

The Secret Within

Grades 6th-8th

Inspired by Judith Scott

Lesson overview

Students will learn about and discuss the life and artworks of Judith Scott. Additionally, students will examine the Americans with Disabilities Act and utilize foil, yarn, and fabric to represent a close relationship with a friend or family member.

Objectives

- Students learn and discuss the experience of a person(s) with varied mental and physical abilities.
- Students analyze, interpret and discuss the works of Judith Scott through “slow observation” exercises.
- Students create poems and artworks that convey their connection with their communities through three dimensional objects.



Untitled by Judith Scott, 2000

Critical Questions

How does art promote healing?

How can we advocate for change for people who face discrimination due to their disabilities?

Vocabulary

6th - 8th	
Entwined	Public Accommodation
Disability	Equal Rights
Language	Advocate
Injustice	Bias
Creativity	
Unique	

Materials

Foil

Pencils

Markers

Fabric

8.5in. X 11in. Paper

Glue

Colored pencils

Yarn

Scissors

Activity One: Defining Disability and the ADA

Note: Before the lesson, please go over community norms in the classroom. This lesson goes over sensitive experiences regarding groups who've experienced discrimination due to their disabilities.

Step 1: Warm up- Display the warm up question "How do you define a disability? Pass out index cards and instruct students to write their responses on the card. Give students five minutes to respond and allow students to share responses in the class. Write their answers on the board.

Step 2: Place students into groups of 4 to 5 and pass out the What I **Know**, What I **Want** to Know, What I **Learned** (KWL) chart. PDF below.

Instruct students to "turn and talk," and complete the "K" and "W" section in their groups together. Time activity 5 to 10 to minutes and adjust time accordingly. Allow for share outs.

Next, play the "[What is the ADA? Basics and Definitions of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)" video.

If you'd like your class to go more depth, you can also play "[Commemorating 30 Years of the Americans with Disabilities Act | NowThis.](#)"

Step 3: Ask the class what they learned from the video. Record their responses on the board and Instruct students to complete the "L" section of the chart in their groups. Allow groups to share out their responses to the "L" section and end class with share outs.

Activity Two: Artmaking

Step 1: Display "[Untitled](#)" by [Judith Scott](#) and ask "When you look at this art piece who do you think made this? Why?" Record and write responses on board.

Read Judith Scott bio to students or print for class to read. Share [Judith Scott pictures](#) during reading.

"Judith Scott was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, along with her twin sister, Joyce, into a middle-class home. Unlike her sister, Judith was diagnosed with Down Syndrome, was deaf and largely mute. Considered "uneducable" by the local school boards, Judith's fate was all but sealed. When she was seven years old, her family made the difficult decision to institutionalize her. She spent the following thirty-six years separated from her family as a ward of the State.

In 1986, Judith's life took a dramatic turn when Joyce took it upon herself to rescue her sister. After a complex and lengthy custody battle with authorities, Judith was flown to San Francisco and handed back to her sister. Joyce provided Judith with a nurturing environment in a nearby board and care home. She then enrolled her at the daily art program of Creative Growth Art Center in Oakland, California, an art therapy organization for people with developmental and physical disabilities. Clients of the center's program "work in the studio" every day and are introduced and guided to the use of various materials with which to create expressive projects."

Note: you can choose to show the [Creative Growth Art Center in "San Francisco Bay Area"](#) (play video 7:40 min to 9:03 min) video which is a brief overview of Judith Scott's biography and studio practice.

Ask "What stood out to you in Judith Scott's biography?" "Do you know of any artists with disabilities? If so, who are they? If not, why do we not know more artists with disabilities?" Write their responses on the board.

Play [Introduction to Judith Scott](#) and display images on board. Or print images for groups. Ask students to do a "Slow Observation" of the works and answer the questions from the Slow Observation Notecards.

Pass out index cards to each student, instruct students to imagine what is inside of Judith Scott's sculpture, and redraw it on the card. Set a timer to 5 minutes (adjust time accordingly). After 5 minutes, instruct students to do a "gallery walk" in the classroom for 1-2 minutes to view everyone's work. (If you'd like to show the images, collect index cards and display them in your classroom).

Step 2: Hand out Memory Sculpture Worksheet & Guide. Display the prompt "Think of a friend or family member that you have a unique connection with. Do you have a special memory of you two?" Instruct students to complete the first page of the worksheet.

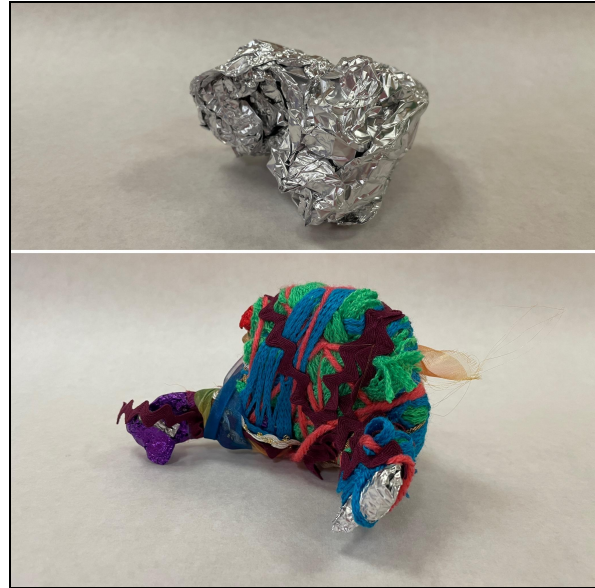
Next, display the Memory Sculpture example and instruct students to complete the rest of the Memory Sculpture Worksheet & Guide. Display instructions:

- Take the foil, and make your object or shape. Example: Create a heart or abstract shape with the foil.
- Take fabric or yarn and wrap your object/shape. Try to change the shape with different colors and thicknesses of yarn or fabric.
- Experiment with different colors, shapes, and objects that remind you of your friend or family member.

- When your sculpture is complete, you and your partner will guess the original object/shape of each other’s sculpture.
- Next, you and your partner will guess the **new** object/shape and how the colors/ fabric represents the friend/family member.

Step 3: Set a timer to 30 to 45 minutes for students to work independently. And set time 5 to 10 minutes for partner activity. Adjust time accordingly for each.

Step 4: Instruct class to walk around the classroom for 1 to 2 minutes for a “gallery walk,” or ask for volunteers to share their sculptures. For discussion, ask and display class reflection/exit ticket questions on the board. Allow 2-3 minutes for share outs.



Memory Sculpture sample

Maryland State Standards

Art Standards	6th-8th ELA SS
<p>Anchor Standard 2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. I:6-8:2</p>	<p>ELA: Key Ideas and Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RI.6.1 • RL.7.1 • RL.8.1 <p>Text Types and Purposes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W.6.1.b • W.7.1.a • W.8.1.a <p>S.S.: 6.G.3 Use current events/issues to answer questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.G.3.e

Closing / Exit Ticket

1. What do you think needs to be done today to allow all people to have equal access to opportunities?
2. How can people with disabilities have more representation and opportunities in the arts?
3. How does your art process represent you?



Untitled by Judith Scott, 1997



Judith Scott in the studio

Additional Resources

[Lesson Plan: Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[Recognizing Discrimination.](#)

Video: [Introduction to Judith Scott](#)

Video: [What is the ADA? Basics and Definitions of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

<https://creativegrowth.org/about>

[Introduction to Judith Scott](#)

[Art for Children and Adults with Physical or Mental Challenges](#)

[15 Ways to Love Sensory Art](#)

Video: [Creative Growth Art Center in "San Francisco Bay Area" - Season 9 | Art21](#) start 7:40min to 9:03min

Bio of the Artist

Judith Scott

1943-2005

Judith Scott was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, along with her twin sister, Joyce, into a middle-class home. Unlike her sister, Judith was diagnosed with Down Syndrome, was deaf and largely mute. Considered “uneducable” by the local school boards, Judith’s fate was all but sealed. When she was seven years old, her family made the difficult decision to institutionalize her. She spent the following thirty-six years separated from her family as a ward of the State.

In 1986, Judith’s life took a dramatic turn when Joyce took it upon herself to rescue her sister. After a complex and lengthy custody battle with authorities, Judith was flown to San Francisco and handed back to her sister. Joyce provided Judith with a nurturing environment in a nearby board and care home. She then enrolled her at the daily art program of Creative Growth Art Center in Oakland, California, an art therapy organization for people with developmental and physical disabilities. Clients of the center’s program “work in the studio” every day and are introduced and guided to the use of various materials with which to create expressive projects.

Judith routinely began her work with an armature of stolen property. After each of her secretive “shopping expeditions” she would start each of her sculptures with objects bound together as a central core. She then proceeded to envelop this kernel with successive layers of malleable materials such as yarn, twine, power cords, tubing, strips of fabric, and whatever else came to her disposal. The results transformed the objects into new shapes and forms, often resembling that of nests and cocoons. It would often take her months, even years on a single piece before it was complete. Judith’s sculptures became sizable; some even larger and heavier than their maker, reaching upwards of nine feet in length.

During her lifetime, she gained international acclaim, and since her passing in 2005, her work has continued to earn critical recognition in major publications and major exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum, The National Gallery, the Zuckerman Museum of Art, Creative Growth Alliance, American Visionary Art Museum, and the American Folk Art Museum.

Name _____

Date _____

My KWL Chart

1. Today we will learn and discuss the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- In the first column, write what you **already know** about the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- In the second column, write **what you want to know** about the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- In the third column, write about what **you've learned** in today's lesson.

What I Know .	What I Want to Know.	What I've Learned .

1. What colors, shapes, objects, and textures do you notice in the artwork? Why?

2. What comes to your mind when you look at the artwork? Why?

3. What is one question that you have about the artwork?

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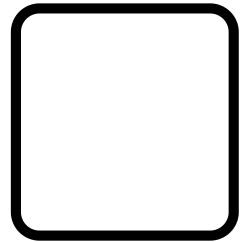
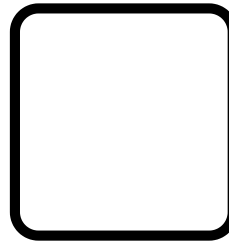
Name _____

Date _____

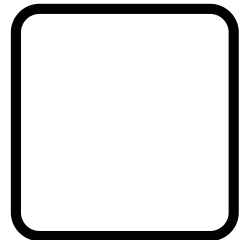
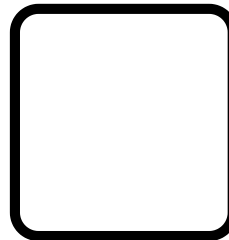
Activity: Today you will create a Memory sculpture that represents your close friend or family member. You will reflect on Judith Scott's artworks, and how she expressed herself through different colors and materials.

1. **Reflect:** Think of a friend or family member that you have a unique connection with. Do you have a special memory of you two? Write your response below.

1. **Imagine:** What is an object or shape that reminds you of friend or family member? Draw two objects or shapes that remind you of that person in the boxes.



2. What are two colors that remind you of your friend or family member? Color in the two boxes that represent your friend or family member.



3. **Create:** Make a Memory Sculpture out of foil fabric, and yarn to represent your friend or family member. Consider Judith Scott's art process and how she made her sculptures with fabrics, colors, and found objects. Refer to the Memory Sculpture Guide to learn how to make your artwork.

Memory Sculpture Guide.

1. Take the foil, and make your object or shape.
Example: Create a heart or shape with the foil.
2. Take fabric or yarn and wrap your object/shape. Try to change the shape with different colors and thickness of yarn or fabric.
3. Experiment with colors and different shapes and objects that remind you of your friend or family member.
4. You and your partner will guess what the original object/shape of your sculpture.

Next, you and your partner will guess what the new object/shape is and how the colors/ fabric represents the friend/family member.

Check list:	Supplies	Activity
Foil		<input type="checkbox"/> I made an object/shape out of foil that represents my friend/family member.
Yarn		<input type="checkbox"/> I wrapped my object/shape with yarn/fabric.
Fabric		<input type="checkbox"/> I changed my original object into a new object/shape with the yarn/fabric.
Scissors		<input type="checkbox"/> I completed my Memory Sculpture!
Pencils		
Colored Pencils		