



CRAFT IN AMERICA

JEWELRY: PURPOSE, PRESENCE, AND MEANING EDUCATION GUIDE

"I am passionate about jewelry. But when it came to making jewelry, I wanted it to be more than about decoration. My own work represents bigger ideas." – Harriete Estel Berman

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will view the work of contemporary jewelry artists Harriete Estel Berman, Gabrielle Gould, and Jesse Monongya. Through investigating these artists' approaches to jewelry making and the processes and techniques they employ, students will understand and discuss how these artists select materials based on personal choices, life experiences, and things they care about in the natural environment. Students will learn about their use of found objects and recycled materials, consider how jewelry is made, collaborate and brainstorm ways to design and create their own jewelry, and explore jewelry as art and as personal adornment. Students will create their own jewelry that has personal meaning and communicates a message that may go beyond the confines of traditional jewelry.

Key Concepts

- Artists sometimes explore and use found objects and recycled materials when creating jewelry and personal adornment.
- Jewelry can help define who you are, including status, relationships, associations, and relationships.
- Jewelry and other forms of personal adornment can have content and convey a message.

Critical Questions

- What is personal adornment?
- How do jewelry and other forms of personal adornment convey status and identity?
- Why is the choice of materials important in jewelry-making?

Objectives

Students will:

- Describe characteristics of and purposes of jewelry and personal adornment.
- Compare and contrast jewelry and other forms of personal adornment inspired by found and/or recycled materials.
- Articulate personal and symbolic associations with a range of materials.
- Create jewelry or other forms of personal adornment with personal meaning and that communicates a message.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Environmental Science: This lesson explores aspects of recycling, upcycling and objects found in the natural world and urban environment. Each artist is inspired by place, geography, and the natural environment. Science classes can investigate recycled and upcycled materials. Science classes can also consider materials in the environment that could be repurposed rather than going to a landfill. *Ask, How do these materials make us aware of sustainability and urban waste?*

History/Social Studies: This lesson explores aspects of recycling, upcycling and objects found in the natural world and urban environment. Each artist is inspired by place, geography, family,

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and the natural environment. Students may investigate the history of jewelry making, materials and functions as related to various cultural traditions and regions. *What purposes did personal adornment serve in a particular culture or society?*

Language Arts: The activity in which students are encouraged to identify a message and/or story about their jewelry could be extended within a Language Arts context. *Write a story about your jewelry and/or an explanation of its purpose and message.*

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.

- Anchor Standard #1, CREATING: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard #2, CREATING: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard #4, PRESENTING: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
- Anchor Standard #8, RESPONDING: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Anchor Standard #11, CONNECTING: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding

Worksheets

- Worksheet 1: Exploring Personal Connections with Materials
- Worksheet 2: Reflections on Completed Jewelry and Personal Adornment

Materials

- Found objects such as plastic, twigs, seeds, feathers, stones, glass, shells
- Recycled materials such as newspaper, plastic, cardboard, tin cans, wire, beads, buttons
- A variety of feathers and beads
- Pencils, rulers
- Sketchbooks
- Tools for cutting wire and plastic
- Newspapers, cardboard, metal scraps, foam board, balsa wood
- Glue, double sided tape, wire, string, rope, staples, leather, twister ties, yarn

About the artists

Harriete Estel Berman

"I love jewelry. Jewelry is a lot more than a decorative object that people put on. They create an identity for themselves by what they wear." - Harriete Estel Berman

Harriete Estel Berman pushes the boundaries of jewelry making by using found and recycled materials to address social issues and create an identity with jewelry. She finds materials that are discarded but have the potential for being incorporated into various kinds of jewelry. She states that the objects she finds are about the "messaging in our society" that is evident in the packaging we use. Those messages are often incorporated into her designs. Even as she explores unconventional materials, Harriete maintains the long standing jewelry making tradition in which exquisite craftsmanship is the norm.



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Gabrielle Gould

"My jewelry is an interpretation of the wildlife surrounding my studio and home, along the coast of Northeast Florida. I see my work as a figurative expression depicting my deep and abiding love of nature's smallest wonders." - Gabrielle Gould

Gabrielle Gould uses found materials such as feathers, twigs, and seeds from the natural environment to create forms of personal adornment. She cuts, trims and ties feathers to create jewelry inspired by the indigenous peoples of Brazil and their use of feathers. She states that she is inspired by the beauty of nature and *"by studying nature, you see the character of every living thing come out."* Gabrielle says her work represents who she is as a person.

Jesse Monongya

"It was instilled in me by my grandfather to be perfect...Why do something wrong and do it over again? Everything I do, I make sure of all the possible ways of not making a mistake, that it is durable and strong." - Jesse Monongya

Jesse Monongya is a master Navajo/Hopi jeweler, living in Scottsdale, AZ. Monongya is best known for his night-sky designs inlaid into a bear shape, which symbolizes strength and power, as well as other forms. His bracelets, necklaces, pendants, bolo ties, and earrings inlaid with Acoma jet, sugilite, coral, turquoise, lapis, and ivory among others are complemented by the dramatic southwestern landscapes that inspired him. Jesse believes that being one with nature impacts his work in terms of jewelry subject matter, motifs, and materials. He sees himself as continuing a tradition begun by his ancestors. He references his grandmother, grandfather, father, aunts, and others who have influenced him as an artist. The bear story brings home the idea of living in harmony rather than in conflict with the natural world. Jesse believes spirituality is what is most important; the universe inside and outside.