



eva
ELEMENTARY VISUAL ARTS
Park City Education Foundation • Kimball Art Center

LESSON
5
Faith Ringgold
Quilts

Verbal Directions

LESSON OVERVIEW

Faith Ringgold (1930–2024) reimagined traditional quilt-making by combining fabric art with painting and storytelling to convey powerful personal and cultural narratives. Students will explore color theory and symbolism as they create paper quilt collages inspired by Ringgold's vibrant and thought-provoking work.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Study the life and work of Faith Ringgold.
- Learn about color theory (primary, secondary, complementary colors).
- Use symbols to create visual storytelling through paper quilts.

SUPPLIES

- Scissors
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Glue sticks
- Multicolored or patterned scrapbook paper
- 12" x 12" white base paper
- Fine-tip Sharpies
- Colored Pencils or Marker
- Images of Ringgold's quilts

FAITH RINGGOLD



Faith Ringgold (1930-2024) was an American artist, author, and teacher from New York City. She grew up in Harlem and started making art when she was a child. Faith is best known for her colorful paintings and "story quilts," which are quilts that tell stories with pictures and words sewn together. She combines art and storytelling to share ideas about fairness, family, and history. Faith has written many children's books, including *Tar Beach*, which was inspired by one of her quilts. She has taught art in colleges and has received many awards for her work. Faith Ringgold's art helps people think about important topics and shows how stories can be told in many creative ways.



LESSON PLAN

1. Begin by introducing Faith Ringgold through a selection of images or videos of her famous story quilts.

Engage students in a discussion about what they notice:

- What stories or moments do the quilts show? Are the scenes joyful, serious, or something else?
- How does Ringgold use color, pattern, and texture to enhance her storytelling? What feelings do the colors evoke?

Explain that many of Ringgold's quilts tell fictional stories inspired by her childhood memories, blending real and imagined elements—for example, *Tar Beach*, where a girl flies over rooftops symbolizing freedom and dreams. Discuss the cultural and historical significance of quilting in America as a form of storytelling, preservation of heritage, and community bonding. Share examples of other famous quilting traditions, such as the Gee's Bend Quilters, whose bold patterns and rich history continue to inspire artists today.

2. Students will begin planning their own story quilts. On scrap paper, have them brainstorm a personal story or memory they want to share. Encourage them to think about: Where does the story happen? Who is involved? What are they doing? What details from their memory can be included? What imaginary or symbolic elements could they add to make the story more vivid?

3. Start by giving each student a 12" x 12" sheet of white paper as the base of their quilt. Students will first create a decorative border by cutting out patterned paper pieces and gluing them around the edges. Encourage them to consider how the colors and patterns in the border relate to the mood or theme of their story.

4. Next, students illustrate the central story of their quilt in the middle section using colored pencils, paint sticks, or mixed media. Guide them to focus on composition and balance, emphasizing how to create a focal point that draws attention to their story. Discuss the use of contrast—between the colorful border and central image—to make their story stand out. Encourage use of symbolic shapes, patterns, and colors to deepen the storytelling. At the end facilitate a sharing circle where each student explains the story behind their quilt, why they chose certain colors and patterns, and what their imagery means to them.

Pre-K Variation (One Session): Show kids colorful quilt patterns. Give each child a big paper and squares of patterned paper. Let them glue the pieces to make their own quilt. Encourage mixing colors and patterns any way they like. Display their quilts to celebrate their work.





KEY IDEAS THAT CONNECT TO STATE CORE ARTS STANDARDS:

Based on Utah Core Standards Fine Arts Requirements (4th Grade).

Standard 4.V.R.2:

Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages.

Standard 4.V.C.O.1 :

Create works of art that reflect community cultural traditions.

Standard 4.V.R.3:

Refer to contextual information and analyze relevant subject matter, characteristics of form, and use of media.



ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Click on links to learn more.

- <https://faithringgold.com>
- <https://www.moma.org/artists/7066-faith-ringgold>
- <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/faith-ringgold-7236>
- <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/faith-ringgold>
- <https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/Faith-Ringgold/625427>

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