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Lesson Plan: Still Life | Meaningful Objects Inspired by Audrey Flack's *Bounty*

Grades

6-12

Subject Areas

Visual Arts

Language Arts

Social Studies

Media Type

Drawing

Estimated Time

Varies according to grade levels; two to three class sessions



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Student Learning Objectives

Students will explore their connections to personal material objects and reflect on those relationships by creating a still life work of art. They will study [Bounty](#) by Audrey Flack to aid them in developing an understanding of how to portray the meaning of objects through color, scale, and composition.

Essential Question

How do objects convey meaning? How do we give meaning to objects?

NC Standard Course of Study

Essential Standards:

6-8.V.1, 6-8.V.2, 6-8.V.3, 6-8.CX.1, 6&8.CR.1, 6&7.H.1, 6&7.C.1

Beginner, Intermediate, Proficient and Advanced Visual Arts: V.1, V.2, V.3, CX.1, CR.1; B&I&A.CX.2

Resources

Audrey Flack (1931 – present)

Bounty, 1978

Oil and acrylic paint on canvas

Gift of Betsy Main Babcock, Reynolda House Museum of American Art, 1980.2.2

<https://reynoldahouse.emuseum.com/objects/76/bounty?ctx=96cbc698b8395f905c7ce2e6a12bc40d437e4099&idx=0>

Audrey Flack bio

<https://reynoldahouse.emuseum.com/people/248/audrey-flack/objects>

Vanitas definition and history

<https://www.thoughtco.com/vanitas-painting-definition-183179>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/v/vanitas>

Dutch painting history and inter-disciplinary considerations with an interactive website

<https://www.metmuseum.org/primer/in-praise-of-painting#information-card>

Vocabulary

Still life: art composed of inanimate subject matter, typically objects, natural and/or man-made.

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Vanitas: Still life artwork that utilizes symbolic objects to remind viewers of their mortality and the meaninglessness of materialism and worldly pleasures.

Color: The response of vision to the quality of a wavelength. Color has three properties:

hue (the color itself- red, blue).

value (its darkness or lightness).

intensity (brightness or closeness to spectral color).

Shade: a color plus a darker neutral (e.g., black).

Tint: a color plus a lighter neutral (e.g., white).

Scale: overall size of an artwork or objects in the artwork (always in relation to the size of the human body).

Composition: The structure of the picture. The ordering of elements arranged through principles of design.

Materials

- 3-5 personal objects for student still life arrangements
- Paper
- Pencils for sketching
- Choice of color media, for example:
 - ◆ Markers
 - ◆ Colored pencils
 - ◆ Crayons
 - ◆ Chalk/oil pastels
 - ◆ Acrylic paint

Overview

Students will collaboratively observe, analyze, and interpret the work, *Bounty*, by artist, Audrey Flack (b. 1931), focusing on content, meaning, color, scale, and composition.

As a class, students will develop a list of the objects they can find in *Bounty* and then discuss what they believe to be significant about each one. Students are also encouraged to notice and comment on the colors and the relative scale of the objects and why the artist made those choices.

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Students will be given time to think, list, and sketch 3-5 objects that are important to them. Once they have their objects, they will prepare a composition for their own still life project, paying attention to scale and position, while being intentional with color choice. Students are encouraged to bring in their personal objects for reference. Older students in visual arts classes should work from life, arranging their objects in interesting and more challenging compositions.

Procedure

Session One

- Introduce Audrey Flack, *Bounty*, and discuss overview of *vanitas* still life paintings (see resources).
 - Consider together how Flack treats *vanitas* painting differently than her 17th century Dutch predecessors, with her scale, bold colors, and personally significant objects.
- Students should generate a list of objects in *Bounty*.
 - Discuss the objects' possible meanings and intentions in *Bounty*. Research as needed.
- Review vocabulary list and consider how the terms are at work in *Bounty*.
- Encourage students to bring in 3-5 personal meaningful objects for session two.

Session Two

- After the first class and before the second, students should start looking at the o
Students set up their still life with their objects
- Emphasize focus on scale, composition, and intentional color choice
- Work on still life (may need a third session to complete)

Assessment/Rubric

Students will be assessed on

- participation in conversation exploring artwork,
- thoughtful consideration to selected objects' personal meaning,
- demonstrable mastery of technique with chosen medium,
- and overall strength of composition.