



Online Exhibition
Textile Activities for Students Grades 9 to 12

- You Are What You Wear
- Make a Personal Symbol
- Make a Batik Banner

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You Are What You Wear

Integrated Curricula: Fashion Studies and Visual Art

Summary:

Students look at two garments in the Canadian Tapestry themes, for example, in the “Stories” theme, the Chinese Dragon Robe (T89.0303) and the Chinese Wedding Costume (T95.0164), and analyze differences and similarities between the garments from several perspectives, including materials, shapes, elements and principles of design, geographic factors and cultural functions. Then they research contemporary Canadian modes of clothing and create photo-based storyboards to explore how personal and community identity is expressed by the clothing a person wears.

Fashion Studies Expectations

- (Functions of clothing) analyze the ways clothing is used as a means of communication
- (Textiles) demonstrate an understanding of the uses of textile materials
- (Fashion and society) describe the effects of historical and social changes on fashion

Visual Arts Expectations

- (Theory) demonstrate an understanding of the design process
- (Creation) use concepts of visual literacy in describing their art activities
- (Analysis) identify formal, expressive and technical qualities in works studied

Materials: sources of photographs (i.e. magazines, newspapers, computers with Internet access attached to printers, digital or film cameras), 60 x 80-cm mat boards, glue or spray adhesive, coloured markers and gel pens.

Description:

1. Students gather photos and illustrations of people dressed in different kinds of contemporary Canadian clothing, for example: uniforms, costumes, high and low fashion. They may find the images in magazines or newspapers, or download them from the Internet, or shoot them themselves if they or the school have access to cameras.
2. Working individually or in groups, the students choose unifying themes for their images and create collages of photos based on this theme. Possible themes include:
 - Clothing to identify a person's rank and status (in the military, in a church, in a shop).
 - Clothing to establish the public acknowledgement of a person's power and authority.
 - Clothing as an expression of ideals, to express a person's emotion or their beliefs.
 - Vestments to indicate a person's affiliation with a particular religious, political or counter cultural group.
3. Layout of the photo collages is considered as a design factor and the students may use pens to add emphasis to their storyboards.
4. Each student or group of students presents their storyboard to the class and answers questions about their theme and why they chose the images they did.

Make a Personal Symbol

Integrated curricula: Fashion Studies and Visual Art

Summary:

Students look at the Mobutu Shirt (T94.0176) in the Canadian Tapestry “Bridges” theme and examine the symbols on the shirt. They also can look for symbols on the *Mola* from Panama (T95.0210) and the Syrian Dress (T92.0092), both in the “Origins” theme, and at the Dress from Afghanistan (T04X0001) in the “Workings” theme. Then the students conduct further research on symbols used on clothing in past and contemporary cultures, and finally design and make a personal symbol for a piece of their own clothing.

Fashion Studies Expectations

- (Functions of Clothing) identify meanings conveyed in clothing in their function as visual symbols
- (Textiles) create a sample fabric using textile materials and techniques
- (Design and Creative Expression) demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles of design

Visual Arts Expectations

- (Theory) explain how the elements and principles of design in a specific work of art support the concepts expressed through that work
- (Creation) produce original art works in a variety of media
- (Analysis) evaluate their own art works and those of others

Materials: drawing materials, (extensions) iron-on fusible web (e.g. Wonder-Under™), cotton or cotton blend fabrics in a variety of colours, an iron, sewing supplies, beads and sequins (optional).

Description:

1. In a group discussion students analyze the symbols they have examined in Canadian Tapestry. They might discuss the effectiveness of each symbol in conveying a message about the wearer by researching these questions: Why does the symbol have the meaning it does – why did the makers choose those images? Do other cultures have similar associations – what do cranes, dragons or certain fruits mean to others? Does colour have the same association in other cultures or in other eras?
2. Students then research graphic symbols in Canadian culture today. They choose three logos and discuss how and why they work as symbols (i.e. Nike swoosh, bank logos, company icons).
3. Students design their own symbol in a 10- to 15-cm square or round format to convey something about them – their own personal “mark” that they would wear on a robe today.

Extensions:

Using iron-on fusible web with fabrics, available at fabric and craft stores, the students can create their personal symbol as a patch to appliqué on a jacket or shirt. They create the patch and sew or iron it onto their garment and finish it by embellishing it with embroidery, beads and sequins (optional).

Make a Batik Banner

Integrated Curricula: Canadian and World Studies and Visual Art

Summary:

Students look at the Hip Wrapper (T89.0137) from Java in the Canadian Tapestry “Stories” theme, a batik cloth made under the Japanese occupation of that island in World War II. They also look at the Rug (T02.13.15) from Afghanistan in the “Origins” theme. Each of these textiles, in its own way, depicts a response to the conditions of war. Students then design and fabricate banners with imagery expressing personal responses to war and conflict in the world today.

Canadian and World Studies Expectations

- Demonstrate an understanding of social, economic and political structures in the world of the 20th century
- Critically analyze historical evidence, events and interpretation

Visual Arts Expectations

- (Theory) explain how the elements and principles of design in a specific work of art support the concepts expressed through that work
- (Creation) produce original art works in a variety of media
- (Analysis) evaluate their own art works and those of others

Materials: 30 x 60-cm pieces of sketch paper, pencils, white cotton cloth cut into 30 x 60-cm pieces, Deka, Jacquard or Dylon cold-water fabric dyes in yellow, blue and red plus fixatives, batik wax, an electric frying pan, brushes, several small jars.

Description:

1. Students research the history of 20th-century conflicts represented by the Javanese Batik and the Afghan War Rug, plus others, e.g., the conflict in Darfur in 2004 and the Iraqi invasion of 2003.
2. Students also research the technique of batik and other resist patterning techniques on cloth, looking at the Shoulder Cloth (T85.0381) from Sumatra in the Canadian Tapestry “Workings” theme.
3. Each student, working on a piece of 30 x 60-cm sketch paper, creates an image expressing their response to one conflict they have researched. The design can include text.
4. The class meets to comment on and critique each others’ designs. Once adjustments are made, the designs are transferred to the white cotton with light pencil lines.
5. Working in groups of three the students take turns dipping brushes into batik wax that has been liquified in the electric fry pan, and applying the wax to the lines on their cloth. The temperature of the wax will have to be adjusted to make sure it is hot enough to penetrate the cloth but not so hot that it is smoking.
6. To prepare concentrated dyes in small amounts: mix one ounce of dye powder with a packet of fixative, and two cups of warm water. The primary colours yellow, red and blue can be combined to make secondary colours green, purple and orange. The concentrated dye liquids are set in small jars, each with its own brush. Once the waxing of the cloth is complete, students

apply dye directly to their cloth. This method of application is preferable in a group situation to dipping the cloth in individual colours, since students can work with more colours.

7. Once the cloth is completely dry, the wax is removed by ironing the cloth between layers of newsprint.