

American Narrative in the Art Ark - an overview



Once upon a time....

Those words act like magic, don't they? The familiar phrase entices us with the promise of a wonderful story. Who will be in it? What will happen? We are curious! We engage, we connect, and we remember, because as human beings we seem to be wired for the sharing of stories.

American Narratives invites students to explore the many forms of storytelling. Rooted in the fundamentals of narrative, educators will lead students to discover the who, what, when, where and why of stories. Narratives delivered in written, visual and audio formats are all explored.

Not every story is told with words. Visual art is a powerful vehicle for communicating a story, and that is the central idea behind *American Narratives*. From cave drawings to digital installations, art has been used to tell its creator's personal story and the histories and unspoken connections that define human realities.

American Narratives features artwork by American artists who come from diverse times, cultures and backgrounds. Students will be introduced to the fundamental elements of storytelling and art through the exploration of art by artists like Jacob Lawrence, whose art adds to our understanding of African Americans migrating from the South to the North; and Eduardo Carrillo, who combines symbols of his Mexican heritage with European tradition to share his life in

paintings. Plot is explored in a painting by Judith Lowry, who paints Native American stories she learned as a child. Setting and composition are offered in an assortment of landscape paintings by Julie Heffernan, Dan Namingha and Maija Peeples-Bright. Views of nineteenth century California are found in the work of German American William Hahn, while Aztec mythology is center stage in a piece from Mexican American Tino Rodriguez, whose thematic painting comes to life in an interactive digital display. Faith Ringgold tells the story of important women in America's history, while Hung Liu reflects upon family and characters in everyday life. These pieces and experiences are woven together to build a concept of narrative on a large and small scale, teaching students about points in our nation's history as well as recognizing the importance of everyday moments that they experience in their own lives.

What is your story? Your neighbor's story, or your friend's story, or the story of someone you don't yet know? These are valuable questions to ask ourselves. Visiting the Art Ark gives an exciting opportunity to experience a sampling of the diverse stories that make up America, in meaningful ways.

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