Collaboration Quilt Collage

Pre-K
Inspired by Wendy Brackman and the Catskill Crafters

Wendy Brackman wanted to be sure her friends didn’t feel lonely during the cold winter months in the Catskill mountains, so she invited them to her house to craft and quilt with her. A quilt is a blanket, piece of clothing or decoration made by sewing together different pieces of fabric. Wendy and her friends call themselves the Catskill Crafters. Together they made “Big Daddy”, a 9-foot tall necktie.

The Catskill Crafters repurposed old neckties to create “Big Daddy.” To repurpose something means to find a new use for it. The ties were crafted into hexagon pieces, and “Big Daddy” was created by stitching the hexagons together. A hexagon is a shape with six sides. The hexagons are red, black, gray, silver, and white. There are different lines and designs on the hexagons. Wendy Brackman and the Catskill Crafters worked collaboratively to create the patterns and designs on “Big Daddy.” To work collaboratively means to work with another person or a group to achieve a goal.

Surrounding “Big Daddy” are words the crafters used to describe their fathers. The women described their father’s using only six words.

Objectives:
- Students will identify a hexagon.
- Students will describe themselves using six words.
- Students will work together to create a collaborative “quilt.”
- Students will consider their feelings in different situations.
- Students will identify the color scheme used in “Big Daddy”

Critical Questions:
How might it feel to spend the winter all alone?
How might you solve feeling lonely?
How do you think it would feel to work together on a big project like “Big Daddy?”
When have you worked together or played with a friend?
What six words can you use to describe you?
What colors do you notice in “Big Daddy?”

Materials:
Cardstock or construction paper; possibly pre cut or with hexagon shape printed
Hexagon template Scissors
Glue sticks Paper and pencils for writing
Collage materials including: fabric scraps (including men’s neckties), paper, tissue paper, markers, washi tape
Activities:
1. Each child will receive a hexagon base. Hexagons might be pre-cut, or a template can be provided for the children to trace and/or cut.
2. Possible step 2: Children collaborate to decide what 5 colors they will use on their group collage.
3. Each student will collage on their hexagon.
4. Students will think of six words that describe them and write them, or have an adult assist in writing them, on a piece of paper.
5. Working together with the teacher, students will assemble their hexagons together to create a classwide “quilted” collaboration.

Modification/Extension:

American Sign Language for shape: https://www.handspeak.com/word/search/index.php?id=4576
American Sign Language for collaborative: https://www.handspeak.com/word/search/index.php?id=6704
These are the signs for “work” and “together”

Possible books:
Mouse Shapes by Ellen Stoll Walsh
When a Line Bends.. A Shape Begins by Rhonda Gowler Green

Song: “Do You Know What Shape This Is?”
To the tune of, “Mary Had a Little Lamb”

Do you know what shape this is,
Shape this is,
Shape this is?

Do you know what shape this is
I’m holding in my hand?

*Educator holds up a shape. Children identify the shape. Together, educator and children count the sides and corners of the shape. Then, a new shape is held up and the song repeats! Include hexagon in this lesson.*
**Self Symbols**

Grades 3-8
Inspired by the artwork of Francisco Loza

Artist Francisco Loza began working in his current medium of “arte en estambre” (pressed yarn technique) in the mid-1980s after visiting indigenous Huichol villages in Central Mexico. Francisco creates his work by pressing yarn into surfaces covered in a special wax. Francisco’s work and the work of the Huichol people depicts scenes and symbols that represent nature, tradition, and community.

A symbol is defined as a character or mark used as a representation of an object, function or process.

In this activity, students will use yarn and glue to depict a personal symbol or image inspired by the techniques of the Huichol people.

**Objectives:**
- Students will study the yarn painting techniques of the Huichol people and artist Francisco Loza.
- Students will generate a list of symbols that represent them, their family, culture or life in some way.
- Students will create their own yarn painting depicting a personal symbol using white glue and yarn.

**MD Content Standards:**
**Grades 3-5:**
- E:3-5:1: Explain how and where different cultures record stories and the history of life through art.
- E:3-5:1: Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages and compare personal interpretations.

**Grades 6-8:**
- E:6-8:1: Explain how a person's artistic choices are influenced by culture, values, and the environment.
- E:6-8:1: Collaboratively interpret and construct meaning by describing the feelings experienced, subject matter, formal characteristics, and art-making approaches, key concepts, and contextual information.
- E:6-8:3: Apply visual organizational strategies to create works of art and design that clearly communicate the main/central idea.

**Critical Questions:**
What is a symbol?
What is a symbol meant to communicate?
What would your personal symbol be inspired by?

**Materials:**
Cardboard or chipboard     Scissors
White glue                 Popsicle sticks
Yarn cut into small strands  Pencil and paper for sketching

**Activity:**
1. Show students Francisco Loza’s artwork and other works by the Huichol people. Have students describe what they see in each work and identify any symbols they see depicted.
2. Lead a discussion about what the symbols may represent in the artworks shown.
3. Have students work together to brainstorm a list of types of symbols they have seen and what they represent. For example: logos, family crests, street signs, emojis, etc.
4. Have students work independently to sketch symbols that would represent them in some way. The following questions can be used to generate ideas:
   a. What characteristics define you or your family?
   b. What do you value in life?
   c. What important events in your life have impacted you and made you who you are today?
5. Once students have chosen their symbol, have them draw the symbol or image on a cardboard base. Keep the bases relatively small (5 x 7 inches or a bit bigger), as this process can take a lot of time and focus! Students should map out what color yarn will go where on their base after their have their symbol drawn.
6. Using white glue and a small brush, have students coat each area of their symbol, going color by color. Then, have students lay down the yarn in the glue. The yarn should be laid down strand by strand and kept tight together. A popsicle stick can be used to move the yarn around in the glue.
7. Allow the yarn paintings to dry overnight.

**Resources:**
Visions of a Huichol Shaman by Peter T. Furst
Francisco Loza: [http://pacoloza.com/](http://pacoloza.com/)
Micro-Drama

Grades 9-12
Inspired by the artwork of Mars Tokyo

In AVAM’s 2018-2019 annual mega-exhibition, Parenting: An Art Without a Manual, artists explore childhood events that shaped their lives. Baltimore-born artist Mars Tokyo creates mini-theaters that play with the ideas of scale, perspective, empowerment, and the delicate balance of the pain and hope inevitably wrapped up in the human experience. Inspired by Mars Tokyo, students will tell their own narrative within 3-D mini-theaters with this visionary workshop.

Objectives:
- Students will define identity.
- Students will evaluate which factors, events and circumstances shape their identity.
- Students will employ thoughtful choices around composition and material choice to depict a specific life event in three-dimensional sculpture.

MD Content Standards:
- E:9-12:2: Brainstorm ideas to make artwork based on a main/central idea or concept. Following or breaking established conventions, plan the making of a series of works of art or design based on a theme main/central idea or concept.
- E:9-12:1: Engage in constructive critique to refine works of art and design while considering relevant, traditional, or contemporary criteria and personal artistic vision.

Critical Questions:
- a. How do we define ‘identity’?
- b. What are some examples of people, places or events that shape one’s identity?
- c. How does Mars Tokyo create a sense of empowerment in the viewer?
- d. How does Mars Tokyo’s work inform us about her identity?

Materials:
Copies of Mars Tokyo’s artist statement, markers/pencils, scrap paper, shallow papier mache jewelry box, hot glue guns, hot glue sticks, tape, collage paper, mini train garden people/animal figurines, sequins, pom poms, tissue papers, matchsticks, popsicle sticks, recycled materials

Activity:
1. To warm up, ask students to write on a scrap piece of paper how they define the word “identity” - this idea could be loose with no right or wrong answer. Call on some students to share their ideas.
2. Explain that many artists create artwork about the people, places or events that they feel shaped their identity. For example, Baltimore-based artist Mars Tokyo creates small sculptures she calls “theaters” that depict specific events or themes from her childhood and young adulthood.
3. Share examples of Mars Tokyo’s artwork, or have students explore independently on a laptop or personal device at teenytheaters.com (or, simply by Googling “Mars Tokyo”).
4. Distribute Mars Tokyo’s Artist Statement, included below, and have students read independently or in pairs. Have them discuss the following questions:
   a. Why does the artist choose a theater as the set-up for her sculpture?
   b. How does the artist create a sense of empowerment in the viewer?
   c. Consider some of the names of Mars Tokyo’s theaters. “Theater of The Babies,” “Theater of The Broken,” “Theater of The Empty Nest.” What do you hypothesize these works are inspired by?
   d. Extension: How does Mars Tokyo’s work inform us about her identity?
5. To prep for creating their own 3-D representation of an identity-shaper, ask students write down, on scrap paper, a word cloud of notable themes or events that have happened in their lives up to this point. These could range from broad to specific. Verbally suggest examples if students seem to be struggling: love, warmth, family trip, grief, good luck, the birth of a sibling, arguments/negotiations, a family vacation, going to church/praying, etc).
6. Students should circle one event/theme on which they will base their micro-drama - if making a series, choose multiple.
7. Students will use a small box as their theater, hot glue, and supplies of the teacher’s choice to create their micro-drama sculptures inspired by Mars Tokyo’s theaters.
   a. Encourage students to envision their chosen theme or life event as a scene in a play. This will help them identify the elements they need to include such as background, setting, props/objects, and characters/actors.
8. Hold a working critique so students can receive feedback on their ideas and execution. During the critique, have students keep in mind they should come up with a title for their works, for example, Mars Tokyo titles include “Theater of the Broken,” “Theater of The Cradle” or “Theater of 67 Years.”
Resources:
Artist’s Statement (Source: http://teenytheaters.com/artstat.html)

This body of work is a natural progression from my earlier Secret Works series of shrouded and lidded boxed assemblages (exhibited in 1999). I wanted to continue and improve on that intimate experience for the viewer. Thus, the idea of small “theaters” arose.

Theaters provided a stage on which visual drama could be composed. They also draw the viewer inside, not only due to their miniature size, but by the idea that drama is taking place within. To some extent the subject matter is narrative, but to a greater extent the content remains open to individual interpretation (which I encourage).

The installation I have designed for this series encourages an intimate, individual, and interactive viewing experience that draws the viewer into the “play” to experience and interpret it. Constructed from modular panels to be configured as space dictates, irregularly, or in the round, the dimly lit installation calls to mind the experience of attending the theater.

Each display is twice covered, first by a velvet curtain which is drawn aside, then by a miniature scale model door which is opened. Upon opening the door, the viewer is greeted by the lighted display of a single “theater” displayed against black for maximum impact. The anticipation of viewing the work and interaction required to do this, becomes an important part of the experience.

The miniature scale of the work in relation to the viewer’s size (whether child or adult) gives the viewer a sense of empowerment while looking inside this tiny world—much the way a child experiences a sense of power when playing with small scaled toys.

Empowerment and interaction of the viewer is an essential element of this series. Because the act of viewing this work requires participation, the viewer feels more ready to interact with the work.

The 3-D miniature scaled assemblages have a second component, which is 2-D and greatly enlarged in scale. When the 3-D assemblages are completed, I use a digital camera with a macro close-up lens and photograph the interiors of the work. I then enlarge and print the photos, and also upload them to an online website devoted to viewing the 2-D enlargements of the 3-D miniature works.

In using the camera to translate the pieces into 2-D illusions, I became much more aware of the shifting compositions within the pieces. Because the camera sees differently than the naked eye, and can only take in one perspective, that of the lens, the dramas become fixed formal compositions of light, color and shape.

With this second 2-D enlarged component, the scale shifts drastically and becomes ambiguous for the viewer who is no longer given an intimate and empowering experience. Now the viewer relates in the expected way most art is shown—without drama, or interaction, and at a distance. With the existence of both formats, this body of work plays with the issues of scale, intimacy, and empowerment within our process of looking at art.

Subject matter for my theaters comes as a result of my ongoing inner dialog, and responds directly to personal thoughts, ideas or current issues I feel a need to address.

From the AVAM Bio: “Mars Tokyo was diagnosed with major depression following a suicide attempt at age 21 and has battled depression for decades. She says she keeps diaries in part as a way to express herself, especially after undergoing electroconvulsive therapy treatments in 2007. Mars Tokyo wishes her viewers to know, “My stories presented in my ‘theaters’ are ones of personal rejection, alienation, and pain. They often reflect a life dealing with major depression. But throughout them, there is also a great beauty and hope, because there is that in life.”
Family Meal

Grades 3-8

Inspired by family traditions as portrayed by artists in the Parenting exhibition, and the book Chef Roy Choi and the Street Food Remix by Jacqueline Briggs Martin.

AVAM’s annual, thematic exhibition for 2018-2019, Parenting: An Art Without a Manual, features artists reflecting on the childhood memories and family traditions that ultimately formed their identities.

In this activity, students will use collage and other 2-D media to create a book that illustrates the family food traditions and rituals unique to their family. This project is designed to be an open-ended visual depiction of food and family-related memories, stories, holidays, or cultural rituals.

Objectives:
- Students will identify ways that food/meals are integrated into family traditions or cultural rituals.
- Students will create a collection of 2-D illustrations that communicate the role food plays in their family traditions and upbringing.
- Students will consider how family traditions shape identity.

MD Content Standards:

Grades 3-5:
- E:3-5:2: Identify, describe, and visually represent places and/or objects that are personally meaningful.
- E:3-5:1: Observe and interpret cultural traditions and surroundings in new ways by creating art.

Grades 6-8:
- E:6-8:1: Determine whether personal artwork meets established criteria and communicates intended meaning.
- E:6-8:3: Apply visual organizational strategies to create works of art and design that clearly communicate main/central idea.

Vocabulary:
Tradition
Generation
Recipe
Ingredient
Sohn-maash

Critical Questions:
What is a family tradition?
How does a family tradition form?
What “ingredients” go into making my family’s identity?

Materials:
Blank mini-sketchbooks
Pencils & colored pencils
Pencil sharpeners  Paint markers
Erasers  Magazines
Fun tape  Scissors
Markers  Elmer’s glue

Intro Books:
- Chef Roy Choi and the Street Food Remix by Jacqueline Briggs Martin

Activity:
- To warm up, have students write or brainstorm aloud the definition of “tradition.” After they have some time to hypothesize, read the definition aloud
  a. Tradition (noun): the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on in this way
- Read aloud or have students read in pairs/small groups, the book Chef Roy Choi and the Street Food Remix by Jacqueline Briggs Martin.
  o Check for understanding of concepts by asking the following questions:
    ■ What cultures shaped Chef Roy Choi’s cuisine?
    ■ What is “sohn-maash”?
    ■ What important role did food play in Chef Roy Choi’s family?
    ■ Why was Chef Roy Choi inspired to start his own business?
- As a group, brainstorm a list of examples of how food is used in family traditions and rituals (i.e. turkey on Thanksgiving, matzoh at Passover Sedar, lamb rice pilaf at Iftar for Ramadan, a recipe passed down for generations, a special cake on your birthday every year).
- Explain that students should think of all the examples of how their family incorporates unique food traditions or rituals.
- Have students write a list of which traditions or rituals are unique to their own families. These could include actual recipes, stories around a particular food item, a special holiday ritual, favorite foods, food restrictions. Encourage students to consider why their family eats or prepares food a certain way.
- Introduce the idea of the Family Meal recipe book as a guide to a student’s family or identity. Ask critical questions to inspire students, such as “What ingredients does it take to make my unique family?” or “What is the recipe for the (last name) family?” Students should list the family traditions they wish to illustrate as their “table of contents”, and at least 2 pages sketched out in pencil before they receive art-making materials.
  o For older students or a lesson extension, make the prompt causal. “My family has a tradition of __________, therefore I am/like/do __________.” For example, “My family avoids eating meat, therefore I am vegetarian and love spinach.” or “My family often adds lots of hot chilies to dinner, therefore I am very tolerant of love spicy foods.” Ask students how these traditions have shaped their present identity.
- Teachers distribute art making supplies after they have checked each student’s initial sketches for an understanding of the concept.
- Students are free to use mixed media as available to make their book. The book may be sequentially narrative or may read more like a non-narrative recipe book.