

The Secret Within

Grades Pre-K-5th
Inspired by Judith Scott
About 45 min

Lesson overview

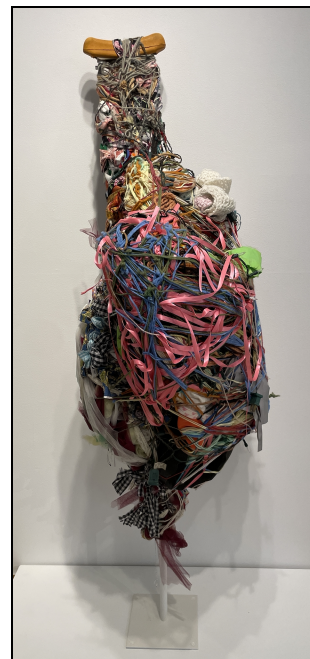
Students will learn and discuss the life and artworks of Judith Scott. Through yarn, colors, and shapes, students will create art that represents a memory with close family or friends.

Objectives

- Students will learn and discuss the experience of a person(s) with varied mental and physical abilities.
- Students examine and discuss the works of Judith Scott.
- Students construct narratives and artworks that connect with their communities through an “album book.”

Critical Questions

Why is it important to treat everyone fairly who has a disability or not?
How can your story about you and your loved one inspire others?
How can we use our stories and art to help people?



Untitled by Judith Scott, 2000

Vocabulary

Pre-K - 2nd grade	3rd - 5th grade
Disability Creativity Unique	Disability Entwined Express Materials Creativity Unique

Activities

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 on board and ask students warm up questions “Who is a friend or family member who you are close with and why?” “What is one thing that makes them unique and why?” 1-2 minutes for turn and talk. Allow time for share outs amongst the whole class.

Step 2:

- Pre-K to 3rd- Read [Unbound: The life + Art of Judith Scott](#) or play the read along video [Unbound: The Life and Art of Judith Scott](#) 🗣️
- 4th to 5th grade: ["Untitled" by Judith Scott](#) on board and read Judith Scott bio.

Step 3: Discussion-Display on board and ask “What did you like about Judith Scott’s story?” “What made Judith and Joyce’s bond unique? Why?” Allow time for share outs. Write responses on the board.

Step 4: Display images and ask students the following question: “What do you think is inside Judith Scott’s work?” “Why do you think she wrapped them?”

Step 5: Pass out Letter worksheets and place students in groups of 4. Place art materials at each table. Display prompt on the board “What friend or family member do you have a unique connection to? Do you have a memory of a special moment between you two?”

Instruct students to write down their responses on the worksheet and to complete a picture depicting their memory in the “photo” section. Give an example of your own or display the example:

“I have special moments with my grandma because we both like to collect many photos and show them. We like to go to the thrift store and buy frames. When we get home, we decorate the frames with colorful beads, paints and shells! We put our family photos in them and hang them on the wall.”

Allow students to work independently for 10 to 15 minutes. Check in with groups and adjust time accordingly for your class.

Step 6: After the letter worksheet is complete, instruct students to take foil and remake a shape or of an object that reminds them of the family member or friend. Next, instruct students to remake their foil object into another shape of their choice with yarn/fabric. Encourage the class to use their friend/ family member’s favorite colors.

Allow students to work independently for 10 to 15 minutes. Check in with groups and adjust time accordingly for your class.

Step 7: Pass out index cards. and instruct students to draw what they think is inside of their group mates’ Memory Sculptures on the blank side of the index card. Allow for share outs, and reflection questions.

Materials

Foil

Yarn

Glue

Colored Pencils

Scissors

Maryland State Standards

Pre-K - 5th ELA: Pre-k 1-2 3-5
Key Ideas and Details <ul style="list-style-type: none">● RL.1.2● RL.2.3● RL.3.3● RL.4.1● RL.5.2
Text Types and Purposes <ul style="list-style-type: none">● W.2.3● W.3.3.a● W.4.3.a● W.5.3.a

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 your story about you and your loved one inspire others?

Additional Resources

<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](#) starts 7:40min to 9:03min

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

[Emotion Painting](#)

[Unbound: The life + Art of Judith Scott](#)

Video: [The ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act \(For Kids. By Kids\)](#)

Worksheet: [Letter worksheets](#)



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 _____

1. Write a letter about a favorite moment you had with a friend or family member.

Example: My favorite memory is with my best friend! We went to the movies and ate ice-cream. It was hot, sunny, and a nice day!

In your letter include:

- Where your favorite moment happened.
- Why it was your favorite moment.
- The activity you and your friend or family member did that day.

2. After your letter, make a drawing of your favorite moment with that family member or friend.

My favorite moment was...

