

Joslyn Art Museum Comprehensive Study Lesson Plan

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Theme: Connecting Art and the Written Word

Focus: Oscar Howe and his *The Origin of the Corn*

Objectives:

- Become familiar with American Indian artist Oscar Howe; appreciate his culture and love for South Dakota through his art.
- Discover various characteristics and meanings of color through various cultures starting with the Sioux Nation.
- Learn about oral history, how to document, how to ask questions, and how to create written and visual presentations of it.

Instructional Strategies that Strongly Affect Student Achievement – Robert J. Marzano

_____ 01 Identifying similarities and differences	_____ 06 Cooperative learning
_____ 02 Summarizing and note taking	_____ 07 Setting goals and providing feedback
_____ 03 Reinforcing effort and providing recognition	_____ 08 Generating and testing hypotheses
_____ 04 Homework and practice	_____ 09 Activating prior knowledge
_____ 05 Nonlinguistic representations	

Resources:

Check out the **Teacher Support Materials** online for additional resources.

Suggested Materials: Howe's *The Origin of Corn* image, medicine wheels, red, yellow, white and black yarn, drawing materials, music, butcher paper

Vocabulary: balance, descriptive, Lakota, medicine wheel, murals, narrative, oral history, persuasive, Sioux Nation, symbolism, symmetry, translate

Procedure:

- **Engage:** Study Oscar Howe's *The Origin of the Corn*. Pick out five things in the painting and talk about what they mean, the purpose, or possible symbolism.
- **Art Talk 1:** Many people think Howe was influenced by Cubism, however he denies that connection. Discuss why you agree or disagree with him. Use other artists who painted in the cubist style to support your arguments.
- **Art Talk 2:** Focus on Howe's mural paintings. Talk about and compare other mural painters covered in previous lesson plans (i.e. Diego Rivera <http://tr.im/HTAo>, Thomas Hart Benton <http://tr.im/HTBh>, and Grant Wood <http://tr.im/HTEQ>). What are some commonalities among them?
- **History:** Who is Oscar Howe? Discuss other prominent South Dakotans and their contributions to society. Refer to the **Bibliography and Webology** in **Teacher Support Materials** for additional information.
- **Aesthetics:** Color. Study the meaning and symbolism of color around the world. Start with the Sioux Nation and why Oscar Howe may have used the colors he did. Learn about the differences in each culture. For example, black means death in the U.S., but in Korea, death is represented by white.

- **Production:** Take what you have learned about color. Gather all different types of drawing materials. Play a selection of various types of music. Play one clip and have students draw/color/create what they feel when they listen to the music. Switch the music and switch to a new piece of paper. Group the drawings together by songs and discuss. Option: switch drawing tool with each song, too.
- **Other:** After graduating from Santa Fe Indian School, Howe returned to SD. Debate – Should Howe should have stayed in Santa Fe to make more money and become a more prominent artist rather than returning to South Dakota because of his love for the land.
- **Close:** Have students create a mural of what they have learned. Use butcher paper to complete.

Extensions:

- **Cultural Connections 1:** Lakota Wisdom. Review the lesson taught by Lester Killscrow and Valery Killscrow Copeland at the November 2009 Thursdays for Teachers to create medicine wheels.
- **Cultural Connections 2:** Oral History. Have students talk to someone two-three times older than the student. Decide on three stories to record with this person. Students should present the project in written document. Option: have students create an overall topic for class (i.e. talk to veterans, talk to teachers, focus on events of the 70s).
- **Fine Arts:** Refer to Cultural Connections 2. Oscar Howe's maternal Grandmother Shell Face taught him about the oral tradition. Howe took those stories and translated them into drawings. Have students choose one of the three stories they heard and translate it into a two dimensional artwork.
- **Language Arts:** Artist and educator, John Day, has spent much of his academic career promoting Oscar Howe. Depending on the grade level, have students write a narrative, descriptive or persuasive essay about Howe or their artist of choice to promote him/her as Day did of Howe.
- **Math:** Talk about symmetry. Look at the *Origin of Corn*. Is it symmetrical? In the art world would it be considered symmetrical because of the balance in its composition. In math however, it is not symmetrical because it is not exact. What would have to change in the painting to make it symmetrical by math's definition?
- **Science:** Production of Corn. Focusing on corn, discuss how agriculture has changed over the years. Where is it grown, and why does it prosper there? Discuss the process from start to finish. Diagram or create a timeline for corn. List the varieties of corn.

Selected References: Go online to Teacher Support Materials and review the Bibliography, Webology and Videos.