

Womens Art, Womens Lives

Grade Level

8 - 11

Theme

The artist as an individual
The artist and society
Art communicates ideas
Materials and Processes

Objectives

Students will gain an awareness of important Oregon artists
Students will increase their understanding of different artistic processes
Students will analyze the relationship between an artist, his or her work, and the societies in which they have participated

Common Curriculum Goals

The Arts – Create, Present and Perform, Aesthetics and Criticism, Historical and Cultural Perspectives
Social Sciences – Geography, Economics
English/Language Arts

Overview

Women have held various roles throughout history, depending on time and place. This lesson plan considers women's roles in various countries, their daily activities, the relationship between their activities and their art, and the stories that tell of their life and work.

Images

Mali Market, 1999-2000
Neighbor, 1953
Africa Creation Myth, 1988
Zeynab Shrine, 2005
Lupe, 1953
Tree of Life, 2005

Focus Questions

While watching the documentary about Betty LaDuke, listen for information relating to the following questions, specifically about women in Nigeria, India, Latin America, and Mexico.

1. As Betty has traveled, what are some relationships between women's lives and their artwork? What do they create? What is the role of these objects in their lives?
2. What are women's daily activities?
3. How are women's activities reflected in the stories they tell through their art?
4. How does art serve her family and/or community?

Materials needed

Oil pastel
Internet access
Heavy paper

Vocabulary

Primary colors
Tertiary colors
Hue
Intensity

Secondary colors
Complementary colors
Value

Activities

1. Passion for Color

Look (15 minutes)

Look at the painting 'Tree of Life' featured in the documentary.

- What can you tell about women's lives in Poland from the final painting?
- List some objects in the painting, and talk about the role they might play in a woman's life in Poland.
- Look at Betty's color choices. Why do you think she chose the colors she did? Talk about hue, value, complementary colors, and color intensity.

Discuss (15 minutes)

Discuss Betty LaDuke's art making process. Sometimes a painting goes through an unpleasant period.

- How does this philosophy effect the way an artist might live?
- How does this approach compare to our own way of living?
- Discuss the benefit of allowing the necessary stages of a process in order to achieve the final goal.

Color Wheel (5 minutes)

Review the color wheel. Familiarize students with how colors work and play off one another.

Research (20 minutes)

Keeping the color wheel in mind, use the internet, books, film, or library to view clothing from various cultures. Look at the purposeful color placement in the design of the material. Consider that fabrics and textiles are part of the way of life of indigenous women. Remember Betty's mention of passion for color and nature, and the reflecting of mood that the clothing communicates.

Economics (45 minutes)

Choose either Nigeria, India, a Latin American country, or Mexico. Ask students to research the textiles of one country, who designs and produces them, and how it effects a woman's income, whether increased or decreased. Discuss these findings briefly in class.

Create (45 minutes)

Using oil pastel, create a pattern for clothing that reflects a specific culture, images in nature, or local imagery. Remember that when the paper is rolled to form a tube, the pattern should be able to connect to its other side and therefore be repeated without a break in design.

Betty 'builds up the surface' of her paintings. Build up the surface of the oil pastel artwork by allowing one color to dry and layering other colors over each other.

Reflection (15-45 minutes)

Hang up oil pastel patterns made by each student. Consider the following –

- What can you tell from color choices?
- What might the imagery represent?
- What cultural references are being made?

If interested, scan the images into your computer. Copy and paste the image several times onto one page.

How does the image work when repeated, as if it were a roll of material?

2. Women's Stories

Betty has written about women artists around the world.

Discuss (20 minutes)

From what was learned in the documentary, discuss Betty's involvement in society, her role as a woman in society, and how her role might have been different if she were a man. Look carefully at the segment where Betty talks about starting at Southern Oregon University and being the only woman for a number of years.

Read (30 minutes)

- a. Look at www.bettyladuke.com and An Artist's Journey from Oregon to Timbuktu, at <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/waaw/LaDuke/spirituality.html>
- b. Read about other women artists who have worked during the same time period as Betty LaDuke, such as -
Anni Albers
Judy Chicago
Annie Liebovitz
Ana Mendieta
Lee Krasner
Georgia O'Keeffe
Cindy Sherman
Read Betty's article on the above website, and about at least one of the artists listed above.

Write (45 minutes)

Write a short story reflecting a woman artist's life that you have learned about. Consider-

- a. What are/were some major influences in her life?
- b. What difficulties did she have to overcome in order to reach her goals?
- c. How might her role be changed were she living in another country?
- d. How might her life have been changed were she a man?

Read/Perform (15-45 minutes)

Read segments of the writings to class.

Alternatively, create partners in class. Turn one of the short stories into a brief skit that each set of partners can perform in front of the class to illustrate one point of interest in the artists life.

Vocabulary

Primary colors - The colors yellow, red (magenta), and blue (cyan) from which it is possible to mix all the other

colors of the spectrum - also known as the subtractive or colorant primaries. Thus pigments that reflect light of one of these wavelengths and absorb other wavelengths may be mixed to produce all colors.

Secondary colors - The colors obtained by mixing equal amounts of two primary colors. The secondary colors are orange, green, and violet.

Tertiary, or intermediate, colors - are produced by mixing unequal amounts of two primary colors. For example, adding more red to the combination of red and yellow will produce the intermediate color of red-orange. Intermediate colors are located between the primary and secondary colors on a color wheel.

Complementary colors - Colors that are directly opposite each other on the color wheel, such as red and green, blue and orange, and violet and yellow.

Hue - The name of any color as found in its pure state in the spectrum or rainbow, or that aspect of any color.

Value - An element of art that refers to luminance or luminosity -- the lightness or darkness of a color.

Intensity - The brightness or dullness of a hue or color. For instance, the intensity of the pure color blue is very bright. When a lighter or darker color is added to blue, the intensity is less bright, or more subdued.



Resources

Africa Through the Eyes of Women Artists, by Betty LaDuke

Companeras: Women, Art, & Social Change in Latin America, by Betty LaDuke

Websites

Betty LaDuke: www.bettyladuke.com

An Artists Journey from Oregon to Timbuktu: <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/waaw/LaDuke/spirituality.html>

Women Artists of the American West: <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/waaw/>

National Museum of Women in the Arts: <http://www.nmwa.org/>

Women Artists, Self-Portraits and Representations of Womanhood:
<http://www.csupomona.edu/~plin/women/womenart.html>

Color wheel, color theory: <http://www.colormatters.com/colortheory.html>

Color wheel, The Artists Toolkit: <http://www.artsconnected.org/toolkit/>