



Academic Resource for Teachers & Students

NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE:  
FREEDOM WOULD BE MINE  
07.21.18 - 09.16.18

*k-5*



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# lesson overview

## lesson plan

Designed to extend and enhance the learning experience of our exhibits while linking to core curriculum subject matter.

## lesson objectives

- To encourage exploration of an idea.
- To understand complex reasoning and interpretation through an artwork's concept.
- To develop empathy through making process.

## core curriculum tie-ins

Visual Arts - 4th Grade, English Language Arts - 3rd Grade, Health Education - 5th Grade

## lesson overview

On the A.R.T.S. tour, students will learn about the work of Niki de Saint Phalle and the exhibit "Freedom would be Mine". Then students will view and discuss the works of art by Niki de Saint Phalle. Students will explore how mental health can affect one's process, material, and subject matter can express ideas and visuals.

## length of class

1-2 class sessions

## supplies

Felt OR construction paper  
Chipboard OR cardboard  
Scissors  
Glue sticks  
Sharpies OR black markers

## Optional

Stencils



TETE/HEAD



TIR NEUF TROUS/ SHOOTING PAINTING NINE HOLES



L'OISEAU AMOUREUX/ BIRD IN LOVE

# core curriculum tie-ins

## Visual Art - Grade 4

### Strand: CREATE (4.V.CR.)

Students will generate artistic work by conceptualizing, organizing, and completing their artistic ideas. They will refine original work through persistence, reflection, and evaluation (**Standards 4.V.CR.1-4**).

### Strand: PRESENT (4.V.P.)

Students will analyze, interpret, refine, and select artistic work for presentation. They will convey meaning in the manner in which the art is presented (**Standards 4.V.P.1-3**).

### Strand: RESPOND (4.V.R.)

Students will understand, evaluate and articulate how works of art convey meaning for the observer as well as the creator (**Standards 4.V.R.1-4**).

### Strand: CONNECT (4.V.CO.)

Students will relate artistic skills, ideas, and work with personal meaning and external context (**Standards 4.V.CO.1-2**).

## English Language Arts - Grade 3

### Text Types and Purposes

#### Writing Standard 3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

- a. Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- b. Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
- c. Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
- d. Provide a sense of closure.

## Health Education – 5th Grade

### Human Development and Relationships

#### Standard 3

The students will understand and respect self and others related to human development and relationships.

#### Objective 1

Demonstrate qualities that help form healthy interpersonal relationships.

- a. List ways of showing respect and care for others.
- b. Practice effective communication skills. Respect personal boundaries.

#### Objective 2

Summarize the basic functions of the digestive and glandular systems.

- a. Review the major body systems and their basic functions.
- b. Describe the digestive and glandular systems.
- c. Explain how good hygiene can help offset the

effects of the glandular system.

#### Objective 3

Identify body changes that accompany puberty. \*MP

- a. Summarize the role of the endocrine system and its impact; e. g., emotional fluctuations, body changes.
- b. Describe basic structures of female and male reproductive systems and identify their respective functions.
- c. Practice behaviors that maintain good hygiene.



LA FEMME (PORTRAIT OF MIMI) OR CLARISSE

## ABOUT

# *Niki de Saint Phalle: Freedom Would Be Mine*

Niki de Saint Phalle (1930-2002) passionately rebelled—against artistic trends or movements, against women’s traditional roles, against perceived limitations of what a woman artist could do. She forged her own path, one that was set in motion in 1961 by her shots heard around the world.

Saint Phalle’s provocative Shooting Paintings brought the artist international attention and set the stage for a multifaceted career imbued with the artist’s personal story as well as the socio-political issues of the era. In the ensuing years, her work took dramatic new form while engaging in lasting dichotomies: allure and aversion, naïveté and sophistication. She established her own visual language populated by voluptuous bodies and fantastical creatures, and her signature forms—appearing through decades of work across various mediums—became the site of complex meaning.

Today, Saint Phalle is most remembered for her joyful, brightly colored sculptures of women mid-frolic. Yet these celebratory figures are part of a larger dialogue. From early assemblages to monumental public art, this exhibition explores the artist’s radical redefinition of women’s roles and women’s bodies and unveils Saint Phalle’s continual quest for freedom.



TAROT GARDEN



ADAM ET EVE/ ADAM AND EVE



SPHINX

## ARTIST

# *Niki de Saint Phalle*

This information is to help you guide the conversation with your students. I highly recommend that you use this information in a way that doesn't create a lecture but a dialogue with your student. Below you will find information about the artist in sections to make it easier to unpack the information as well as aiding you to focus on key specifics for you, projects and curriculum tie-ins.

### **Background**

Niki de Saint Phalle was born in France on Oct. 29th, 1930. Her family consists of five children (she was the second oldest). Her father is French and her mother American. Her family had their own business that was quite profitable and they were wealthy but when the stock market crashed – so did their business. Niki would spend a good portion of her youth in New York City.

### **Mental Health**

Niki's work encapsulates a lot of trauma from her life, especially from her youth. Niki would find making art as a catalyst for her trauma, emotions, and existence. Her work would become therapeutic for her but it would also recreate moments of trauma and abuse that would be reinterpreted either through a process, materials, and/or subject matter.

Niki had a nervous breakdown in 1953 and is hospitalized. She begins to paint and decides to pursue becoming an artist.

### **Beauty Standards**

Niki spent the later portion of her teenage years as a fashion model. You can find photographs of her in Vogue and Life. The 1960's were a space that women's beauty standards focused on the notions of youth and rebellion.

### **Expectations**

Niki eloped at the age of 18 with Harry Mathews (childhood friend). She would have her first child in 1951. This is also around the time she starts making her first painting. She would have her second child in 1955. While participating in motherhood, Niki would study theater and acting in Paris.

### **Relationships**

Niki's life with partners, self and womanhood were impacted by the sexual abuse from her father during her adolescence.

Niki and Harry separate in 1960 – Harry moves to a new apartment with the children.

Niki would marry Jean Tinguely (an artist of the New Realists movement). Their relationship is one of the boundaries, intimacy, trust, and collaboration. Typically we see marriages as being faithful in intimacy but for them, they would define faithfulness within trust in each other. Their marriage was a responsibility for each other's art. When one would pass away the other would take of their works and ideas. Tinguely would pass away 11 years before Niki. Niki and Jean's relationship was still a turbulent one.

# Discussion

## Visual Thinking Routine

Use the following routines to navigate your students through the artwork. After discussion follow-up with Information about Niki de Saint Phalle - using the information provided in this lesson plan including the resource section.

### See, Think, Wonder

What do you see?  
What do you think about that?  
What does it make you wonder?

### Group Conversation - Experiences

Think, Pair, Share

Think Pair Share involves posing a question to students, asking them to take a few minutes of thinking time and then turning to a nearby student to share their thoughts.



L'ANGE AVEC DRAGON TETE ET SOLEIL ANGE (JAUNE)/ ANGEL WITH DRAGON HEAD AND SUN ANGEL (YELLOW)

# Discussion Cont

## **Materials**

What objects are in this piece?  
Why do you think Niki used these objects?  
Do you think they brought her comfort or pain?  
What did she use to cover up these objects?  
What color(s) do we see? Do you think the color was intentional?  
What feelings do you get from these colors?  
What color would you use?

## **Process**

How would you start this piece?  
What places would you go to find the objects to use?  
Where would you place the objects?  
What kind of composition would you make?

## **Artwork (Nana Series)**

What about it makes it look human/feminine?  
What about it makes it not look like a real human?  
What images do you see on their body? What imagery does imagery mean to you? Why?  
What do you think about her pose? What emotion do you think she's feeling?  
(if space and time permits get them to pose or make facial expressions to certain emotions/feelings)  
How do these colors make you feel? Does one color make you feel stronger to that emotion?



# Discussion Cont

## Curriculum Tie Ins

### Health

Do you think making this work made Nikki feel better? How/Why?

Does this piece make you think about a conversation or a feeling you've had towards others? (who/ what)

If you were having a bad day - what kind of art would you make? Would it look happy, sad or mad?

After the conversation do an exercise to explore the topic of boundaries.

Below is a link to a worksheet that can be done in class.

[https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/teachers/articles/migrated-files-in-body/setting\\_boundries.pdf](https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/teachers/articles/migrated-files-in-body/setting_boundries.pdf)

### English

After conversations of Niki's work with your students. Have a couple images ready for them to do a brief writings that describe the artwork as if they are a character being introduced into a story.

Provide them with a list of adjectives that they can pull from. Make this into a flash round - quick rotation (1-5 minutes per artwork) this will help your students on focusing on the visual attributes they think are important to convey in writing.

How would you describe this character?

What about their shape, forms, and colors would be important to write?

What colors do you see and how are they being used?

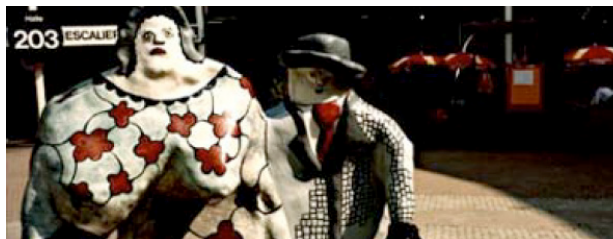
Do you think this is a friendly character?

If you made a story what role do you think this creature would play – and why?

What about the way it looks make you think or feel that way?



DRAGON/MONSTER



PROMENDAE DU DIMANCHE/ SUNDAY STROLL



MYSTERIOUS HUMMINGBIRD

# Prepare

Before doing the project or even starting the demonstration. Make sure that you have all the materials that you need.

If you are using felt make sure your students have the tolerance and time to cut out their figures and/or shapes. If not cut some in advance or use construction paper. If your goal is more focused on process instead of material exploration, either is fine.

Glue sticks take more but doesn't warp the chipboard - if using cardboard feel free to use liquid glue.

Do not use hot glue - the felt may be really thin and could cause burns.



ARTIST NAME - TITLE

## *Demonstrate*

They will make their own figure in felt.

Now it's time to create!

Talk through your process with your students as you work on your piece. You can also have a piece finished to show your students the finish art piece. Pass the sample around or the felt - it'll help students understand the tactility of this project.

First talk about the chipboard being a base for the felt to go on to. Talk about background and what colors you are thinking about and why. After you've chosen a color lay the chipboard on top and use a sharpie to trace around it. Afterwards cut it out and use a generous amount of glue (if using a glue stick) to apply it on the chipboard.

Talk about why you are making a figure, pose, and color. Draw it out, cut it out and apply it. If you have stencils for your students to use show them how to use the stencils.



LA JUSTICE/JUSTICE

# Reflect

After your class has finished their project this is an opportune time to reflect, critique, and enhance their problem-solving skills. Depending on class size - your class can discuss each individual's piece, or you can ask the group reflective questions below to do a call and response with the class.

## **Process**

- What did you think about making your artwork?
- Did you find it challenging – why/why not?

## **Artist**

- How do you think the artist feels about making this kind of artwork?
- Looking at their artwork - what kind of emotions do you think they put into their art?
- What do you think your work and her artwork have in common?

## **Constructive**

- If you had you had more time – what would you add/change?
- Name two individuals whose art looks like yours – how?
- Name two individuals that art looks different – What did they do differently than you – why?



SNAKE/SERPENT

# *terminology*

**Pattern** - can be described as a repeating unit of shape or form

**Texture** - is the perceived surface quality of a work of art

**Abstract** - art that does not attempt to represent external reality, but seeks to achieve its effect using shapes, forms, colors, and textures.

**Movement** - is used to guide the viewer through the piece

**Figurative** - departing from a literal use of words; metaphorical.

**Protagonist** - the leading character or one of the major characters in a drama, movie, novel, or other fictional text.

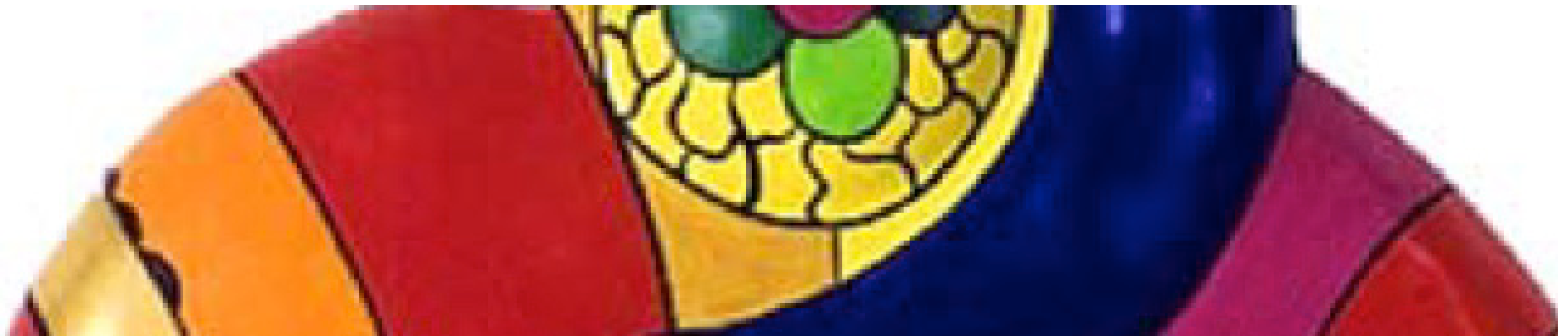
**Antagonist** - a person who actively opposes or is hostile to someone or something; an adversary.

**Respect** - a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements.

**Safe Space** - a place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm.

**Frustrated** - feeling or expressing distress and annoyance, especially because of inability to change or achieve something.

**Privacy** - the state or condition of being free from being observed or disturbed by other people.



COLLABORATION (REMEMBRANCE)

## resources

### **Nikie de Saint Phalle:**

<http://nikidesaintphalle.org/>

<https://www.theartstory.org/artist-de-saint-phalle-niki.htm>

<http://www.dailyartmagazine.com/mental-breakdown-niki-de-saint-phalle/>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/niki-de-saint-phalle-1890>

<https://www.moma.org/artists/1444>

### **Boundaries/Empathy Building:**

<https://childmind.org/article/teaching-kids-boundaries-empathy/>

<https://www.advocatesforyouth.org/3rscurric/documents/11-Lesson-2-3Rs-MyBoundaries.pdf>

### **English - Character Creation:**

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/genia-connell/bringing-characters-life-writers-workshop/>

<https://thewritepractice.com/teachers/>

### **English - Adjectives and Adverbs**

[http://www.novamil.org/sites/novamil.org/files/adjectives\\_list.pdf](http://www.novamil.org/sites/novamil.org/files/adjectives_list.pdf)

<http://www.jccc.edu/student-resources/tutors-accessibility/writing-center/files/adjectives.pdf>

