

INVESTIGATING PERSONAL AESTHETIC through BASKET DESIGN

For 4th or 5th grade

By Lauren Holland

SETTING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS for experiencing the *Rooted, Revived, Reinvented: Basketry in America* exhibition at the Museum of Art and Archeology and subsequent locations

1.) Conceptual Structure

Pre-exhibition visit plan – Uncover prior knowledge and perceptions about basketry

- **Big idea/theme:** Discovering your personal aesthetic

- Define *art*, define *design*, and explore differences and similarities as they relate to basketry

- Distinguish between *functional*, *aesthetic*, or *both*

- Have students compile an image inventory of baskets that they find aesthetically appealing

- pay close attention to materials, technique and form

- use description to explain which visual aspects are particularly alluring

- identify as many similarities as possible between design preferences (i.e.

- **1-3 essential investigative questions:**

- What is ugly and what is beautiful? What/who decides this? Can an object that is ugly to you be beautiful to another person?

- Should a functional object to be aesthetically appealing? Why or why not?

- What visual elements and materials are you most drawn to and what is it about them that you find appealing? Is there beauty in mystery (unidentifiable) materials?

What questions will they seek to answer about this basketry idea in their own art?

- How can I incorporate my personal aesthetic preferences into a design for my own unique basket?

- i.e. Will my basket be wooden? Metal? Yarn? Geometric? Organic? Woven? Sculpted? Constructed with large chunks of material of fine strands? Brown? Black? Rainbow? Will there be pattern? How will it be incorporated?

-Will my basket be functional, functional and aesthetic, or purely aesthetic?

- If functional, for what would I use it?

-If aesthetic, where would I display it?

RESPONDING AND CONNECTING

2.) Instructional Activities

What will the students KNOW about baskets at the end of this lesson?

Students will know which visual elements resonate with them.

They will know how to use these as inspiration for creating their own designs.

They will know that perceptions of others are different from their own.

What specific new knowledge will they acquire?

Similarities and differences between “art” and “design”

Differences between functional object, functional-aesthetic object, and purely aesthetic object

Knowledge of a variety of different aesthetic preferences

How and where does the exhibition fit into your lesson?

- Students will peruse the exhibition and select the five baskets they are most drawn to, then pair up with other students who selected one of the same baskets. They will spend at least fifteen minutes observing that basket together, describing in writing as many characteristics as possible and how they relate to their personal aesthetic.

- Exemplary Artists:

- Pima water bottle

- functional, cultural artifact, teardrop form, hair handles, mud

- Jose Reyes: Nantucket Friendship Purse w/ Carved Seagull, 1961

- functional and aesthetic, wood, weaving, rounded, lid, accents/embellishments

- Dorothy Gill Barnes

- aesthetic, wood (bark), woven, geometric and organic

- Lindsay Ketterer Gates

- unusual materials, functional and aesthetic, multi-colored, cylindrical

-Charissa Brock

-wood, aesthetic, modern, organic form

-John Garrett

-bricolage, modern, mostly aesthetic, symbolism

Explain how you will teach artistic ideas and how you will **CONNECT** to prior knowledge and other disciplines such as science and social studies.

-If cultural artifact, students may consider what function says about human needs

-With aesthetic choices, potential for discussion of marketability of design (i.e. Do you think lots of people would like to own this? Why or why not?)

-Artist statement will incorporate elaborative writing, and students will read each other's statements

CREATING

3.) Art making activities

What will students DO and CREATE that will provide evidence of depth of knowledge about the baskets?

- Students will spend a class period designing their own unique basket with colored pencils on paper, referencing the baskets they explored in the museum as inspiration. They will begin with a few rough sketches and ideas, then work their way up to a fully formed "basket". They can be free to be as wild and creative or as simple and practical as they wish. This method is accessible to everyone, plus the sky is the limit for design options! Students will elaborate on their artistic choices details in an artist statement. They would explain if the basket would be functional, aesthetic, or both, and they would take time to explain the construction and design elements, i.e. what materials they would use, how they would construct it, what it would be used for, the form it would take, etc.
- This is an exercise in creative design as well as a good way to practice drawing a realistic object that originates in the imagination. There will be ample opportunity to discuss classic elements and principles (color scheme, line, scale, value to create illusion of 3-dimensionality, etc.) but there will also be encouragement of postmodern principles (juxtaposition, incorporation of text, visual layering, appropriation and recontextualization, and representin').

4.) Assessment

What evidence from performances and products demonstrate deep understanding and generalizable new knowledge? What evidence of pre-thinking, (pre-museum exhibit visit) in-process ideation and development will be required?

How will you know what your students have learned about:

- The development and execution of a personal aesthetic will be identifiable through the record of thought process as evidenced in the initial visual inventory, reflections on museum basketry, basket design and artist statement.

- The artistic concepts and depth of knowledge base about baskets will be evidenced in the embodiment of new vocabulary terms as they relate to baskets, evidence of classic elements and principles, post-modern principles, and thoughtful, uniquely constructed baskets that reflect their personal aesthetic preferences.

- The drafts/sketches will allow for knowledge and ideas to take shape at a comfortable pace. Students will take time to thoughtfully represent their basket on paper in full color, thinking about how its construction would take place in real life.

- Students will reflecting on their own work through a thoughtful artist statement that details the reasoning behind their artistic choices and connections to what they saw at the museum.

PRESENTING

5.) How will your students' work be PRESENTED and curated?

-Students will each have the opportunity to present their creation to the class, and the instructor will guide the group through an informal critique of each. He or she may ask:

What are your aesthetic preferences and how are they used here?

Is your basket functional, aesthetic, or both?

How would you construct this?

Would this be feasible in real life? Why or why not?

Why did you choose to incorporate these objects/symbols/materials/forms?

What would you use this basket for or where would you display it?

-Classmates may provide ideas and suggestions. They may compare and contrast different design preferences. They will show respect for tastes different than their own and have a better understanding of how personal preference shapes design.