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art starts here™
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 - Grade 6, English Language Arts - Grade 7, Science - Grade 7

Length of Class
1-3 class sessions

Supplies
Air Dry Clay OR Oven Bake Clay (white/cream/natural in tone)
Markers OR Acrylic OR Watercolors
Optional Acrylic Varnish (Gloss or Matte)
Feathers
Beads
Strings

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 Niki’s ability to abstract reality figures and animals through material and process.

Tete/Head
Tir Neuf Trous/ Shooting Painting Nine Holes
L’oiseau Amoureux/ Bird in Love
core curriculum tie-ins

Visual Art - Grade 6
Strand: CREATE (6.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.

Strand: RESPOND (6.V.R.)
Students will understand, evaluate, and articulate how works of art convey meaning for the observer as well as the creator (Standards 6.V.R.1–5).

Strand: CONNECT (6.V.CO.)
Students will relate artistic skills, ideas, and work with personal meaning and external context (Standards 6.V.CO.1–2).

English Language Arts - Grade 7
Text Types and Purposes
Writing Standard 3
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.

Science
Strand 7.5: Changes in Species Over Time - Grade 7
Genetic variation and the proportion of traits within a population can change over time. These changes can result in evolution through natural selection. Additional evidence of change over time can be found in the fossil record, anatomical similarities and differences between modern and ancient organisms, and embryological development.

7.5.1
Construct an explanation that describes how the genetic variation of traits in a population can affect some individuals’ probability of surviving and reproducing in a specific environment. Over time, specific traits may increase or decrease in populations. Emphasize the use of proportional reasoning to support explanations of trends in changes to populations over time. Examples could include camouflage, variation of body shape, speed and agility, or drought tolerance.

7.5.2
Analyze and interpret data for patterns in the fossil record that document the existence, diversity, extinction, and change of life forms throughout the history of life on Earth, under the assumption that natural laws operate today as in the past.

7.5.3
Construct explanations that describe the patterns of body structure similarities and differences between modern organisms, and between ancient and modern organisms, to infer possible evolutionary relationships.

7.5.4
Analyze data to compare patterns in the embryological development across multiple species to identify similarities and differences not evident in the fully formed anatomy.
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.
ARTIST

Niki de Saint Phalle

This information is to help you guide the conversation with your students. I highly recommend that you 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

This visual thinking routine will give you the ability to interject a theme or topic related to the curriculum tie-Ins.

Brainstorm a list of different perspectives and then use this script skeleton to explore each one:
1. **I am thinking of** ... the topic... **From the point of view of** ... the viewpoint you've chosen
2. **I think** ... describe the topic **from your viewpoint**. Be an actor - take on the character of your viewpoint
3. **A question I have from this viewpoint is** ... ask a question from this viewpoint

Example - Science:
1. I am thinking of reptiles From the point of view of herpetologist
2. I think snakes have different patterns and that's how we can tell what kind they are.
3. A question I have from this viewpoint is what snakes are common in Utah and what kind of patterns do they have?

Example - English:
1. I am thinking of making a character for a short story for children From the point of view of an author
2. I think I’ll use this snake that Niki has made to base my character off.
3. A question I have from this viewpoint is what kind of personality does my character have? What would they look like that would be like to Niki’s piece? Would they be a protagonist or an antagonist?
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 (Snake/Serpent)**
What is this?
What about it looks like a snake?
What about it is different from real snakes?
Why do you think she made it not look like a real snake?
What colors do you see?
Why do you think she used these colors?
What other marks do you see (talk about pattern)


**Discussion Cont**

**Curriculum Tie Ins**

**Science**
What are reptiles?
How do reptiles keep warm?
How do reptiles adapt to their environments?
What are some characteristics of reptiles?
Reptiles are divided into 4 groups - what are they?
Why do snakes and lizards flick their tongues in the air?
What are snake's scales made of?

**English**
Instead of questions give quick timed prompts for your students to write about using Nikki's work as inspiration or jumping off points.

- What is your all-time favorite memory? What makes it so important to you?
- Write a powerfully supportive letter to yourself 10 years from now.
- Should we fear failure? Explain.
- Draw an imaginary constellation. Write a story such as ancient people might have told about it.
- Describe a real made-up dream or nightmare.
- Write about your favorite childhood toy.
- Write out the best or the worst day of your life.
Prepare

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

Make sure you have clay for your students and sheets of cardboard/chipboard. If you know the number of students you have you go ahead separate clay and place into ziplock bags so it doesn’t dry out. Have a station set up for markers, watercolors, and/or acrylics for your students.

If you are using the curriculum-tie in for science - have photographs of different types of reptiles that showcase a variety of different patterns, textures, and other traits. It is also an opportunity to have information on different species and bulleted facts about each.

If you are using the curriculum-tie in for English - have images of characters from stories and books that were reptilian or fit traits normally typed to folks that have similar characteristics (Harry Potter - Nagini, The Jungle Book - Kaa, Rikki Tikki Tavi - Nag & Nagaina, and so on.) It is also an opportunity to have a bio or character descriptions attached for students to compare and get inspiration for their own character creation.
Demonstrate

They will make their own snake (if you are following the curriculum)

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. Tell your students that you want it to be flat on one side, so they can hang it up (at home or in the classroom). You’ll take your clay and separate it into two balls. The first ball will be made into the head of the snake. While you shape the head, you can talk about the difference between venomous and nonvenomous snakes. After finishing the head, you will start to work on the body - you can pinch or roll it on the table (make sure to show both processes to your students). Talk about giving its body movement - crawling or coiled up, etc. You’ll connect the head and body by using a toothpick.

If you’re using oven-bake clay or a soft air-dry clay, you may want to wait until the next day for your students to paints and draw on their serpent.

After the serpent is made talk about why you use the colors and the patterns you make (fit your character created, represents an actual snake, or connected with your emotions.)
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 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?
terminology

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

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

**Sculpture** - of making statues by carving or chiseling (as in wood or stone), by modeling (as in clay), or by casting (as in melted metal)

**Representational** - is a term that generally refers to a painting or sculpture that is clearly recognizable for what it claims to be.

**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.

**Genre** - a category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter.

**Fable** - a short story, typically with animals as characters, conveying a moral.

**Herpetology** - the branch of zoology concerned with reptiles and amphibians.

**Reptile** - a vertebrate animal of a class that includes snakes, lizards, crocodiles, turtles, and tortoises.

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

Science - Reptiles:
https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/ket-earlychild-sci9/whats-a-reptile/
https://www.aza.org/amphibian-education-resources
https://www.natgeokids.com/za/teacher-category/reptiles/

English - Character Creation:
https://thewritepractice.com/teachers/