

CONVERSATIONS



Smithsonian
National Museum of African Art

November 9, 2014 to January 24, 2016



AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN ARTWORKS IN DIALOGUE

FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
AFRICAN ART AND CAMILLE O. AND WILLIAM H. COSBY JR.



EDUCATION PACKET FOR TEACHERS
Pre-K/Kindergarten

CONVERSATIONS

AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN ARTWORKS IN DIALOGUE

EDUCATION PACKET FOR TEACHERS

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MUSEUM HOURS: 10 am-5:30 pm daily, except December 25
EXHIBITION DATES: November 9, 2014-January 24, 2016

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Information Desk: 202.357.4879
Tour Scheduling: 202.633.4633
Website: www.africa.si.edu
Address: 950 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC, 20560

SCHOOL TOURS:

Teachers and their students may explore the Museum's exhibitions either with a Museum guide or independently. Pre-registration is required for all school programs. Please make reservations as far in advance of the requested date and time as possible. Our February programs are especially popular during Black History month. All school programs are FREE of charge.

To book a tour, contact call 202.633.4633 or sign up on line:

Please visit www.africa.si.edu for more information

ADMISSION IS FREE.

NOTE:

The lesson plans in this educational packet are intended to be interdisciplinary. Look for the one or more of these icons on the front page of each individual lesson plan, indicating its connection to a particular subject.



English/Writing



History



Arts



Social Studies



Science



LESSON ONE: INSPIRED BY NATURE--Mixed Media



Walter Williams, *Roots, Southern Landscape*, 1978, oil, sand, enamel, collage (USA)

GOALS:

Students will be able to

- Understand that art can communicate an artist's ideas
- Observe nature and use their observations as a source of inspiration in their own artwork
- Experiment with different tools and media to create varied textures

NATIONAL LEARNING STANDARDS- Visual Arts

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| VA: Cr1.1.PKa | Engage in self-directed play with materials. |
| VA:Cr2.1.PKa | Use a variety of art-making tools. |
| VA:Cn10.1.Pka | Explore the world using descriptive and expressive words and art-making. |
| VA:Cr2.1.Ka | Through experimentation, build skills in various media and approaches to art-making. |
| VA:Cr2.3.Ka | Create art that represents natural and constructed environments. |

Artwork of Focus: Walter Williams, *Roots, Southern Landscape*, 1978

Theme: Nature as Metaphor

LEARN AND DISCUSS

Walter Williams, *Roots, Southern Landscape*, 1978, oil, sand, enamel, collage (USA)

Roots, Southern Landscape is an oil painting, textured with sand and bits of paper, collaged onto it. Williams often uses blackbirds, butterflies, sunflowers, children, and a bright red sun as symbols of hope and eventual freedom in his work. Although the artist has positive associations with the Southern landscape, the upturned, barbed tree trunk alludes to his ancestors being uprooted from Africa and forced into slavery. Notice that the flowers turn into cotton as they get farther away from the viewer. The shacks remind us of the pervasive poverty in the rural South.

As a class, make a list on the board of the colors found in the artwork.

Continue looking closely at the work by asking:

- Who is in this painting?
- What do you think the children might be doing? What do you like to do with your friends? Pretend you are playing with your friends.
- What time of year might it be?
- What sounds might you hear if you were there? Imitate the sounds.
- How many butterflies do you see? Act like butterflies.
- How many sunflowers? Pretend you are a flower in a field.
- Where do you think the children live? Are they rich or poor?
- What is the boy hiding behind? Pretend you are hiding behind a tree.

EXPERIENCE AND CREATE: Creating a Texture Board

Activity Setting: outside of classroom (10 minutes); inside classroom (30 minutes)

Materials/Preparation:

- Before class create a “nature box” based on objects in *Roots, Southern Landscape*. (Possible objects may include leaves, flowers, tiny rocks, grass, feathers, cotton, bark, small bottle of sand or dirt.)
- 8.5”x11” piece of thin cardboard for each student (recycled cereal and cracker boxes work well)
- Glue
- Objects from nature such as leaves, flowers, tiny rocks, grass, feathers, cotton, and bark for each student

Duration: 20 minutes

NOTE: If you are not able to go outside, this lesson can also be done inside. Sit in a circle and imagine you are outside. Pass objects from the “nature box” around and talk about the way they feel, smell, and look.

Begin by taking the students outside. Sit in a circle and have them close their eyes. Invite the students to share what they hear and then to imitate the sounds. Have them open their eyes. Then ask the students what they see. Have them pretend to be birds, bugs, or anything else within view. Then show objects from the “nature box” and pass them around the circle one at a time, allowing the students to describe how each item feels. Encourage the students to use words like rough, smooth, soft and hard to describe the objects.

Return to the classroom. Using glue and a piece of cardboard, show students how to attach the objects from the “nature box” to create a texture board. Hand out the cardboard, glue, and various items from nature to each student. They will then create their own texture boards by gluing a variety of objects from nature to their papers.

VOCABULARY

observe

South (Southern USA)

texture

ARTWORKS IN THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTION RELATED TO THIS LESSON

Nuna artist, mask, mid-20th century, wood, pigment, metal (Burkina Faso)



Alexander "Skunder" Bo-hossian, *Devil Descending*, 1972, oil and mixed media on canvas (Ethiopia)



Georgia Papageorge, *Maasai Steppe Ascending—Convective Displacement*, 1997, oil stick and graphite on canvas with volcanic rock and cloth (South Africa)



Christine Dixie, *Unravel*, 2001, linocut and etching on paper (South Africa)





LESSON TWO: JAZZY ART--Painting



Archibald J. Motley, Jr., *Stomp*, 1927,
oil on canvas (USA)



Romare Bearden, *Sitting in at Baron's*, 1980,
oil on canvas (USA)

GOALS:

Students will be able to

- Identify various jazz instruments
- Recognize ways visual arts can convey musical elements
- Create a work of art inspired by jazz music

NATIONAL LEARNING STANDARDS- Visual Arts

VA: CR3.1.PKa	Share and talk about personal artwork.
VA:Cn10.1.Pka	Explore the world using descriptive and expressive words and art-making.
VA:Cr2.1.Ka	Through experimentation, build skills in various media and approaches to art making.
VA: Cr3.1.Ka	Explain the process of making art while creating.

Artworks of Focus: Archibald J. Motley, Jr., *Stomp*, 1927 (USA); Romare Bearden, *Sitting in at Baron's*, 1980 (USA)

Theme: Music and Urban Culture

LEARN AND DISCUSS

The Harlem Renaissance refers to a literary and intellectual surge during the 1920s and 1930s that celebrated African American culture and encouraged expression through the arts. During this time many African Americans migrated from the southern United States, north, to places like New York City, Chicago, and Washington, D. C. During this time, Jazz music was born and influenced visual artists of the time. Like music, art is a form of expression. It can make us feel happy, sad, excited, or scared. Jazz music can be difficult to clearly define because it spans from ragtime to the present—a span of over 100 years. A lot of Jazz music relies heavily on improvisation and syncopation. Common Jazz instruments include drums, double bass, guitar, piano, saxophone, trumpet, clarinet, trombone, and vocals.

Archibald J. Motley, Jr., *Stomp*, 1927, oil on canvas (USA)

Artists like Archibald J. Motley used artistic elements such as color, line, and rhythm, to create a sense of music and movement in his works. Notice the different kinds of instruments in the painting. (Play some jazz music for the students and invite them to dance and pretend to play different instruments as they hear them.)

- What do you see in this painting?
- How many people are there?
- What are they wearing?
- How do you think the people are feeling?
- What time of day is it?

Romare Bearden, *Sitting in at Baron's*, 1980, oil on canvas (USA)

Romare Bearden is an internationally known visual artist, intellectual, and songwriter, of the Harlem Renaissance. His unique collages depict African American life in a somewhat abstract, *Cubist* style. The pieces of paper he uses are both torn and cut.

- What shapes and colors do you see?
- What patterns and colors do you see?
- What materials did the artist use?
- Which artwork looks most realistic? Why? (compare with Motley's *Stomp*)
- Which artwork do you like better? Why? (compare with Motley's *Stomp*)
- How does this artwork make you feel?

EXPERIENCE AND CREATE: Improvisational Painting to Music

Activity Setting: classroom

Materials:

- I See Rhythm by Toyomi Igus (optional)
- Jazz music (See the suggestions below, but any jazz music with a strong beat and melody will work. Available on YouTube or iTunes.)
 - *"Perdido" by Juan Tizol, recorded by Duke Ellington
 - *"Yardbird Suite" by Charlie "Bird" Parker
 - *"Seabreeze" by Romare Bearden, recorded by Dizzy Gillespie
- Paint (preferably bright colors and black)
- Paintbrushes
- Large piece of paper for each student
- Poster or photos of various jazz instruments (optional)

Duration: 20 minutes

Read the book, I See Rhythm (optional). Discuss ways that artists can "paint" music. Give each student a large piece of paper, a paintbrush, and paints. Explain what it means to improvise. Encourage them to use curvy lines, straight lines, bright colors, and listen to the music as they work. Ask students to describe their artwork as they are creating and ask why they used certain colors and kinds of lines.

VOCABULARY

collage
improvisation
syncopation
Cubist
abstract

"...become a blues singer — only you sing on the canvas. You improvise — you find the rhythm and catch it good, and structure as you go along — then the song is you."—Romare Bearden

ARTWORKS IN THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTION RELATED TO THIS LESSON

Iba N'Diaye, *Hommage à Bessie Smith*, 1987, oil on canvas (Senegal)



Malick Sidibé, *Nuit de Noel* (Happy Club), 1963, printed 2008, gelatin silver print (Mali)

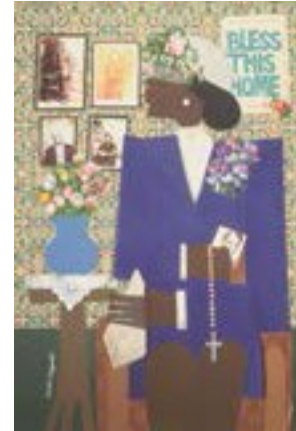




LESSON THREE: THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME--Collage



Romare Bearden, *Harlem Brownstone*, 1980, collage on masonite (USA)



Varnette Honeywood, *Precious Memories*, 1984, collage (USA)

GOALS:

Students will be able to

- Visually represent specific objects, people and places that are important to them
- Experiment with collage-making

NATIONAL LEARNING STANDARDS- Visual Arts

VA:CR2.3.PKa	Create and tell about art that communicates a story about a familiar place or object.
VA: CR3.1.PKa	Share and talk about personal artwork.
VA:Pr4.1.PKa	Identify reasons for saving and displaying objects, artifacts, and artwork.
VA:Re.7.1.PKa	Recognize art in one's environment.
VA:Cr2.3.Ka	Create art that represents natural and constructed environments.
VA:Re.7.1.Ka	Identify uses of art within one's personal environment.

Artworks of Focus: Romare Bearden, *Harlem Brownstone*, 1980 (USA); Varnette Honeywood, *Precious Memories*, 1984 (USA)

Theme: Memory, Family, and the Domestic Sphere

LEARN AND DISCUSS

Romare Bearden, *Harlem Brownstone*, 1980, collage on masonite (USA)

This domestic scene shows an African-American woman combing a child's hair, with another woman in the room with a face like a Baulé mask (from Côte d'Ivoire). His style mixes reality with imagination and symbols of Africa and African-American cultures. He also liked working with materials that were going to be discarded like paper, materials, and paint.

- What looks realistic in this collage? What isn't realistic?
- Who do you think the woman at the table might be?
- What objects do you see in the room?
- What do the objects and masks tell us about the people in the collage?
- How would you describe the colors in this piece?

Varnette Honeywood, *Precious Memories*, 1984, collage (USA)

Honeywood, like Bearden, uses collage to create her artwork, but her use of materials and style differs quite a bit. She uses materials like wallpaper, lace, photographs, and artificial flowers to create her work. The portrait in her hand is of her child and the photographs on the wall are of family members at different stages in life.

- Where do you think this woman is? How do you know?
- What materials did the artist use to create this artwork?
- What kinds of things might be important to this woman? (family, religion, home, etc.)
- What is this woman wearing?
- Where do you think she is going?
- Who might the people in the photographs be?
- Would you like to meet this woman? Why or why not?

EXPERIENCE AND CREATE: Creating a Collage

Activity Setting: classroom

Materials/Preparation:

- old magazines
- pieces of wallpaper, scrapbooking paper, or construction paper
- pieces of cloth
- artificial flowers
- glue
- scissors
- "My House" template for each student (found at the end of this lesson)

Duration: 60 minutes

Begin by asking the students:

- What does your house look like inside?
- What do you have hanging on your walls?
- Why do you put photos of family or friends on display?
- What other kinds of decorations do you have in your house?
- Do you display art in your home? Why?
- Why do you decorate your house or bedroom?

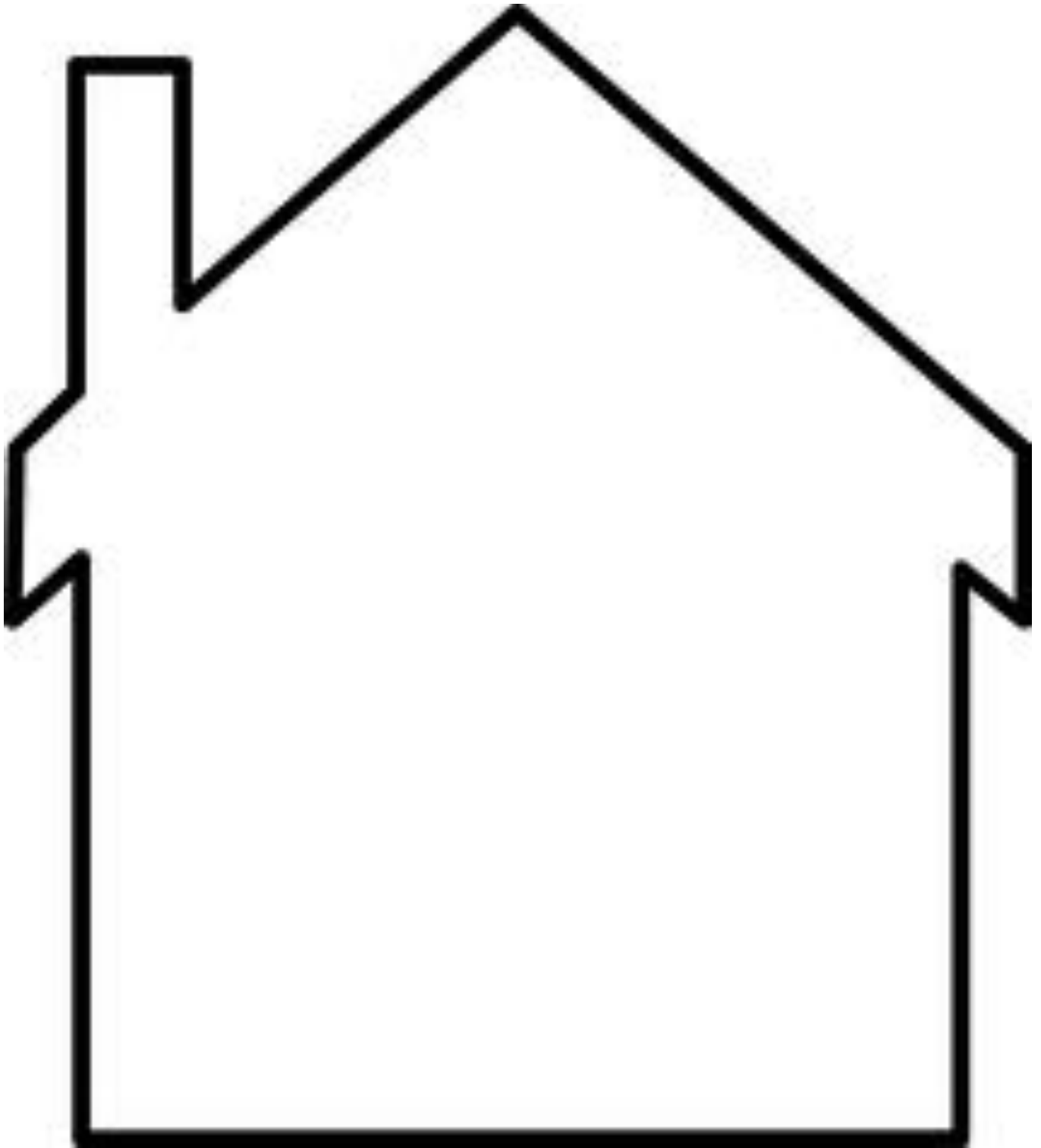
Pass out a "My House" template, glue, scissors and a pile of assorted collage materials to each student. Invite them to decorate their houses with lots of colors and patterns using the collage materials. Older students may wish to make their artwork reflect their actual home. When everyone is finished, students will share their work with the class and tell one thing they like about their collage.

VOCABULARY

Collage

Baulé mask

Côte d'Ivoire



MY HOUSE

Name: _____

ARTWORK IN THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTION RELATED TO THIS LESSON

Zwelethu Mthethwa, Untitled,
2002, chromogenic print mounted
on plexiglass (South Africa)





LESSON FOUR: ART IN THE DETAILS--Sculpture



Cup, Kuba artist, early 20th century, wood
(Democratic Republic of Congo)



Bowl, Lozi artist, late 19th-early 20th century,
wood (Zambia)

GOALS:

Students will be able to

- Recognize art in utilitarian objects around their home and school
- Use clay to create a decorative arts piece (such as a bowl, utensil, cup, ladle)
- Experiment with different tools to create patterns and textures in clay

NATIONAL LEARNING STANDARDS- Visual Arts

VA:Cr1.1PKa	Engage in self-directed play with materials.
VA:Cr1.1.Ka	Engage in exploration and imaginative play with materials
VA:Cr2.1.PKa	Use a variety of art-making tools
VA:Cr2.1.Ka	Through experimentation, build skills in various media and approaches to art-making
VA:Re.7.1.PKa	Recognize art in one's environment
VA:Re.7.1.Ka	Identify uses of art within one's personal environment

Artworks of Focus: Cup, Kuba artist, early 20th century, wood (Democratic Republic of Congo); Bowl, Lozi artist, late 19th-early 20th century, wood (Zambia); Ladle, Somali artist, ca. 1940, wood (Somalia)

Theme: Memory, Family, and the Domestic Sphere

LEARN AND DISCUSS

Materials/Preparation:

- Bring in examples of decorative dishes, silverware, glasses from home to share with the class.

Many African artists have created beautiful, well-crafted personal objects to be both utilitarian and beautiful. But a highly decorated cup or bowl, for example, may have too many decorative elements to make it practical for daily use. Rather, it might be reserved for special occasions and distinguished individuals.

- Do you have special dishes or objects that only come out for special occasions?

Cup, Kuba artist, early 20th century, wood (Democratic Republic of Congo)

This cup was likely created to hold a popular drink, palm wine. Such elaborately carved cups, were reserved for elite men and were prestigious possessions in the 19th and 20th centuries. They have been gradually replaced by metal or plastic vessels cups.

- Why do you think they decorated the cup?
- What kind of cups/containers do you drink out of? Are they decorated?
- Why are they cups/containers you drink out of decorated? If they aren't decorated, why not? (if they are disposable)

Bowl, Lozi artist, late 19th-early 20th century, wood (Zambia)

Wood food bowls may be carved as a single container or as two relish dishes carved as a linked pair. The large size of this bowl recalls the important communal nature of meals, and the status conveyed by being able to offer generous hospitality. The pierced rim of this bowl would be visible both in use and when hung on the wall.

- If you had this dish, what would you fill it with to serve your friends?

Ladle, Somali artist, ca. 1940, wood (Somalia)



Ladle, Somali artist, ca. 1940, wood (Somalia)

Somali ladles or spoons are called *fandar* or *fandal* and are designed to serve roasted coffee beans. Some ladles may have been carved simply as works of art never to be used. Typically, handles of such spoons have triangular or rectangular forms rounded at the top. The meaning of these designs is unknown.

- How is this different than spoons you have at home? (Look at the shape, material, and size.)
- What shapes do you see in this ladle?

EXPERIENCE AND CREATE: Sculpting a Decorative Bowl

Activity Setting: classroom

Materials/Preparation:

- Bring in examples of cups, bowls, silverware, serving utensils, etc. (If possible, bring in objects made out of a variety of materials--i.e. wood, glass, clay)
- Clay
- Tools for manipulating the clay (i.e. plastic forks and knives, small circle cookie cutters, small objects to press into the clay to make designs)

VOCABULARY

clay

decorative

Give each student a piece of clay. As a class, have each student practice manipulating the clay into a ball, then shaping it into a bowl, with your guidance. When everyone has a bowl shape, demonstrate how different tools can be used to make a variety of patterns in the clay. Pass out the tools and instruct each student to decorate his/her bowl. Depending on the type of clay you use, you may wish to bake the clay so the students can take their bowls home. You may also want to use self-hardening clay.

ARTWORKS IN THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTION RELATED TO THIS LESSON

Moustapha Dimé, *Femme Sérère*
(Serer Woman), 1952–1998,
wood, metal (Senegal)



VOCABULARY

Pre-K/Kindergarten

clay: a moldable substance (from the earth) that can be used to make objects such as bowls

collage: a piece of art made by sticking pieces of paper, photographs, fabric, or other found objects onto paper or other backing

decorative: made to look more beautiful or attractive

improvisation: to create with little or no preparation

observe: closely look at

South (Southern USA): refers to the states in the southern region of the United States

