

Storytelling Quilt Activity

Lesson Plan

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Educator Resources and Lesson Plans
Spring 2021

Echoes of Harlem, Faith Ringgold



In the 1970s Faith Ringgold collaborated with her mother, Willi Posey, a well-known tailor in Harlem, to make a number of textile works. *Echoes of Harlem* was Ringgold's first quilt and her final collaborative project with her mother. The composition unifies four distinct fabrics in a recurring rhythm and frames thirty faces, which display a variety of individual expressions. Together, the faces represent the many life stories present in Harlem.

This work was included in the special exhibition *Black Refractions: Highlights from the Studio Museum in Harlem* which was on view at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts from January 23-April 10, 2021. This landmark initiative, surveying nearly a century of creative achievements by artists of African descent, explores the vital contributions of these artists, proposing a plurality of narratives of Black artistic production and multiple approaches to understanding these works

Faith Ringgold (b. 1930, New York City; lives and works in Englewood, NJ)
Echoes of Harlem, 1980
Acrylic on cotton
The Studio Museum in Harlem; gift of Altria Group, Inc.
2008.13.10

Storytelling Quilt Activity

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Overview

In the African American culture, quilts have always helped tell a story. Whether it was to help enslaved african americans to freedom to keeping families warm during winter months, quilts told stories of a person or family.

Objectives

In Utah we have youth that come from various backgrounds they may not have the information to tell their “family history”. Whether they were adopted, a child of a single parent home, or just unaware of family history, this activity allows them to tell their story how they want to or how they see it (their lives).

Intended Audiences/Grade Levels 1st-4th grade

This could also be done for grades past the 4th grade to help cultivate a sense of pride in themselves. When reflecting on family history or American history, this would be a great activity to use to help instill pride and higher self esteem.

State Core Links (see State Core Links at the end of this lesson plan)

Duration 60 minutes

Materials

1. Construction paper
2. Scissors
3. Glue
4. Markers/Colored Pencils
5. Optional: Pictures, Stickers, Glitter, etc.

Vocabulary/Key Terms

Storytelling the activity of telling or writing stories

My Truth your own personal experience and opinion about something

Empowering youth an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority, and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and others. (from Definitions.net)

Activity

Art Making:

- Take one piece of construction paper and cut vertical slits. Starting 1-inch from the top and going to 1-inch from the bottom. Create 6 slits.
- Cut one or more sheets of construction paper (different colors) into 1.5-2 inch slithers.
- One by one, slide the slithers behind the vertical cuts and glue.
- Once there is no more room for the slithers, the student can use all the spaces to insert their story through drawing or gluing down pictures of what “Their Story” is.
- Other decorative items like glitter, stickers, etc. can be added to make it more fun for younger students.

Method(s) for Assessment

Assessment can be made by looking at the level of engagement in the project and the final product of the art and stories being told.

State Core Links

Social Studies

1st Grade - Standard 1 (Culture): Students will recognize and describe how schools and neighborhoods are both similar and different.

1st Grade - Standard 2 (Citizenship): Students will recognize their roles and responsibilities in the school and in the neighborhood.

2nd Grade - Standard 1 (Culture): Students will recognize and describe how people within their community, state, and nation are both similar and different.

3rd Grade - Standard 2: Students will understand cultural factors that shape a community.

4th Grade - Standard 2: Students will understand how Utah’s history has been shaped by many diverse people, events, and ideas.

Visual Arts

Respond (L1.V.R.): Students will understand, evaluate, and articulate how works of art convey meaning for the observer as well as the creator.

Connect (L1.V.CO.): Students will relate artistic skills, ideas and work with personal meaning and external context

Create (L1.V.CR.): Students will generate artistic work by conceptualizing, organizing, and completing their artistic ideas.

Additional Resources:

- Book: *Piecing Me Together* by Renee Watson

- Any children books by Andrea Beaty (young children)
- Georgetown Law Center on Law and Inequality: Initiative on Gender, Justice and Opportunity: <https://genderjusticeandopportunity.georgetown.edu/resources/reports/>
- The Crown Act: <https://www.thecrownact.com/>

Example:

