

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students watch the segment featuring Preston Singletary from Craft in America's NATURE episode, which explores the relationships of environment, culture, materials and artmaking.

Students will hear from the artist, the team of assistants that help with his glasswork, and independent curator Miranda Belarde-Lewis, who is curating a show of Singletary's work. The program features the Tlingit origin story, Raven and the Box of Daylight, as well as information about traditional Tlingit art, customs, and philosophy.

After viewing the episode, students will discuss Singletary's work and the Tlingit people's connections to the natural world. Students will also examine the ecology of art materials. In the studio portion of the lesson, students will choose a traditional tale and rewrite it as an ecological fable. Students will share the tale by crafting a diorama that includes found materials. The diorama projects can vary according to students' ideas.

Key Concepts:

- Connection to environment and place can be a theme for an artist's work.
- The art materials we choose have ecological significance.
- We understand our world through stories.

Critical Questions:

- Why is connection to environment and place an important theme for some artist's work?
- What is the ecological significance of the art materials we choose?
- How can telling stories enable (or limit) our understanding of the world?

Objectives

Students will:

- Understand that connection to environment and place can be a theme for an artist's work.
- Research the sustainability and ecological significance of their chosen art materials.
- Develop an artwork that teaches the school community about an important family member or figure in the student's life.

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

This lesson addresses the following standards. The performance standards listed here are directly related to the lesson's goals.

- Visual Arts/Connecting #VA:Cn10.1
Process Component: Interpret
Anchor Standard: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- Visual Arts/Creating #VA:Cr2.2
Process Component: Investigate
Anchor Standard: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Visual Arts/Presenting #VA:Pr.4.1
Process Component: Relate
Anchor Standard: Select, analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation.
- Visual Arts/Presenting #VA:Pr6.1
Process Component: Analyze
Anchor Standard: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- Visual Arts/Responding #VA:Re8.1
Process Component: Perceive
Anchor Standard: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Student Worksheets

- #1: *The Ecology of Art Materials*
- #2: *Crafting a Tale of Ecology*

Interdisciplinary Connection

- Technical Education: Students may choose to add to their story with video, special lighting of objects, and/or sound recordings, as Preston Singletary does in his show. Technical Education teachers may help to provide expertise and equipment for these plans.
- English/Literature: Origin stories may be a topic to explore with an English teacher, perhaps comparing origin stories from various books, cultures, and places.
- Science: Science teachers may help with determining the sustainability of artists' materials in the classroom. This topic could provide several lessons in itself: looking at the origin and ecological aspects of art materials.



CRAFT IN AMERICA

CRAFTING A TALE OF ECOLOGY EDUCATION GUIDE

Materials

- Access to online resources for research
- Sketchbooks
- Pencils
- Art materials of students' choice
- Found materials: boxes and containers of all kinds for dioramas
- Safety glasses
- Additional found materials: Encourage students to use recycled materials, including old worksheets and notes from schoolwork, scrap wood, fabric, scrap metal, scrap glass, cardboard, and packaging materials. Discarded objects from home and thrift store finds can be useful in diorama crafting.
- Glue
- Optional: video, recording, and playback equipment for recording and displaying dioramas

About the Artist

Preston Singletary (b. 1963 in San Francisco, CA) is a Tlingit glass artist. He studied at the Pilchuck Glass School in Stanwood, Washington. Singletary transfers Tlingit designs, traditionally carved in wood, onto glass. Light is integral to his work, and he uses it to add dimension to the glass and his design. He uses glass to tell a story and as a transformational medium. He is known as the ambassador of glass to the Indigenous community.

Singletary is surrounded by the wild natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest Coast. He captures the motion and magnificence of wild creatures in molten glass, then embellishes the cooled and hardened sculptures with symbols and designs from Tlingit culture. He is a pioneer, one of only a handful of Native American artists working in glass today.

He explains as he works in his Seattle, WA studio, "When I began working with glass, I had no idea that I'd be so connected to the material in the way that I am. It was only when I began to experiment with using designs from the Tlingit cultural heritage that my work took on a new purpose and direction." His work is in the collections of the Corning Museum of Glass, the Heard Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, and Seattle Art Museum.