



CRAFT IN AMERICA

JEWELRY: PURPOSE, PRESENCE, AND MEANING EDUCATION GUIDE

Teaching *Jewelry: Purpose, Presence, and Meaning*

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

(one 45 minute class period)

Invite students to discuss the elements and defining characteristics of personal adornment and/or jewelry. Make use of these and similar prompts: Are there certain materials out of which jewelry must be made? Can something be jewelry if it is made from trash or recycled objects? Is there an optimal size or shape? What about how it “wears?” Should it open and close? Does it need to tell a story or communicate ideas and/or information? Does anyone in your family wear jewelry? Do you wear jewelry? What are you expressing with your jewelry?

As students address these and other questions, urge them to provide examples that they have seen or that are in the classroom.

Before Viewing

Prior to viewing the segment, tell students that they will view videos about American contemporary jewelry artists, Harriete Estel Berman, Jesse Monongya and Gabrielle Gould. Explain that each artist uses different sources for their materials, why they select the materials they use, and how they are inspired by different traditions and ideas of jewelry and jewelry making. Suggest that as they view the video segments, students keep in mind their discussion of the defining characteristics of a piece of jewelry or personal adornment and why these artists have chosen the materials they use.

After Viewing & Discussion

(one 45 minute class period)

Explain that since people tend to decorate objects and spaces around them, it should come as no surprise that people also decorate themselves. From early times, humans have found ways to adorn, or decorate, their bodies, focusing on the face, ears, nose, eyes, and hair, as well as arms, legs, hands, and feet. As with most personal adornment, materials and design have significance and meaning. Jewelry, head and hair pieces, sashes, badges and accessories are examples of personal adornment.

- What other kinds of personal adornment can you think of?
- In what ways do these artists have personal connections to what they make?
- In what ways does the artists’ jewelry look familiar to what you have seen or worn?
- How does Harriete Estel Berman make her jewelry?
- How does Gabrielle Gould make her jewelry?
- How does Jesse Monongya make his jewelry?



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- Review the jewelry making materials, tools and techniques observed during the video segments. (The artists use found and/or recycled materials from their natural environments of different objects, sizes, textures, colors, and origin).
- Review the process each artist engages in when creating their jewelry. (While planning and designing, each artist allows their ideas to evolve and change; they create sketches of the separate pieces and then put them together for the completed piece.)
- Refer to what each artist says about working with ideas. Help students understand that the artist often begins with an idea, is inspired by traditions or personal experiences and allows for their ideas to change during the process of working.
- What seems to be important to the artists in creating their jewelry?

If necessary, review the segments where they describe their jewelry, how each piece of jewelry is made, and how it is inspired. How did the artist incorporate traditional and nontraditional materials and techniques in the process?

Studio Experience

(five or more 45-minute class periods)

Provide students with their studio challenge: *Create a piece of jewelry or another object that can be used for personal adornment, uses found and/or recycled materials and that conveys an idea or message.*

Ask students to collect and bring in found and/or recycled materials to add to your art room collection and use for their project.

Students will need to identify an idea or message with which they will work and express through their jewelry.

Remind students that their jewelry might feature something they care about deeply, like the environment, animal rights, social issues, politics, etc. Their jewelry can tell a story or convey a message. Suggest that they return to one of the artists' websites and pay attention to the ideas they have explored in their jewelry making. Ask students to brainstorm with each other for ideas and techniques.

Small sticks, buttons, beads, stones, shells, and other objects can be glued, sewn, or wrapped in place.

Ask students how they see the potential for beauty in ordinary objects/materials?

Provide students with **Worksheet 1: Exploring Personal Connections with Materials**. Once they've settled on an idea, have students sketch the form of their jewelry with notes about how it will be constructed.



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Remind them to explore possible ways to construct their jewelry and to see how the parts will fit together. Provide plastic, metal and cardboard scraps, tape, glue, paperclips, wire, etc. Materials/objects can be layered or linked together. Remind them to consider what elements they will repeat within their artwork.

As students work on their projects, ask students to consider whether the various materials and design decisions support the meaning. Remind students that if they want to communicate ideas and/or feelings with their artwork, they will need to be aware of how the consumer/viewer might experience and wear it.

Extensions

An additional lesson could feature looking at the work of other artists, and finding out about the materials used in their construction and the meaning behind the materials and designs.

Reflection

Provide students with *Worksheet 2: Reflections on Completed Jewelry and Personal Adornment*. Invite students to share their reflections. Are they pleased with how their jewelry turned out? What surprised them? Do they feel that every aspect of the object of adornment or jewelry contributes to its meaning?

Ask students, How might you display your personal adornment object/jewelry and those made by your classmates to show how they are part of a long tradition?

Invite students to work in pairs to “try on” each other’s jewelry. Pairs should discuss what it is like to “experience” the jewelry. In what ways did the consumer’s experience meet your expectations? What were you hoping for that did not happen?

Assessment

By the end of this lesson students should be able to:

- 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.