



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2023 Volume I: Histories of Art, Race and Empire: 1492-1865

Perspectives on Race: Slavery and its Legacies in Art

Curriculum Unit 23.01.11, published September 2023

by Tina Berry

“Racism is so universal in this country, so widespread, and deep-seated, that it is invisible because it is so normal.” - Shirley Chisholm, *Unbought and Unbossed*

There are those that say racism no longer exists in our country. Slavery is over, and everyone has equal opportunities now because the government adopted the Civil Rights Act in 1957. Some even say people of color (POC) have special rights because of groups like the National Urban League and the NAACP, both of which are meant to empower black Americans and other people of color. The latest out of Florida even touts the benefits of slavery for those that were enslaved. However, a look at the education system, the criminal justice system, or poverty-stricken areas in our nation reveals obvious, even glaring, disparities based on race. Maps of race, incarcerations, country of origin, education, cost of college, and poverty all show the same trends: this may not be the great country of equal opportunity for all, after all. Many people still struggle from the inequalities in our society and artists have been portraying it for hundreds of years in our country.

Introduction

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs for an individual is much like the hierarchy of needs for a culture. First and foremost, food, shelter, and safety must be obtained and stable. When a person or culture spends every day working for and providing the basic needs of life, there is little time left for self-actualization and self-expression, much less the development and maturation of artistic skills. It is with this consideration that viewers can better understand the advancement in art across the globe. Cavemen's drawings were crude and basic because they didn’t have time for art classes or to leisurely use their time to improve their cave painting skills. All of this does not mean that art is not created in times and places of scarcity or poverty; it does mean however that fewer artistic craftsmen and fewer formally educated artists will likely exist. Personally, I can’t help but think of all the art that does not exist because of this and it saddens me. In times of prosperity and stability, the arts flourish, even if the wealth is not equally distributed throughout society. Not just in painting and sculpture, but also in music, writing, fashion, architecture, and even cuisine. Many remarkable things came from the European Renaissance, largely paid for and enjoyed by rich white families who were supporters of the arts.

If you look for art in the Antebellum of the United States, that is before the Civil War, you will find many examples of elegant furniture and fine paintings made for wealthy patrons, but you will be hard-pressed to find artworks created by enslaved people. On its website, the National Humanities Center states that enslaved people had to “create the opportunity to create” and “Perhaps southern archives hold drawings created by slaves in the private papers of antebellum slaveholders, there to be discovered by researchers.” Few possessions from enslaved people exist today due to living conditions, materials that would have been used to create and preserve art, and the lack of interest of slave owners in preserving such items if not for personal benefit or use. Enslaved people that did show a talent for the arts may have been used to create art for white families, such as David Drake, a potter enslaved in South Carolina until his death in 1863. Drake would write messages and his name on his jars and pots at a time when being literate could mean death for an enslaved person. However, his literacy is the main reason so many pieces can be ascribed to him today, and since so many of his pieces still exist it is assumed that his owner knew of his literacy. There are examples of art from black artists of the time, but much of it is likely nameless, has been handed down between generations and kept private, or are not known as being work from an enslaved person at all (for example: quilts, cookware, ironwork).

In this unit students will be introduced to wood engravings from the Antebellum period, murals from the Harlem Renaissance and Black Wall Street/Tulsa Race Massacre, and collage work by contemporary black artists representing their race and culture. Each time period reflects the last. Each new era is growing from the struggles of the last. This is the growth of the nation as displayed by the people that helped build it. When introducing this unit to students I want them to understand this is not representative of all black people, everywhere, but images and stories of real struggles and the legacies these struggles have stamped on the art world (and the world at large) to gain independence and equality, and the security of self-actualization and self-expression.

Background of the classroom environment:

My students attend public school in Tulsa, Oklahoma. According to Niche.com last year our school saw 927 students in grades 9-12. Our school services grades 6-12 with 1,679 students according to the school website.¹ We do have a high Hispanic population, at about 50% of the students. The remaining population is about 30% black, 15% white, and the rest being “other”. A substantial number of our Hispanic students are English Language Learners. I am teaching upper-level Art next year including Art 2 for high school students, Advanced Art 2, and AP Art, while in the past I have taught 6-12th grades Art 1.

Pedagogical Philosophy

Arts integration was the foundation and focus of my master’s degree in education, after getting my bachelor’s in fine arts, and evolved while teaching 4th-6th grade general education classes. Arts integration continues to be foundational in my teaching high school art. My own thirst for knowledge makes me enjoy mixing core class curriculum materials into my art lessons. Students are more likely to find an interest in cross-curricular lessons, to connect prior knowledge, and make the personal connections that are all needed to retain information with integrated learning.

Rationale

I am a middle-aged, white, upper-middle-class teacher teaching in a low- to medium-income school with most minority students. While I do believe students can benefit from teachers of their own race or culture, it is not always possible or feasible. I have a responsibility to add to and improve the equity, fairness, and value of my

students' education in any way possible. Race relations and teaching about culture is a sensitive area. We, as teachers, must ensure that students are learning the history of our world and our own specific areas to include the state, city, neighborhoods, and essentially their world. I wish students to see how much the world has changed and grown since we became a nation and how they can change the world around them and grow with it.

Sometimes, point of view is everything. How can you understand starvation if you have always been well fed? How can you recognize trauma in others when you have never been traumatized? How can you relate to racism or prejudice if you have never been discriminated against? There are some things that some people will never fully grasp, whether that is due to ignorance or a lack of sympathy, but as teachers we have a duty to help students recognize, if not relate to, the struggles that other people face. Imparting empathy is as much part of my job as disseminating information. I hope to do both in this unit.

The unit will be used in my high school Art 2 classroom but could easily be used in lower-level art classes. It could also easily be adapted for History or English classes by tweaking the activities and final product. The content is better suited for high school but could be used in middle school.

Unit Content

My students will look at representations of black lives from various artists during different time periods in the United States from the Antebellum to the modern day. It will be a three-piece unit focusing on slavery in the antebellum period, the 1920s-1930's during the Harlem Renaissance and the Tulsa Race Massacre, and then current black artists' portrayals of their people and culture. During this unit students will view art and read excerpts of non-fiction writings by black artists and authors to gain a better understanding of some of the progress and setbacks experienced by black people in America. Students will also learn or improve on three separate art techniques used in the pieces we will be viewing in the unit: wood-engraving, murals, and collage work.

Slavery, the Beginning of an Empire, and Wood Carvings

Colonialism legitimized slavery. Slavery built what is now United States, which can be understood to be both a nation and a continental empire. When the colonists moved in, they didn't build cities to share with the native inhabitants but moved Indigenous people out to make room for more Europeans to come. When the south was being settled and labor was needed, slavery, which was legal in most of Europe during the 1500's to 1800's, became the norm. In the colonies/states it was considered acceptable in the north and "necessary" in the south. This was because of the need for labor on the growing plantations farming tobacco, cotton, rice, and sugar. Cotton took over as the major commercial crop and was 2/3 of the world's cotton production by the 1860's.² The northern colonies originally tended to mimic Europe's common "society with slaves" while the south plunged into full "slave society" to build and support plantation life.³

As mentioned previously, art created by enslaved people is quite rare. However, art portrayals of the enslaved people are not. It was quite common for rich white slaveholders to have family portraits with an enslaved person in the frame to show off their wealth. Images of enslaved people at work, being sold at auctions, receiving punishments, and life in the living quarters are common, yet rarely created (and even less often

preserved) by the enslaved themselves. Not surprising, art depicting those in slavery from the European perspective compared to that of an enslaved person typically shows a vastly different point of view. We will look at two wood engraved prints and read writings related to each, one by a white European, the other comes from the memoir of a former enslaved man.

Eyre Crowe: Slaves Waiting for Sale

Eyre Crowe, a British artist, created a series of sketches after witnessing a slave auction in Virginia. These sketches were later published as wood engravings and used in two oil paintings. One of Eyre Crowe's oil paintings, *Slaves Waiting for Sale, Richmond, Virginia, 1861*, shows a group of enslaved people sitting in a room, waiting patiently for the auction block, an overseer opening a door in the background, and the white seller and buyers haggling over their prices at the door.⁴ In the oil painting the enslaved people look clean and pretty in white linen aprons and matching dresses like well respected, paid servants. The enslaved people in the image are humanized, real, and relatable due to the realistic style in which they are presented. In the oil painting, one waiting woman smiles happily at her child who is wearing cute little patent leather shoes. Crowe has also added a red flag at the door in the painting. The red flag was used to mark where the enslaved were being sold. Here, he uses the red flag and the touch of red on the enslaved individuals clothing to "link each of the slaves to their ultimate fate".⁵ Note: In his wood engraving of the same scene, the enslaved individuals are caricatures of themselves compared to the oil painting. The white men at the door are notably missing from the engraving and the original drawing, as well. Crowe's images "played an important role in spreading anti-slavery awareness in both Britain and in America".⁶ While he did intend on this image to strike the reader with an emotional response, to feel sympathy for these people waiting to be sold, it was a bit of a fair-weather response to abolition compared to the next piece.

Henry Bibb and the Slave Auction

Henry Bibb was an enslaved man who later became an abolitionist and an author. His book, "Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave", is his personal account of life in slavery and details the abhorrent nature of slavery along with wood engraved prints of enslaved life. These images were not drawn by him but go along with his writings. The artist's name(s) are not given, that I can find as of this writing. Students will read the preface to Henry Bibb's 1849 published writings, "A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave". In this preface Bibb states, "The reader will remember that I make no pretension to literature; for I can truly say, that I have been educated in the school of adversity, whips, and chains." Though he was not formally educated, he recognized that he was a bit brighter than the average slave of the day and used his quick wit and intelligence to escape repeatedly during his lifetime.⁷ Henry Bibb's story is heart wrenching and gut punching, yet he says in the end that he did not include all of the most gruesome descriptions of slavery because it would "not be in good taste" for his book.⁸

The wood engraving, *Slave Auction, 1849*, is the last image in Bibb's booklet. In this image a mother is crying out for mercy at the feet of the slave owner selling off her baby. On the stage behind this woman stands the white auctioneer, dangling her naked baby in the air by one wrist above her, for all the slave buyers to see. All around are white faces, smiling, looking on at the auction or at the smiling man with a whip raised in the air above a group of enslaved people huddled together on the ground. In his memoir, Bibb writes of a time at the auction block that a wife with a baby in her arms was crying and begging to be sold off with her husband, so as not to be separated. She was ultimately ignored and had her baby ripped from her arms so that she could be placed on the block to be sold. There, the Christian enslaved requested to kneel to pray before they were separated, and the request was granted. However, they were driven to their feet by the threat of the whip

when they started to pray for mercy from God. Perhaps, what was said by the praying enslaved men and women was a little too stark for the slave owners in the room to bear.⁹

Despite the fact of having different emotional viewpoints, both images were used in the anti-slavery movement. Crowe was more interested in historical representation. He drew life as it was, what he saw and experienced from the white gentleman's viewpoint, even though his paintings did seek out more drama and symbolism than really existed. Bibb on the other hand was bought, sold, escaped, captured, and tortured repeatedly throughout his life and wrote about his remembered experiences adding artwork that depicted his words.

Wood engraving

Wood engravings were quite common during this time period. Wood was easily obtained, cheap, and it is also easily engraved (depending on the wood type). Though less forgiving than paint, it can be reproduced many times over in print. Metal etching and engraving was also available, and though much more painstakingly fashioned, the metal plates lasted much longer than wood for printing. With the use of the steam press "visual reportage came to play an increasingly influential role for the middle-class reading public" in the mid 1800's.¹⁰ These images were also extremely important for the story telling for the non-reading public, since many people at the time did not know how to read, which was most often the case with enslaved people.

In this first section, students will also learn more about wood engraving tools and techniques and will learn how to use scratchboard to create a small art piece to start. Other options available in the art room include wood engravings, rubber stamp making, and linoleum carving. I will not get deep into the engraving and carving process here, as art teachers will typically be familiar with the process and other teachers could have students do basic "engravings" on Styrofoam if the unit is used in a non-art classroom.

Harlem and Tulsa: Building Prosperity and Remembrance Murals

The next section will look at the Harlem Renaissance and the Tulsa Race Massacre. In the Northeast during the 1920s black Americans were in the beginning stages of a cultural revival of black art, garnering control over the way black culture was viewed in art, theater, and writing. Meanwhile, black citizens of Tulsa, Oklahoma were building up a prosperous "Black Wall Street" only to then have that prosperity destroyed amid a boiling over of racial tensions and hate in 1921. Students will view a mural from the 1930s Harlem Renaissance and a mural in Tulsa commemorating the ruthless loss of life, lifestyle, home, business, and culture during the Race Massacre, alongside actual images of the Greenwood District where the Race Massacre occurred.

W.E.B. Du Bois and the Harlem Renaissance

Du Bois was a well-educated, well-dressed black man born in 1868, just under three years after slavery was abolished by the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. In the late 1890's he was hired to conduct a series of interviews with the University of Pennsylvania in Pittsburg and later for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in Virginia, Alabama, and Georgia. Not surprisingly, the results determined that black people all over the U.S. were still affected by slavery and racism, and that "the black community's biggest challenges were poverty, crime, lack of education and distrust of those outside the community".¹¹ In his efforts to bring about racial equality and to advance the black race, DuBois wrote "The Souls of Black Folk" which became a platform for the black arts movement, helped found the NAACP, and is said to have been a forefather of the Harlem Renaissance.

“During the first decades of the 20th century, more than a million Black Americans took part in the Great Migration, fleeing the Deep South in search of jobs and freedom from Jim Crow segregation and racial violence.”¹² Harlem became the home of the greatest influx of Black Americans and soon the home of a the most influential and powerful black artistic movement in history, the Harlem Renaissance. “...the Harlem Renaissance instilled in African Americans across the country a new spirit of self-determination and pride, a new social consciousness, and a new commitment to political activism...”¹³

During this unit we will discuss Du Bois, his role in the black artistic legacy, and read excerpts from “The Souls of Black Folk” along with viewing the Aaron Douglas 1934 mural, *Aspects of Negro Life: Song of the Towers*. While it is technically an oil painting on canvas, it is considered a mural due to its size and is one of a four-part collection. The image depicts a shadow of a man standing on a cog wheel with arms raised in the air, a saxophone in one hand radiates circles outward, one might assume to be the music he creates. In front of him is a man with a briefcase who looks to be struggling to get up the cog. Behind the saxophone man is the Statue of Liberty in the distance, forever the symbol of success, freedom, and the American dream. Ghostly hands reach out in what seems to be an effort to drag the men down.¹⁴

Skip Hill: Tulsa Race Massacre and Building Up from the Ruins

In Oklahoma, prior to 2010, students were not likely to be educated about the Tulsa Race Massacre. It was then called the Tulsa Race Riots and was not taught in most schools. As the 100-year mark of the horrific event approached, so did the openness of remembrance, reflection, and sorrow in the community. By the 1920’s in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Greenwood District was a thriving neighborhood of black Tulsans with businesses growing and wealth flowing. It was doing so well it was even called “Black Wall Street” by some and recognized nationally. The racial tensions grew with the prosperity of the area until one day, they exploded.

In May of 1921 a young black man was on an elevator with a young white woman. Stories vary; he tripped and touched her (or just tripped getting on and frightened her) or that he tried to talk to her, or he was just “riding an elevator while black”. Regardless, the story spread and got uglier with the telling, spurring police to go arrest the young man. While he was at the courthouse, there were black and white Tulsans protesting outside for quite different reasons. When shots were fired (assumedly by a white protester in the mob outside) the black residents withdrew and went home. However, by morning the Greenwood District lay in ruins after white men raided the area, dragging black residents out of their homes to beat them, looting, burning homes, churches, schools, a library, and multiple businesses, and murdering people in the streets. Bombs of some kind were even dropped from planes, the only time the U.S. has dropped bombs on its own land, its own people. The National Guard was called to step in, and martial law declared. The entire black community was rounded up and housed at the baseball field or fairgrounds for up to a week “for their safety”.

Depending on the source, between 100-300 people died in the massacre that destroyed 35 blocks of Tulsa. The charges against the young black man in the elevator were dropped after the massacre when the young lady recanted her story. However, it isn’t hard to tell that the situation in Tulsa was tense even before that fated elevator ride. The search for unmarked graves in the area is still ongoing and the three survivors, now over 100 years old, are still fighting for justice. There is a link provided in resources for photos. (Warning: some photos include the deceased and could be upsetting for some.)

There are several murals dedicated to Black Wall Street and the Tulsa Race Massacre. One of which is in the rebuilt Greenwood District (a much smaller area than it originally was). *History in the Making*, created in 2021

to mark the 100-year anniversary of the massacre, by local Tulsa artist Skip Hill, faces towards the highway on the side of Wanda J's Restaurant on Greenwood Avenue.¹⁵ This mural is a patchwork of images of people from the original Black Wall Street. There are farmers, children, teachers and businessmen. Strong black figures of the time, some with halos of yellow and orange color about their heads look out at the viewer. The mural is based on a children's book that Hill illustrated, "Opal's Greenwood Oasis", historically accurate look at a day in the life of a little girl living in the Greenwood District of Black Wall Street.¹⁶ The mural shares the book's color palette and pride, as well as the visual texture that goes into Hill's collage work that is included in the next section.

Murals

Mural work can be complicated because you are taking a small image, such as a sketch on paper, and expanding it to a grandiose size on a wall. In this section, students will learn more about methods used to create large art pieces based on smaller images including freehand, grids, doodle grids, and projections. Murals are so common in cities today; all students will likely know what they are and have seen them on public buildings. It is important to note that graffiti art can be considered a mural, however, murals are generally large, complex works with "intricate patterns and themes" and graffiti art is more spontaneous, typically less planned, with a focus "on words and images over formal composition".¹⁷

Modern Day Black Artists and Collage Work: Building on the Past

The concluding section will focus on contemporary black artists and how they present culture and everyday life in the black community through collage.

Skip Hill and Collage

Skip Hill is a Tulsa artist who works in paint and collage. My students will have the opportunity to go to the Philbrook Museum of Art and downtown Tulsa to view Skip's works in the gallery and in the street and may even get the chance to meet the artist himself. Of his work, Hill says, "The aesthetic of my paintings is drawn from African American folk art, African tribal motifs and contemporary popular culture."¹⁸ Hill has complete collections of artworks based on salons and barber shops. His pieces show the uniqueness and importance of aesthetic and beauty, pride and representation of his culture. He says his art is not political and doesn't want it to be.

That being said, as a Black man in America there is an expectation that my art speaks to the historic and contemporary pain of the Black experience in this country. There are talented artists better equipped than me to do that. If my art is political at all, as it is with my 'Barbershop Phrenology' series, it is a rebellious act of negating Black pain and negative images, by radically celebrating Black cool, beauty and joy.

-Skip Hill¹⁹

We will be looking at Hill's work, *Beauty Shop Aria*, made in 2020 and purchased by Tulsa's Philbrook Museum of Art in 2021. This piece is an "homage to the entrepreneurial spirit of African American women in Greenwood as represented by Mabel Little."²⁰ Mabel and her husband lost their salon, restaurant and rental properties in Greenwood during the Tulsa Race Massacre.²¹ The image is of a hairstylist standing beside her

salon chair and the customer sitting in it. They are surrounded by items that reflect past and present black hair care products. Mabel wears a Gap shirt, the customer wears Nikes, and a McDonald's cup sits on the counter. The layering of paint, inks, enamels, and hand-cut and digital images create a colorful and textural image that reflects some of the unique characteristics of black culture. Though there is nothing that can make up for the loss of life, homes, businesses, and wealth in the Tulsa Race Massacres, Hill shows that the people and the culture have survived.

Faith Ringgold and Collage

Faith Ringgold is an American artist who started her artwork and activism work in the 60's. She is most well known for her quilt collages and the storytelling they entail, although she started out as a painter. She was turned away from one art gallery because her work did not portray her as a black artist. In essence, her art wasn't "black enough" for the gallery owner. Ringgold was almost 50 before her mother taught her the art of quilting as she was taught by her grandmother Betsy. Ringgold's great-great grandmother, Susie Shannon, and her great grandmother, Betsy Bingham, were both born into slavery and created quilts for plantation owners.²² They, like Dave the Potter, would have likely done this work to benefit a slave holder rather than themselves, but unlike Dave their work would not likely have been signed. Their quilts could possibly still exist after being handed down through history as a family heirloom, though no one would likely know the specific person that made it and might not even know that it been produced by an enslaved person.

Typically, quilts are considered part of the folk art or craft and textiles genre, but Ringgold has taken her knowledge of quilting and combined it with her knowledge of painting and collage to create art works that are uniquely her own. She "uses fabric to weave together personal stories and histories of African American experience."²³ Her first solo art quilt was titled *Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima* [1983]. She says it took a year to make and was created as she mourned over the death of her mother.²⁴

Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima is a story quilt about a fictional character, Jemima Blakley, though loosely based on her own aunts. Ringgold's Aunt Jemima is the matriarch of a large family, and unlike her namesake of pancake fame, this Aunt Jemima is a strong independent businesswoman. "Ringgold exposed and subverted the racist undertones in the way Aunt Jemima is depicted as the mammy stereotype that was often used to portray African American women by giving her a story; she was shown with a family and had hopes and dreams."²⁵ The image has 9 panes that tell the story of the family in the surrounding panels. In one interview she stated that she was able to take a racist, controversial subject and turn it into a story of pride and heritage.²⁶

Collage

In this section, students will learn about collage work and techniques and will make a small collage piece of their own. Good collage work requires a lot of creativity, reasoning, and problem-solving. Learning how to collage with various techniques can be extremely helpful in other art areas of work, also. Collage work is the layering of materials, using different items to form a new whole. Although magazines and other paper sources are most typical in collage work, artists often use paint, textiles, markers, and many other materials. Collage is sometimes thought of as kitschy, or tacky, children's work of gluing images from a magazine onto paper. However, when done well, collage is a dynamic and expressive art form. Working with collage teaches students about color, design, texture, dimension, composition, and helps with focus.

Student Work

Students will use one of the techniques they have learned or practiced in this unit to use in creating a final art piece. They will learn and practice techniques after each section. The focus of the final piece will be based on memory and how people overcome adversity and trauma. Students interested in mural work will be able to create murals in the school building.

Strategies

Learning Stations

Call it centers or learning stations, this strategy allows students to visit different areas of the room to work in small groups (or alone, as some prefer). These stations can be set up to build from one station to the next or to learn something individual from each. For this unit, stations will be set up for students to visit after discussing Skip Hill and Faith Ringgold and their collage work. Stations will include an area with more examples of collage work for students to get ideas from, a station with paint, a station with markers and other drawing implements, and a station with magazines and fabric, and a station for added tidbits such as buttons, rhinestones, or other decorative objects. Separating these stations will help to keep students from creating a complete disaster on their own tables and, hopefully, keep paint from getting on everything else at the stations.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers are standard in many classrooms, such as Venn diagrams, T-charts, 4 squares. Graphic organizers allow students to create visuals to help them understand, organize, and remember information. These charts are great for visual learners and hands-on learners. My students will use a starburst chart for their graphic organizer. Whether they are using the chart for themselves, an artist, or author, the person's name will go in the middle with lines drawn out around the name to answer specific questions or prompts to identify the individual.

Rubrics

Rubrics offer students the chance to better understand what is expected of them in their final piece and allow the teacher to evaluate everyone's work based on the same criteria. The rubric lets students know standards for the grading method and what must be included in the final piece, it also gives expectations and guidelines for success. The rubric used will have space to allow students to grade themselves and give an artist's statement before turning the art piece and rubric in to get feedback from the teacher in return.

Activities

Personal Identity Chart

Slavery was intended to take away enslaved peoples' personal identity. One can only imagine the overwhelming emotions of being freed from slavery, but then also creating an entirely new life. Almost 150 years later, black Americans are still affected by the aftereffects of slavery, segregation, and racism and for many, their past has become a part of their personal identity.

This activity uses a graphic organizer to encourage students to think about their personal identity: who they are and what they represent and what represents them, as well. Students will first brainstorm in small groups the things they feel make up any personal identity. Students will be encouraged to think about things about identity that change over the course of life, things we can and can't control, as well as background, age group, physical characteristics (especially things that stand out), and labels that we, or others, put on us. Groups will share out to the class to help create a list of things for an identity chart. Students can choose anything from the shared list or their table list to finish their identity assignment.

In small groups, students will use the identity chart list to research or use information given in the lesson to create one identity chart for one artist or author. Students will hang the charts around the room to be able to walk around to see them all. Individual students will then use that list to build their own identity chart which will be helpful in their final art pieces for the unit. The idea is for students to get to know the artists and authors, identify their own important traits, and have needed details for their final Identity project.

Historical Timeline

Thinking back in time over 150 years can be daunting and unfathomable to a teenager. It's hard enough to contextualize as an adult. To better understand the history, we will build a timeline of black historical events. Students will be given an event and asked to find the date and facts about the event. Students will be asked to create a small image on a scratch board to reflect the event using skills learned in separate etching and engraving lessons. They will date and label the pieces; we will then create the physical timeline in our hallway. Here is a list of 13 items that date from the beginning of slavery to its abolition with the 13th Amendment.²⁷ Many more items could be added to this list of course, as well as events from 1865 to the present.

1619 First enslaved peoples brought to the colonies.

Early 1780's Underground Railroad started to help people escape slavery.

1791 Haitian uprising leads to stricter treatment of enslaved people in the south.

1793 Eli Whitney invents the cotton gin that leads the South to move from tobacco to cotton as its money-making crop.

1793 Fugitive Slave Act passed by Congress makes it illegal to help an enslaved person's escape.

1820 Missouri Compromise

1831 Nat Turner leads the only effective slave rebellion in U.S. history which led to harsher restrictions for

enslaved people in the south.

1831 Abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator* started by William Lloyd Garrison

1857 Dred Scott case in the Supreme Court declared Missouri Compromise unconstitutional, allowing slavery in all territories.

1859 John Brown's Raid was a collection of abolitionists led by John Brown in a failed to take a federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia in order to attack Virginia slaveholders.

1860 Anti-slavery president Abraham Lincoln elected as President.

1861 Civil War Begins after 242 years of slavery in the colonies and states.

1865 The 13th Amendment officially abolishes slavery.

Art Evaluations

Students will individually and collaboratively interpret, analyze, and defend or critique each piece of art in the unit. Students will have the opportunity to investigate each image before discussions. They are invited to take notes and/or sketches or just think about the work. What is the image? What do things mean or represent? What is it made of? How was it made? Why was it made? We will then go through a Socratic dialogue to discuss each piece with the common Socratic understanding that it is a discussion, not a debate, with the pursuit of deeper understanding and appreciation of the art piece.

Final Art Project

Throughout the unit students will have learned about black artists and authors that have captured their own identities and that of their culture from the Antebellum to the present. They have looked at the long battle from the beginning of slavery until today and witnessed the art and writings representing the building of the "American Dream". It is now their chance to express themselves and share themselves with the audience of their choice. Using the learning and experience of scratchboards, engraving wood, designing and preparing a surface beforehand or spray painting a large surface, and collage work, students will create original art pieces that represent who they are.

Reference Materials

Edgefield Potters and David Drake ('Dave the Potter')

Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/edgefield>

Dave the Potter, Vases and Jugs

<https://www.osgf.org/blog/2019/2/13/dave-the-potter-and-his-historic-ceramics>

Eyre Crow, *Slaves Waiting for Sale, Richmond, Virginia, 1861*

<https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/slave-Trade-eyre-crowes-images-of-the/>

Henry Bibb pamphlet image, Author Unknown, *Slave Auction*, 1849

<https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bibb/bibb.html>

B., Du Bois W E, and Brent Hayes Edwards. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

Aaron Douglas, mural, *Aspects of Negro Life: Song of the Towers*, 1934

<https://www.illustrationhistory.org/illustrations/aspects-of-negro-life-song-of-the-towers>

Skip Hill, mural, *History in the Making*, 2021

<https://www.tulsa.tours/greenwood-black-wall-street-tour>

Tulsa Historical Society and Museum. Images of Tulsa Race Massacre

<https://www.tulsa-history.org/exhibit/1921-tulsa-race-massacre/photos/nggallery/page/5>

Skip Hill, collage, *Beauty Shop Aria*, 2020

<https://www.skiphillart.com>

Faith Ringgold, collage quilt, *Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima*, 1983

<https://www.faithringgold.com/portfolio/whos-afraid-of-aunt-jemima/>

Appendix on Implementing District Standards

These are Oklahoma Academic Standards for high school art according to the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

VA.P.1: Utilize a variety of ideas and subject matter in the creation of original works of visual art.

III.VA.P.1.1 Synthesize knowledge of social, cultural, historical, and personal life with art-making approaches to create original, meaningful works of art or design.

This unit will easily meet the “Accomplished” top tier (III) requirement for this standard as the focus of this lesson accomplishes exactly what it says.

VA.CHP.1: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

III.VA.CHP.1.1 Evaluate the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society.

During our Socratic dialogues students will evaluate the impact of artists on their community and society at

Bibliography

“6 Key Figures of the Harlem Renaissance’s Queer Scene.” History.com. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.history.com/news/harlem-renaissance-figures-gay-lesbian>. Arabindan-Kesson, Anna. *Black bodies, white gold: Art, Cotton, and Commerce in the Atlantic World*. Durham (C.): Duke University Press, 2021.

Beach, Caitlin Meehye. “Value and Its Sources: Slavery and the History of Art.” ARTnews.com, July 20, 2022. <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/columns/henry-sayre-anna-arabindan-kesson-slavery-and-art-1234634804/>.

Bibb, Henry. “Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave, Written by Himself:” Documenting the American South. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bibb/bibb.html>.

Bibb gives a toned-down look at slavery and his attempts to set himself free. This narrative’s introduction will be used in the unit, but the entire booklet is an amazing read. His story is moving and emotional while being straight forward and honest.

“Black History Milestones: Timeline.” History.com. Accessed August 3, 2023. <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-milestones>.

This is not a physical timeline but an article. There are many timelines available online that can be used.

“Black Wall Street Tour & Tulsa Race Massacre.” Tulsa Tours. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.tulsa.tours/greenwood-black-wall-street-tour>.

This website gives a look at the two major Tulsa Race Massacre murals as well as a look at what Greenwood looks like today.

Bonazza, Giulia. “Slavery in Europe during the Atlantic Slave Trade.” Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History, September 15, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.971>.

Bonsu, Osei. “50 Years of Celebrating Black Beauty and Culture: Faith Ringgold.” Frieze. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.frieze.com/article/50-years-celebrating-black-beauty-and-culture-faith-ringgold>.

Faith Ringgold started her career painting flowers and pretty things. She was told she needed to find herself in her art. I’m sure that was very hard for her to hear, but I’m glad she listened. She has spent a half a century proving she had found herself

Bontemps, Alex. “Seeing Slavery: How Paintings Make Words Look Different.” Commonplace, November 6, 2019. <http://commonplace.online/article/seeing-slavery-how-paintings-make-words-look-different/>. Douglas, Aaron. “Aspects of Negro Life: Song of the Towers, 1934.” Illustration History. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.illustrationhistory.org/illustrations/aspects-of-negro-life-song-of-the-towers>.

DuBois, W.E., and Brent Hayes Edwards. *The souls of Black Folk*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

This book is a collection of writings rather than one complete story. It tells of the Black American struggles, inequalities, and the need for higher education in their community.

“The Economics of Cotton - Opened CUNY.” Open Ed CUNY. Accessed August 1, 2023.
<https://opened.cuny.edu/courseware/lesson/368/overview>.

“Faith Ringgold: Aunt Jemima Focus.” YouTube, March 22, 2010.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1AXCF2h3cQ>.

This video is an interview with Faith Ringgold. The piece goes through multiple pieces of her art and she talks about each piece. For the Aunt Jemima piece, start at about 35:20. The painting previous to Who’s Afraid of Aunt Jemima in the video does have nudity.

Goeser, Caroline. *Picturing the new negro: Harlem Renaissance Print Culture and Modern Black Identity*. Lawrence, , Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2007.

Graham, Margaret. “An Exploration of the Work of Faith Ringgold - Voca: Voices in Contemporary Art.” VoCA, February 3, 2022.
<https://voca.network/blog/2021/02/26/an-exploration-of-the-work-of-faithringgold/#:~:text=In%20Who’s%20Afraid%20of%20Aunt,and%20had%20hopes%20and%20dreams>.

Hill, Karlos K., and Kevin Matthews. *The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre: a photographic history*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2021.
https://books.google.com/books?id=59I7EAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

This is an online Google book. It allows you to scroll through the book to view some of the images. It is informative but does have some graphic images.

Hill, Skip. “Beauty Shop Aria Acquired by Philbrook Museum of Art.” SKIP HILL /PORTFOLIO, November 9, 2021.
<https://www.skiphillart.com/blog-1/hp8j29et5344blz4ctytcp96n8fsjp>.

Hill, Skip. “Skip Hill /Portfolio.” SKIP HILL /PORTFOLIO, March 8, 2023. <https://www.skiphillart.com/>.

Skip Hills work can be seen here. He also takes the time to talk about his life, his work, and his experiences.

Hylton, Najah-Amatullah, Quraysh Ali Lansana, and Skip Hill. *Opal’s Greenwood Oasis*. Tulsa, OK: Calliope Group, 2021.

Kasper, Lukas. “Easiest Way to Scale up a Mural Art Tutorial | Doodle Grid & Ipad.” YouTube, January 6, 2022.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7CNI5HclGM>.

Korobkin, Tess. “Sculptural Bodies of the Great Depression.” *Sculptural Bodies of the Great Depression | Art History Dissertations and Abstracts from North American Institutions*. Accessed August 1, 2023.
<https://openpublishing.psu.edu/ahd/content/sculptural-bodies-great-depression>.

McInnis, Contributor: Maurie D. “Slave Trade, Eyre Crowe’s Images of The.” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, January 25, 2022. <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/slave-trade-eyre-crowes-images-of-the/>.

"Mural vs Graffiti." Mural Appreciation, February 15, 2023.

<https://muralappreciation.com/murals/mural-vs-graffiti/>.

"A New African American Identity: The Harlem Renaissance." National Museum of African American History and Culture, March 14, 2018.

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/new-african-american-identity-harlem-renaissance>.

Osgf. "Dave the Potter and His Historic Ceramics." Oak Spring Garden Foundation, February 21, 2019.

<https://www.osgf.org/blog/2019/2/13/dave-the-potter-and-his-historic-ceramics>.

Ringgold, Faith. "Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima?, 1983 ." Faith Ringgold. Accessed August 1, 2023.

<https://www.faithringgold.com/portfolio/whos-afraid-of-aunt-jemima/>.

"Slaves Waiting for Sale." Omeka RSS. Accessed August 1, 2023.

<https://www.virginiamemory.com/online-exhibitions/items/show/396>.

Smith, Clint. *How the word is passed a reckoning with the history of Slavery Across America*. New York, NY: Back Bay Books, Little, Brown and Company, 2022.

"W. E. B. Du Bois - Beliefs, Niagara Movement & NAACP." History.com. Accessed August 1, 2023.

https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/w-e-b-du-bois#section_4.

Wonderful read about the life and times of W.E.B. DuBois. It shows what an exceptional man he was and insight into why he thought education was so important and why he became so involved in the civil rights movement.

West, Shearer. *The Victorians and race*. Aldershot, Hants.: Ashgate, 2000. P. 35

"What Eyre Crowe Saw." Omeka RSS. Accessed August 1, 2023.

<https://www.virginiamemory.com/online-exhibitions/exhibits/show/to-be-sold/eyre-crowe>.

Will Rogers College Middle & High School. Accessed August 2, 2023. <https://rogers.tulsaschools.org/>.

Notes

1 Home - will rogers college middle & high school. Accessed August 2, 2023. <https://rogers.tulsaschools.org/>.

2 <https://opened.cuny.edu/courseware/lesson/368/overview>

3 Slavery in Europe during the Atlantic Slave Trade

4 <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/slave-Trade-eyre-crowes-images-of-the/>

5 <https://www.virginiamemory.com/>

[online-exhibitions/exhibits/show/to-be-sold/eyre-crowe/waiting-for-sale](https://www.virginiamemory.com/online-exhibitions/exhibits/show/to-be-sold/eyre-crowe/waiting-for-sale)

6 Ibid

7 <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bibb/bibb.html>

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid

10 *The Victorians and Race*, P. 35

11 https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/w-e-b-du-bois#section_4

12 <https://www.history.com/news/harlem-renaissance-figures-gay-lesbian>

13 <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/new-african-american-identity-harlem-renaissance>

14 <https://www.illustrationhistory.org/illustrations/aspects-of-negro-life-song-of-the-towers>

15 <https://www.tulsa.tours/greenwood-black-wall-street-tour>

16 Hylton, Najah-Amatullah, Quraysh Ali Lansana, and Skip Hill. *Opal's Greenwood Oasis*. Tulsa, OK: Calliope Group, 2021.

17 <https://muralappreciation.com/murals/mural-vs-graffiti/>

18 <https://www.skiphillart.com/bio>

19 <https://www.skiphillart.com/bio>

20 <https://www.skiphillart.com>

21 <https://www.skiphillart.com/blog-1/hp8j29et5344blz4ctytcp96n8fsjp>

22 <https://www.frieze.com/article/50-years-celebrating-black-beauty-and-culture-faith-ringgold>

23 Ibid

24 Ibid

25 <https://voca.network/blog/2021/02/26/an-exploration-of-the-work-of-faith-ringgold/#:~:text=In%20Who's%20Afraid%20of%20Aunt,and%20had%20hopes%20and%20dreams>

26 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1AXCF2h3cQ>

27 <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-milestones>

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use