The Secret Within

Grades 9th-12th
Inspired by Judith Scott

Lesson overview
Students will learn 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 will 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 represent their connection to a friend or family member through a sculpture.

Critical Questions
How can biases systematically impact groups who are differently abled?
How does art communicate our experiences and feelings?

Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9th-12th</th>
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<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
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<td>Advocate</td>
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<td>Language</td>
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<td>Express</td>
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<td>Abstract</td>
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<td>Materials</td>
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Materials
Foil
Pencils
Markers
Fabric
8.5in. X 11in. Paper
Glue
Colored pencils
Yarn
Scissors
Activity One: Defining Disabilities 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: 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: Next play Commemorating 30 Years of the Americans with Disabilities Act | NowThis. If students need a concise explanation of the ADA, please play "What is the ADA? Basics and Definitions of the Americans with Disabilities Act" video.

Step 3: Place students into groups of 4 to 5. Pass out What I Know, What I Want to know, What I Learned (KWL) chart. After the video is completed, instruct students to do a “turn and talk” and complete the “K” section first in their groups. Allow for share outs. Next, instruct students to complete the “W” section of the chart together. Time activity 10 to 15 minutes. Adjust time accordingly.

Extension lesson:
Place students into groups of 4 to 5. Print and pass out historical accounts about Section 504 and Americans with Disabilities Act to each group.

Note: Please select readings that are appropriate for your class time and grade level.

Short History of the 504 Sit-in

Voices of 504: Reprinted from The Independent, Summer 1977

Confronting the D.C. Power

Instruct students that they will read the excerpt and to complete the Event Map Worksheet as a group. After the worksheet is completed, they will present information to the class.
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 ‘ineducable’ 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.

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**Maryland State Standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art Standards</th>
<th>9th -12th</th>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>SS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anchor Standard 5 Develop and refine artistic work for presentation</td>
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<td>I:9-12:2</td>
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<td>● RI.11-12.2</td>
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<td>● W.9-10.3.a</td>
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<td>● W.11-12.3.a</td>
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<td>Standard 5.0: History</td>
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**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 representation and opportunities in the arts?
3. How does abstract art communicate our experiences and feelings?
Untitled by Judith Scott, 1997

Judith Scott in the studio
Additional Resources

Lesson Plan: Americans with Disabilities Act

Recognizing Discrimination.

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund.

Video: "Untitled" by Judith Scott, made before 1991

Video: Commemorating 30 Years of the Americans with Disabilities Act | NowThis

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.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I <strong>Know</strong>.</th>
<th>What I <strong>Want</strong> to Know.</th>
<th>What I've <strong>Learned</strong>.</th>
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Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
Event Map

- Why did the event happen?
- When did the event happen?
- What was the event?
- Where did the event happen?
- Who was involved in the event?
- Why was the event important?
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.

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

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check list:</th>
<th>Supplies</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foil</td>
<td></td>
<td>___ I made an object/shape out of foil that represents my friend/family member.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yarn</td>
<td></td>
<td>___ I wrapped my object/shape with yarn/fabric.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fabric</td>
<td></td>
<td>___ I changed my original object into a new object/shape with the yarn/fabric.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scissors</td>
<td></td>
<td>___ I completed my Memory Sculpture!</td>
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<td>Pencils</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colored Pencils</td>
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