

Katie Romanic

**Unit Name:** Sharing Personal Significance

**Lesson Title:** Identity Still Life

**Age Group:** 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade Art III students

**Duration of Lesson:** This lesson will likely span the course of a couple weeks, and the exact time duration will only be determined by monitoring student progress over the duration of the lesson.

**Current Lesson Focus:** It is educationally important for students to learn about the unit plan central focus because self-identity is a perpetually, ever-evolving construct, and it is often something adolescent students struggle to grasp as they are caught in the awkward place between childhood and adulthood. Emotionally, students in the “artistic thinking” stage have entered the adult world of thinking; however, this is often met by frustration caused by the belief that adults cannot comprehend the issues facing adolescents. Artistically, students of this age have well-developed skills across multiple mediums and often view art as a creative outlet for a means of self-expression, making a lesson combining the challenges of a photorealism painting with the focus on objects reflective of students’ identity perfectly suited for students of this particular age group (Kerlavage, 58). This painting will also serve as a means to visually memorialize their given persona at their particular stage in life.

**Goals:**

6PE: Identify, examine and understand the aesthetic, stylistic and functional considerations of designing objects, environments and communications.

6PR: Expand visual literacy as a means to create images that advance individual expression and communication.

3RE: Explain artistic processes from idea conception to completion of a work of art using descriptive and arts-specific terminology.

**Lesson Objectives:**

Cognitive:

1. Critical Inquiry: Students will critically examine the works of Aminah Robinson and Audrey Flack, which symbolically function as memorials and reveal the concept of self-identity.
2. Historical Inquiry: Students will discover how memorials cross into the realm of art pieces and how they have symbolically functioned as visual attractions to help people remember people, events, and occasions both large and small.

Affective

3. Students will unveil the concept of self-identity and memorials through the study of works by Aminah Robinson and Audrey Flack among other memorials as they relate to the expressionism aesthetic stance.

Studio Inquiry

4. Students will construct their own canvas with stretcher bars, canvas, and a staple gun to ultimately create a photorealistic painting that depicts a still life comprised of at least 5 objects that are reflective of their personality and will memorialize their identity.
5. Students will create their paintings using color and balance as the two main elements and principles of design that will guide their constructions.

**Integrative Aspects:**

English: Because this studio project is heavily related to the concept of visually depicting a personal narrative, it could be seamlessly integrated with an English lesson of writing a story, poem, or other statement to accompany or explain the imagery found in their painting.

Math: Because students will be translating a photograph to their canvas through the process of making a grid, there inherently is already a great deal of math already intertwined in the lesson. This can be taken further, though, by spending more time discussing aspect ratios and proportions.

**Instructional Concept:**

It is educationally important for students to learn about the central focus of conveying and stating their personal importance because the adolescence period can be one of tremendous social and emotional challenge. Because of frequent hormonal changes, students do not always fully grasp their new role, feeling caught between their childhood innocence and the impending future of leaving home and entering adulthood. Although students still believe they are each a special and unique individual, the struggles their new challenges can bring often lead students to believe the adults in their lives could not possibly understand or relate to what they are going through.

Socially speaking, every adolescent feels the importance of establishing his or her own social identity among his or her peer group. It is often challenging for students to balance the need to conform with the desire to remain true to oneself. Consequently, this dilemma can prove to be detrimental to those who may be unable to decipher their place among their friend group.

Additionally, students place a great significance on their friendships at this time, especially as their friends serve as their support system when it comes to resolving any social issues (Kerlavage, 61). The combination of balancing their new social role and the belief that adults do not understand their individuality make a unit plan where students are forced to portray and share their identity and the things most important to them perfectly applicable to students of this age. Because of the previously stated reasons, specifically those related to the social and emotional development of students, students will benefit from a lesson that forces them to explore the

concept of their personal identities artistically. This unit will challenge students' willingness to boldly display their personal identity, and it will also allow them to further their realism skills. This particular lesson of creating a photorealistic painting that depicts a self-composed still life of objects reflecting their identity, which in itself is an act of sharing themselves with those around them, will ideally force students out of their comfort zone to proudly declare their identity and things that make them who they are to the rest of their classmates. This painting will also serve as a way of personally memorializing their character at this time in their life.

**Language Demand and Function:**

Through this lesson, students will use the academic language as a means of analyzing the purpose, intent, and identity features

**Assessment Plan:**

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will participate in a critique activity that will make use of Facebook "like it" buttons. Each student will place a print out of a "like it" button next to their artwork, and students will use these buttons to write out compliments or what they like about each other's pieces. Students will be expected to write at least five comments on different students' Facebook "like it" buttons. Students will be reminded that their comments must be kept school appropriate and should remain positive yet constructive in their feedback. Students will be made aware of the requirements and expectations of how they will be graded right from the beginning of the project with a simple, straightforward requirements poster that will be posted for the duration of the lesson. A rubric will be created based on the selected criteria for how exactly student work will be created.

**Daily Lesson Plans:**

**Day of Lesson:** One

**List of Objectives for this day:**

Cognitive:

1. Critical Inquiry: Students will critically examine the works of Aminah Robinson and Audrey Flack, which symbolically function as memorials and reveal the concept of self-identity.
2. Historical Inquiry: Students will discover how memorials cross into the realm of art pieces and how they have symbolically functioned as visual attractions to help people remember people, events, and occasions both large and small.

Affective

3. Students will unveil the concept of self-identity and memorials through the study of works by Aminah Robinson and Audrey Flack among other memorials as they relate to the expressionism aesthetic stance.

**Constraints:**

Materials: stretchers, canvas, gesso, large gesso brushes, staple guns, Prezi, projector

Advanced Preparations: prepare Prezi, lay out stretcher bars, cut pieces of canvas

**Instructional Planning:**

5 minutes: Greet students, get Prezi ready

10 minutes: Prezi presentation introduction about the concept of memorials, specifically including examples from Aminah Robinson and covering the photorealism painting movement, specifically the still life work of Audrey Flack. Explain that students will be creating a still life of their own that will memorialize and characterize their high school experience thus far as well as who they are as a person.

5 minutes: Show students my own model painting and discuss how each of my objects is representative and indicative of my own personal memorial. Talk about characteristics of their

still lives that will be advantageous of them to keep in mind when they are taking their photograph. Show composition poster that covers things to keep in mind when creating a strong composition. Students will need to have at least a draft of this photograph for the next class.

5 minutes: Demonstrate the first part of constructing a canvas frame. Show students all the available stretcher sizes. Explain that each student will need to grab two of each of the sized stretchers they plan on using. Make students aware that painting on a larger canvas may lend itself better to more detailed work. Give students time to choose what size they would like to work with and grab their stretchers.

5 minutes: Once all students have picked stretchers, have them assemble the stretchers along with me as I demonstrate how to do so. Show students that they will put a staple in each of the four corners with a staple gun to keep the frame secure.

5 minutes: Show students how to stretch their actual canvas, showing them to staple once in the middle on each stretcher, pulling tightly each time they do so. Once they have one in the middle of each stretcher, show how to continue stapling around the rest of the canvas, also spending time on how to fold the corners correctly to keep the canvas flat.

10 minutes: Allow students time to start stretching their canvases and get as far as they can.

5 minutes: Stop to clean up, have students write their names on the back of their canvases. Refer to a poster that will list all the possible sizes of canvases given the available stretchers along with what size their photograph will need to be to correlate with the size of their canvas. Remind students they must bring in a rough draft of this photograph for the next class and that we will look at the photographs as a class and make any suggestions or improvements.

**Day of Lesson:** Day Two

**List of Objectives for this day:**

Cognitive:

1. Critical Inquiry: Students will critically examine the works of Aminah Robinson and Audrey Flack, which symbolically function as memorials and reveal the concept of self-identity.
2. Historical Inquiry: Students will discover how memorials cross into the realm of art pieces and how they have symbolically functioned as visual attractions to help people remember people, events, and occasions both large and small.

Affective

3. Students will unveil the concept of self-identity and memorials through the study of works by Aminah Robinson and Audrey Flack among other memorials as they relate to the expressionism aesthetic stance.

**Constraints:**

Materials: canvases made from last time, stretchers and canvas for those who may have been absent, staple guns, gesso, gesso brushes, student photographs

Advanced Preparations: prepare containers of gesso

**Instructional Planning:**

5 minutes: Greet students, have students get their canvases from last time.

5 minutes: Gather students for a demonstration of putting gesso on their canvases. This will be done first before looking at photographs so that the time required for the first layer of gesso can be used productively, and that is when we will look at photographs. Demonstrate using a large gesso brush how to apply a relatively thin layer to the canvas, making sure to remind students you do not want any globs anywhere. It should be as even of a coat of gesso as possible. Show students to apply gesso to the sides of the canvas as well.

15 minutes: Give students time to apply their first coat of gesso to their canvas.

10 minutes: Have students lay out the photographs they took for their paintings. Students will look at each other's, and we will discuss strengths and weaknesses among them as well as possible improvements that could be made to the quality of their images that would produce stronger paintings in the end. Stress to students that they will be working on this painting for a good length of time, and the quality of their final painting will be determined in part by the quality of their image in the very beginning. Explain that if students are not happy with their photograph, they make retake it, but they must have the final image by the next class regardless.

15 minutes: Give students time to apply a second coat of gesso to their canvases, emphasizing again the need to have an even application of gesso for the top coat as well. Clean up, wash brushes, put gesso away, wash hands as necessary. Leave canvas out to dry. Make sure every student puts his or her name on the back of the canvas.

**Day of Lesson:** Day Three

**List of Objectives for this day:**

Studio Inquiry

4. Students will construct their own canvas with stretcher bars, canvas, and a staple gun to ultimately create a photorealistic painting that depicts a still life comprised of at least 5 objects that are reflective of their personality and will memorialize their identity.

5. Students will create their paintings using color and balance as the two main elements and principles of design that will guide their constructions.

**Constraints:**

Materials: canvas, photographs, rulers

**Instructional Planning:**



5 minutes: Greet students, have students find their canvas and pull out their photographs. Talk about how we will be gridding their photograph and translating it to the larger canvas as a process of creating an enlargement of the photograph. Compare the process to when students make a graph or chart things out in math class.

5 minutes: Demonstrate how to grid their photographs and canvas. Talk about how large the squares will need to be on the photograph in relation to their painting on the canvas.

15 minutes: Give students time to grid out their photographs and canvases. Remind students to draw lightly as they will not want to see their pencil lines through their painting when they are all finished.

5 minutes: Demonstrate how students will be drawing the essential lines from their photographs on their canvases. Explain that students will not need to draw out each little detail as it may be easier to paint those instead. Rather, have them focus on the larger areas that will help guide their drawing. Demonstrate how students should work upside down throughout this process and explain that doing so will force them to rely on their right brain and see shapes rather than relying on their left-brain to tell them what they should be drawing. Refer to the quote poster of draw what you see, not what you think you see.

15 minutes: Give students time to draw their photograph on their canvas, reminding students to continue to draw very lightly.

5 minutes: Clean up. Put canvases and photographs away. If time allows, stop for a brief activity that focuses on the right brain versus the left-brain as a way of furthering student knowledge about the process and reiterate the value in working upside down.

**Day of Lesson:** Day Four

**List of Objectives for this day:**

## Studio Inquiry

4. Students will construct their own canvas with stretcher bars, canvas, and a staple gun to ultimately create a photorealistic painting that depicts a still life comprised of at least 5 objects that are reflective of their personality and will memorialize their identity.
5. Students will create their paintings using color and balance as the two main elements and principles of design that will guide their constructions.

### **Constraints:**

Materials: canvases, photographs, paintbrushes, acrylic paint, water cups

Advanced Preparations: Set out paint and paint palettes for easy access for all students

### **Instructional Planning:**

5 minutes: Greet students, have them find their canvases and photographs. Explain that this will finally be the day they get to start painting.

5 minutes: Demonstrate how to start painting, go over that students should always paint from background to foreground. Have students start with larger areas of color rather than jumping right into highly detailed areas.

5 minutes: Talk about how students will not be using black in their paintings, have them brainstorm ways of how they can mix colors to result in any of the dark values they need to make. Refer to color mixing poster as necessary for students to use as a reference point.

5 minutes: Have students get some paint to start with their larger areas, enforcing that students should not take more paint than they need as they should not be wasteful with the paint. Remind students that if they accidentally get too much they should share colors with those around them.

25 minutes: Give students time to start painting, focusing mostly on their larger areas of single colors. Students may move on to finer details as they finish their main, larger areas.

5 minutes: Clean up, put paintings away, wash palettes and brushes correctly

\*The following several days will be spent giving students time to continue their paintings. I do not have a clear picture at this time exactly how many days this will require, especially as this will depend greatly on monitoring student progress. I will, of course, continue to do demonstrations of different painting techniques on the succeeding days, especially things like wet on wet. I will insist that students work painting upside down, only turning their canvases to the correct orientation once in a while to check their progress. There will be several times throughout the work days where I will ask students to stand up and look at their piece from a distance and remind students that this will force them to see things they will not otherwise see while working directly on top of the image. I will also ask that students walk around the room and occasionally observe what their classmates are doing to further guide their inspiration throughout the process.

**Day of Lesson:** Final day of the lesson

**List of Objectives for this day:**

2. Historical Inquiry: Students will discover how memorials cross into the realm of art pieces and how they have symbolically functioned as visual attractions to help people remember people, events, and occasions both large and small.

Studio Inquiry

4. Students will construct their own canvas with stretcher bars, canvas, and a staple gun to ultimately create a photorealistic painting that depicts a still life comprised of at least 5 objects that are reflective of their personality and will memorialize their identity.

5. Students will create their paintings using color and balance as the two main elements and principles of design that will guide their constructions.

**Constraints:**

Materials: finished paintings, photographs, Facebook “like it” buttons

Advanced Preparations: prepare copies of the Facebook “like it” buttons

**Instructional Planning:**

5 minutes – Greet students, ask them to find their paintings and photographs

10 minutes – Give students only 10 minutes to put any last minute details or finishing touches on their paintings

35 minutes – Critique activity. Each student will receive a print out copy of the iconic Facebook “like it” button. Students will place this copy directly beside their artworks, and students will be asked to take a pencil with them and walk around the room, writing at least five different positive comments on the works of their classmates. Students will be reminded to keep all statements appropriate and positive, and make it clear that I will be reading their comments at the conclusion of the activity. Once students have circulated around all the pieces, we will stop for an open discussion where students may comment on a work for the benefit of the entire class. Each time a piece is discussed, the artist of that particular work will be given the opportunity to defend their decisions and add to what has been said.

At the conclusion of the critique discussion, students will each be given a worksheet that asks them to list each of the objects they included in their painting as well as the significance they hold to their personal lives and how they serve as a portion of what their personal memorial would consist of.

Model:

\*Photograph of model will be sent upon completion at some point this coming week.\*

**References:**

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