Joslyn Art Museum
Comprehensive Study Lesson Plan
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AMERICAN INDIAN ARTISTS

Focus: Ledger Art and Howling Wolf

Objectives – Students will:
• Learn how the introduction of commercial materials shifted the documentation of American Indian events from heraldic hides to portable ledger books.
• Critically consider how American Indian art aesthetic was affected when they were constrained to reservations.
• Produce a ledger book-like artwork inspired by artist Howling Wolf.

Common Core Standards available on online version at www.joslyn.org/education/teachers/thursdays-for-teachers

Resources: Check out the Teacher Support Materials online, and http://www.joslyn.org/education/teachers for additional resources

Suggested Materials: Ledger Art / Howling Wolf teaching poster, art supplies, ledger or gridded paper

Vocabulary: American Indian, buffalo, calendar, chief, glyph, heraldic hide, ledger book art, nomadic, oral tradition, pigment, reservation, ritual, tipi, travois, tribe, war, warrior society

Procedure:
• Engage: Glyphs. Show students Howling Wolf's photo and images of his ledger book in Joslyn's collection. Talk about glyphs using Howling Wolf's as an example. Have students think about who they are and how they can be represented in a glyph.
• Art Talk: Discuss how gender played a role in American Indian art. Traditionally, women produced the beadwork and other abstract creations while men drew, painted, and carved more realistic compositions.
• History: Who is Howling Wolf, and what is ledger book art? Refer to ledger art / Howling Wolf teaching poster and additional information in Teacher Support Materials.
• Aesthetics: Heraldic hides inspired howling Wolf. Talk about the progression of calendars and other visual records shifting from buffalo hides to ledger books. Consider how the introduction of commercial materials affected how American Indian artists documented their history.
• Production: Ledger Book Art. Inspired by Howling Wolf, have students create their own ledger book-like art including creating their own glyph. Refer to the workshop led by Julia Olson at the April 2014 Thursdays for Teachers.
• Other: Talk about the juxtaposition of when Howling Wolf was constrained both by prison and reservation life, he became more creative in his work versus when he had more freedom, he was less inventive.
• **Close:** Display your students’ glyphs and have them try to figure out each other’s symbols.

**Extensions:**

• **Cultural Connections:** Talk about how when Howling Wolf traveled to Boston, he took on a “white man” persona. Then when back on the reservation, he encouraged his tribe to follow suit. However he had a realization, when governmental promises were not kept, and returned to his traditional roots.

• **Fine Arts:** Students should create a visual calendar using a variety of media from pencil to photography. It should depict important events in their life. Perhaps they want to include national and world events that they have witnessed.

• **Language Arts:** Oral tradition. What is it? Have students share their family history and perhaps why they came to Nebraska. Why are oral traditions important? Consider acting out a story for the class.

• **Math:** Have students record their journey to school. How long does it take to get there from home? Estimate the miles or feet creating a visual record of the trip. Then use Google maps to see who had the closest approximation.

• **Science:** Pigments. Before the introduction of commercial media, American Indian artists used natural pigments when creating their artwork. Have students research this and make a chart showing how they created the colors needed for their art.