

The Dinner Party Curriculum Project

Classroom Connections: History Through Art



Erica Harner

Grade Levels: Upper Elementary

Art educator Erica Harner created a unit of study for upper-elementary/middle-school students entitled *History Through Art*. In Lesson One students investigate the symbolism of selected table runners from *The Dinner Party*.

Enduring Ideas:

1. Artist as Historian

Lesson One: Looking at Symbols / Objects in Art

Class: Sixth Grade

Time Allotment: One fifty-minute class

Overview:

Lesson Summary:

Students will access selected table runners from *The Dinner Party*. They will look at the symbols/objects and try to discover “her” story.

Artworks, Artists, and Artifacts:

► Artwork:

1. Table runners from *The Dinner Party*: Hatshepsut, Tortula, Petronella, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Isabella d’Este, Elizabeth R, Artemisia Gentileschi, Sacagawea, Caroline Herschel, Susan B. Anthony, Ethel Smyth

► Artist:

1. Judy Chicago

Key Concepts Addressed in Lesson One:

1. Events in the world inspire artists to create.
2. Artists use objects as symbols to tell stories in history.
3. Artists use their work as a tool to educate and inform the viewer.
4. History can be told through images.





Essential Questions Addressed in Lesson One:

1. Why is history important?
2. Why do artists create images about historical events?
3. What events are important enough to become a part of history?
4. How does history change depending on who is telling the story?
5. Why are stories/people left out of history?
6. What clues do objects and symbols provide to understand the artwork?

PA Standards:

▶ 9.2

- A. Explain historical, cultural and social context of an individual work in the arts.
- D. Analyze a work of art from its historical events.
- F. Know and apply appropriate vocabulary used between social studies and the arts and humanities.

▶ 9.3

- A. Identify critical responses in the examination of works in the arts and humanities.
- D. Describe and use types of critical analysis in the arts and humanities.

▶ 9.4

- A. Identify uses of expressive symbols that show philosophical meanings in the works in the arts and humanities.
- B. Investigate and communicate multiple philosophical views about works in the arts.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Writing, Social Studies.

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

1. Understand how artists create work about the world they live in.
2. Understand that history can be told through images.
3. Be aware that symbols and objects can have multiple meanings within a work of art.
4. Understand that artists often have a message in the work they create.

Assessment:

How will you and the students know that they have learned what is intended?

1. Students will be assessed through student observation, class discussion, teacher questions, and the handout.



Sequence of Action:

Instructional Strategies/Activities:

Day One

Engage/Motivation:

1. Students will be given an image. Students will need to use their keen eyes and their brains to find symbols giving clues to the woman's "her" story.

Develop:

The students will be given a reproduction of a table runner. They will work in groups predetermined by the teacher. The students will complete a *Table Runner Investigation* handout that will aid them in discovery about the piece.

After completion of the handout the teacher will project the images and the students will tell what they have learned about the piece. The teacher will add information about the woman as needed.

Close/Culmination:

The teacher will ask the students to share something they learned that surprised or intrigued them.

Preparation:

- ▶ Teacher Research and preparation:
 1. Table Runner reproductions.
 2. Information about each.
 3. Power Point presentation of larger images for group discussion.
- ▶ Student Supplies:
 1. Photocopies of selected art.
 2. Pencils, paper.
 3. Sentences to accompany table runners.
 4. Power Point presentation on table runners.

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Table Runner Investigation

By Erica Harner

List the objects you see on the table runner.

What could these objects mean?

What colors were used? What moods, feelings or ideas do the colors suggest?

Do you recognize anything that you have seen before? Where did you see this?

Where do you think this woman was from? Why?

What techniques did the artist use to make the table runner?

If you could ask the artist a question, what would it be?

What techniques did the artist use to make the table runner?

If you could ask a question of the woman for whom the table runner was created, what would it be?