are read aloud, the associated folk art reproductions should be hanging where they are visible to the class, so that the students can guess which object inspired each poem.

### **PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS**

- Complete the same activities with personal objects the students have brought from home—objects that are of importance and have significance to the students.



- Write a collaborative poem as a response to a work of art. Ask each student to contribute two words that come to mind when looking at the artwork. In small groups, have the students compose their various words into short poems. Each group should share their poem and discuss the similarities and differences between the poems.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The “Stories from My Life” lesson designed for pre-K–grade 1 (pages 119–121), in which artmaking and writing are inspired by personal experiences, may be adapted for use with older students and taught in conjunction with this lesson.

## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students were able to differentiate between fact and opinion in discussion and in their completed Observation Worksheets.
- Students’ drawings and Observation Worksheets accurately represent at least the basic appearances of the presented artworks.
- Students selected ideas and words from their Observation Worksheets and developed them into poems.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Students

Ely, Robert, and Mose Tolliver. *Mose T’s Slapout Family Album*. Montgomery, Ala.: Black Belt Press, 1996.

Paintings by American folk painter Mose Tolliver, playfully and perceptively interpreted in the poems of his friend, poet Robert Ely.

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *A Fine Fat Pig, and Other Animal Poems*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.

Poems accompanied by illustrations of Malcah Zeldis paintings, some of which were exhibited at the American Folk Art Museum.

Rowden, Justine. *Paint Me a Poem: Poems Inspired by Masterpieces of Art*. Honesdale, Pa.: Wordsong/Boyds Mills Press, 2005.

A simple, whimsical poetic response to works from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., including paintings by two American folk artists.

### Recommended Books for Students and Teachers

Greenberg, Jan, ed. *Heart to Heart: New Poems Inspired by Twentieth-Century American Art*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Forty-three poetic responses to forty-three works of art.

Janeczko, Paul B. *How to Write Poetry*. New York: Scholastic Reference, 1999.

An introduction to different forms of poetry, writing techniques, warm-up exercises, and resources that encourages young poets to express themselves. Though written for young adults, it makes a valuable classroom resource for upper-elementary-school students and teachers alike.

# OBSERVATION WORKSHEET



Name:

## **FACTS**

Describe the characteristics of this object. Think about the colors, materials, and other details you can see.

## **OPINIONS**

What do you think about when you look at this object? How does it make you feel? Does it remind you of anything?

Title:

Artist:

Materials:

Year made:













## STUDY OF A VIVIAN GIRL WITH DOLL

Henry Darger (1892–1973)

Chicago; mid-twentieth century

Watercolor, carbon tracing, and pencil

on paper; 12 × 9"

Gift of Robert and Louise Kleinberg in celebration

of granddaughter Cecelia Cooley, PD-01

Photo by Gavin Ashworth, New York

## UNTITLED (IDYLIC LANDSCAPE WITH CHILDREN)

Henry Darger (1892–1973)

Chicago; mid-twentieth century

Watercolor, pencil, carbon tracing, and collage

on pieced paper; 24 × 106 ½"

Gift of John and Margaret Robson, 2004.1.3 b

Photo by James Prinz

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECTS

Henry Darger's artwork was closely allied with his writings, serving as illustrations for his fantastic stories. Darger began writing a 15,000-page manuscript when he was 19 years old and continued writing and making art throughout his life, creating more than three hundred paintings, many more than ten feet long. *The Story of the Vivian Girls in What Is Known as the Realms of the Unreal, or The Glando-Angelinnian War Storm, Caused by the Child Slave Rebellion* is the title of Darger's epic work. Its heroes are the Vivian Girls, seven young sisters who, though they look like typical little girls, bravely battle to free enslaved children from armies of adult captors.

The Vivian Girls are described as beautiful, good, brave, adventurous, and capable of doing anything. As they fight against the evil soldiers, they are aided by good and helpful generals, including several characters named Henry Darger or variations on the artist's name. Over the course of their adventures, the sisters travel through imaginary lands; brave fires, floods, tornadoes, and warfare; and encounter strange beasts, such as Blengins—winged dragonlike creatures. The setting of the story is the fantastical and unusual landscape of the Realms of the Unreal, where thunderstorms ever threaten and flowers grow larger than houses.

Amazingly, all of Darger's writing and artmaking was done in secret; a janitor by day, Darger never shared his work with anyone during his lifetime. He used collage and tracing in his drawings and paintings, often appropriating images from

magazines, advertisements, coloring books, and other popular media of his time. He would copy and enlarge or reduce them and compile images from many different sources in a singular composition; for instance, tracing the head from one figure, clothing from another, and arms from a third.

### RELATED LESSONS

- "Character Creations" (4–5)
- "Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry" (2–3)



# CHARACTER CREATIONS

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4-5

**GRADE LEVEL: 4-5**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

**ESTIMATED TIME: THREE 45-MINUTE PERIODS**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will observe and analyze a work by self-taught artist Henry Darger and create individual artistic responses to the artwork.
- Students will execute creative writing assignments, including character descriptions and narrative fictional stories.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Study of a Vivian Girl with Doll* and *Untitled (Idyllic Landscape with Children)*
- Copies of the Observation Worksheet (one for each student)
- Copies of the Character Questionnaire (one for each student)
- Writing materials
- Drawing materials, such as paper, colored pencils, and markers

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Day One

#### Introduction

- View a reproduction of *Study of a Vivian Girl with Doll* but do not share the title or any information about the artwork or artist at this point.
- Have the students individually fill out the Observation Worksheets. It may be helpful to model filling out a worksheet and categorizing the responses.

#### Discussion

- Use the students' individual responses as a starting point for a discussion around the artwork.
- In addition to responding to what can be observed in the work, ask the students to share personal associations it evokes in them.

#### Activity

- Introduce the idea of using *Study of a Vivian Girl with Doll* as inspiration for a character description.
- Who is this character; what can you tell about her from close observation of the work? What do you imagine the rest of the story about this character to be? How could the figure in the image be developed into a well-rounded, fully fleshed-out character?
- Referring to their Observation Worksheets, ask the students to expand on these ideas by completing the Character Questionnaire.

### Day Two

- Once again looking at the reproduction of *Study of a Vivian Girl with Doll*, have several students share portions of their Character Questionnaires. Discuss the different characters that grew out of the students' interpretations and imaginings of the artwork.
- Have each student develop and write a fictional narrative that features the character described in his or her Character Questionnaire as an integral figure. Remind the students that the character developed in each questionnaire should be consistent with and support the character's role and actions in the short stories they're writing.

### Day Three

- Have the students complete a drawing that illustrates their character at one point in their story. Remind them that their character does not have to be an exact copy of Darger's painting; tell the students that the artist often changed the appearance of his characters in different illustrations.
- Each drawing should not only include the character the student developed but also a setting. While it does not need to reflect the entire narrative, it should illustrate a specific moment or point in the story.
- Once the students have completed their own creative writing and drawing assignments, share *Untitled (Idyllic Landscape with Children)* and a summary of Darger's story involving the Vivian Girls. Ask the students to compare and contrast their character descriptions of the Vivian Girl to the character Darger created. How does the artist's character and story meet or challenge their initial expectations?

## PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- Have the students read a book inspired by a work of art. Introduce the book through an experience with the artwork, in which students look closely and respond to the work before information about the object or the artist is introduced. (See "Recommended Books for Students" on page 135.)
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The "Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry" lesson designed for grades 2–3 (pages 123–126), which guides students in developing their observations and responses to a work of folk art into poetry, may be adapted for use with older students and taught in conjunction with this lesson.

## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students' writings may be evaluated on the basis of how well they grasped the idea of character development and executed it.
- Students included both personal characteristics and personality traits, in addition to physical descriptions of their character.
- Students took inspiration from and expanded on *Study of a Vivian Girl with Doll*.



## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Students

Konigsburg, E.L. *The Second Mrs. Giaconda*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1998.

A historical-fiction account of the creation of the *Mona Lisa*; the characters include Leonardo da Vinci, his assistant, and the “Mona Lisa” herself.

Nicholson, Nicholas B.A. *Little Girl in a Red Dress with Cat and Dog*. New York: Viking, 1998.

The imagined story behind this painting from the collection of the American Folk Art Museum from the perspective of the artist and the little girl that sat for the portrait.

### Recommended Resources for Teachers

**Note:** Much of Henry Darger’s work contains nudity and violent imagery. The following resources are suggested for the teacher’s own knowledge and interest. The teacher should first carefully review any materials that will be shared with students.

Anderson, Brooke Davis. *Darger: The Henry Darger Collection at the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Full-color catalog of the American Folk Art Museum’s Darger collection that offers an introduction to the controversial self-taught artist.

Public Broadcasting Service online:

“P.O.V.: *In the Realms of the Unreal*”

[www.pbs.org/pov/intherealms/](http://www.pbs.org/pov/intherealms/)

Includes an audio tour of Darger’s work with Brooke Davis Anderson, director and curator of the Henry Darger Study Center at the American Folk Art Museum; excerpts of Darger’s 15,000-page manuscript; an interview with Jessica Yu, director of *In the Realms of the Unreal*; and high-school-level curriculum materials produced by the American Folk Art Museum.

Yu, Jessica. *In the Realms of the Unreal: The Mystery of Henry Darger*. DVD. New York: Wellspring Media, 2005.

Documentary featuring dreamlike animation of Darger’s art and narration taken from his 15,000-page opus to trace the artist’s life and give an insight into the stories he imagined in his drawings, paintings, and writings.



# OBSERVATION WORKSHEET



Name:

## **WHAT DO YOU SEE?**

Describe what you see in this painting.

## **WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

What are your ideas about this painting? How does it make you feel? Does it remind you of anything?

Title:

Artist:

Materials:

Year made:



# CHARACTER QUESTIONNAIRE

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Name:

Look carefully at the picture, and then use what you see and your imagination to answer the questions.

Character's name:

Age:

Physical description:

Where does this character live?

How does she feel about living there?

How would you describe her family?

What is her life like?

What is the most important thing that has ever happened to this character?

What are some words that describe her?

Would you want to be friends with this character? Why or why not?

Other ideas:

Title:

Artist:

Materials:

Year made:





## MAN WITH A PLOW

Bill Traylor (1852/56–1949)

Montgomery, Alabama; c. 1939–1942

Poster paint and pencil on paperboard; 15 × 25 ¾"

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.267

Photo courtesy Sotheby's, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

Bill Traylor spent most of his life on a plantation in Alabama, first as an enslaved child and fieldworker and later as a freed farmworker. After more than seventy years, Traylor eventually left the plantation and worked for a short time in a Montgomery, Alabama, factory. It wasn't until the age of 84, when he was no longer able to work, that he began to draw and paint.

In the mere three years that comprised his career as an artist, from 1939 to 1942, Traylor produced about fifteen hundred works on paper. Although he was poor and often had to use found materials, such as laundry shirt cardboards and discarded pencil stubs, out of necessity, he actually preferred found cardboard and paper to new, store-bought paper. The marks on and irregular shapes of cut-up boxes and signs he often used were, in fact, inspirational: When working on a cardboard that had a thin slot cut into it, for example, Traylor drew a figure peeking into the slot.

Traylor recorded the images of his life sitting on a Montgomery sidewalk, across the street from a hotel. His inspirations were the memories he had of specific people or animals, as well as the people he saw every day in the city, such as the travelers carrying suitcases who kept coming in and out of the hotel. Still other subjects were the inventions of his own imagination. When he remarked, once, "I wanted to be plowing so bad today, I draw'd me a man plowing," he might have been speaking about this very painting.\* However, Traylor painted several depictions of men plowing, so it is just as possible that he was referring to another, similar picture.

Simplified forms, often built from geometric shapes, characterize Traylor's artistic style. He used a small stick as a straightedge, constructing his figures from squares, rhombuses, and triangles before drawing their outlines and filling them in with color. The figures were stripped of details and thus made into bold graphic symbols.

Sometimes Traylor displayed his works, hanging them on a nearby fence for passersby to see. However, he wasn't particularly interested in selling them; when he did sell a drawing, though, he accepted whatever amount of money a person offered—usually just a few cents. The idea of people buying his artwork seemed to amuse Traylor; he said, "Sometimes they buys 'em, when they don't even need 'em."†

### RELATED LESSONS

- "History Through the Eyes of Individuals: Bill Traylor" (4–5)
- "Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry" (2–3)

\* Quoted in John L. Moore, "Bill Traylor," in Elsa Longhauser and Harald Szeemann, *Self-Taught Artists of the 20th Century: An American Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books in association with Museum of American Folk Art, New York, 1998), p. 58.

† Quoted in Alfred M. Fischer, "Looking at Bill Traylor: Observations on the Reception of His Work," in Josef Helfenstein and Roman Kurzmeyer, *Bill Traylor, 1854–1949: Deep Blues* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 163.

# HISTORY THROUGH THE EYES OF INDIVIDUALS: BILL TRAYLOR

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4-5

**GRADE LEVEL: 4-5**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, AND SOCIAL STUDIES**

**ESTIMATED TIME: THREE 45-MINUTE PERIODS**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will view a work by former slave and self-taught artist Bill Traylor and learn about his biography through a reading and discussion.
- Students will learn about the daily life and experience of slaves, pre- and post-emancipation, in the United States.
- Students will explore U.S. history, using an artwork and a first-person narrative as primary sources.
- Students will write fictional stories in response to the artwork.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Man With a Plow*
- A copy of *Deep Blues: Bill Traylor, Self-Taught Artist*, by Mary E. Lyons
- An ex-slave narrative from the Library of Congress's "Voices from the Days of Slavery" online archive (see "Recommended Websites" on page 144)
- Writing materials

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Day One

#### Introduction

- The students will view and discuss a reproduction of *Man with a Plow* by Bill Traylor.
  - What is happening in this picture?
  - What are your ideas about the man in the picture?
  - Why might the artist have chosen to create the work the way he did, using this particular style?
- Introduce the biographical information about Bill Traylor and/or read from *Deep Blues: Bill Traylor, Self-Taught Artist* by Mary E. Lyons, then continue the discussion of the artwork in light of this new information.

### Day Two

#### Discussion

- Read excerpts from an ex-slave narrative with students. Transcripts and audio recordings of such narratives can be found in the Library of Congress's "Voices from the Days of Slavery" online archive (see "Recommended Websites" on page 144).
  - What was daily life like for the slave who told his or her story?

- How did the ex-slave describe the ways emancipation changed his or her life?
- How does the life described differ from your own?
- How did this person's life compare to Bill Traylor's life?
- What surprised you about the narrative?
- Why is it important to preserve records of the life experiences of former slaves?
- Make connections between the ex-slave narrative and the fifteen hundred drawings and paintings that can be said to form a visual narrative of Bill Traylor's life experiences.
  - Why do you think it was important to Bill Traylor to depict the people and the animals that surrounded him through his life?

### Day Three

#### Activity

- Ask the students to write a work of historical fiction inspired by Bill Traylor and his painting *Man with a Plow*. The story may concern:
  - the day Traylor painted the picture
  - the man in the painting and his relationship to Traylor
  - a specific memory of Traylor's from his days on the plantation that may have inspired the painting
  - other ideas inspired by looking at and discussing *Man with a Plow*.
- Remind the students to include details and descriptions of the events, characters, and settings in their stories.
- Encourage the students to incorporate information gathered from the ex-slave narrative and/or from the background information on Bill Traylor.
- Students should each have access to a reproduction of *Man with a Plow* while planning and writing their stories.

### PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- This lesson can be conducted within an extended unit on slavery, the Civil War, or the Reconstruction era in American history.
- Have the students illustrate an event or a character from their stories with simple drawing materials.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The "Character Creations" lesson (pages 133–135) may be conducted in conjunction with this lesson to offer students another opportunity to respond to folk art through creative writing.





## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students thoughtfully observed and discussed the presented painting.
- In discussion, students showed comprehension of the ex-slave narrative as a primary historical resource.
- Students responded to a work of folk art in creative writing, responding to the objective aspects of the work and their own personal thoughts and associations.
- Students included information or ideas gathered by reading excerpts from an ex-slave narrative and/or the book *Deep Blues: Bill Traylor, Self-Taught Artist* in their own historical fiction stories.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Students and Teachers

Lyons, Mary E. *Deep Blues: Bill Traylor, Self-Taught Artist*. New York: Scribner, 1994.

A picture-book exploration of Bill Traylor's childhood, adulthood, and life as an artist, based on historical research into the lives of slaves and free African Americans in Alabama and written at a level appropriate for upper-elementary and middle-school students.

Porte, Barbara Ann. *Black Elephant with a Brown Ear (in Alabama)*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1996. Imaginative short stories inspired by ten paintings by Bill Traylor.

### Recommended Books for Teachers

Arnett, Paul, and William Arnett (eds.). *Souls Grown Deep: African American Vernacular Art of the South*. Atlanta, Ga.: Tinwood Books, 1999.

The definitive book on African American folk artists of the South. Volume 1 explores artists working in the years following World War II; Volume 2 focuses on artists working in the 1980s and '90s.

Berlin, Ira, Marc Favreau, and Steven F. Miller, eds. *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk About Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Emancipation*. Book & Cassette edition. New York: New Press, 1998.

Transcripts of 124 former slaves interviewed in the 1920s and '30s by the Federal Writers' Project, accompanied by original recordings and narratives read by contemporary actors.

Helpenstein, Josef, and Roman Kurzmeyer. *Bill Traylor, 1854–1949: Deep Blues*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999.

A collection of essays exploring Traylor's life and work within the historical context of the segregated South of the first half of the 20th century. Illustrated with black-and-white photographs of the artist working and reproductions of his drawings and paintings.

Hollander, Stacy C. *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001. Catalog of this once private collection of American folk art, comprising hundreds of pieces of furniture, signs, ceramics, textiles, weathervanes, walking sticks, and other objects, including several works by Traylor. *Man with a Plow* is illustrated and discussed on pages 279 and 504.

Hollander, Stacy C., and Brooke Davis Anderson. *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001. An exploration of American folk art from the colonial period through the present as seen through highlights from the American Folk Art Museum's collection. Two other works by Traylor are illustrated and discussed on pages 204, 205, and 374.

Livingston, Jane, and John Beardsley. *Black Folk Art in America, 1930–1980*. Jackson: Published for the Corcoran Gallery of Art by the University Press of Mississippi, 1982. Catalog published in conjunction with the groundbreaking 1982 exhibition “Black Folk Art in America, 1930–1980” at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., which included works by Bill Traylor.

Maresca, Frank, and Roger Ricco. *Bill Traylor: His Art, His Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991. Reproductions of Traylor's drawings and paintings, accompanied by an interview with Charles Shannon, the artist who preserved and promoted Traylor's work after having befriended him in Montgomery, Ala.

### **Recommended Websites**

Bill Traylor biography on *Raw Vision* website:

[www.rawvision.com/back/traylor/traylor.html](http://www.rawvision.com/back/traylor/traylor.html)

Artist's biography on the international “outsider art” magazine's website.

The Library of Congress's American Memory website:

“Voices from the Days of Slavery” online archive

[www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/voices/vfssp.html](http://www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/voices/vfssp.html)

Transcripts and audio recordings of the narratives of former slaves. Teachers may wish to choose excerpts.



# SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

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Some of the most visually potent examples of folk art are those that speak through symbolic language. The five lessons in this unit revolve around objects that are symbolic in different ways. Symbols may be inclusive, expressing widely recognized ideas and experiences, as in *Flag Gate*, or exclusionary, as in the arcane symbolic systems of secret societies such as the Freemasons. Individuals in history can also act as symbols for the ideals or desires of a community. When symbols pass from common usage or stem from a personal vision, we no longer hold the key to understanding their original meanings. Works become mysterious and subject to new interpretations.

Through the lessons in this unit, students will uncover the meaning behind many symbols and understand the ways symbols are being used in their everyday lives. While some lessons are geared toward early learners discovering, for the first time, how images can represent ideas, others delve into the complexity of familiar symbols or symbols specific to students' local communities or the country.



**COUNTING QUILTS (PRE-K-1):** Students will use math concepts to observe an appliqué quilt top and examine the pairs of animals that decorate it. They will then create simple quilts representative of their own families.



**THE STARS AND STRIPES (2-3):** Students will explore the significance and symbolism of the U.S. flag through the study of a work of patriotic folk art, *Flag Gate*, and will create an original flag that is emblematic of the class.



**SYMMETRY AND SYMBOLS (2-3):** Students will recognize and identify symmetrical and congruent shapes in an inlaid wooden plaque exhibiting secret symbols of the Freemasons and design their own symmetrical collages encoded with secret meanings.



**COMMUNITY SYMBOLS: HEROES AND LEADERS (4-5):** Students will investigate the portrait of a Latin American hero and create portraits of individuals that represent their community's ideals, principles, and beliefs.



**SITUATION OF AMERICA: A SENSE OF PLACE (4-5):** Students will discuss an 1848 painting of New York as a primary source and consider its symbolic statement on the United States when viewed within the historical context.









## BIRD OF PARADISE QUILT TOP

Artist unidentified

Vicinity of Albany, New York; 1858–1863

Cotton, wool, silk, and ink with silk embroidery; 84 ½ × 69 ⅝"

Gift of the Trustees of the American Folk Art Museum, 1979.7.1

Photo by Gavin Ashworth, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

The *Bird of Paradise Quilt Top*, made during the Civil War period, is thought to be an unfinished marriage or wedding quilt. This idea is supported by the vertical rows of appliquéd blocks that feature pairs of birds and other animals. In addition to these animal pairs, other symbols of union and fertility can be found on the quilt top; they include birds tending nests of eggs, flowers, and fruits. The only aberration appears in the two top blocks of the quilt. A single female figure is appliquéd onto one block, but the square next to her is nearly empty, save for the decorative leaves and flowers. Newspaper templates, including a template of a male figure, were found with this quilt top, suggesting that perhaps the quilt was never finished, and the marriage it was intended to celebrate never took place.

The quilt top also features depictions of famous nineteenth-century racehorses and of an elephant named Hanible, who had traveled throughout New York State during this period with his trainer.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Counting Quilts” (pre-K–1)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)

# COUNTING QUILTS

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PRE-K-1

**GRADE LEVEL: PRE-K-1**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS; ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS; AND MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY**

**ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 60-MINUTE PERIOD**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will practice their observation skills, looking closely at an appliqué quilt top from the mid-nineteenth century.
- Students will practice their counting skills and apply mathematical concepts in the exploration of this work of art and in the creation of their own collage quilt.
- Students will represent their families symbolically through numbers and designs.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Bird of Paradise Quilt Top*
- Quilt materials, such as paper, fabric, or felt, and pieces for collage and supports; glue sticks

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Introduction

- Ask the students to share their knowledge and understanding of quilts and quilting. If possible, share a sample of a quilt. The American Folk Art Museum has quilts in its “touch” collection; please call 212. 265. 1040, ext. 381, or e-mail [grouptours@folkartmuseum.org](mailto:grouptours@folkartmuseum.org) to arrange a visit.
- Define “quilt” and identify some of the differences between quilts and other bedcovers: A quilt is a bedcover that consists of three layers—generally two layers of fabric and an inner layer of padding—that are stitched together to hold the layers in place. Quilting also refers to the often decorative stitching that connects the layers and holds the batting, or to the padding in place between the top and bottom layers.
- Share the idea that sometimes the designs on a quilt are just for decoration, while at other times a quilt’s designs may have special meanings. Quilts may be decorated with patterns or with depictions of various creatures or objects.
- Point out to the students that quilts were made centuries ago and are still made today.
- Tell the students that they will be using counting and math to uncover the hidden meaning of this particular quilt top.

### Discussion

- Observe and discuss the quilt top as a class. Encourage the students to look closely. Ask open-ended questions to provoke responses and sharing:
  - What do you see?
  - Who sees something different?

- Encourage the students to use their own words to describe what it is they see in the quilt top and where they see it, rather than just have them use their fingers to point.
- As a class, evaluate the quilt in terms of concepts of “more than,” “less than,” and “equal.” Have the students practice counting and comparing amounts. For example:
  - How many birds are in this square?
  - Which square has the most birds? Which has the fewest?
  - Are there other places on this quilt where you can find a pair of animals?
- Write a running record of the numbers that are mentioned by the students in their observations of the quilt.
- Point out to the students that the number two comes up repeatedly when we count the elements of the quilt. The hidden meaning of the quilt has to do with the number two; it is a symbol for a married couple or a wedding. The pairs of animals stand for two people in love or two people starting a family.

### Activity

- Introduce the idea that the students may symbolize their own families in the creation of their collage quilt.
- How many family members are there in the students’ families? How many adults? How many children? Tell the students that these numbers will be repeated in their quilt designs to symbolize their families.
- Have the students use precut paper, fabric, or felt shapes to decorate their quilt squares; alternatively, they may also cut out their own shapes. Different size shapes and figures may be employed to indicate adults and children. For example, a family of four may be represented by four figures—one adult figure and three child figures—in one quilt square, while another quilt square might be decorated with one large heart surrounded by three smaller hearts.
- Have the students explain the designs in writing on the back of their quilt squares. (Assist younger children in writing out the explanations.) For example: “There are four members in my family, one adult and three children.” Older students may include the mathematical equation  $4 = 1 + 3$ .
- Have the students investigate one another’s quilt squares, counting the elements and decoding the meaning contained in the designs. The students may “quiz” one another by turning the quilt squares over to find the correct answers.

### PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- As a class, tally the different “family numbers” and create a pictograph or bar graph charting the number of members in each student’s family.
- Explore quilts and quilting from a storytelling perspective. Create story quilts inspired by a specific family memory.



- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The “Coming Together: Creating a Community Quilt” lesson designed for grades 2–3 (pages 87–90) may be adapted for use with younger students and taught in conjunction with this lesson.

## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students were able to apply their counting and mathematical skills to the observation and discussion of the presented quilt top.
- Students created quilt squares that accurately symbolize their families through numeric values and joined the squares to a collage quilt.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Students

Cline-Ransome, Lesa. *Quilt Counting*. New York: SeaStar Books, 2002.

A description of how a special family quilt is made, put in rhymes that follow the numbers one to ten and back again.

*Critters A to Z in American Folk Art*. New York: American Folk Art Museum, 2003.

An alphabet of animals portrayed in folk art carvings, quilts, paintings, and many other media.

Flournoy, Valerie. *The Patchwork Quilt*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1985.

The story of a girl helping her grandmother and mother to make a beautiful quilt that tells the story of her family’s life. The quilt, made from scraps of old clothing, becomes a special remembrance and comfort when the girl’s grandmother passes away.

Hines, Anna Grossnickle. *Pieces: A Year in Poems & Quilts*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2001.

Poems about the four seasons accompanied by photographs of quilts made by the author.

Johnston, Tony, and Tomie DePaola. *The Quilt Story*. New York: Putnam Juvenile, 1985.

The story of a star-covered quilt that provides warmth and comfort to two little girls, generations apart.

Jonas, Ann. *The Quilt*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1984.

Describes a little girl’s quilt full of memories, imagination, and dreams.

Micklethwait, Lucy. *I Spy Two Eyes: Numbers in Art*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1993.

A counting book that asks children to find elements in works of art from a wide variety of styles, cultures, and time periods.

Paul, Ann Whitford. *Eight Hands Round: A Patchwork Alphabet*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.

Introduces the letters of the alphabet with names of early American patchwork quilt patterns and explains the origins of the designs by describing the activity or occupation they derive from.



### **Recommended Books for Teachers**

Hollander, Stacy C., and Brooke Davis Anderson. *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001. An exploration of American folk art from the colonial period through the present as seen through highlights from the American Folk Art Museum's collection. *Bird of Paradise Quilt Top* is illustrated and discussed on pages 133 and 344–345.

Warren, Elizabeth V., and Sharon L. Eisenstat. *Glorious American Quilts: The Quilt Collection of the Museum of American Folk Art*. New York: Penguin Studio in association with Museum of American Folk Art, 1996.

Describes the American Folk Art Museum's quilt collection with chapters on whole-cloth quilts, chintz quilts, signature quilts, appliqué quilts, pieced quilts, log-cabin quilts, show quilts, revival quilts, Amish quilts, African American quilts, and contemporary quilts.

### **Recommended Websites**

EDSITEment Lesson Plan "History in Quilts":

[www.edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=241](http://www.edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=241)

EDSITEment Lesson Plan "Stories in Quilts":

[www.edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=242](http://www.edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=242)

EDSITEment Lesson Plan "Family and Friendship in Quilts":

[www.edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=346](http://www.edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=346)

National Endowment for the Humanities lesson plans with links to online resources.

International Quilt Study Center at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln:

[www.quiltstudy.org](http://www.quiltstudy.org)

Database of images and information regarding historic and contemporary American and international quilts.

National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C., Quilt Collection:

[www.americanhistory.si.edu/collections/quilts/](http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/collections/quilts/)

A selection of images of quilts, including those categorized as patriotic quilts, album quilts, Amish quilts, and more.







## FLAG GATE

Artist unidentified

Jefferson County, New York; c. 1876

Paint on wood with iron and brass; 39 ½ × 57 × 3 ¾"

Gift of Herbert Waide Hemphill Jr., 1962.1.1

Photo by John Parnell, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

The flag of the United States is perhaps the most potent national symbol—and certainly the most recognizable. This wooden gate was fashioned in the shape of a U.S. flag with wavy stripes that appear to be rippling in the breeze.

*Flag Gate*, the first object donated to the collection of the American Folk Art Museum, in 1962, exemplifies the multitude of meanings that may be encoded or depicted in works of folk art. The object's utilitarian function was that of a gate, possibly made for Robert Darling's farm in the Upstate New York town of Antwerp. Its unconventional form is an expression of its maker's creative imagination. It is thought that the gate was created in 1876 as a response to the nation's centennial celebration, which evokes both the national American spirit and the personal patriotism of its maker. Interestingly, the flag has thirty-seven stars on one side and thirty-eight on the other. Colorado, the thirty-eighth state, joined the Union in 1876.

### RELATED LESSONS

- "The Stars and Stripes" (2–3)
- "Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry" (2–3)

# THE STARS AND STRIPES

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2-3

**GRADE LEVEL: 2-3**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, AND SOCIAL STUDIES**

**ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 60- TO 75-MINUTE PERIOD**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the significance and symbolism of the U.S. flag as a national symbol.
- Students will recognize, through the observation and exploration of a work of folk art, that art objects are often representative of the culture and country in which they originate.
- Students will collaboratively design and create a class flag, applying their understanding of flags as symbolic representations of communities.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Flag Gate*
- A U.S. flag
- Construction paper
- Markers, crayons, and colored pencils
- Collage materials, including scissors and glue sticks

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Introduction

- Ask the students to describe the U.S. flag from memory.
- Where can they see the U.S. flag or flags of other countries?
- We often see the image of the U.S. flag on objects such as T-shirts, key chains, hats, etc. Why do people like everyday objects decorated with flag images?
- What does the flag mean to people? Why do they display their flag?

### Discussion

- The students will view and discuss a reproduction of *Flag Gate*. Relate the observation of *Flag Gate* to ideas expressed in the introductory discussion.
  - In what ways does *Flag Gate* look like the U.S. flag; how is it different?
  - What materials did the artist use to create this work?
  - Why do you think the artist chose to make *Flag Gate*?
- Introduce the symbolism of the U.S. flag and review the concept of a symbol.
  - What does the flag symbolize? Identify the symbols within the flag.
- The students will probably be able to discern that each star represents a state and make the connection between the stars and the heavens. The more abstract symbolism of the colors and the stripes will most likely need to be introduced and explained.

- Discuss how this art object is representative of how the U.S. flag changed as our nation grew over the years.

### **Activity**

- Working in small groups or as a class, ask the students to consider the characteristics and attributes their group or class flag will celebrate. The students will brainstorm ideas and possible items to include on their own flag.
- As each state is represented by a star on the U.S. flag, each student will be represented by a symbol on the group or class flag. Facilitate negotiations and agreement on a common symbol that represents the group or class. The arrangement and composition of these symbols, as well as any other symbols that will be included on the flag, are to be determined collaboratively.
- Observe and assist the students as they create their flag; drawing and/or collage materials may be used.

### **PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS**

- Have the students write newspaper articles introducing their group or class flag and explaining its symbolism and intent.
- Research the symbolism and significance of another country's flag, perhaps a country being studied in class or a student's country of origin or ancestry. The students may present their findings in oral presentations or poster displays.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The "Symmetry and Symbols" lesson (pages 161–163) may be used in conjunction with this lesson, continuing the students' exploration of symbolism in folk art and in their own artwork.

### **ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS**

- In discussion, students expressed an understanding of the symbolism of the U.S. flag and its significance as a national symbol.
- Students were able to represent symbolically the group or class's characteristics that they chose to celebrate in their flag(s).
- Students successfully collaborated, negotiating and making decisions as a group or class.

### **RECOMMENDED RESOURCES**

#### **Recommended Books for Students**

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *The Flag Maker*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.

The story of the 13-year-old girl who helps her mother sew the Star Spangled Banner that inspired Francis Scott Key to write the National Anthem.



Bates, Katharine Lee. *America the Beautiful*. Illustrated by Chris Gall Boston: Little, Brown, 2004.  
The poem “America the Beautiful” illustrated with images of the United States from the beginnings to the recent past.

Giblin, James Cross. *Fireworks, Picnics, and Flags: The Story of the Fourth of July Symbols*. New York : Clarion Books, 1983.

The true story behind the origins and history of our national symbols; a good resource for students and teachers alike.

Sís, Peter. *The Train of States*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2004.

Illustrations of Uncle Sam conducting a train of 50 railroad cars, one for each state. The cars’ intricate designs, which incorporate each state’s bird, flower, flag, motto, landmarks, and much more, are based on antique carved wooden circus trains. More information on the states, introduced in the chronological order in which they joined the union, is included in the text.

#### **Recommended Books for Teachers**

Bishop, Robert, and Carter Houck. *All Flags Flying: American Patriotic Quilts as Expressions of Liberty*. New York: E.P. Dutton in association with Museum of American Folk Art, 1986.

Catalog published in conjunction with an exhibition of patriotic quilts from the 19th and 20th centuries. Includes commentary on the political events that may have influenced the quiltmakers.

Harding, Deborah. *Stars and Stripes: Patriotic Motifs in American Folk Art*. New York: Rizzoli, 2002.

The signs and symbols of the United States depicted in weathervanes, pottery, quilts, and assorted folk art objects.

Hollander, Stacy C., and Brooke Davis Anderson. *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.  
An exploration of American folk art from the colonial period through the present as seen through highlights from the American Folk Art Museum’s collection. *Flag Gate* is illustrated and discussed on pages 140 and 347.

#### **Recommended Website**

The Flag of the United States of America:

[www.usflag.org](http://www.usflag.org)

Includes images of the complete history of official U.S. flags, from the first 13-star to today’s 50-star flag.







## MASONIC PLAQUE IN THE FORM OF A ROYAL ARCH TRACING BOARD

Artist unidentified

Probably Natick, Massachusetts; 1899

Wood with printed and painted paper;  $18 \frac{3}{4} \times 31 \frac{5}{8} \times 1 \frac{5}{16}$ "

Gift of the Hirschhorn Foundation, 1997.6.4

Photo by David Stansbury, Springfield, Massachusetts

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

The Freemasons are a fraternal organization that traces its roots to Solomon's Temple; more likely, however, it arose from practices associated with medieval stonemasons' guilds. Modern Freemasonry dates back to seventeenth-century England but was established in North America around the time of the American Revolution. The members of this secret society are joined together by a system of shared ideals, morals, and beliefs. Masonic teachings are intended only for initiates into the society. To protect this knowledge, a coded language of symbols, emblems, and signs was developed. Because of this secrecy, non-Masons have often been suspicious of the Freemasons.

Much of Masonic symbolism is mathematical in nature, specifically geometric. Often, the letter G can be found on Masonic artifacts, representing the "Great Architect of the Universe" or "Grand Geometer." A star or rays of light may symbolize truth or knowledge, both tenets the Freemasons value. In *Masonic Plaque in the Form of a Royal Arch Tracing Board*, the letters on the ladder in the upper part of the central panel stand for Faith, Hope, and Charity. Most likely, this plaque was made to hang in the home of a Mason, who would know the meaning of the symbols and forms that compose the design and would understand its full meaning.

### RELATED LESSONS

- "Symmetry and Symbols" (2-3)
- "Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry" (2-3)

# SYMMETRY AND SYMBOLS

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2-3

**GRADE LEVEL: 2-3**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS; ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS; AND MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY**  
**ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 60-MINUTE PERIOD**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will be introduced to the idea that geometry, specifically symmetry and congruence, can be used to structure the composition of an artwork.
- Students will recognize and identify the symmetrical and congruent elements present in an object of folk art.
- Students will construct their own geometric cut-paper collages, applying the concepts of symmetry and congruence in their compositions.
- Students will be introduced to the art and symbols of the Freemason society.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Masonic Plaque in the Form of a Royal Arch Tracing Board*
- Geometric cut-paper shapes, additional paper for collage and background, scissors, glue sticks
- Mirrors and/or index cards

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Introduction

- Introduce the concept of composition: the arrangement and placement of shapes, forms, colors, and other elements in a work of art.
- Tell the students that geometry and other mathematical concepts can be used as compositional tools.
- Review the concepts of symmetry and congruence.
- Share several reproductions of works of folk art—of both those that employ symmetry or congruence in their compositions, such as *Surprise Quilt Presented to Mary A. Grow* (page 85), and those that do not, such as *Flag Gate*. Ask the students whether symmetry or congruence are represented in the composition of each of the objects.

### Discussion

- In pairs, the students will study reproductions of *Masonic Plaque in the Form of a Royal Arch Tracing Board*, identifying areas where symmetry or congruence are exhibited.
- The students may use small mirrors to confirm symmetry. The mirrors can be positioned on the centerlines of areas believed to be symmetrical; the students may check if the reflection of one half of an observed design matches the other half. Alternately, the students may use index cards to block half of the areas hypothesized to be symmetrical and compare the two halves of the images, one half at a time.



- Partners should confer and double-check any areas of disagreement.
- Once it is clear that the students have grasped this concept and have been successful in determining symmetry and congruence within the work, introduce and discuss the background material on *Masonic Plaque in the Form of a Royal Arch Tracing Board*, particularly the fact that the Freemasons are a secret society and that geometric shapes and concepts are important to their system of secret symbols.
- Encourage the students to guess and imagine meanings for the unfamiliar symbols in the work.

### Activity

- Introduce the idea that the students will imagine that they are the founders of their own secret societies, and that each student will create a plaque to represent his or her society. Each plaque should have a secret meaning encoded in the shapes, colors, or symbols used.
- Instruct the students to design a composition with cut-paper geometric shapes, employing both symmetry and congruence in their designs.
- Remind the students that each composition as a whole may be symmetrical, or that areas within a composition may exhibit symmetry, or both.
- The students should experiment with variations of their compositions before settling on a final version and gluing the paper shapes in place. Before beginning to glue, partners should check each other's compositions, verifying that some areas are indeed symmetrical and that some shapes are in fact congruent. If there is any dispute as to the symmetry of a design, the mirrors may be used to check.
- Students may cut their own organic shapes in addition to geometric shapes if their composition calls for it.
- Assist the students as they work on their plaques, reminding them of the objectives of their designs.
- Students should share their finished works with their partners. In doing so, they should also share some of the secret meanings and symbolism in their designs.

### PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- Continue the students' exploration of symbolism with the "Stars and Stripes" lesson (pages 155–157), which explores the symbols present in the U.S. flag.
- Mathematical concepts, including geometry, symmetry, and congruence, may be introduced as design parameters by teaching the "Coming Together: Creating a Community Quilt" lesson (pages 87–90) in conjunction with this lesson.





## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students expressed their understanding of symmetry and congruence by recognizing and identifying these concepts in the observation of *Masonic Plaque in the Form of a Royal Arch Tracing Board* and by applying the concepts in their own compositions.
- Students showed understanding of the concept of symbolism, both in discussion and in their own designs.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Book for Teachers

Hollander, Stacy C., and Brooke Davis Anderson. *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001. An exploration of American folk art from the colonial period through the present as seen through highlights from the American Folk Art Museum's collection. *Masonic Plaque in the Form of a Royal Arch Tracing Board* is illustrated and discussed on pages 165 and 357–358.

### Recommended Website

Henry Ford Museum:

“Quilting Genius” online exhibition

[www.hfmgv.org/museum/quiltinggenius/home.asp](http://www.hfmgv.org/museum/quiltinggenius/home.asp)

Includes the rare *Quilt for a Freemason*, which employs some of the same symbols as the *Masonic Plaque in the Form of a Royal Arch Tracing Board*.







## THE ASCENSION OF SIMÓN BOLÍVAR ON MOUNT JAMAICA

Everald Brown (1917–2002)

Jamaica; 1983

Oil on canvas; 20 ½ × 37 ½"

Gift of Maurice C. and Patricia L. Thompson, 2003.20.8

Photo by Gavin Ashworth, New York

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

Venezuelan Simón Bolívar (1783–1830), who has been called the “George Washington of South America,” fought for Latin America’s independence from Spain during the time of Spanish colonial rule. He believed that unity was crucial for Latin Americans to support one another and work together as a people to free their lands. Also known as “*El Libertador*,” Bolívar led the fight for liberation of what are now Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, becoming a hero to many in Central and South America. The newly independent country of Bolivia, of which Bolívar was the first president, was named in his honor.

Everald Brown, a Jamaican artist, painted this portrait of Simón Bolívar, depicting him larger than life, standing on the island of Jamaica. Bolívar is dressed in military regalia and smiling broadly. He is straddling Mount Jamaica, surrounded by the rich natural resources of the island. In each hand he is holding typical Jamaican produce—a red chili and a coconut. A rooster crows into the general’s ear; the message delivered travels through Bolívar’s head and emerges, streamlike, on the coast of Africa. That continent, which for centuries also was dominated by colonialism and oppression, is depicted as a mass of huts teeming with people. This may be symbolic of Bolívar’s dream that the spirit of independence, unity, and freedom from colonial rule would travel to and inspire the African colonies. *The Ascension of Simón Bolívar on Mount Jamaica* is rife with symbols of the beliefs and ideals Bolívar represents to the artist, including two birds that form a heart and white and black arms each holding a rose bouquet as offerings of hope for freedom, equality, and liberation.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Community Symbols: Heroes and Leaders” (4–5)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)

# COMMUNITY SYMBOLS: HEROES AND LEADERS

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4-5

**GRADE LEVEL: 4-5**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, AND SOCIAL STUDIES**

**ESTIMATED TIME: TWO 45-MINUTE PERIODS**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn that portraits often depict people of great importance to their communities.
- Students will analyze a portrait through extended observation and inquiry. After learning the biography of the portrait's subject, students will revisit their interpretations of the painting.
- Students will create portraits of individuals they have identified as being of symbolic importance to their community.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *The Ascension of Simón Bolívar on Mount Jamaica*
- Copies of the Portrait Worksheet (one for each student)
- Writing and sketching materials
- Art supplies for painting, drawing, printmaking, or sculpture

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Day One

#### Introduction

- Introduce or review the concept of a portrait. A portrait is a painting, drawing, sculpture, or other work of visual art that captures the likeness of a person, most often focusing on the face.
- What does a portrait tell us about the person it depicts? Oftentimes, a portrait captures more than what a person physically looks like; it also gives the viewer insight into the subject's character or beliefs. Ask the students to consider how a portrait might show them such features.
- Ask the students to think about their own portraits. How would they pose for pictures? Ask for a few volunteers to pose for the class pretending to photograph them. What do their facial expressions, body language, and poses say about their characters or beliefs? How would they pose if they wanted to look tough, powerful, sweet, etc.?
- Tell the students that portraits are made of ordinary people and also of people who may have special importance to their communities.



## Discussion

View and discuss a reproduction of *The Ascension of Simón Bolívar on Mount Jamaica*, analyzing the portrait before introducing the background information on the artwork. Given that this is a complex and richly detailed painting, allow time for close observation.

- Begin the discussion by asking the students to describe the elements they find most interesting. Encourage them to share their observations and give their attention to aspects of the painting their classmates point out.

Considering there is so much imagery and information to take in, let the students continue observing and describing the work until a full description has been formed before moving on to analyzing the meaning of the painting.

- Discuss the physical appearance and characteristics of the subject. Ask the students to consider the subject's pose, facial expression, and clothing.
- Consider the backdrop and all the elements that surround the subject.
  - Can you position your body the way the portrayed person poses in the painting? How do you feel in this position?
  - What ideas do you have about this person?
  - What might he symbolize or stand for?
  - What ideas do the things that surround him—the rooster, the birds, the heart, the roses, the hands, etc.—symbolize?
  - What would you call this painting if you had to give it a title?
- Introduce the background information about *The Ascension of Simón Bolívar on Mount Jamaica*, relating the ideas the students touched upon in their observation and discussion, as well as the questions that interested them, to this new information.
- Read *A Picture Book of Simón Bolívar* by David A. Adler or visit the websites recommended on pages 169–170 to learn more about Bolívar.

## Day Two

### Activity

- Brainstorm individuals who are community symbols. What do these people symbolize? The students may think about symbolic figures from different periods in history whom they have encountered in their studies.
- Each student may choose his or her own hero or leader; there may be overlap in some of the students' choices. Once the students have each chosen an individual, have them complete their Portrait Worksheets in preparation for the portraits they will create. (If necessary or desirable, research may be conducted in school or as a homework assignment.)
- The students should explain the significance of their subjects in writing and prepare a sketch before beginning the final artwork.
- Observe and assist the students as they create their portraits. The works can be executed in the medium deemed most appropriate for the class.



- Remind the students to pay particular attention to the details that are included in their works. How can we identify the subject of their portraits? How can we find insight into the characters or beliefs of the portrayed subjects?

## PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- Create a “Gallery of Community Heroes and Leaders.” Have each student choose an individual he or she believes is a community symbol. The students should research their subjects, locating portraits as well as biographical and historical information. Each student should write a short label explaining the individual’s role as a symbol for the community to hang next to the image they found. The students should be encouraged to read one another’s labels and discuss their individual choices.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The “Family Portraits” lesson designed for pre-K–grade 1 (pages 37–39), in which students create individual portraits of each of their family members unified by one reoccurring visual element, may be adapted for use with older students and taught in conjunction with this lesson.
- The “Artist as Activist” lesson (pages 99–101), which concerns addressing social issues through art, may be taught in conjunction with this lesson.

## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students participated in discussion, observing and analyzing the presented portrait.
- Students were able to identify individuals of symbolic importance to their community and support their identifications with evidence.
- Students created portraits of symbolic figures in their communities, thoughtfully including symbols that represent the person’s character or beliefs.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Book for Students

Adler, David A. *A Picture Book of Simón Bolívar*. New York: Holiday House, 1992.  
A picture-book biography of Simón Bolívar for elementary-school students.

### Recommended Websites

Biblioteca Virtual de Simón Bolívar [Virtual Library of Simón Bolívar]:  
[www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/7609/eng/toc/html](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/7609/eng/toc/html)

An informational website in English and Spanish for adults featuring selected writings on and by Bolívar.

Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the United States of America:

“Venezuela for Kids—Simón Bolívar”

[www.embavenez-us.org/kids.venezuela/simon.bolivar.htm](http://www.embavenez-us.org/kids.venezuela/simon.bolivar.htm)

A comprehensive history and biography of the Venezuelan national hero in Spanish and English.

The Official Website for Central Park:

*Simón Bolívar* sculpture info page

[www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/southend/simonbolivar](http://www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/southend/simonbolivar)

Features a photograph of a statue of Simón Bolívar on horseback in New York’s Central Park; a map marks the statue’s location in the park.

Universidad de los Andes, Mérida, Venezuela:

“Bolívar para los niños”

[www.bolivar.ula.ve/indininos.htm](http://www.bolivar.ula.ve/indininos.htm)

A multimedia Spanish-language website presenting history, bibliography, primary-source documents, artwork, and more to supplement the study of Simón Bolívar.

# PORTRAIT WORKSHEET



Name:

Subject of portrait:

Describe the subject of your portrait. How does this person look? How will your subject be posing? What clothing will your subject be wearing?

What does this person symbolize or stand for?

What symbols will you use to show your subject's character, ideas, beliefs, or principles?

Make a rough sketch of the subject of your portrait.







SITUATION OF AMERICA, 1848.

## SITUATION OF AMERICA, 1848.

Artist unidentified

New York; 1848

Oil on wood panel; 34 × 57 × 1 3⁄8"

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.58

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

This painting on wood boards is an overmantel—an ornamental panel set over a fireplace. The scene painted on this example symbolizes the economic and industrial success of the United States and New York in the mid-nineteenth century.

By 1848, New York was the country's largest city. During the 1840s, its population had increased by more than 60 percent. New York had become the nation's leading port by 1840 and would remain the busiest port in the world until 1985. The Erie Canal, which connects New York's Atlantic port with the Midwestern agricultural markets, was built in the 1820s; the canal was instrumental in the city's development into a worldwide trading center: Farm produce could be shipped to the East Coast, and consumer goods could be shipped west, faster and cheaper than ever before.\* To maximize the economic potential of its port, the first railroads in New York were built upon the East River's edge; soon these railroads would connect goods and passengers to the entire country. In the 1850s, railroads began to compete with steamships as the most efficient means of transporting goods and passengers.

*Situation of America, 1848.*, depicts the view from Brooklyn across the East River to Lower Manhattan. A boat—a paddle wheeler named *Sun*—and a freight train are featured in the foreground of the painting, symbolizing the importance of trade and transportation to the city. The smoke billowing from each attests to their productivity. Barrels and crates sit on the dock, waiting for distribution to American businesses and consumers. In their letters home,

some nineteenth-century visitors to the United States described how they were struck by the freshness and color of the paint on houses lining the streets of cities such as New York. The flag flying on the dome of City Hall is depicted disproportionately large, stressing the national and civic pride embodied in the painting.

### RELATED LESSONS

- “Situation of America: A Sense of Place” (4–5)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)

\* “The Erie Canal: Journey Through History” on Epodunk—The Power of Place ([www.epodunk.com/routes/erie-canal](http://www.epodunk.com/routes/erie-canal)).

# SITUATION OF AMERICA: A SENSE OF PLACE

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4-5

**GRADE LEVEL: 4-5**

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, AND SOCIAL STUDIES**

**ESTIMATED TIME: TWO 45- TO 60-MINUTE PERIODS**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will observe and discuss a nineteenth-century painting, both as a work of art and as a primary source.
- Students will recognize and understand the role of symbols in conveying ideas about New York and the United States.
- Students will create original works of art, exploring symbolic depictions of present-day New York.

## MATERIALS

- Images of *Situation of America*, 1848.
- Writing paper and pencils/pens
- Paper and pencils for sketching
- Painting materials, such as tempera paint, brushes in an assortment of sizes, and water cups

## LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

### Day One

#### Introduction

- Introduce or review the concept of a symbol. Discuss the fact that sometimes symbols are more obvious to us than at other times.
- Brainstorm familiar symbols, such as a heart representing the concept of love. Oftentimes, symbols in artworks, especially in works from other cultures or times, may appear hidden.
- Ask the students to recall a symbol from another culture or time that has been previously studied in class. How did the students learn about this symbol?
- When a symbol is unfamiliar to us, we have a different experience interpreting its meaning than when it is a familiar or common symbol from our own culture and time.

#### Discussion

The students will view a reproduction of *Situation of America*, 1848. Allow the students to respond with their own observations and interests before revealing contextual information about the painting.

- What is this place like? How can you tell?

A photograph of this scene would probably have looked slightly different than the painting. The artist chose to include specific objects and certain details in the work.



- Why would the artist have selected each of these elements to tell us about the place? What ideas could these elements symbolize?
- What ideas did he or she want to convey about America?
- What would the dark black smoke emerging from the steam engines symbolize today, in a contemporary painting? In 1848, how would a viewer interpret the smoke? Consider the industrial revolution and the United States' aspirations to become a developed, prosperous, leading country.

Share some of the background information about the symbolism in the painting, and how a person of the time would have read or interpreted it. What are the students' reactions to this information?

- Do you look at the painting or think about it differently now that you know more about the background?

#### **Activity**

- Ask the students to consider what image of New York or the United States they would like to convey in a painting. Divide sheets of paper into two columns; in the first column have each student write ideas about New York that they want to project. (These may be more abstract ideas, such as success, diversity, etc.)
  - What would you choose to include in or exclude from your painting to express these ideas?
- In the second column, have the students write down corresponding symbols or images for each idea. For example, what image could symbolize the idea of diversity?

#### **Day Two**

- Have the students design their composition in pencil and make their final decisions about how to represent the characteristics of New York through the use of visual symbols.
- Once their compositions are finalized, ask the students to move on to painting.
- After the students have finished their artwork, compare and contrast the students' ideas and representations of New York to the nineteenth-century vision of the city presented in *Situation of America, 1848*.
- Remind the students of their experiences when first looking at *Situation of America, 1848*. Did they need to be told more about that time period in U.S. history to understand some of the symbols they saw?
- Would someone from a different place, culture, or time understand the students' use of symbols, or would they also need further information?

#### **PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS**

- This lesson may be conducted within an extended unit on the industrial revolution, nineteenth-century New York, or American history.
- Have the students research contemporary visual depictions and/or literary representations of New York. In a piece of writing, analyze how these representations of New York compare to their own experiences and views of the city.



- Discuss how the *Situation of America, 1848* addresses the country's greatness in the mid-nineteenth century. In contrast, discuss how the painting does not include the diversity of the American experience, and what American characteristics are not represented.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The "Artist as Activist" lesson (pages 99–101), which explores a contemporary artist's use of symbols, may be taught in conjunction with this lesson.

## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students showed an understanding of the presented artwork and recognized the role of symbolism within the painting.
- Students chose and employed personal symbols to convey specific ideas or perceptions about New York.
- Students applied their previous art-viewing and -making experiences to the second observation of the artwork and showed an increased understanding or posed new questions.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Recommended Books for Students

Avakian, Monique, and Carter Smith III. *A Historical Album of New York*. Brookfield, Conn.: Millbrook Press, 1993.

Surveys the history of New York State, from precolonial times through its industrial, political, and social development to current economic and environmental concerns. Includes maps, statistics, and other facts.

Graves, Kerry A., ed. *A Nineteenth-Century Schoolgirl: The Diary of Caroline Cowles Richards, 1852–1855*. Mankato, Minn.: Blue Earth Books, 2000.

The diary of a 10-year-old girl who lived in western New York State during the 1850s, recording her family and school life, clothing, transportation, and views on women's rights.

Mackay, Donald A. *The Building of Manhattan*. New York: Harper & Row, 1987.

The growth and development of Manhattan Island from the ground up explained in drawings and text, encompassing both the history and science of building the city, from Dutch colonialism to the present.

Walvoord, Linda. *Rosetta, Rosetta, Sit By Me!* New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2004.

A chapter-book telling the story of Frederick Douglass's 9-year-old daughter, Rosetta, who became the first African American student at Miss Tracy's Female Seminary in Rochester, New York, in 1848.



### Recommended Books for Teachers

Hollander, Stacy C. *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Catalog of this once private collection of American folk art, comprising hundreds of pieces of furniture, signs, ceramics, textiles, weathervanes, walking sticks, and other objects. *Situation of America, 1848*. is illustrated and discussed on pages 86–87 and 412.

Homberger, Eric. *The Historical Atlas of New York City: A Visual Celebration of Nearly 400 Years of New York City's History*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994.

Contains photographs of mid-19th-century New York, including images of Downtown Manhattan comparable to the view represented in *Situation of America, 1848*.

Jackson, Kenneth T., ed. *The Encyclopedia of New York City*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press/New York: New-York Historical Society, 1995.

A comprehensive and interesting reference book that covers the people, places, events, and experiences of New York history with illustrations and maps, charts, and tables.

Lipman, Jean, Elizabeth V. Warren, and Robert Bishop. *Young America: A Folk-Art History*. New York: Hudson Hills Press in association with Museum of American Folk Art, 1986.

A wide variety of folk art objects from the American Revolution to World War I presented chronologically, set within historical context.

### Recommended Websites

Epodunk—The Power of Place:

“The Erie Canal: Journey Through History”

[www.epodunk.com/routes/erie-canal](http://www.epodunk.com/routes/erie-canal)

A multimedia tour of the Erie Canal for adults and children.

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History:

[www.gilderlehrman.org](http://www.gilderlehrman.org)

Featuring a “For Teachers and Students” section that offers comprehensive resources for teaching American History, including timelines, primary-source documents, visual aids, and lesson plans.

Images of 19th-century New York ports and river traffic:

- [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:NYC\\_1848.jpg](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:NYC_1848.jpg)  
*New York City as Seen from Williamsburg, 1848*, lithograph by Eliphalet M. Brown (1816–1886).
- [www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/print/exhibits/movingup/no16.htm](http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/print/exhibits/movingup/no16.htm)  
*New York, from Brooklyn Heights, about 1836*, colored aquatint and etching by William James Bennett (1787–1844), shown as part of the “Moving Uptown: Nineteenth-Century Views of Manhattan” online exhibition at the New York Public Library’s website.



# GLOSSARY

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**Activism**

The practice of taking action, especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue.

**Activist**

A person who takes action to achieve a goal that is often political or social in nature.

**Appliqué**

A decorative quilting technique in which shapes or pieces of one material are cut out and sewn onto a larger piece of fabric.

**Assemblage**

A sculptural composition assembled or constructed from an arrangement of objects and materials. May refer to both the process of creating a work and the finished construction.

**Community**

A group of people with common interests living in a particular area, or a group of people with a common characteristic, interest, or belief within a larger society.

**Composition**

The plan, placement, or arrangement of elements such as colors, forms, shapes, and space in an artwork.

**Fact**

A concept whose truth can be proved.

**Family record/family tree**

A graphical representation of genealogy—accounts of the descent of successive generations of a family—including names, dates, and other facts.

**Folk art**

Art created by people who had no academic training in the arts, though they may have received training through apprenticeships or family tradition. It is not a single art form but includes a diverse range of visual expression, such as painting, drawing, sculpting, textile work, and pottery. Folk art is often → *utilitarian*, religious, handmade, rooted in a crafts tradition, and/or stemming from a communal tradition. It encompasses the highly personalized expression of self-taught creators.

**Found object**

Common objects (natural materials as well as manufactured items) that are not normally considered art materials but which are incorporated into an artwork.

**Fraktur**

A highly artistic and elaborate eighteenth- or nineteenth-century calligraphed and illuminated drawing or document created in a Germanic area of settlement in North America.

**Freemasons/Freemasonry**

A fraternal organization that traces its roots to Solomon's Temple but that, more likely, arose from practices associated with medieval stonemasons' guilds. Its members are joined together by a system of shared ideals, morals, and beliefs. Masonic teachings are intended only for initiates into the society.

**Functional**

Designed or developed for a particular use.

**Individuality**

The character and personality that distinguishes one person from another.

**Masonic**

Relating to → *Freemasons/Freemasonry*.

**Museum**

An institution devoted to the collection, care, study, and display of objects of lasting interest or value.

**Opinion**

A view, judgment, or appraisal formed by a person about a particular matter.

**Overmantel**

An overmantel is a painted ornamental panel set over the parlor fireplace. Overmantels provided an ornamental focus to the fireplace, which was one of the most important features of the early American home.

**Pennsylvania German**

People living in Pennsylvania and its environs whose characteristic cultural traditions go back to the migrations of large numbers of German-speaking immigrants from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and other European countries during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries; also the dialect of German spoken by this cultural group. Alternatively referred to as the Pennsylvania Dutch.

**Portrait**

A painting, drawing, sculpture, or other work of visual art that captures the likeness of a person, usually focusing on the face.

**Primary source**

A record, such as a letter or photograph, that has survived from the past, created by a witness of or participant in an event who recorded the event and/or his or her reactions to it.

**Protest**

To speak strongly against or express disapproval of something.



**Quilt**

A bedcover consisting of three layers—a decorated textile top layer, an inner layer of padding, and a bottom fabric layer—that are stitched together, often decoratively, to hold each of the layers in place.

**Reuse**

To use something again in its original or a varied form for either the same or a different purpose.

**Sampler**

A needlework exercise representing a “sample” of stitch styles and designs. Samplers were standard learning tools for young girls to practice and improve their needlework skills from the Renaissance until the industrial revolution.

**Self-taught artist**

An artist who has received no formal or academic training in the arts, nor has been trained or mentored by a community or in a traditional art form, but has developed artistic processes, styles, and/or techniques independently.

**Sgraffito**

A technique of ceramic decoration that involves painting a coat of a colored → *slip* onto an unfired pottery and then carving through the slip to reveal the clay color below. May refer to both the process and a work decorated with sgraffito.

**Show figures**

Three-dimensional lifelike and life-size figures, often carved from wood, designed to advertise tobacco and other businesses in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**Slip**

Liquefied or watered-down clay that can be mixed with minerals or metals to create different colors.

**Slipware**

Pottery that has been decorated by pouring, dripping, brushing, or trailing → *slip* over the surface of a clay form before firing.

**Sultana**

The wife, mother, sister, or daughter of a sultan, the ruler of a Muslim state.

**Symbol**

The visual or graphic representation of something beyond itself, often an abstract concept.

**Symbolism**

The representation of concepts or ideas through the use of → *symbols*, particularly in the arts.

**Trade signs**

Iconic objects that advertise trades, services, or products. Often carved, oversize versions of everyday items associated with the trades they advertise, they are hanging off the façades or placed in front of businesses.

**Utilitarian**

Something serving primarily for → *utility*, rather than being solely an object of beauty.

**Utility**

Something useful or designed to fulfill a specific purpose.



# BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

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## RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

Adler, David A. *A Picture Book of Simón Bolívar*. New York: Holiday House, 1992.

A picture-book biography of Simón Bolívar for elementary-school students.

Aliki. *Marianthe's Story: Painted Words/Spoken Memories*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1998.

An autobiographical picture book comprised of two stories in which the author shares her memories of beginning a new school and undertaking a new language. With her teacher's encouragement, she learns she can share her stories through her art and eventually through her words.

Andrews-Goebel, Nancy. *The Pot That Juan Built*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2002.

A rhyming story on noted Mexican potter Juan Quezada's work, which preserves and celebrates the techniques of an ancient Mexican people, accompanied by a more advanced text that recounts the artist's process and purpose.

Avakian, Monique, and Carter Smith III. *A Historical Album of New York*. Brookfield, Conn.: Millbrook Press, 1993.

Surveys the history of New York State, from precolonial times through its industrial, political, and social development to current economic and environmental concerns. Includes maps, statistics, and other facts.

Barasch, Lynne. *A Country Schoolhouse*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.

A picture book in which a grandfather shares his recollections of going to a three-room schoolhouse in 1940s Illinois. Based on the author's own family history.

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *The Flag Maker*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.

The story of the 13-year-old girl who helps her mother

sew the Star Spangled Banner that inspired Francis Scott Key to write the National Anthem.

Bates, Katharine Lee. *America the Beautiful*. Illustrated by Chris Gall. Boston: Little, Brown, 2004.

The poem "America the Beautiful" illustrated with images of the United States from the beginnings to the recent past.

Belle, Jennifer. *Animal Stackers*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2005.

A collection of 26 short acrostic animal poems.

Caseley, Judith. *On the Town: A Community Adventure*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2002.

The story of a young boy and his mom out exploring their neighborhood, notebook in hand, for a class project on community.

Cline-Ransome, Lesa. *Quilt Counting*. New York: SeaStar Books, 2002.

A description of how a special family quilt is made, put in rhymes that follow the numbers one to ten and back again.

Coleman, Janet Wyman, with Elizabeth V. Warren. *Baseball for Everyone: Stories from the Great Game*. New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with American Folk Art Museum, 2003.

A history of the sport illustrated with baseball statues, sculptures, balls and bats, paintings, and baseball-themed quilts.

Collier, Bryan. *Uptown*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000.

A personal tour of Harlem, given by a boy from this New York neighborhood. Collage illustrations capture its many shades.

Collins, Pat Lowery. *I Am an Artist*. Brookfield, Conn.: Millbrook Press, 1992.

An artist's description of finding natural beauty and seeing the world in a creative way.

*Critters A to Z in American Folk Art*. New York: American Folk Art Museum, 2003.

An alphabet of animals portrayed in folk art carvings, quilts, paintings, and many other media.

Ehlert, Lois. *Leaf Man*. San Diego, Calif./New York: Harcourt, 2005.

Featuring illustrations of the “leaf man” and of chickens, geese, and hills composed of fall leaves.

Ely, Robert, and Mose Tolliver. *Mose T’s Slapout Family Album*. Montgomery, Ala.: Black Belt Press, 1996.

Paintings by American folk painter Mose Tolliver, playfully and perceptively interpreted in the poems of his friend, poet Robert Ely.

Esterman, M.M. *A Fish That’s a Box: Folk Art from the National Museum of American Art*. Arlington, Va.: Great Ocean Publishers, 1990.

A children’s introduction to folk art, featuring objects from the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., including works made from found materials. Encourages students to create their own works of art.

Flournoy, Valerie. *The Patchwork Quilt*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1985.

The story of a girl helping her grandmother and mother to make a beautiful quilt that tells the story of her family’s life. The quilt, made from scraps of old clothing, becomes a special remembrance and comfort when the girl’s grandmother passes away.

Giblin, James Cross. *Fireworks, Picnics, and Flags: The Story of the Fourth of July Symbols*. New York: Clarion Books, 1983.

The true story behind the origins and history of our national symbols; a good resource for students and teachers alike.

Graves, Kerry A., ed. *A Nineteenth-Century Schoolgirl: The Diary of Caroline Cowles Richards, 1852–1855*. Mankato, Minn.: Blue Earth Books, 2000.

The diary of a 10-year-old girl who lived in western New York State during the 1850s, recording her family and school life, clothing, transportation, and views on women’s rights.

Hines, Anna Grossnickle. *Pieces: A Year in Poems & Quilts*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2001.

Poems about the four seasons accompanied by photographs of quilts made by the author.

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *A Fine Fat Pig, and Other Animal Poems*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.

Poems accompanied by illustrations of Malcah Zeldis paintings, some of which were exhibited at the American Folk Art Museum.

Janeczko, Paul B. *How to Write Poetry*. New York: Scholastic Reference, 1999.

An introduction to different forms of poetry, writing techniques, warm-up exercises, and resources that encourages young poets to express themselves. Though written for young adults, it makes a valuable classroom resource for upper-elementary-school students and teachers alike.

Jenkins, Steve, and Robin Page. *What Do You Do with a Tail Like This?* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003.

A playful picture book illustrating the diversity and adaptability of the animal world to explore the similarities and differences of animals and their bodies.

Johnston, Tony, and Tomie DePaola. *The Quilt Story*. New York: Putnam Juvenile, 1985.

The story of a star-covered quilt that provides warmth and comfort to two little girls, generations apart.

Jonas, Ann. *The Quilt*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1984.

Describes a little girl’s quilt full of memories, imagination, and dreams.

Konigsburg, E.L. *The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2004.  
The story of a 12-year-old's struggle to save her uncles' creations, three towers constructed from broken glass and watch mechanisms, from demolition.

———. *The Second Mrs. Giaconda*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1998.

A historical-fiction account of the creation of the *Mona Lisa*; the characters include Leonardo da Vinci, his assistant, and the “Mona Lisa” herself.

Lowe, Warren, and Sylvia Lowe. *Leroy's Zoo: Featuring the Folk Art Carvings of Leroy Ramon Archuleta*. Montgomery, Ala.: Black Belt Press, 1997.  
An alphabet of Leroy Ramon Archuleta's carved cottonwood animals, each accompanied by an informative text. Leroy Archuleta is the son of Felipe Benito Archuleta, the artist who carved *Tigere* (page 107).

Lyons, Mary E. *Deep Blues: Bill Traylor, Self-Taught Artist*. New York: Scribner, 1994.

———. *Painting Dreams: Minnie Evans, Visionary Artist*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996.

———. *Starting Home: The Story of Horace Pippin, Painter*. New York: Scribner, 1993.

———. *Stitching Stars: The Story Quilts of Harriet Powers*. New York: Scribner, 1993.

Lyons, Mary E., ed. *Talking with Tebé: Clementine Hunter, Memory Artist*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998.  
Picture-book biographies of folk artists, providing valuable historical perspective and context at a level appropriate for upper-elementary and middle-school students.

Mackay, Donald A. *The Building of Manhattan*. New York: Harper & Row, 1987.

The growth and development of Manhattan Island from the ground up explained in drawings and text, encompassing both the history and science of building the city, from Dutch colonialism to the present.

Micklethwait, Lucy. *I Spy Two Eyes: Numbers in Art*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1993.

A counting book that asks children to find elements in works of art from a wide variety of styles, cultures, and time periods.

Nelson, Robin. *School Then and Now*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company, 2003.

Features historical and contemporary photographs to illustrate how school in the United States has changed through the years. Transportation, school supplies, and subjects learned are compared and contrasted.

Nicholson, Nicholas B.A. *Little Girl in a Red Dress with Cat and Dog*. New York: Viking, 1998.

The imagined story behind this painting from the collection of the American Folk Art Museum from the perspective of the artist and the little girl that sat for the portrait.

Nikola-Lisa, W., and Grandma Moses. *The Year with Grandma Moses*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000.

Grandma Moses's paintings of landscapes through the seasons, accompanied by her own words, excerpted from her memoirs.

Panchyk, Richard. *American Folk Art for Kids: With 21 Activities*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2004.

A survey of American folk art for kids, exploring a breadth of materials, styles, and artists as inspiration for children to create their own projects. Includes a foreword by self-taught artist Mr. Imagination.

Paul, Ann Whitford. *Eight Hands Round: A Patchwork Alphabet*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.  
Introduces the letters of the alphabet with names of early American patchwork quilt patterns and explains the origins of the designs by describing the activity or occupation they derive from.

Piven, Hanoch. *The Perfect Purple Feather*. Boston: Little, Brown, 2002.

Shows how a single purple feather is transformed into a whisker for a cat, a quill for a porcupine, and many more imaginative ideas with the addition of art supplies and various other objects.

———. *What Presidents Are Made Of*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2004.

A funny collection of portraits and biographical sketches of the presidents of the United States, made from found objects and everyday items.

Polacco, Patricia. *The Keeping Quilt*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1988.

An autobiographical picture book about a handmade quilt, and the memories that it preserves, passed down through four generations of a Russian Jewish family.

Porte, Barbara Ann. *Black Elephant with a Brown Ear (in Alabama)*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1996.

Imaginative short stories inspired by ten paintings by self-taught artist Bill Traylor.

Prelutsky, Jack. *If Not for the Cat*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2004.

Animals described in haiku poems and illustrated by watercolor paintings. Each haiku is a riddle to be solved.

Pringle, Laurence. *One Room School*. Honesdale, Pa.: Boyds Mills Press, 1998.

The story of the last year of the one-room school of the author's childhood—School 14 in Monroe Co., N.Y.

Roalf, Peggy. *Children*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 1993.

A collection of paintings of children from a wide variety of cultures, time periods, and artistic movements. Part of the *Looking at Paintings* series.

———. *Families*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 1992.

A collection of family portraits and paintings of

family scenes spanning 2,000 years of art history. Part of the *Looking at Paintings* series.

Rowden, Justine. *Paint Me a Poem: Poems Inspired by Masterpieces of Art*. Honesdale, Pa.: Wordsong/Boyds Mills Press, 2005.

A simple, whimsical poetic response to works from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., including paintings by two American folk artists.

Schreck, Karen Halvorsen. *Lucy's Family Tree*. Gardiner, Me.: Tilbury House Publishers, 2001.

The story of an adopted girl's struggle to present her family history during a family-tree school project, and of her discovery that she isn't the only one with an "alternative" family.

Shindler, Ramon, and Wojciech Graniczewski. *Found Alphabet*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.

An alphabet book illustrated with collages made from leaves, twigs, matchboxes, buttons, and other found materials, accompanied by poems that highlight the objects used in each picture.

Sís, Peter. *Madlenka*. New York: Frances Foster Books, 2000.

The story of a New York girl with a loose tooth traveling through her diverse, multicultural community to share her good news.

———. *The Train of States*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2004.

Illustrations of Uncle Sam conducting a train of 50 railroad cars, one for each state. The cars' intricate designs, which incorporate each state's bird, flower, flag, motto, landmarks, and much more, are based on antique carved wooden circus trains. More information on the states, introduced in the chronological order in which they joined the union, is included in the text.

Slaymaker, Melissa Eskridge. *Bottle Houses: The Creative World of Grandma Prisbrey*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2004.

The true story of a house built from thousands of bottles scavenged from the city dump and the woman who became an unlikely folk artist and environmentalist. “I guess there are different kinds of art,” said Grandma Prisbrey.

Sweeney, Joan. *Me and My Family Tree*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1999.

A simple introduction to family structure and family trees, in which a young girl uses her own drawings and diagrams to explain the relationships between her family members.

Taulbert, Clifton L. *Little Cliff's First Day of School*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2001.

The story set in the rural South of the 1950s of a boy's anxiety approaching his first day of school and the joy he finds in his classmates—a timeless book despite the differences to modern-day schools.

Udry, Janice May. *A Tree Is Nice*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1956.

A classic and quiet picture book that gives many reasons for which a tree can be nice.

Walvoord, Linda. *Rosetta, Rosetta, Sit By Me!* New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2004.

A chapter-book telling the story of Frederick Douglass's 9-year-old daughter, Rosetta, who became the first African American student at Miss Tracy's Female Seminary in Rochester, N.Y., in 1848.

Watts, Claire. *A First Look at Animals: On Safari*. Minnetonka, Minn.: Two-Can Publishers, 2001.

An exploration of African animals in story form, illustrated by numerous photographs.

Wolfman, Ira. *Climbing Your Family Tree: Online and Off-Line Genealogy for Kids*. New York: Workman Publishing Company, 2002.

A comprehensive guide to researching and recording genealogy, useful and interesting to a wide audience from older elementary students to adults.

Wood, Michele, and Toyomi Igus. *Going Back Home: An Artist Returns to the South*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1996.

The illustrated story of Wood's trip to the South to learn about her ancestors' lives, her family's history, and herself.

Young, Ed. *Seven Blind Mice*. New York: Philomel Books, 1992.

A version of the classic fable in which seven blind mice each describe a different part of an elephant and disagree on the appearance and identity of the “something” they have found.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR TEACHERS

Anderson, Brooke Davis. *Darger: The Henry Darger Collection at the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Full-color catalog of the American Folk Art Museum's Darger collection that offers an introduction to the controversial self-taught artist.

Arnett, Paul, and William Arnett, eds. *Souls Grown Deep: African American Vernacular Art of the South*. Atlanta, Ga.: Tinwood Books, 1999.

The definitive book on African American folk artists of the South. Volume 1 explores artists working in the years following World War II; Volume 2 focuses on artists working in the 1980s and '90s.

Beardsley, John. *Gardens of Revelation: Environments by Visionary Artists*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1995.

Twenty-five “visionary environments” from around the world and their creators, explored in depth in photographs and text and viewed from both folk art and environmental perspectives.



Berlin, Ira, Marc Favreau, and Steven F. Miller, eds. *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk About Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Emancipation*. Book & Cassette edition. New York: New Press, 1998.

Transcripts of 124 former slaves interviewed in the 1920s and '30s by the Federal Writers' Project, accompanied by original recordings and narratives read by contemporary actors.

Bihalji-Merin, Oto, and Nebojša-Bato Tomašević. *World Encyclopedia of Naïve Art: A Hundred Years of Naïve Art*. Translated by Kordija Kveder et al. London: Frederick Muller, 1984.

A reference book on 19th- and 20th-century naïve art, including sections on specific geographic regions.

Bishop, Robert, and Carter Houck. *All Flags Flying: American Patriotic Quilts as Expressions of Liberty*. New York: E.P. Dutton in association with Museum of American Folk Art, 1986.

Catalog published in conjunction with an exhibition of patriotic quilts from the 19th and 20th centuries. Includes commentary on the political events that may have influenced the quiltmakers.

Black, Mary. *Simplicity, a Grace: Jacob Maentel in Indiana*. Evansville, Ind.: Evansville Museum of Arts & Science, 1989.

A catalog accompanying a 1989 exhibition of portrait painter Jacob Maentel's work at the Evansville Museum of Arts & Science.

Bley Miller, Gloria. "Vestie Davis, Brooklyn Painter: In His Own Words; Interviews from 1961–1965." *Folk Art* 28, no. 2 (summer 2003): 40–51.

Cerny, Charlene, and Suzanne Seriff, eds. *Recycled, Re-Seen: Folk Art from the Global Scrap Heap*. New York: Harry N. Abrams with Museum of International Folk Art, 1996. The role of recycling in the folk art of Mexico, Ecuador, Trinidad and Tobago, India, Senegal, and several cultures and communities in the United States, including Texan-Mexican culture.

*Eugene Von Bruenchenhein: Obsessive Visionary*. Sheboygan, Wis.: John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 1988.

Catalog of works by self-taught visionary artist Eugene Von Bruenchenhein in the permanent collection of the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Documents Von Bruenchenhein's life and work, which includes not only chicken-bone sculptures such as *Gold Tower* (page 49) but hundreds of oil paintings, pinup-style photographs of his wife, Marie, as well as a variety of other objects. The book also presents a selection of poetry and theoretical writings by the artist.

Fagaly, William A. *Tools of Her Ministry: The Art of Sister Gertrude Morgan*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Rizzoli International Publications, 2004.

The first monograph on this important self-taught artist, who considered her paintings and decorated objects tools for teaching the word of God.

Greenberg, Jan, ed. *Heart to Heart: New Poems Inspired by Twentieth-Century American Art*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Forty-three poetic responses to forty-three works of art.

Harding, Deborah. *Stars and Stripes: Patriotic Motifs in American Folk Art*. New York: Rizzoli, 2002.

The signs and symbols of the United States depicted in weathervanes, pottery, quilts, and assorted folk art objects.

Helfenstein, Josef, and Roman Kurzmeyer. *Bill Traylor, 1854–1949: Deep Blues*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999.

A collection of essays exploring Alabama self-taught artist Bill Traylor's life and work within the historical context of the segregated South of the first half of the 20th century. Illustrated with black-and-white photographs of the artist working and reproductions of his drawings and paintings.

Hollander, Stacy C. *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Catalog of this once private collection of American folk art, comprising hundreds of pieces of furniture, signs, ceramics, textiles, weathervanes, walking sticks, and other objects.

Hollander, Stacy C., and Brooke Davis Anderson. *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

An exploration of American folk art from the colonial period through the present as seen through highlights from the American Folk Art Museum's collection.

Homburger, Eric. *The Historical Atlas of New York City: A Visual Celebration of Nearly 400 Years of New York City's History*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994. Contains photographs of mid-19th-century New York, including images of Downtown Manhattan comparable to the view represented in *Situation of America, 1848*. (page 173).

Horwitz, Elinor Lander. *Contemporary American Folk Artists*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1975. Offers profiles of the lives and work of 22 American painters, carvers, and environmental artists.

Jackson, Kenneth T., ed. *The Encyclopedia of New York City*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press/New York: New-York Historical Society, 1995. A comprehensive and interesting reference book that covers the people, places, events, and experiences of New York history with illustrations and maps, charts, and tables.

Janeczko, Paul B. *How to Write Poetry*. New York: Scholastic Reference, 1999. An introduction to different forms of poetry, writing techniques, warm-up exercises, and resources that

encourages young poets to express themselves. Though written for young adults, it makes a valuable classroom resource for upper-elementary-school students and teachers alike.

Lipman, Jean, and Tom Armstrong, eds. *American Folk Painters of Three Centuries*. New York: Hudson Hills Press in association with Whitney Museum of American Art, 1980.

Catalog published in conjunction with a major retrospective of American folk art at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, in 1980.

Lipman, Jean, Elizabeth V. Warren, and Robert Bishop. *Young America: A Folk-Art History*. New York: Hudson Hills Press in association with Museum of American Folk Art, 1986.

A wide variety of folk art objects from the American Revolution to World War I presented chronologically, set within historical context.

Livingston, Jane, and John Beardsley. *Black Folk Art in America, 1930–1980*. Jackson: Published for the Corcoran Gallery of Art by the University Press of Mississippi, 1982.

Catalog published in conjunction with the groundbreaking 1982 exhibition “Black Folk Art in America, 1930–1980” at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., which included works by Alabama self-taught artist Bill Traylor.

Lowe, Warren, and Sylvia Lowe. *Leroy's Zoo: Featuring the Folk Art Carvings of Leroy Ramon Archuleta*. Montgomery, Ala.: Black Belt Press, 1997. An alphabet of Leroy Ramon Archuleta's carved cottonwood animals, each accompanied by an informative text. Leroy Archuleta is the son of Felipe Benito Archuleta, the artist who carved *Tigere* (page 107).

Lyons, Mary E. *Deep Blues: Bill Traylor, Self-Taught Artist*. New York: Scribner, 1994.

A picture-book exploration of Bill Traylor's childhood, adulthood, and life as an artist, based on

historical research into the lives of slaves and free African Americans in Alabama and written at a level appropriate for upper-elementary and middle-school students.

Maizels, John, ed. *Raw Vision Outsider Art Sourcebook*. Radlett, UK: Raw Vision, 2002.

A guide to art galleries, websites, organizations, publications, museums, and exhibitions of art of the self-taught, art brut, and contemporary folk art.

Manley, Roger, and Mark Sloan. *Self-Made Worlds: Visionary Folk Art Environments*. New York: Aperture, 1997. An international tour of folk art environments constructed with an endless variety of materials and methods.

Maresca, Frank, and Roger Ricco. *Bill Traylor: His Art, His Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991. Reproductions of Bill Traylor's drawings and paintings, accompanied by an interview with Charles Shannon, the artist who preserved and promoted Traylor's work after having befriended him in Montgomery, Ala.

Porte, Barbara Ann. *Black Elephant with a Brown Ear (in Alabama)*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1996. Imaginative short stories inspired by ten paintings by self-taught artist Bill Traylor.

Rosenak, Chuck, and Jan Rosenak. *Contemporary American Folk Art: A Collector's Guide*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1996. Includes biographical notes on 181 artists and lists of museums and galleries where one can see and buy their art.

———. *Museum of American Folk Art Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Folk Art and Artists*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1990. A comprehensive look at 257 American folk artists, including biographical data and complete background information.

Sellen, Betty-Carol, with Cynthia J. Johanson. *Outsider, Self-Taught, and Folk Art Annotated Bibliography: Publications and Films of the 20th Century*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2002.

A guide containing entries for books, including reference books, biographies, exhibition publications of all kinds, picture books, and books geared to children, as well as periodicals, newspapers, and films about folk artists and their work.

———. *Self-Taught, Outsider, and Folk Art: A Guide to American Artists, Locations, and Resources*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2000.

A reference book listing individual artists, galleries, and museums organized by state, publications, exhibitions, festivals, art centers, organizations, and educational opportunities.

Tull, Mary Herd, Sharon Franklin, and Cynthia A. Black. *North America: Understanding Geography and History Through Art*. Austin, Tex.: Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 2000.

Describes the cultures of the Haida Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands, the German settlers of Pennsylvania, the Cherokee and African Americans of the Southern United States, and the Pueblo of New Mexico, and provides instructions for projects that introduce these peoples' crafts.

Ward, Gerald W.R., et al. *American Folk*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2001. Highlights everyday life in 19th-century America through the folk art collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Warren, Elizabeth V., and Sharon L. Eisenstat. *Glorious American Quilts: The Quilt Collection of the Museum of American Folk Art*. New York: Penguin Studio in association with Museum of American Folk Art, 1996. Describes the American Folk Art Museum's quilt collection with chapters on whole-cloth quilts, chintz quilts, signature quilts, appliqué quilts, pieced quilts,

log-cabin quilts, show quilts, revival quilts, Amish quilts, African American quilts, and contemporary quilts.

Warren, Elizabeth V., with Margaret S. Smeal. *The Perfect Game: America Looks at Baseball*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2003.

Captures portraits, watercolors, carvings, painted signage, lithographs, and a wide variety of everyday objects from the 1840s to the end of the 20th century that are reminders of baseball the way it used to be.

Wertkin, Gerard C., ed. *Encyclopedia of American Folk Art*. New York: Routledge in association with American Folk Art Museum, 2004.

A comprehensive reference book comprised of more than 600 entries, many of which refer to objects from the collection of the American Folk Art Museum.

Wolfman, Ira. *Climbing Your Family Tree: Online and Off-Line Genealogy for Kids*. New York: Workman Publishing Company, 2002.

A comprehensive guide to researching and recording genealogy, useful and interesting to a wide audience from older elementary students to adults.

## RECOMMENDED WEB RESOURCES

American Folk Art Museum:  
[www.folkartmuseum.org](http://www.folkartmuseum.org)

Contains information about the museum's exhibitions, collections, programs, and events, as well as an online catalog of the museum's noncirculating research library.

*Antiques and The Arts* online archive:  
Ralph Sessions, "The Image Business: Shop and Cigar Store Figures in America"  
[www.antiquesandthearts.com/archive/image.htm](http://www.antiquesandthearts.com/archive/image.htm)  
Article written on the occasion of a traveling exhibition of the same name organized for the American Folk Art Museum by curator Ralph

Sessions. (Originally published in *Folk Art* 21, no. 4 [winter 1996/97]: 54–60.)

The Bessie Harvey Homepage:  
[www.sunsite.utk.edu/bessie/](http://www.sunsite.utk.edu/bessie/)  
A comprehensive online resource about self-taught artist Bessie Harvey and her work.

Biblioteca Virtual de Simón Bolívar [Virtual Library of Simón Bolívar]:  
[www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/7609/eng/toc/html](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/7609/eng/toc/html)  
An informational website in English and Spanish for adults featuring selected writings on and by Simón Bolívar.

Bill Traylor biography on *Raw Vision* website:  
[www.rawvision.com/back/traylor/traylor.html](http://www.rawvision.com/back/traylor/traylor.html)  
The Alabama self-taught artist's biography on the international "outsider art" magazine's website.

De Young Museum, San Francisco:  
"Teachers' Guide to American Art"  
[www.thinker.org/fam/education/publications/guide-american/index.html](http://www.thinker.org/fam/education/publications/guide-american/index.html)

EDSITEment Lesson Plan "History in Quilts":  
[www.edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=241](http://www.edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=241)  
EDSITEment Lesson Plan "Stories in Quilts":  
[www.edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=242](http://www.edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=242)  
EDSITEment Lesson Plan "Family and Friendship in Quilts":  
[www.edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=346](http://www.edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=346)  
National Endowment for the Humanities lesson plans with links to online resources.

Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the United States of America:  
"Venezuela for Kids—Simón Bolívar"  
[www.embavenez-us.org/kids.venezuela/simon.bolivar.htm](http://www.embavenez-us.org/kids.venezuela/simon.bolivar.htm)  
A comprehensive history and biography of the Venezuelan national hero in Spanish and English.

Epodunk—The Power of Place:  
"The Erie Canal: Journey Through History"

[www.epodunk.com/routes/erie-canal](http://www.epodunk.com/routes/erie-canal)

A multimedia tour of the Erie Canal for adults and children.

The Flag of the United States of America:

[www.usflag.org](http://www.usflag.org)

Includes images of the complete history of official U.S. flags, from the first 13-star to today's 50-star flag.

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History:

[www.gilderlehrman.org](http://www.gilderlehrman.org)

Featuring a "For Teachers and Students" section that offers comprehensive resources for teaching American history, including timelines, primary-source documents, visual aids, and lesson plans.

Grandma Prisbrey's *Bottle Village*:

[www.bottlevillage.com](http://www.bottlevillage.com)

Photographs, history, and news about Grandma Prisbrey's *Bottle Village* in Simi Valley, Calif.

*Grandma's Bottle Village: The Art of Tressa Prisbrey*, a 1982 documentary film by Allie Light and Irving Saraf, downloadable for free at:

[www.folkstreams.net/film,102](http://www.folkstreams.net/film,102)

A 28-minute documentary of a tour conducted by Grandma Prisbrey of her remarkable *Bottle Village*, including a trip to the town dump to scavenge for inspiration.

Henry Ford Museum:

"Quilting Genius" online exhibition

[www.hfmhv.org/museum/quiltinggenius/home.asp](http://www.hfmhv.org/museum/quiltinggenius/home.asp)

Includes the rare *Quilt for a Freemason*, which employs some of the same symbols as the *Masonic Plaque in the Form of a Royal Arch Tracing Board* (see page 159).

Images of 19th-century New York ports and river traffic:

- [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:NYC\\_1848.jpg](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:NYC_1848.jpg)  
*New York City as Seen from Williamsburg, 1848*, lithograph by Eliphalet M. Brown (1816–1886).

- [www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/print/exhibits/movingup/no16.htm](http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/print/exhibits/movingup/no16.htm)

*New York, from Brooklyn Heights, about 1836*, colored aquatint and etching by William James Bennett (1787–1844), shown as part of the "Moving Uptown: Nineteenth-Century Views of Manhattan" online exhibition at the New York Public Library's website.

International Quilt Study Center at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln:

[www.quiltstudy.org](http://www.quiltstudy.org)

Database of images and information regarding historic and contemporary American and international quilts.

The Library of Congress's American Memory website:

"Voices from the Days of Slavery" online archive

[www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/voices/vfssp.html](http://www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/voices/vfssp.html)

Transcripts and audio recordings of the narratives of former slaves. Teachers may wish to choose excerpts.

Nantucket Historical Association:

"Nantucket Roots: The 'Vine and Hearts' Family Registers"

[www.nha.org/digitalexhibits/roots/index.html](http://www.nha.org/digitalexhibits/roots/index.html)

An online exhibition of seven watercolor family records from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, including one depicting a blended or stepfamily from the 1700s. Each record offers opportunities for comparison and contrast to the *Family Record for Andrew Bickford and Olive Clark* (see "My Family Tree," pages 45–47).

National Gallery of Art:

Tour: Pennsylvania German Folk Art from the Index of American Design

[www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/iadpenn/iadpenn-main1.html](http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/iadpenn/iadpenn-main1.html)

An image gallery of Pennsylvania German Folk Art, including pottery.



National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C., quilt collection:  
[www.americanhistory.si.edu/collections/quilts/](http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/collections/quilts/)  
A selection of images of quilts, including those categorized as patriotic quilts, album quilts, Amish quilts, and more.

The Official Website for Central Park:  
Bethesda Terrace and Angel of the Waters Fountain info pages  
[www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/southend/bethesdaterrace](http://www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/southend/bethesdaterrace)  
[www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/southend/bethesdaangel](http://www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/southend/bethesdaangel)  
Feature photographs of Bethesda Terrace and the Angel of the Waters Fountain depicted in Vestie Davis's painting *Bethesda Fountain* (page 79).

The Official Website for Central Park:  
Simón Bolívar sculpture info page  
[www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/southend/simonbolivar](http://www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/southend/simonbolivar)  
Features a photograph of a statue of Simón Bolívar on horseback in New York's Central Park; a map marks the statue's location in the park.

Public Broadcasting Service online:  
"Off the Map: A Look into Backyard Paradises Created by Visionary Artists Around the World"  
[www.pbs.org/independentlens/offthemap/](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/offthemap/)  
An interactive site for teachers (and students) to explore the visionary environments of folk artists such as Grandma Prisbrey and American Folk Art Museum exhibition subjects Nek Chand and Howard Finster. Includes video, photographs, lesson plans and resources, and online activities for students.

Public Broadcasting Service online:  
"P.O.V.: *In the Realms of the Unreal*"  
[www.pbs.org/pov/intherealms/](http://www.pbs.org/pov/intherealms/)  
Includes an audio tour of Henry Darger's work with Brooke Davis Anderson, director and curator of the

Henry Darger Study Center at the American Folk Art Museum; excerpts of the artist's 15,000-page manuscript; an interview with Jessica Yu, director of the documentary *In the Realms of the Unreal*; and high-school-level curriculum materials produced by the American Folk Art Museum.

Purvis Young website:  
[www.purvisyoung.com](http://www.purvisyoung.com)  
Includes slide shows of artwork, links to articles and reviews, and exhibition listings.

The Quilt Index:  
[www.quiltindex.org](http://www.quiltindex.org)  
An online research and reference tool with contextual information and images of quilts held in private and public collections. Browse by category: collection, time period, style/techniques, purpose/function, or location.

Universidad de los Andes, Mérida, Venezuela:  
"Bolívar para los niños"  
[www.bolivar.ula.ve/indininos.htm](http://www.bolivar.ula.ve/indininos.htm)  
A multimedia Spanish-language website presenting history, bibliography, primary-source documents, artwork, and more to supplement the study of Venezuelan national hero Simón Bolívar.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:  
Educational Resources  
[www.epa.gov/epaoswer/education/students.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/education/students.htm)  
Offers grade-specific facts, lesson plans, worksheets, and resources introducing and explaining the issues, processes, and reasons for waste reduction, reuse, and recycling. Links are provided to state agencies and additional resources.

The *Wall of Respect* on the Web:  
[www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu/wallofrespect/main.htm](http://www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu/wallofrespect/main.htm)  
A "re-creation" of Chicago's *Wall of Respect*, a mural created by visual artists from the Organization of Black American Culture in 1967, featuring images, history, biographies, lessons, and online activities.

## RECOMMENDED FOR TEACHERS' VIEWING

Yu, Jessica. *In the Realms of the Unreal: The Mystery of Henry Darger*. DVD. New York: Wellspring Media, 2005.

Documentary featuring dreamlike animation of Henry Darger's art and narration taken from his 15,000-page opus to trace the artist's life and give an insight into the stories he imagined in his drawings, paintings, and writings.

# VISITING THE AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM

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Thank you for choosing the American Folk Art Museum for your students.

For information on current school and educator programs, please call 212. 265. 1040, ext. 381, e-mail [grouptours@folkartmuseum.org](mailto:grouptours@folkartmuseum.org), or look to the museum's website at [www.folkartmuseum.org](http://www.folkartmuseum.org).

## Planning Your Visit

The museum is a contracted vendor with the Department of Education (vendor number: MUS005000, contract number: 9501432).

- Groups must have one adult chaperone per every ten students.
- Chaperones and teachers are responsible for supervising groups.
- The museum does not allow self-guided groups. All groups must have a reservation with a museum guide.
- Tours in select languages, including American Sign Language and visual description, are available. Additional lead time may be necessary to schedule such a tour.

## Scheduling Your Visit

To make your reservation, please call 212. 265. 1040, ext. 381, or e-mail [grouptours@folkartmuseum.org](mailto:grouptours@folkartmuseum.org).

- Reservations must be made at least one month in advance.
- Programs are offered Tuesday through Friday, 10:45 AM–3 PM.

## Payment and Cancellation

\$3.00 per student for a 1-hour session; \$5.00 for a 1 ½-hour tour and workshop session.

- Before your visit, 50% of the estimated total cost is required as a deposit.
- Deposits are nonrefundable but may be used as a credit toward future visits.
- If you must cancel your visit, please call 212. 265. 1040, ext. 381, at least 48 hours in advance.

## Lunch

The museum does not have a place for groups to enjoy bag lunches, and the café can only accommodate twelve people. There is a public outdoor plaza with benches directly across from the museum.

## Accessibility



The museum is fully accessible to visitors with special needs. Copies of labels and wall texts in large type are available at the admissions desk and throughout the museum. American Sign Language interpretation for gallery tours and auditorium programs is available by request with one-month advance notice. Gallery tours with verbal imaging and tours of touch objects from the museum's collection are available by request with one-month advance notice. Assisted-listening devices are available for auditorium programs. All levels of the building are wheelchair accessible; two wheelchairs are available for use during your visit. For details, please contact the education department at 212. 265. 1040, ext. 381.

## Getting Here

The American Folk Art Museum is located at 45 West 53rd Street, between 5th and 6th Avenues.

- Buses may drop off school groups in front of the museum. There is no parking lot.
- Subway: E or V to 5 Avenue/53 Street; B, D, F, V to 47–50 Streets/Rockefeller Center
- Bus: M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7

