

Name: Alban DeLorenzo
Lesson Title: Faith Ringgold Story Quilts (Dealing with current issues)
Grade Level: 12th grade

P.A. Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities

- 9.1.12F: Analyze works of art influenced by experiences or historical and cultural events through production, performance, or exhibition.
- 9.2.12A: Explain the historical, cultural, and social context of an individual work in the arts.
- 9.3.12F: Analyze the processes of criticism used to compare the meanings of a work in the arts in both its own and present time.
- 9.4.12A: Evaluate an individual's philosophical statement on a work in the arts and its relationship to one's own life based on knowledge and experience.

Objectives:

Knowledge: Students will learn about the artist Faith Ringgold, who is known for the "story quilts" she creates as narratives recounting both her personal history and her African American heritage. Students will find these themes encompass her work and will visually learn about the enormous impact of African American history in our country.

Skill: The students will study several of the "story quilts" created by Faith Ringgold. They will then work as a team to create a collective story quilt, which specifically deals with current cultural issues.

Attitude: The students

will become more aware of the social, cultural and ethical situations concerning us today, while simultaneously learning about the struggles and adversities that African Americans have dealt with throughout history.

Prepare Ahead: The teacher will have knowledge of Faith Ringgold and her work, consulting the information packet provided. This will also require a variety of visuals of Faith's artwork and the appropriate supplies to complete the suggested project.

Prior Knowledge: Students should be familiar with the content of Faith Ringgold's story quilts, specifically the Civil Rights Movement, and other issues affecting African American history. As seniors in high school, students will have previous experience working in student groups and knowledge of library and Internet researching techniques. The students will be familiar with the technique of collage that will be used to create their story quilts.

Motivation: Questions leading the students to discovery: Does anybody have any idea who this is? (show the class a picture of Faith Ringgold) Her name is Faith Ringgold, she currently lives and works in Englewood, NJ and is most famous for her story quilts. She combines the techniques of folk art and narrative to create quilts that address African American history in general, specifically the Civil Rights Movement as it pertains to her own personal history. Teacher shows the slide of *Under a Blood Red Sky* and asks questions about its content. Tell me what is represented in this serigraph? How do you feel about the use of bold colors? Do the colors correlate to the subject or do you feel different colors would have more appropriate? Would you describe the serigraph as detailed or simplified? Why do you think she chose to make it that way? Next put up the slide *The Bitter Nest Part: The Letter*. What is the woman depicted doing? How does the textual and visual narratives complement one another? What emotions develop out of the silent dialogue between the two figures? Why do you think that is? What is the perspective in this serigraph? Do you think it was done on purpose? What do you think Ringgold

was trying to say by creating this scene? Put up the slide *Coming to Jones Road #6: Baby Freedom Came One Night*. What do you notice about this serigraph? Who do you think the grouping of centralized figures represents? The story quilts that we are going to be creating are in a way similar to these examples in content and use of pictorials with narrative. We will be creating a dialogue concerning current issues and situations by the method of collage, but the subjects of your story quilts are left up to you and your group to decide. I need everyone to start thinking about who you would like to work with and what important current event you would like to visually address in your quilt, then I will tell you a little more about what we will be doing today.

Demonstration: The teacher will have all the supplies ready that she needs to begin the project. He or she will have an 18" x 24" piece of Bristol board (or larger depending on your preference for the size of the project) posted on the wall where everyone can see. The teacher will show them how to make a 4" border around the edge, where the fabric border will go. The teacher will already have magazine clippings and articles of relevancy cut out and ready to paste onto the board. He or she will begin the collage method using magazine articles, newspaper clippings, pictures, paint, etc. The teacher will remind the students to think through the design before pasting anything permanently on their board. Remind students that different colors portray different moods and that adding corresponding colors could add a great effect to their work of art. After doing a portion of the example, the teacher will then show them how they are going to make the quilt-like fabric border so that some of the students in the group can get started on that. The teacher will have a box filled with scraps of fabric or the students can contribute their own fabric scraps to add another layer of relevancy and personal effect.

The students can choose from the selection and form a quilt-like pattern around the border of their collage to form what looks like a story quilt. Tell students that they can make the quilt pattern as creative as they want. They can cut and paste different fabrics, alternate colors, or even paint on the fabric squares. They can include their own text in the border if they have commentary for the situations being addressed. Before they get started students should be reminded that the first thing they are to do is to put all the names of the people in their group on the back of the poster board.

Visual Aids: Ringgold's *Under a Blood Red Sky*, *The Bitter Nest Part 4: The Letter*, and *Coming to Jones Road #6: Baby Freedom Came one Night*, as examples. Picture of Faith Ringgold and a world map.

Reference to Art History: Faith Ringgold was born in Harlem, NY in 1930. She is a storyteller who recounts her life and cultural history through many different mediums. Her most famous method of conveying these situations was through her "story quilts." They are patchworks of painted images and handwritten texts that lyrically stitch together the threads of African American History and her own personal experiences.

Exemplars: Previous student's work and teacher's example

Activity:

1. Students will form groups of 3-4 and together they will discuss the theme of their collages. The theme can include any social issue or cultural situation concerning our current society or historical problems that continue to be relevant today (For example: Columbine, 9/11, slavery, women's rights, etc.)
2. Once a topic is decided on, the students will then spend some time in the library researching their topics. They will be told to look through newspapers, magazines the Internet and to cut out any relevant material. The inclusion of text in their collages is a must!
3. After collecting a sufficient number of materials, the groups will get started on their collages. They will start out by creating a 4" border all the way around the edge of their poster board. Then

they will begin the collage process. The collages can be as imaginative as possible, even using 3-dimensional materials if they like.

4. After the collage is completed, the students can get started on their quilt-like fabric border. They are to think of a creative way to form a patterned border around their collage. They can cut the fabric and paste it right onto the border of their poster board. Students are to make sure that the border complements the ideas being addressed and/or the overall patterning of the collage.

5. When completed, students should be prepared to talk about their story quilt to the class.

Supplies:

- 18" x 24" or larger Bristol board
- rulers
- pencils & erasers
- old newspapers/ magazines/ photographs
- paint
- scrap fabric
- various other materials to add onto a collage (feathers, toothpicks, felt, etc)
- glue

Vocabulary: Faith Ringgold, collage, story quilts, African American history, Civil Rights Movement
Closure: Where did Faith Ringgold get most of her ideas? The Civil Rights Movement.

Assessment Strategy: Students will be graded according to whether or not they completed the project, did they follow directions (did they use the collage method, add text to their image, make a border?) did they work well in a group (each student will fill out a questionnaire asking about their group performance on the project), did they do ample research, Was the presentation thorough and well put together? Did the materials and researched narrative complement one another to aptly address the chosen social issue or situation?

Correlated Lessons: After completing this assignment, the students will create a classroom wide mural, pieced together like a quilt. Each student will receive a square of the mural and they will draw, paint, or collage, something that was very important in their lives. A moment of their personal history. When they have completed their square, the class will work as one to piece together all the student work in order to create one collaborative story quilt. The quilt will then be displayed for everyone to see.

Interdisciplinary Domains: Each group, at the completion of their project, will write a one to two page essay that will be presented with the project describing their story quilt . I want to know why they chose this topic, why was it is important today, did it affect them personally?