

AFRICAN-AMERICAN ARTISTS, 1880-1987
SELECTIONS FROM THE EVANS-TIBBS COLLECTION

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Western Gallery
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington

Introduction:

"Thurlow E. Tibbs, Jr. started the Evans-Tibbs Collection in 1979. The collection is housed in Washington, D. C. in a historic townhouse that was once the home of Tibbs' grandmother, Lillian Evans Tibbs. She was the first black professional opera singer to gain international fame. She began the family tradition of collecting African-American art; the house was a magnet for black artists and intellectuals. The collection focuses on works by 19th and 20th century African-American artists. Tibbs hopes to integrate these artists into the mainstream of American art history by exposing people to the artworks. He also keeps biographical records on all of the artists in the collection.

This traveling exhibition contains about 67 artworks, approximately one-sixth of the entire collection. The exhibition is presented by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, located in Washington, D. C." ("African-American Artists, 1880-1987, Preparatory Classroom Materials for Museum Education Enrichment Program," Stedman Art Gallery, Camden, NJ, p1)

"African-American Artists, 1880-1987, Selections from the Evans-Tibbs Collection," will be on view at Western Washington University from September 28 to November 25. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday, 12 to 4 p.m. This educational packet, published by Western Gallery, contains classroom materials designed to prepare students for tours of the exhibit. Included in the packet are background information about the exhibition, three classroom presentations, slides of eight examples from the exhibit plus a slide of "The Banjo Lesson" by Henry O. Tanner, a worksheet to be completed by each student during the gallery tour, suggestions for follow-up activities, and a program evaluation form.

Goal:

The goal of this program is that students will move from an initial, intuitive, response through a process of description, analysis, and interpretation to a more considered response to the work exhibited in "African-American Artists, 1880-1987". ("Art Education" (44)6, p26) They will look longer, notice details, ask questions, acknowledge personal reactions, and reflect on the meaning of what they see. ("Art Education" (44)4,

LESSON 1

Background Information:

"When we first look at a portrait we can begin to understand at whom we are looking by noting the subject's pose and body language, facial expression, and clothes, as well as the setting and any attributes or objects included in the picture." ("Art Education" (44)2, p23)

Lesson Objective:

Students will reflect on the meaning of what they see by describing, analyzing, and interpreting photograph portraits of their classmates.

Vocabulary:

portrait
pose
profile

Presentation:

1. Ask students to bring a photograph of themselves to school. Display these in a way that all can see. Explain that these pictures are considered portraits because they represent a particular person.
2. After students have had a chance to view the pictures, choose one and initiate a discussion. A photograph that depicts someone in a situation familiar to most students, such as a birthday party, would provide more content for discussion, consequently stimulating student response.
3. Ask the students to be detectives. First they must look for clues that will tell them what the picture is about. Have them describe their classmate's pose, body language, facial expression, clothes, setting, and any objects included in the picture. In this phase of the discussion, allow the students to tell only what they see. Avoid making inferences, telling personal feelings, or talking about meaning or value. (Varieties of Visual Experience, E. B. Feldman, Prentice-Hall, Inc. & Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, NY, p471) The following questions may assist you:
 1. Is this a picture of a boy or girl?
 2. How old do you think this person is?

3. How is he/she dressed?
 4. How would you describe this person's facial expression?
 5. How would you describe this person's pose? (Suitable answers to this question would be standing straight, slumping in a chair, bent over, sitting, jumping, or running rather than analyzing what the subject is doing, such as catching a ball or blowing out birthday candles.)
 6. Are there other people in the picture?
 7. Repeat the above questions for each person in the photo.
 8. Describe the setting. (Encourage students to use color, size, and shape in their descriptions.)
 9. Name objects in the picture.
4. After obtaining the "clues", ask the students to analyze what they saw in the photograph. This is the time to ask "why" questions. (Why is the person pictured sitting or standing in that position? Why is he or she wearing that kind of hat? Why is she laughing? Why did the photographer choose this particular moment to snap the photograph?)
 5. The final step is to interpret the meaning of the portrait. If you did not know this person, what could you discover about him or her by looking at the photograph? Here, the students are being asked to speculate or make assumptions using only the visual evidence in the picture. They must disregard what they already know about the person pictured.
 6. Time permitting, repeat this process with other photographs. Making this a small group activity will provide students opportunity for independent practice and give everyone a turn having their photo discussed.

LESSON 2

Background Information:

"The human figure has been an enduring image throughout the history of art. Like other cultures, African-American artists have used the human figure/the portrait as a method to communicate the uniqueness of their culture and their heritage." ("Knoxville Museum Interpretative Tours Program," Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, TN, p3)

"Afro-American art, which seeks to provide a testament to the humanity of black people, has remained solidly committed to the use of the figure as a vehicle for expressing human passions and aspirations." ("Art Education" (43)6, p26)

"Portraits represent particular people, yet how an artist chooses to create their likenesses varies according to when and where both the subject and the artist lived, why

the portraits were created, and where they would hang, as well as the artist's own particular temperament, background, and skills. ("Art Education" (44)2, p23)

Lesson Objective:

Students will reflect on the meaning of what they see by describing, analyzing, and interpreting four slides of portraits from the exhibition, "African-American Artists, 1880-1987."

Vocabulary:

lithography
etching
woodcut
value
Gemini
sharecropper

Presentation:

1. Tell the students that they will soon visit Western Gallery to view the exhibition, "African-American Artists, 1880-1987." Included in this show are a number of examples of portraiture. Remind the students that in Lesson 1 they learned that a portrait is a representation of a particular person. In addition, they learned to reflect on the meaning of what they saw in photographs by a three-step process of describing, analyzing, and interpreting. In this lesson, they will again look at portraits and reflect on their meaning. They will view four slides of artwork that will be in the exhibition that they will see at Western.
2. The first slide is a photograph taken in 1905 by Addison Scurlock. The name of the artwork is "Portrait of Mrs Johnson." Tell the students to study Scurlock's photograph to see what they can discover about the person pictured. Ask the following questions:
 1. Is this person male or female?
 2. What race is she?
 3. How is she dressed?
 4. Is she young or old?
 5. How would you describe Mrs. Johnson's pose?
 6. Is she facing the viewer or turned to the side?
 7. How would you describe her facial expression?
 8. What is the setting? (Name things in the environment.)
 9. What might the setting tell you about the occasion of this photograph?

10. Are there any objects in the picture that might tell you more about who Mrs. Johnson was?
 11. What do you think was the relationship of the photographer to Mrs. Johnson?
 12. How do you think he felt about Mrs. Johnson?
 13. How would you describe the character of Mrs. Johnson? Addison Scurlock has made additions to this photograph. Can you tell where?
 14. Why do you think Scurlock did this?
 15. What do you think the photograph would look like without Scurlock's additions?
 16. Do you think you would view the photograph differently without Scurlock's additions?
 17. Would you view the photograph differently if it were in color?
 18. If Mrs. Johnson were looking directly at you, the viewer, would your reaction to the work be different?
 19. Would your reaction to the work be different if Scurlock had photographed Mrs. Johnson's profile?
3. The second slide shows a portrait done in 1945. It was made by a printmaking process called lithography. "Negro Worker" is the title of this work by James Lesesne Wells. Ask the following questions:
1. Is this person male or female?
 2. What race is he?
 3. How is he dressed?
 4. Is he young or old?
 5. How would you describe his pose?
 6. How would you describe his facial expression?
 7. What is the setting? (Name things in the background.)
 8. What might the setting tell you about the man pictured?
 9. What objects in the picture tell you more about who the man was?
 10. What do you think was the relationship of the artist to the man?
 11. How do you think he felt about him?
 12. Where did the artist get his inspiration for this artwork?
 13. Why did Wells choose to create a portrait of the "Negro Worker"?
 14. Do you think that this is a particular worker or is the man representative of many workers? Explain your reason for thinking the way you do.
 15. How do the shapes that make up the factory in the background affect your reaction to the picture?
 16. How would you describe the shapes that the artist uses to depict the man?
 17. Value is the lightness or darkness of objects. The artist used strong contrasts in value to define the drawing in this lithograph. How does this affect your reaction to the work?

18. Why has the artist presented his subject with blocky shapes? dramatic contrasts in value?
 19. How does this affect your reaction to the lithograph?
 20. How would the picture be different if the artist used color? softened the shapes in the picture?
 21. How do you think the artist felt about his subject?
 22. How would you describe the character of the Negro worker? Has the artist influenced how you feel about the man?
4. The third slide shows a 1969 portrait made by another printmaking process called etching. This is titled "Gemini I" by Lev T. Mills. The following are questions to assist the discussion. If the students are ready, encourage them to describe the work without the help of the first seven questions.
1. Is this person male or female?
 2. What race is he or she?
 3. How is he or she dressed?
 4. Is he or she young or old?
 5. Describe his or her pose.
 6. Describe his or her facial expression?
 7. Describe the setting.
 8. The artist has superimposed figures and street scenes over the head of the person portrayed and has left the head incomplete. Why?
 9. Why is this person resting his/her chin on hand?
 10. When a person looks directly at you what effect does it have?
 11. Does this person live in the country or the city?
 12. Why has Mills included road signs with arrows?
 13. What are the figures at the top running?
 14. Why has Mills included store fronts with signs that say "FOOD," "BAR," "ROOM," "MOTEL," and "WINE."
 15. The sign in the upper left hand corner says, "Black is beautiful." An educational movement in the sixties used this slogan to raise the self-esteem of young, black children. Why has Mills included this in his drawing?
 16. Do you think the person portrayed in the portrait is also pictured in the figures above?
 17. Why did the artist make the gender of the person portrayed unclear?
 18. Do you think this is a particular person or representative of many people? Explain your answer.
 19. What do you think was the relationship of the artist to the person pictured?
 20. How do you think he felt about him/her?
 21. Where did the artist get his inspiration for this artwork?

5. (You may choose to use this last slide for independent practice. If you feel that your class is ready, ask the students to write a description, analysis, and interpretation of the slides. Or you may wish to discuss the slide using the questions below before having them write answers to one or more of the questions that ask for their interpretation.) The last slide to be presented in this lesson is a woodcut made in 1970. A woodcut is another kind of printmaking process. The print was made by Elizabeth Catlett and is call "Sharecropper." The following are questions to assist the discussion. Again, if the students are ready, encourage them to describe the work without the help of the first questions.

1. Is this person male or female?
2. What race is she?
3. How is she dressed?
4. Is she young or old?
5. How would you describe her pose?
6. How would you describe her facial expression?
7. What is the setting?
8. Does the setting tell you anything about the woman pictured?
9. Why is she wearing a hat?
10. Why is she wearing a safety pin?
11. Sharecroppers are farmers who do not own the land that they farm. They earn a percentage of the value of the crops that they grow. However, they must subtract the cost of rent for their living quarters and the cost of any seed, tools, and food that they buy on credit. Why did Catlett choose to create a portrait of a "Sharecropper"?
12. Do you think that this is a particular sharecropper or is the woman representative of many sharecroppers? Explain your reason for thinking the way you do.
13. What do you think was the relationship of the artist to the woman?
14. How do you think she felt about her?
15. Where did the artist get her inspiration for this artwork?
16. A woodcut is a form of printmaking in which areas of a woodblock are cut away with a sharp tool. The remaining areas are inked and printed. This usually produces a particular kind of line, texture, and value contrast characteristic of woodcuts. How does the strong, decisive line characteristic of a woodcut affect your reaction to this work? the texture? the strong value contrasts?
17. Would your reaction be different if the artist had made an etching instead of a woodcut?
18. The artist has used three colors of ink to make this print--black, brown, and green. How does her choice of colors affect your reaction? Would different colors make a difference? What if the print were in black and white instead of color?
19. How would you describe the character of the sharecropper?
20. How has the artist influenced how you feel about this woman?

Follow-up Activities:

1. Ask the students to choose someone to be the subject of a portrait. Ask them to think about how they will portray this person. What is important about the subject? What kinds of things does he or she like to do? What makes the subject special? Brainstorm descriptive words. Use the information collected when making the portrait. Remind the students' that the subject's pose, facial expression, clothes, setting, and objects included in the picture help to tell the story of the person they are drawing, painting, or photographing.
2. An alternative to the above portrait activity is to have your students draw the outline of their head and shoulders on a large piece of white paper. Ask the students to leave the "person" or positive space untouched and concentrate only on the background or negative space. In the background surrounding the "portrait," have the students tell their story in pictures about their life, family, interests, hobbies, etc. Share them orally with the class and then display them in a prominent place in the classroom. ("Knoxville Museum Interpretative Tours Program," Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, TN, p22)
3. Each artwork discussed in Lesson 2 was made by a different kind of printing process. This presents an opportunity to further explore printmaking either by having the students experiment with printmaking themselves or by having them explore and compare the qualities of line, tone, and texture in photographs, lithographs, etchings, and woodcuts. The following definitions may be helpful.

Lithography is a printing process where the artist draws with a greasy pencil onto a large stone, usually limestone. The stone is then treated with acid. Recessed areas are created in the places not protected by the grease. The ink collects in these recessed areas as it is rolled onto the stone. The stone is then printed on a press. ("African-American Artists, 1880-1987, Preparatory Classroom Materials for Museum Education Enrichment Program," Stedman Art Gallery, Camden, NJ, p3)

Etching is a printmaking process in which the drawing is created by scratching lines directly into a metal plate. Sometimes the plate is put in acid so that the lines and dark areas are created by the acid "biting" into the plate and leaving a recessed area. The plate is then rolled with ink. The recessed areas pick up the ink and the plate is printed by placing a sheet of paper over it and rolling it through a printing press. ("African-American Artists, 1880-1987, Preparatory Classroom Materials for Museum Education Enrichment Program," Stedman Art Gallery, Camden, NJ, p5)

A woodcut is a form of printmaking in which areas of a wood block are cut

away with a sharp tool. The remaining areas are inked and printed. Multiple blocks may be used to create one print. ("African-American Artists, 1880-1987, Selections from the Evans-Tibbs Collection, Teacher Packet," Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago, IL, p9)

LESSON 3

Background Information:

"The African-American artists who reached maturity following the Civil War experienced the broadened opportunity afforded by emancipation but suffered the ostracism and limitations imposed by new forms of institutionalized racism. While these artists often had the advantage of studying in leading American fine arts centers, their limited access to patronage and the broader cultural milieu frequently made it impossible for them to realize the status of their white contemporaries. The post-Civil War movement of blacks from the rural South to the urban North eventually resulted in the concentration of African Americans in major cities such as Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, New York, Washington, Atlanta, and, in the West, San Francisco. It was in these cities that an educated black middle class developed. And it was also here that African-American artists found endorsement and support from a small number of the enlightened white middle class, many of whom had been involved in abolitionist activities." ("The Foundations for Change, 1880-1920," G. C. McElroy, African-American Artists, 1880-1987, Selections from the Evans-Tibbs Collection, Smithsonian Institution, 1989, p15.)

"The art of black Americans underwent numerous changes between 1920 and 1950. These changes in aesthetic points-of-view and degrees of racial and cultural consciousness can be attributed to the ideological shifts within black America as a whole. It was in this period that African Americans experienced spells of heightened self-awareness and optimism about the future, as well as moments of despair and disillusionment concerning their role in American society. Black migration from the rural South to the urban North, the stock market crash of 1929 and the resulting, worldwide economic depression, the encouraging governmental policies of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and the social challenges which World War II brought about--all these events figure into black artistic expression during this period. Even in the many instances when the works avoid overt references to the political and social conditions of the day, America's attitude toward blacks is an everpresent backdrop for individual acts of art-making." ("From Renaissance to Realization, 1920-1950," R. J. Powell, African-American Artists, 1880-1987, Selections from the Evans-Tibbs Collection, Smithsonian Institution, 1989, p41.)

"For African-American artists, the Cold War era and the three decades that followed were a time for the further exploration and refinement of artistic philosophy and skills, for

the development of an African-American aesthetic, for the attainment of critical recognition, and for survival as artists.

Earlier in the twentieth century, two major personalities, philosopher Alain Locke and painter and art historian James Porter, had set the agenda for contemporary African-American art. While Porter encouraged a generation of black artists to erase the distinctions of race in pursuit of personal expression, Locke was concerned with the deliberate search for and retrieval of elements of black culture that reflected their African origins, and with incorporating these elements into an African-American aesthetic. It was a controversy that was to resurface, with new passion, in the 1960s and 1970s." ("The Search for Identity, 1950-1987," S. F. Patton, African-American Artists, 1880-1987, Selections from the Evans-Tibbs Collection, Smithsonian Institution, 1989, p73.)

Lesson Objective:

Students will be able to reflect on the meaning of what they see with regard to the historical context of the exhibition by listening to a slide presentation and describing, analyzing, and interpreting five slides.

Vocabulary:

foreground
aspiration
mural
silhouette
rhythm
improvisation
syncopation

Presentation:

1. Tell the students that in this lesson they will view five more slides of artwork from the African-American exhibition at Western.
2. The first slide is an etching done in 1910 by Henry O. Tanner. It is called "Christ Walking on the Water." Ask the students to describe what they see in the etching. The following questions will help the students to analyze and interpret what they have described.
 1. Tanner depicts a story from the New Testament of the Bible. Christ walks upon water and calms the stormy Sea of Galilee. Which figure is Christ?
 2. Why is the figure of Christ ghostlike?
 3. Why are the figures in the boat more readily recognizable?

4. Why is the boat tilted?
 5. The foreground is the part of the picture that is nearest the viewer. Why is the water in the foreground drawn with curved, dark, and overlapping lines?
 6. Why is the water in the background drawn with fainter, straighter lines?
 7. By drawing the boat large enough to fill most of the picture and placing it in the foreground, the artist has focused the viewer's attention on the disciples in the boat. Why would the artist want us to focus on the disciples?
 8. Henry O. Tanner was born in 1859, two years before the Civil War began. His father was a bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. Tanner studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts with a now-famous artist named Thomas Eakins. "The Banjo Lesson" is a well-known painting of Tanner's. (Show "The Banjo Lesson.") Some people thought that he should continue to paint pictures of African-American life, but Tanner decided to draw and paint religious subjects. Why do you think he was drawn to religious subjects?
 9. Why might people have wanted him to continue to paint pictures of African-American life?
 10. Tanner became frustrated by the lack of opportunities that existed because he was a black artist. Consequently, he decided to live and work in Paris, France. In his lifetime, he won many awards and was the first black artist to become well-known in both Europe and America.
3. The next slide shows an oil painting done by Aaron Douglas in 1936. The name of this work is "Aspiration." Ask the students to describe what they see in the painting. The following questions will help the students to analyze and interpret what they have described.
1. What color are the arms at the bottom of the page?
 2. Why are they in shackles?
 3. Why are the arms raised?
 4. Why are the three figures all looking at the buildings on the hill?
 5. Why is the woman holding a book, one man drafting tools, and another a test tube? Where are these objects usually found? Why is there a globe?
 6. Why are the arms at the bottom of the picture?
 7. Why are the buildings at the top?
 8. Why are the colors at the bottom of the picture dark?
 9. Why are the colors at the top of the picture light?
 10. Why is there a star pattern superimposed on top of the arms, figures, and buildings?
 11. Why are the star shapes transparent?

12. Aspiration is defined as a strong desire for high achievement or an ambitious goal. Why do you suppose Douglas titled his work, "Aspiration"?
 13. Douglas has not painted the figures realistically. His figures are silhouettes. They look like they have been cut from black paper and pasted onto the picture. Why did Douglas choose to paint his figures in this manner?
 14. Do you think these figures represent specific individuals?
 15. What kind of people do they represent?
 16. How would your reaction be different if the figures were painted more realistically?
 17. Aaron Douglas was a major artist noted for developing new ways of expressing the black experience. "Aspiration" was created for the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition's "Hall of Negro Life." Although the work you will see at Western Gallery is an oil painting, "Aspiration" originally was a mural. That is, it was made to be a part of the wall of the exposition hall and was probably quite large.
 18. How does Aaron Douglas inspire the viewer?
 19. What is he saying about education?
4. The third slide shows a painting done in 1948 by Jacob Lawrence. The title of this work is "Graduation." Ask the students to describe what they see in the painting. The following questions will help the students to analyze and interpret what they have described.
1. Why are the graduates seen from the back?
 2. Why are most of the people in the audience pictured in profile?
 3. Jacob Lawrence made this work to illustrate a poem in a book by Langston Hughes. Black and white illustrations are less expensive to print. For this reason, book publishers often prefer that artists make their illustrations using only black and white paint or ink. How does this affect your reaction to the work?
 4. How would the work be different if Lawrence had used color?
 5. Rhythm in music, dance, and poetry is a measure of time. Rhythm in the visual arts is related to how our eyes move while viewing a work of art. For reasons we do not understand, our eyes will follow a repeated pattern almost against our will. (Varieties of Visual Experience, E. B. Feldman, Prentice-Hall, Inc. & Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, NY, p244) It is as though our eyes dance through the space of a visual work to the rhythm of the patterns made by repeated shapes, lines, and colors. How has Lawrence created rhythm in this painting?
 6. How many kinds of patterns can you find?
 7. Jacob Lawrence speaks of being impressed with fire escapes when he first moved to New York City as a young boy. He was attracted to

rhythm created by the repeating shapes of the steps and the spaces between them. How do your eyes move when looking at a ladder?

8. How is "Graduation" like a ladder?
 9. Like Douglas, Lawrence has not painted the figures realistically. How does this affect your reaction to the painting?
 10. How would the painting be different if the figures were painted realistically?
 11. How would you describe the facial expressions of the people in the audience?
 12. How do you think they feel about the graduation?
 13. What do you think Jacob Lawrence is saying about education?
 14. How is this painting like "Aspirations"?
 15. Jacob Lawrence is one of America's best known contemporary artists. He was born in New Jersey and grew up in New York City. He taught art for many years at the University of Washington and, although now retired, still resides in Seattle. Many of his works deal with black history and culture. How does "Graduation" deal with black culture?
5. The fourth slide is done by both painting and drawing. It was made with acrylic paint and ink in 1986 by Frank E. Smith. The name of this work is "River of Darkness." The following questions will help the students to analyze and interpret what they have described.
1. Ask the students to describe the shapes and colors.
 2. Ask them to describe the different patterns that they find in the work.
 3. Why has Smith repeated the shapes he has chosen to draw?
 4. Why did he choose to use the shape of a triangle so often?
 5. How has Smith created rhythm in his work?
 6. How would your reaction be different if he had used blue, purple, brown, black, and white instead of red, yellow, green, black, and white? if the piece were done in black, white, and shades of grey?
 7. What kinds of things do you think of when you see this piece?
 8. Not all African American artists, like Douglas and Lawrence, have chosen to work with social issues concerning black people. Some artists, like Frank E. Smith, strive to create a picture of black American culture. These artists examine their roots in African culture and express how it is a part of their culture today.
 9. The wonderful music of jazz is a black contribution to American culture that can be traced to these African roots. Often musicians play jazz according to their individual interpretation composing the music on the spur of the moment. This is called improvisation. Have you ever improvised? Have you ever doodled or scribbled without knowing what you were going to draw or where you were going to make your next mark?

10. Another important characteristic of jazz is a special kind of rhythm that accents notes that are not played on the beat. This is called syncopation. Smith claims that he creates a visual form of jazz. How is "River of Darkness" like jazz?

Follow-up Activities:

1. (Grades 4 and above) Ask your students to research one of the artists in the exhibition and write a report about their life and achievements. Encyclopedias or books about African-Americans are potential resources. Remind the students to describe what kind of artwork the artist created (paintings, drawings, prints) and tell what kinds of themes were used in their artwork. ("African-American Artists, 1880-1987, Sample Follow-up Classroom Materials for Museum Education Enrichment Program," Stedman Art Gallery, Camden, NJ, p5)
2. View a part or all of the videotape, "Jacob Lawrence, American Artist" (45 min.)
3. Have students make a drawing or painting about their own aspirations using Aaron Douglas's work as a model. Ask students to think about what their aspirations or goals are. What are they going to do to reach their goal? How long will it take? What have they achieved so far? What were they like when they began working towards this goal? Brainstorm ways student aspirations can be represented pictorially. Ask students to divide the paper into three horizontal sections. As in Douglas's painting, have them draw the past in the bottom section, the present in the middle section, and the future in the top section. An alternative for younger students is to divide the paper into two sections and depict only the present and the future. Display the artwork in a prominent place in the classroom.
4. Read the attached poem by Langston Hughes. Discuss how Jacob Lawrence's painting illustrates the poem. Have students choose a poem to illustrate. Display the illustrated poems in a prominent place in the classroom.
5. Listen to a jazz recording. Brainstorm words that describe the music and how it makes you feel. Discuss how these words might be represented pictorially. Make a drawing or painting that expresses your reaction to a piece of music. Display the artwork in a prominent place in the classroom and discuss similarities and differences in how students chose to express the music. Or, have students improvise a painting as they listen to a piece of jazz music.

GRADUATION

Cinnamon and rayon,
Jet and coconut eyes,
Mary Lulu Jackson
Smooths the skirt
At her thighs.

Mama, portly oven,
Brings remainders from the kitchen
Where the people all are icebergs
Wrapped in checks and wealthy.

Diploma in its new frame:
Mary Lulu Jackson,
Eating chicken,
Tells her mama she's a typist
And the clicking of the keys
Will spell the name
Of a job in a fine office
Far removed from basic oven,
Cookstoves,
And iceberg's kitchen.

Mama says, *Praise Jesus!*
Until then
I'll bring home chicken!

The **Diploma** bursts its frame
To scatter star-dust in their eyes.

Mama says, *Praise Jesus!*
The colored race will rise!

Mama says,
Praise Jesus!

hen,
Because she's tired,
She sighs.



"GRADUATION"

AFRICAN-AMERICAN ARTISTS, 1880-1987
SELECTIONS FROM THE EVANS-TIBBS COLLECTION

GALLERY TOUR QUIZ

For Students of All Ages

WHO AM I?

Can you name the portrait that best fits each description?

I am young and troubled, but I keep my troubles
to myself. _____

The artist has painted me as an example of what
he thinks is a beautiful, young black woman. _____

The artist has drawn me as an example of what he
thinks is an attractive and sophisticated man. _____

I am a successful opera star and art collector. _____

I am a man who has worked hard in my lifetime
and endured much hardship. _____

I lived around the turn of the century. I am
young, flirtatious, and from a well-to-do family. _____

I am a middle-aged man who is lost in thought.
Perhaps I am an artist or musician. _____

GALLERY SEARCH

How sharp are your eyes? The following items can be seen in this exhibition. Check the ones
that you find.

safety pin
 nurse
 blind man
 fan

backwards 6
 road sign
 flowered shoe
 violin

clam shell
 street light
 purse
 rooster

sea shell
 TV antenna
 book
 horsewhip

How many works can you find with musical instruments in them? _____

WHAT IS THE MEDIUM?

Without reading the title card, can you find an example of following?

Photograph _____

Print _____

Oil painting _____

ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

The following works in this exhibit are done in a style of painting called abstract expressionist:

- "North Carolina," by Richard W. Dempsey
- "Caprice," by Hale A. Woodruff
- "Vibrato," by Richard Mayhew
- "Extensions," by Richard Hunt
- "Nature Study No. 20," by Mary Reed Daniel
- "Leaves Outside a Window in Rain," by Alma Thomas
- "Nebulae," by Delilah Pierce
- "Abstraction," by Sam Gilliam
- "Mamie Harrington," by Sylvia Snowden

An artist painting in this style often uses large, spontaneous movements to brush the paint on the canvas. Abstract expressionist paintings are usually nonrepresentational. That is, there are no recognizable objects or people in the art.

Choose an abstract expressionist work that you like. Describe the work in the space below. Tell what colors and shapes that you see. What color is the background? Are there lines in the work? Are the lines circular? horizontal? vertical? diagonal? Are the colors mostly light or dark? bright or dull? What do you think of when you look at the work? Do any of the following words describe the work you have chosen? joyous? somber? exciting? mysterious? dreamy? disturbing? electric? light-hearted? moody? humorous?

When your description is finished, find another student who described the same work. Compare your descriptions. What is the same? What is different?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What did you like best about your trip to Western's Gallery? What information will you share with your family? _____

AFRICAN-AMERICAN ARTISTS 1880-1987
SELECTIONS FROM THE EVANS-TIBBS COLLECTION
Teacher Materials Evaluation

We would appreciate your comments and suggestions. This will help us to develop better education materials for future exhibitions. Please take a moment to fill out this form and return it to: Western Gallery, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225.

Grade Level _____

PRESENTATION MATERIALS

Were the presentation materials appropriate for your class? YES NO
If not, do you have suggestions for making the materials more age-appropriate?

Did you modify the materials? YES NO
Explain.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

What follow-up activities did you try?

Were they successful? YES NO
Did you modify the follow-up activities? YES NO
Explain.

Did you do the follow-up activities before or after the Gallery tour? BEFORE AFTER

GALLERY TOUR

Did your students enjoy the tour? YES NO
Would you consider bringing your students again this year? YES NO
Would you participate in a similar program if available for a future exhibition? YES NO
How would you rate the Gallery Tour Quiz? GOOD LONG SHORT DIFFICULT EASY
What evidence do you have that students learned something?

AFRICAN-AMERICAN ARTISTS 1880-1987
SELECTIONS FROM THE EVANS-TIBBS COLLECTION
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Grade Level 4

PRESENTATION MATERIALS

Were the presentation materials appropriate for your class? YES NO

If not, do you have suggestions for making the materials more age-appropriate?

Thank you for all the teacher background information. Your materials fit well with our grade 4 art curriculum organized by the Whatcom Museum.

Did you modify the materials? YES NO

Explain. I felt like I needed to leave out "Christ Walking on the Water." Even a hint of any relationship between any religion & school has become very touchy for us. This is sad but true. Ditto for the follow up activity about "Graduation."

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

What follow-up activities did you try?

Were they successful? YES NO

Did you modify the follow-up activities? YES NO

Explain.

Did you do the follow-up activities before or after the Gallery tour? BEFORE AFTER

GALLERY TOUR

Did your students enjoy the tour? YES NO

Would you consider bringing your students again this year? YES NO

Would you participate in a similar program if available for a future exhibition? YES NO

How would you rate the Gallery Tour Quiz? GOOD LONG SHORT DIFFICULT EASY

What evidence do you have that students learned something?

As they toured the exhibit in groups, it was evident that they were

I've written a few notes I'd like to share with you ^{about the materials.} We want to get you out of here expeditiously. So -- I'm going to talk rather fast. PLEASE interrupt me with questions that you have based on the materials.

In this packet, there are THREE THEMES:

1. Teaches a process of viewing artworks consisting of describing, analyzing, and interpreting - *not limited to this show - all artwork*
2. Portraits
3. Introduction to history of African-American art and artists
 - information interspersed in the questions and related directly back to the artwork being viewed
 - slides in both Lesson 1 and 2 represent the chronological ~~range~~ *timeline* covered in the exhibition

In the beginning of each lesson, there is BACKGROUND information on each of these three themes. I have included bibliographic references for those of you who would like to read further. This section is for YOUR INFORMATION ONLY and does not necessarily contain content that your students are expected to learn.

The lessons also contain:

- LESSON OBJECTIVES
- VOCABULARY
- PRESENTATION that is well-developed with dialogue and questions

And -FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

LESSON 1 begins to teach the critical process. Photographs of students are used. Reasons:

- This is a good place to begin because* Visual clues are familiar.
- Personal connection--~~self concept~~ *interest in selves*
- interest in peers

LESSONS 2 and 3 present an analysis of slides of works from the exhibition.

- The questions are speculative. They are open-ended, thought-provoking, and in most cases, there is no one right answer.
 - There are a lot of questions for each slide. This is because I have tried to be as comprehensive as possible. You don't need to ask all of the questions. ~~I'm sure you will want to consider~~ The age and abilities of your students *may influence the amount of question you ask.*
 - If you decide to pick and choose questions:
 - Be thorough in the describing stage.
 - Don't prejudge student's ability to answer the questions. The fun part about talking about art with youngsters is listening to their surprisingly astute responses. Play it by ear. If a question bombs, explain your own response and skip over similar questions.
- However, be sure to reach some kind of reasonable interpretation before proceeding to the next slide.

I have these suggestions for you →

It is difficult to gauge the length of the lessons because it is hard to predict the amount of discussion you will engender by the questions. Remember the overall goal of the program is that students will look longer, notice details, ask questions, acknowledge personal reactions, and reflect on the meaning of what they see. It is best to give them more time with one slide than cover all of the materials. An option is to break up the lessons into mini-lessons. Use slide analysis as a filler for those 15 minute in-between-times during the classroom day.

Let's try out some of the materials. Come over here to this oil painting done by Aaron Douglas. The name of this work is "Aspiration" and was painted in 1936. Turn to page 12. First let's describe the work. Remember, at this stage, only tell what you see. Avoid making inferences, telling personal feelings, or talking about meaning or value.

What race are the people pictured?
How are they dressed?
How would you describe their poses?
What is the setting?
What other things do you see in the painting?
What color are the arms at the bottom of the page?
Why are they in shackles?
Why are the arms raised?
Why are the three figures all looking at the buildings on the hill?
Why is the woman holding a book, one man drafting tools, and another a test tube? Where are these objects usually found?
Why is there a globe?
Why are the arms at the bottom of the picture?
Why are the buildings at the top?
Why are the colors at the bottom of the picture dark?
Why are the colors at the top of the picture light?
Why is there a star pattern superimposed on top of the arms, figures, and buildings?
Why are the star shapes transparent?
Aspiration is defined as a strong desire for high achievement or an ambitious goal. Why do you suppose Douglas titled his work, "Aspiration"?
Douglas has not painted the figures realistically. His figures are silhouettes. They look like they have been cut from black paper and pasted onto the picture. Why did Douglas choose to paint his figures in this manner?
Do you think these figures represent specific individuals?
What kind of people do they represent?
How would your reaction be different if the figures were painted more realistically?
Aaron Douglas was a major artist noted for developing new ways of expressing the black experience. "Aspiration" was created for the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition's "Hall of Negro Life." Although the work you will see at Western

Gallery is an oil painting, "Aspiration" originally was a mural. That is, it was made to be a part of the wall of the exposition hall and was probably quite large.
How does Aaron Douglas inspire the viewer?
What is he saying about education?

The FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES are optional. Also, you may have your own ideas. Let me know what kinds of things you have tried and how the activities went. One footnote: The Jacob Lawrence videotape mentioned on page 14 is available through Western Gallery. It is very good and pertinent to the lessons. It is also long (45 minutes) but showing just the first half would be valuable.

Let's talk a little bit about the TOUR. In your packet, there is a sample TOUR QUIZ. These will be made available for you when you visit the gallery. I suggest giving the students time in the gallery for reaction and discussion before giving them the tour quiz. Think of it as a tool for engaging the students in the exhibition.

Explain components:

Who Am I?--relates to lesson on portraits

Gallery Search--helps students to focus on details

Abstract Expression--supplement to the preparatory lessons; writing activity

What Do You Think?--time to reflect; encourage students to bring parents to the gallery

One thing you need to consider is the student's initial reaction to the show. The actual works may appear quite different to them than what they expected from looking at the slides. Be prepared to discuss this with the students.

How are the real works different from the pictures that you looked at in class?

EVALUATION SHEET

Ask for questions.

When are they coming?

*Bibliography - African-American Artists, 1880-1987
(Stedman Gallery)*

Resources

Driskell, David C., et al. African-American Artists 1880 - 1987: Selections from the Evans-Tibbs Collection, organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition service, Washington, D.C., 1989.

Hartigan, Linda R. Afro-American Art - 20th Century Selections, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985.

Losos, Carol M., assisted by Xavier Leonard. Henry Ossawa Tanner - A Booklet for Children, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1991.

Children

Everett, Gwendolyn. Li'l Sis and Uncle Willie, National Museum of American Art, Rizzoli, 1992