

CRAFT IN AMERICA

landscape: place



David Gurney, Tree of Life, Doug Hill Photograph

Preview

Many craft artists are inspired by the physical, social, and/or emotional aspects of the where they live and that influence can easily be seen in their artwork. In this section of Educator Guide: Landscape, students will learn how craft artists such as Kit Carson and David Gurney reflect their intimate relationships with their surroundings in their artworks. Students will also discover how other artists find inspiration from places special to them—whether that be the place where they live, a place they visited, or an imaginary location—to create beautiful handcrafted works of art.

Featured Artists

David Gurney (clay/Landscape)
Kit Carson (jeweler/Landscape)

Related Artists

Timberline Lodge (various/Landscape)
Mary Jackson (basket/Memory)

place

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education guide information

Craft in America, Inc.

Craft In America Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to the exploration of craft in the United States and its impact on our nation's cultural heritage. The centerpiece of the company's efforts is the production of a nationally broadcast television documentary series celebrating American craft and the artists who bring it to life. The project currently includes a three-part television documentary series supported by CRAFT IN AMERICA: Expanding Traditions, a nationally touring exhibition of exceptional craft objects, as well as a companion book, and a comprehensive Web site. Carol Sauvion is the founder and director of Craft in America.

Craft in America Mission Statement

The mission of Craft in America is to document and advance original handcrafted work through programs in all media made accessible to all Americans.

Craft in America: The Series

Craft in America's nationally broadcast PBS documentary series seeks to celebrate craft by honoring the artists who create it. In three episodes entitled Memory, Landscape and Community, Craft in America television viewers will travel throughout the United States visiting America's premier craft artists in their studios to witness the creation of hand-made objects, and into the homes, businesses and public spaces where functional art is employed and celebrated. The primary objective of the series is to convey to a national audience the breadth and beauty of handmade objects in our culture.

Viewing the Series

Craft in America may be taped off the air and used for educational purposes at no cost for one year from the date of the first national broadcast—May 30, 2007. Check local PBS station listings as broadcast times may vary.



Ordering the DVD and Companion Book

For long-term viewing and in-classroom use, the Craft in America: The series enhanced format DVD may be purchased through PBS Video, 1-800-752-9727, or www.shoppbs.com/teachers

To order the companion book, CRAFT IN AMERICA Celebrating Two Centuries of Artists and Objects contact 1-800-424-7963 or www.shoppbs.com/teachers

Audience

Craft in America is produced for a public television audience. Companion Educator Guides written for teachers support each of the three episodes—Memory, Landscape and Community. These guides are intended primarily for use with middle and high school students; however, the content can be adapted for students of all ages and for use in other educational settings.

education guide information

Craft in America Educator Guides

Three Educator Guides have been designed to accompany Craft in America. Each guide—Memory, Landscape and Community—relate to and reflect the core ideas, artists, and art forms presented in the corresponding series episode. The themes presented in each guide allow additional entry points into the material found in the three episodes.

How to Use the Guides

The material presented in the three Craft in America Educator Guides is organized into thematic groupings and written to support middle and high school art education curricula. Teachers are encouraged to use the content as presented or to enhance and further their established programs of study. The guides can also be adapted for use in other subject areas. The primary purpose of the guides is to deepen students' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of craft in America.

Scope and Sequence

The three thematic Educator Guides—Memory, Landscape and Community—can be used in whatever sequence is appropriate. The guides can be used independently or sequentially. Time for each suggested activity will vary depending on the depth of inquiry.

Each theme within an Educator Guide features the following components:

Preview

A brief overview of the theme and related activities

Featured Artists

Each theme features two artists, one of whom is highlighted in the related episode

Related Artists

In addition to featured artists, each theme references at least two other artists whose work illustrates the theme

Background Information

An introduction to the theme, the featured artists, and their connection to the broader world of craft, intended for teacher use

Craft in Action

Provides questions for the teacher to use with students prior to and following viewing of the DVDs

Craft in the Classroom

Suggested activities for exploring and investigating key concepts and opportunities for art making and reflection

Worksheets

Support selected activities

The Educator Guides are designed to complement the series, but there are additional resources available on the Craft in America Web site that can be used by both teachers and students. It is recommended that teachers preview materials on the DVD and Web site prior to introducing the theme to students.

PLACE

“ You can't compete with nature, you can just try to reflect it and be a part of it. ”

David Gurney



David Gurney, Tea Set, Rachel Gehlhar Photograph

Close your eyes. Think about the one place on earth that is special to you. Is it a beach you visited on vacation? The park you played in as a child? A special room in your house? Or, is it the neighborhood where you currently live? Is it inside or outside? Is it rural, urban or suburban? Why is this place special to you? What is the connection? Is it the people? The land? The memories associated with it? Each of us is connected to a special place, somewhere on this vast planet, that is important to us: a place where we feel safe, a place that awakens our senses and imagination, a place where we are inspired.

What do you see when you look around your special place? Is the landscape rolling and gentle, vast and majestic, geometric and compact? Do you see the whole sky or only a segment? What are the unique characteristics of this place you are imagining? What is the climate like? The vegetation? The décor? What about the sounds and smells? Can you feel the wind? Is the temperature warm, cold or just right? Is the light bright or diffused, or has night fallen? Are there billowing clouds, or is the sky clear with endless stars overhead? What shapes, colors, and textures are there? Are you there alone or are you with other people? Are you talking, laughing, or thinking? How does this special place make you feel? Do other people know about your special place or is it a secret?

Places and our sense of place are important to all of us. Sometimes by simply closing our eyes we can transport ourselves to a desired location. Some people are fortunate enough to live in or near their special place. How and why we become connected to a place is not always known. People become connected to a certain area through habit, happenstance, deliberate choice, or memories. A special place might be somewhere you visited as a child, or somewhere you visited with your children. It can be far away or within your own home. Regardless of where it is or why you feel connected to it, your place evokes strong feelings within you like no other. Most importantly, it's your place, somewhere that is cherished by you for your own unique reasons. Enjoy.



Kit Carson and Aryana Londir
Jennifer Gerardi Photograph

Kit Carson

Born 1948, Castle Hot Springs, Arizona

As a child, made small mud houses for his rusty toys

Attended Yavapai College, Prescott, Arizona and the University of Oregon

In 1975, returned to his studio; has been self-employed as an artist/jeweler there ever since

In 1978, began creating three-dimensional pieces of art in glass by sandblasting and carving

Traveled around Europe in 1979 to view great works of art

Moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1981, where he began his production jewelry line

Designed and made jewelry and glasswork for twelve years, and began assembling rusted metal sculpture

Returned to Cactus Camp in his beloved desert of Arizona in 1993; continues to make jewelry, glass and "Adjuncts de Art"—sculpture, furniture, lamps and toys from recycled rusty metal at Cactus Camp Studio



Kit Carson, Pirate Ring. Photograph courtesy of the artist.

When you pick up a piece of jewelry created by Kit Carson you know immediately that he is deeply connected to the place where he lives. In his engraved jewelry, Carson captures the land and sky of the Sonora desert with an understanding that could only come from having been born and raised there. Growing up on a ranch in the southwest, Carson not only lived in the landscape, he loved it. From the time he was a child he strongly identified with the sweeping vistas that surrounded him, so much so that he has lived in the southwest for most of his life.

Carson describes the desert as a "rare, naked place, a truthful place." He feels his work is equally as honest and he strives to reflect and capture the essence of the desert in his jewelry. Each piece encapsulates various aspects of the desert as reflected in his choice of motifs and palette. Carson designs each piece with great care and precision. He begins by sketching his design repeatedly until he is satisfied, and then he skillfully transfers the design to metal. Engraver in hand, he works the design until the desired outcome is achieved. Carson completes each piece with what he calls "affirmations of positivity"—inspirational words engraved inside or on the back of each piece to remind the wearer of the good things life has to offer. Carson's love of the desert, diverse interests, and mastery of technique allow him to make jewelry that truly reflects his unique creative vision.



Craft in America Photograph

David Gurney

Born 1958, Garden Grove, California

Born and raised in Southern California among abundant orange groves and strawberry fields

Father's family operated the Gurney Seed Company in South Dakota until the Great Depression

Still connected to seeds, maintaining a huge fruit and vegetable garden

Frequent childhood trips to Mexico greatly influence his love of folk art and eventual artistic style

Began selling work in high school to mother's friends

Earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees at California State University

Lives and works on five acres in Arroyo Grande, California

Inspired by functional pottery from Mexico and Spain because the makers were tied to the land and spirituality

For David Gurney the flora, fauna, and landscape of central California provides a constant source of inspiration for his ceramic artworks that explode with color. From the seemingly endless sand dunes a short distance from his home to his own lush garden, Gurney seeks to capture what he sees in his natural surroundings in each piece he makes. For Gurney, no artwork can possibly mirror the beauty of nature; however, he has found a way to unify the splendor of his surroundings with his unique creative vision. The results are magnificent: skillfully handcraft objects that clearly reflect his sense of place.



David Gurney, Tree of Life Corn, Doug Hill Photograph

Gurney's first foray into craft began as a child when he dug clay out of the ground after a landslide. What emerged from his discovery were wonderfully imaginative surrealistic houses. Since that time, the artist has continued to enjoy the act of manipulating clay—for Gurney, it's a magical, playful experience. Over the years, he has refined and mastered his unique glazing techniques, allowing him to explore a vibrant palette of hundreds of colors inspired by his garden and the local landscape.

From teapots to tiles and candelabras, Gurney's highly detailed creations take many forms. He likes to add his own twist to established forms, as demonstrated in his California Tree of Life and Adam and Eve Tree of Life candelabras. While these artworks find their roots in traditional Mexican pottery, Gurney has created his own mythical versions that reflect his unique artistic vision and beliefs. Gurney continues to explore the landscape surrounding his home, believing that if you follow your bliss it will lead you to a good place.



David Gurney, Trees of Life, Doug Hill Photograph

The Craft Connection

Many craft artists are inspired by the physical, social, and/or emotional aspects of the where they live, and that influence can easily be seen in their artwork. Both Kit Carson and David Gurney demonstrate the intimate relationship a person can develop with his surroundings. Other artists may find inspiration from a special place that is not necessarily where they live. It might be a place they have visited, lived in for a short time, or even imagined. What is important is that craft artists are able to take that inspiration and, through their chosen art form, create beautiful handcrafted works of art that in their own special way connect all of us, regardless of where we live.



Kit Carson, Bracelet, Photo courtesy of the artist

Craft in Action

Discuss

Introduce the notion of Place to your students by engaging them in a conversation about where they live. Possible questions might include: Where do we live? Describe the landscape? What is our climate like? How does the landscape and the climate effect our lives, the way we live? What activities do we do (i.e., sports, gardening, socializing, etc.) that suit the climate and terrain? Are there unique or interesting landmarks, either natural or manmade? What sounds are part of our landscape? What are the places that matter to you? What makes them special? If you were going to convince someone to move to the area, what would you highlight? What do you know about the flora and fauna in your area? What plants are native to the region? Have you ever been to a place that is very far from where we live? What do you like you about where you live? What would you change?

View

Have students watch the DVD segment on Kit Carson (jewelry/Landscape). After viewing, distribute a copy of the Their Sense of Place worksheet (Landscape: Place Worksheet #1) to each student, and have them work in small groups to complete Part 1 in response to what they have seen.

View

Have students watch the DVD segment on David Gurney (clay/Landscape). In their groups, ask them to complete Part 2 of Landscape: Place Worksheet #1.

Discuss

When students have completed Parts 1 and 2 of the worksheet, discuss their answers, focusing on the differences and similarities between the two artists. Highlight the fact that Kit Carson is influenced by the larger context of where he lives, while David Gurney's work is more focused on smaller elements from his environment, such as plants.

Craft in the Classroom

Explore

View additional DVD and Web site segments on featured artists Kit Carson and David Gurney.

Explore

Examine DVD or Web site segments for other artists and art forms that explore the theme Place. How do these artists or art forms explore the notion of Place in their artwork? Compare and contrast Timberline Lodge (various/Landscape) and Mary Jackson (basket/Memory) with Kit Carson and David Gurney.

Investigate

Engage students in a conversation about the important role the natural environment plays for both featured artists. Introduce students to Kit Carson's and David Gurney's knowledge about the plants and other natural features of their landscapes. If necessary, have students watch the DVD and Web site segments for both artists again. Ask them to focus on how the artists were able to refer to and name indigenous species. Then have students investigate plants native to their area. This can be done through Web searches, library research, and/or at local nature centers and nurseries. Each student should research at least five native plants.

When their research is complete, have students select one plant that they will use to inspire drawings (use a real plant if possible, or work from photographs). Through a series of drawings that decrease in size, students will experiment with scale and detail. The first drawing should be on a full sheet of paper, at least 12" x 18". This should be a sketch that captures the basic shapes of the plant. Then have them take another 12" x 18" sheet and fold it in half to create two 9" x 12" sheets. The second drawing will be on the 9" x 12" sheet. Fold the remaining sheet in half again, and so on. The smallest sheet will be 3" x 4 ½ ". Each progressively smaller drawing should include more detail. There will be one small piece of paper left. Ask students to create a symbol that is a stylized version of one element from one of the other drawings. When that drawing is complete, engage students in a discussion relating to what they learned about plant species native to their area through their observation and drawing. How did a change in scale and detail affect the way you worked?

“ The key to all the work is the drawings underneath it. It's the real estate under all the jewelry. ”
Kit Carson

Investigate

Have students research metal engraving. Working in small groups or pairs, have them create a storyboard that shows the process of engraving using the Engraving in Action template (Landscape: Place Worksheet #2). What can you fill in immediately from having viewed the DVDs and clips on the Web site? What more do you need to know to complete the storyboard?

To complete the storyboards, students may investigate other sources such as books and Web sites, as available. Follow up student investigations with a discussion about process: Can an engraver work alone? What do you find most interesting about the process? Most challenging? Is there a jewelry making tradition in your family or community? Imagine that Kit Carson or another jeweler has come to visit our class. What questions would you have regarding engraving process and techniques?

Investigate

Have students research metal engraving. Working in small groups or pairs, have them create a storyboard that shows the process of engraving using the Engraving in Action template (Landscape: Place Worksheet #2). What can you fill in immediately from having viewed the DVDs and clips on the Web site? What more do you need to know to complete the storyboard? To complete the storyboards, students may investigate other sources such as books and Web sites, as available. Follow up student investigations with a discussion about process: Can an engraver work alone? What do you find most interesting about the process? Most challenging? Is there a jewelry making tradition in your family or community? Imagine that Kit Carson or another jeweler has come to visit our class. What questions would you have regarding engraving process and techniques?

Investigate

Introduce students to Timberline Lodge by having them view the related DVD and Web site segments. Explain the vision for Timberline Lodge (<http://www.timberlinelodge.com>): a building completely made by hand that easily blends into its surroundings. Built as a Works Project Administration (WPA) initiative during the Great Depression, every aspect of the lodge is handcrafted, from the overall structure to the smallest decorative details. Engage students in a discussion about the lodge, looking at the original design and the restoration initiative currently underway to correct wear and tear due to constant use. In what ways does the building reflect its surroundings (scale, pitch of the roofs reflect the mountains, steep roofs, timber from surrounding areas, timberline or where the forest stops)? What craft forms are integrated into the design of the building—exterior and interior? How did the crafts people incorporate the local flora and fauna into the design of the interior? What other natural elements or outdoor activities provided inspiration for the crafts people? How do the crafts people restoring the lodge know what the original designs were? Why are they restoring the lodge? What special challenges do the Friends of Timberline Lodge face (<http://www.friendsoftimberline.org>)? Are there any buildings or other architectural structures in your region or state that are handcrafted? Why is it important to preserve places like Timberline Lodge?

Make

Using David Gurney's tiles and Kit Carson's broaches as inspiration, have students create an artwork that is comprised of layers and depicts nature motifs. Possible materials for this project include clay, balsa wood, illustration board or cardboard, felt on a cardboard base, and/or found objects. Students should refer back to the drawings they created in the "Investigate" activity as starting points for their designs. They will need to spend some time creating new sketches for their artwork.

The artwork should be composed of at least three layers to build a relief image. Point out to students that in both cases—Gurney's tile and Carson's broach—the artist included a foreground, middle ground and background. Ask students to consider scale when designing their pieces. What is the best scale for the materials you are using? Students will also need to make choices about color. Have them refer to Gurney's and Carson's artworks, which represent two very different color schemes, before they decide upon their own palettes. When students have completed their handcrafted objects, display them and discuss the process of creating each artwork and that piece's special connection to the notion of place.

Reflect

Take the conversation back to the larger theme presented using the Crafting a Vision: A Scenario worksheet (Landscape: Place Worksheet #3).

A large home décor company has asked you to design a line of home furnishings to commemorate the place where you live. A home furnishing line typically includes things such as tableware, bedspreads, tablecloths, fireplace screens, rugs, curtains, flatware, etc. Select one of these items, and create a design that incorporates nature motifs specific to your region. On the design, indicate what you used as inspiration, and present a range of color choices. Write a one paragraph rationale that you can present to the company in support of your choice of motif and overall design.

Craft in Your World

Are there any craft artists in your community whose work is inspired by where they live? Invite a craft artist to class, or take your students to visit the artist.

Name _____

Date _____

Landscape: Place Worksheet #1– Their Sense of Place

Part 1: Kit Carson

Where does Kit Carson live?

Describe the landscape.

How do the landscape and the climate influence the way he lives?

What activities does he undertake that suit that climate and terrain?

What unique or interesting landmarks, natural or manmade, inspire him?

Where in his art do you see evidence of his ties to the land?

What did you find most interesting about him or his artwork?

If you could ask him one question, what would it be?

Name _____

Date _____

Landscape: Place Worksheet #1– Their Sense of Place

Part 2: David Gurney

Where does David Gurney live?

Describe the landscape.

How do the landscape and the climate influence the way he lives?

What activities does he undertake that suit that climate and terrain?

What unique or interesting landmarks, natural or manmade, inspire him?

Where in his art do you see evidence of his ties to the land?

What did you find most interesting about him or his artwork?







If you could ask him one question, what would it be?

Name _____

Date _____

Landscape: Place Worksheet #2-Engraving in Action

In the boxes below, draw the sequence of engraving from start to finish. Write short descriptions beneath each in the box provided. Add more boxes as needed.

Name _____

Date _____

Landscape: Place Worksheet #3–Crafting a Vision: A Scenario

A large home décor company has asked you to design a line of home furnishings to commemorate the place where you live. A home furnishing line typically includes things such as tableware, bedspreads, tablecloths, fireplace screens, rugs, curtains, flatware, etc. Select one of these items, and create a design that incorporates nature motifs specific to your region. On the design, indicate what you used as inspiration, and present a range of color choices. Write a one paragraph rationale that you can present to the company in support of your choice of motif and overall design.

Respond in the space below.

additional web resources

American Craft Council
<http://www.craftcouncil.org/>

Smithsonian Archives for American Art
<http://archivesofamericanart.si.edu/exhibits/pastexhibits/craft/craft.htm>

Museum of Arts and Design, NYC (formerly the American Craft Museum)
<http://www.madmuseum.org>

Museum of Craft and Folk Art, San Francisco
<http://www.mocfa.org/>

Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles
<http://www.cafam.org/current.html>

Featured and Related Artists

Kit Carson
<http://www.kitcarsonjewelry.com/>
http://freehand.com/artists/story_117.php

David Gurney
<http://handsgallery.com/artists/show/20>
<http://www.ceramicmonthly.org/expandedcontent/2007-03/upfront/default.asp>

George Nakashima
<http://www.nakashimawoodworker.com/>
<http://www.nakashimafoundation.org/>

Richard Notkin
<http://www.ceramicstoday.com/potw/notkin.htm>
<http://www.plasm.com/cana/CBCeramics/Ceramics/Friends/Notkin/Notkin.html>
<http://www.archiebray.org/residents/notkin/index.html>

Denise Wallace and Samuel Wallace
<http://www.denisewallace.com/>
http://www.iaiancad.org/apressrelease_121.php

Jan Yager
http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/fashion/object_stories/tiara/index.html
<http://www.pewarts.org/2003/yager/main.html>
<http://art.wmich.edu/alumni/academy/yager/>

additional web resources

Art Forms

Book Arts

Book Arts Web
The Center for Book Arts
Book Arts Guild
Projet Mobilivre/Bookmobile Project

<http://www.philobiblon.com/>
<http://www.centerforbookarts.org/>
<http://bookartsguild.org/>
<http://www.mobilivre.org/>

Ceramics

American Ceramic Society
Ceramics Today

<http://www.ceramics.org/>
<http://www.ceramicstoday.com/>

Fibers

All Fiber Arts
Handweavers Guild of America
National Basketry Organization
PBS's The Art of Quilting Series

<http://www.allfiberarts.com/>
<http://www.weavespindye.org/>
<http://www.nationalbasketry.org/>
<http://www.pbs.org/americaquilts/>

Glass

Glass Art Society
Contemporary Glass Society (UK)
Stained Glass Association of America

<http://www.glassart.org/>
<http://www.cgs.org.uk>
<http://www.stainedglass.org/>

Metals

Anvil Fire
Lapidary Journal
Art Metal
Metal Arts Guild of San Francisco
Society of American Silversmiths

<http://www.anvilfire.com/>
<http://www.lapidaryjournal.com/>
<http://www.artmetal.com/>
<http://www.metalartsguildsf.org/>
<http://www.silversmithing.com/>

Paper

Hand Papermaking
International Association of
Hand Papermakers and Paper Artists

<http://www.handpapermaking.org/>
<http://www.iapma.info/>

Wood

Woodworkers Website Association
Fine Woodworking
Wood Magazine

<http://www.woodworking.org/>
<http://www.taunton.com/finewoodworking/>
<http://www.woodmagazine.com/>

National Visual Art Standards

ArtsEdge, Kennedy Center

<http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards.cfm>

Credits & Copyright

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