

Aboriginal and African Oral Traditions and the Visual Arts

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Overview

The purpose of my unit is to have my students explore the oral traditions of Australians Aboriginal cultures and to make some comparisons to oral traditions found in many African cultures. I would like also to explore the visual arts traditions which I believe reflect these oral traditions and allow student to recognize the similarities to be found on these disparate continents. African Arts belong to a wide variety of cultures each with its own languages, traditions and artistic forms and the same can be said of the Aborigines.

I will focus in particular on the Aboriginal Dreamtime which for the Aboriginal people is a force which explains the origins of the lands, the culture and its people. Aborigines have a culture which dates back some 65,000 years, the longest continuous cultural history of any people on earth. The Dreamtime or the time before time is the embodiment of the religion and the culture of its people. The Dreamtime stories tell of how things came to be, how the universe was formed, how humans were created and the functions of all living things. In the Aboriginal world view all meaningful activities or events are reflected in the physical world in some form. The natural world itself is a sort a “symbolic footprint” of some metaphysical being who has shaped the world the Aborigines inhabit. The mountains, rock formations, lakes and rivers and a variety of other physical characteristics of the land are the hand of the creator beings. These stories which explain the origins of earthly locations and “The Dreaming” of a place is a potent act which encompasses the sacredness of the earth and all of the creatures who inhabit it.

Just as Aboriginal Art is imbued with certain themes and spiritual truths so too is the art of Africa. Both African and Aboriginal art could be classified as ethnographic, that is, according to H. W. Janson and Anthony F. Janson in *History of Art for Young People*, art that is more concerned with “the imaginative reshaping, rather than the careful observation, of the forms of nature.” As in African art, according to the authors, “the visible world is far less important than the unpredictable disquieting spirit world.” Much of the art is concerned with visitation with spirits and divinities who cohabitate and often communicate with humans.

Animism, the belief that every living thing has a spirit, is embedded in the iconography of the artworks. Because animism is central to their belief system, Ethnographic societies view the spirits of their ancestors as a potent force endowed with certain dominion over

the living. The appeasing of the ancestral spirits thus becomes a key aspect of their “artistic” creations. How do these artistic and oral traditions become interchanged, is the subject of the research for this unit. How do these ancestral spirits speak through the art to the people and how do the people speak to the ancestors through their art, their story telling, dance and music; the unwritten form. For my students to understand that artwork can have a higher spiritual meaning is an important aspect in helping them to understand how these artworks came to be, and why certain iconography is embedded. In an accomplished arts classroom environment students should be presented with the opportunity to respond to, interpret, and evaluate the complex characteristics of a works of art. When we examine a powerful mask for example, we can ask questions about the materials used, the form the mask takes, the aesthetic choices the artists has made in coloring or texturing or expression. How does the form connect to the actual purpose of this ritual object? In what ways has the artist used symbols or metaphor to transmit the meaning of the mask? The roles and functions of artists and artworks in times and places is central to the goals of visual arts education.

Both the Australian Aboriginal and the huge variety of African groups have vast and rich artistic traditions from which to draw. Student will have an opportunity to explore two continents of ancient people whose traditions are rich and powerful. They will discover ritual, myth and magic through the art and the continuum the people have to their past through the stories they pass on from their ancestors and elders to their descendants. We will try to make connections to discover what stories have been passed down to us from our elders and ancestors and what objects and rituals in our lives represent the traditions of our ancestors.

Though contemporary art confounds many, Western art has been founded on the ability to recreate things as they appear in nature. This was always considered the highest achievement for the artist. Good examples might be works from the Renaissance where Realism was most highly valued. It is important to stress to students that the western view of art for art’s sake is not a part of the imagination of neither the African artisan nor other Ethnographic societies. The art is far more conceptual by nature. In all of the African languages to be found on the vast continent there is not one that actually translates to “art”. In Africa the word beautiful and the word good are the same. Art is considered that which is beautiful. That beauty lies in its ability to remain connected to tradition, the ancestors and the unseen spirit world. Art forms are powerful tools to be used in rituals. Among the arts we will discuss are sculpture, textiles, masking, dance, adornment, elaborate costumes and dramatic performance ceremonies where one would become a sort of medium for the spirit world. During this visitation of the spirits, the living and the dead were connected. And yet, as elsewhere art and the aesthetic exploration of the human condition is an integral part of significant events in the lives of the people.

Visual arts teachers seek to engage students in the discovery, examination and understanding of artworks from various times and places. These artworks cover a broad range of styles, media and techniques. Through the arts we are able to explore the social, political, and cultural underpinnings of the societies for which they were created. The views of the world these artworks represent provide clues for students to understand their neighborhood and eventually their universe.

An interesting aspect of this unit is also the separating of oral traditions from oral history, and at some point combining the two as we interview artists about their art and the things that have influenced their choice in aesthetic construction. Many contemporary artists have modern influences to contextualize their work, but many also, like the Sankofa bird image found in much of the art of Africa, “look back”. We can compare and contrast oral history with oral tradition.

RATIONALE

The first thing I will cover in my unit is a framework for Aboriginal belief systems and a history of their experience in Australia. Then I discuss belief systems common to some African groups and give information about the history of some of those groups. Aboriginal oral traditions which describe the Dreamtime tell of dramatic events where powerful beings formed the land. According to the Aborigines it was a time when men could turn to animals and animals to men. While the stories or legends describe the origins of man on the Australian continent it is interesting to note that some of the tales have scientific backup such as the rising of the seas, the changes from fertile land to desert and the volcanic eruptions which reshaped the landscape.

The Ancestor spirits who came to earth in human and other forms were responsible for organizing the chaos of existence. Groups or individuals whose spirituality is rooted in these beliefs call the practice of their religion “Dreaming.” They are surrounded by those spirits in the land forms, celestial bodies, plants and animals into which those great spirits reside, so that the past is alive today and will live on into the future. The stories of “Dreaming” are handed down by word of mouth and by totem from generation to generation. Like the rock paintings found in many sacred locations, they are told layer upon layer in various ritualistic events, such as initiation ceremonies for young men and women. The lifestyle and philosophy is based upon the idea of living in harmony with the land their ancestors have known for thousands of years. Those who specialize in Aboriginal myths across the continent believe that in combination, the stories represent a kind of unwritten oral library within which the totality of Aboriginal reality, its concepts, and values are passed on.

There are four hundred distinct Aboriginal groups across Australia. Stories across the continent while diverse all similarly describe the journey of ancestor beings during the Dreamtime as they gave form to the natural environment. These stories give form to visual mediums as the creating of art forms is considered part of the Dreaming. Some of the mediums include painting on a variety of surfaces, woodcarving, rock carving, sculpture, sand painting and decorative work on tools and weaponry. Art is a key ritual in Aboriginal culture, delineating the territories, recording important historical events and retelling the stories of the dreamtime. Art is central to many of the key components of the culture, the political life, the relationships between clans and between men and women. Ancestral events can be recreated in art forms. The spirits of these beings reside in the works themselves according to beliefs of the Aboriginal people. The designs are part of the potent spirit. The iconography and symbols of the art and the Dreamtime are the same.

Students will have an opportunity to explore a continent through multiple aspects of its artistic traditions in Africa just as they will in Australia. The varieties of art forms are rich and meaningful. The very vastness of the African continent which is three times the size of America, where there are over 1000 languages spoken and over 800 million people provides a fascinating array of cultures. There is an opportunity here for great discovery about the enormity of the continent and many varieties of cultures within it. Students will be able to compare and contrast differences and similarities as we explore the many groups.

As with Aborigines the oral traditions of Africa are methods by which history, folktales, ancestral stories and religious beliefs are passed on from generation to another. The oral traditions as with the Aborigines are linked to their way of life, transmitting culture, feelings and attitudes. For centuries important traditional values and lessons pertaining to conduct were passed on to others without written language. Oral traditions explained the mysteries of the universe, the philosophy and religion of the people, providing guidance in navigating life's journey.

For African people voice was the vehicle for conveying knowledge to future generations. Death, the silencing of a voice was if a great library of knowledge and experience was extinguished. Voice unified clans and families. As with music another key component of African oral traditions, the visual arts also serve to convey the voice of the living and the dead, recording and celebrating important events. The art forms are varied, from rock carvings, and paintings to sculpture to fiber arts and also quite prominently the masquerade.

We know of course these oral traditions survived the Middle Passage as Africans came to America and became the primary means of preserving the history, morals and cultural information of the motherland. Those oral traditions took diverse forms from stories to

folktales to sermons to spirituals and of course jazz and blues and currently to rap and spoken word art.

In my unit I want to explore the capturing of oral traditions in visual forms by Aboriginal and African artists. The unit will allow my students to experience how ancient cultures preserved their heritage without the use of written language through oral traditions and the symbolic language of the visual arts. I will be using it with upper elementary students but it could easily be used at the middle or high school level.

For elementary school students art activities provide an effective way to transmit complex content in way that has meaning for them. The way the arts transmit traditions in these societies is ready made to address the multiple intelligences that increase the likelihood of knowledge and skill acquisition. Students in the upper grades are being exposed to the cultures of the world and the events which have changed the course of history. They are becoming aware of how their own ancestors led them to the place they occupy in their own families' continuum. One of the goals of art education is to develop the decoding skills necessary for interpreting works of art through their historical and cultural content. This unit links history and culture in a way that will illuminate and link two continents and two ancient cultures.

In the art room the description, analysis and interpretation of works of art are the foundation of our explorations. Through this method the elements of art: line, shape, color, space, texture, value and form are explored. Students are exposed to a broad range of two and three dimensional artworks that chronicle aesthetic expression throughout history. Through their interviews with artists, both student and professional an opportunity is provided to examine choices and artist makes as practices his craft and the kinds of things and events that have influenced their imaginations.

The introduction of oral history in the art classroom will serve several purposes. First it will allow students to understand the role of the historian as he records times and events and interprets their significance. This is an important thing because as we view and interpret artworks their historical underpinnings are key components to interpreting their meaning. If the business of the oral historian is to document "how, what and why people remember and narrate the past", according to Donald A. Ritchie then there are fascinating parallels to be examined as we grapple with how people have made art, their forms and techniques: what form their art has taken, two or three dimensional, fiber or metal, wood or rock or countless other formats. And of course why, the motivations, the shared experiences that must be expressed through art.

The unit will cover all of the state and national standard for the arts and humanities and the national standards for education in the visual arts. Students will be taught to recognize that artworks serve as a primary and secondary source for the documentation and

interpretation of the multilayered aspects of history and culture. The classroom is the vehicle for a dialogue that challenges our assumptions about things. We must analyze and interpret the expressive content of various objects. We must make judgments about the aesthetic choices artists have used and come to understand that an aesthetic itself is culturally based.

Objectives & Goals of the Instruction

We will begin by researching the continents of Africa and Australia. Using traditional maps and globes will help students to understand just where we are on the planet in relation to Africa and Australia. We can see the size of these continents and learn more about the surrounding oceans. Students in the elementary grades start by understanding neighborhoods as the center of their world. Understanding their city, their state, their country, and then where we are in the world is a good way to scaffold the information about the African and Australian continent. We will find important features of each continent, their populations, geography, major cities, natural resources, religions, historical cultural contributions to world history. This is an opportunity to discover what they know already and create a list so that it can be compared later with what they learn about the continents, the countries and cultures after the unit completion and through the artworks discussed and created.

The visual arts seek to engage students in the discovery, examination and understanding of works of art from various times and places. The students are exposed to a wide range of styles, media and techniques. In our explorations we engage in description, analysis and interpretation of a variety of genre, forms and media. We will be looking at masks, sculptures, pottery, textiles, and prestige objects or objects specifically made for use by royalty. In analyzing a work of art we discuss the elements of art; LINE, SHAPE, COLOR, TEXTURE, FORM, AND SPACE and how the artists manipulated the elements in the creation of the work.

Broadening our understanding of ceremony and rituals is an important key to cultural understanding which is essential for art appreciation. We will have an opportunity to examine how different societies have different views of the function of art. We will define rituals in people's lives, big and small. We will define and discuss symbols and their impact. We will compare and contrast these symbols and rituals in different cultures using Venn Diagrams. What are the similarities and what are the key differences.

THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO:

-Look at and respond to the artistic expression of artists from different periods and cultures of the world

-Make use of the vocabulary of art, which includes art concept terminology, artistic periods, art materials and the names of individual artists.

-Explore the cultural background and the techniques used in order to have a better understanding of the artist's messages and achievements.

-Create original artworks based on the knowledge gained from this exposure and their knowledge, experiences and feelings.

In our research we will discover that Australia is the smallest continent on the planet located in the Southern Hemisphere. It is home to the Great Barrier Reef, the largest coral reef in the world. Australia is the flattest continent with the largest part being desert called the Outback by the Australians. There are a range of habitats on the continent including tropical rainforests. Most interesting to elementary age children of course will be the wide variety of unusual wildlife that inhabits the continent. Many of these animals are prevalent in the indigenous arts like the bark paintings. Some of the animals found on the continent and appearing in the artworks are the platypus, the echidna, the largest variety of marsupials including the kangaroo, the koala bear, the wombat, freshwater and saltwater crocodiles and a wide array of birdlife including the emu and the kookaburra.

These "first" people were greatly impacted by the influx of the new culture in the late 18th century. In the upper grades student begin to understand that in world history groups of people have been affected by choice, chance and by force. For the Aborigines there was great suffering at the hands of its newer inhabitants. Students at the upper grades can draw similarities to what happened to Native Americans here in America.

The visual arts for the indigenous people have their beginnings with the cave and bark paintings. The caves themselves are sacred places where spirits of ancestors dwell and gather strength. The bark paintings echo the power of the dreamtime using important symbols and picturing animals who themselves tell of the time of creation. The dreamtime stories are transmitted orally through stories and ceremony where dance and music and specific adornment are practiced. Students can compare creation stories from other cultures and draw parallels.

Africa is the second largest continent on the planet and one of the most populated after Asia. Its area of twelve million square miles is three times the size of the United States. There are a billion people on the giant continent as of 2009. From America we must cross the Atlantic but the continent is surrounded by bodies of water including the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The climate ranges from subarctic which can be found on the highest peaks to tropical. While the northern half is mostly known for deserts and arid lands, The central and southern parts are composed of

savannahs and very dense jungle, grasslands and rainforest regions. Africa's Victoria Falls are 343 feet high twice as high as Niagara Falls.

The African continent is home to an amazing and fascinating array of wild life. On the continent one can find large carnivores, like tigers, lions, hyenas, and cheetahs, herbivores like elephants, buffalo, deer, camels and giraffes, There a variety of primates, snakes and aquatic life species. Children at this age find these animals fascinating and with little motivations they love to include them in their artwork. This allows for cross curricular activities in science and social studies as we can talk about the geography and flora and fauna found on the continent.

Great scientific discovery can be included in the lesson as we learn that that central Eastern Africa is believed to be the origin of humankind. Scientific evidence confirms the discovery of the earliest hominids and their ancestors which date back seven million years. This is a concept most students of this age will have difficulty trying to comprehend, the passage of seven million years but it is useful as we are talking about ancient civilizations and how people constructed meaning and order in their times.

AFRICAN ART

In African arts certain themes prevail as they do in the Aboriginal art. They too are concerned with how things began. Genesis is a prevalent theme in African art as well. They wish to answer the question of how the world began. Questions of ancestry, the sources of kingship the beginnings of agriculture are issues that are intricately interwoven in their oral history, their poetry and other art forms.

On the continent and in the Diaspora African peoples maintain a tradition of expressing many of the elements of their existence through a variety of art forms such as oral literature, visual arts, and theatrical performance. Art is a part of the social fabric of everyday life, providing entertainment, powerful spiritual religious functions and playing an important role in many life cycles. Artistic expression plays a role in the rites of passage, the religious practices and social control. It helps to explain cosmology. The artworks are laden with icons and symbolism and used in all serious rituals. For many African people the cosmos consists of two distinct yet inseparable realms. The Yoruba call it the "aye" or the visible tangible world of the living and the "orun", the invisible spiritual realm of the ancestors.

African societies are not thought to be characterized by the Eurocentric tradition of writing, which was considered to be the highest form of communication and the only legitimate framework for communicating ideas. It is for this reason that accounts of African history were considered to be unreliable by some of the "experts." And yet as one discovers and examines the voluminous evidence of the testimony the oral traditions

transmit about mighty kingdoms and powerful spirits, it is clear there is much to be gained from them.

Wooden masks and figures are often what come to mind when thinking of the art of Africa. And yet there are many other prominent art forms that lend themselves well to the elementary classroom, such as pottery and textile arts like weaving, appliqués, batik, tie dye, and stamp printing. Other art forms can be explored as well such as basketry, bead making, carving and metalworking.

Mask forms on the continent are many and varied. They are associated with many different rituals. They play an important role in the community life of many African communities. Spiritual forces called forth by the masquerade can protect or heal, instruct or induce fear, commemorate the dead or provide entertainment for living. Their use is crucial in funerary, initiation and ceremonies to honor important elders or leaders. Masks are used to provide protection from unseen evil, to heal the sick, and of course invoke and appease the unseen but powerful spirit world. It is believed the mask has the power to transform the wearer into a sort of transcendent being who could traverse the spiritual ancestral realm of existence.

Sculpture is an art form which is dominant among African arts. Wood and terracotta are two well represented forms. A sculpture might represent an important facet of society such as agriculture. The Chiwara antelope headdress is a good example. Or it might celebrate the importance of women and the contributions they make to the continuity of the community such as the Gelede masks of the Yoruba people which involve elaborately sculpted superstructures. A sculpture might be made to celebrate, to warn, or connect the living and the dead.

Textile art is another dominant art form on the continent. There are infinite varieties of types and forms. The beautiful woven Kente cloth is widely known, the resist mud-painted cloth of the Bamana people is also highly valued. Other prestige cloths include the Adire cloth which is resist dyed with indigo, and the soft cut pile Kuba raffia cloth. Another textile example is the woven Asante or Ewe cloth which is considered among the most highly skilled samples of weaving in the art form. Art forms are associated with the variety of ethnic groups. Textiles could inform the viewer of any number of things about the owner from social or marital status, family ties to place of origin. Some fabrics could virtually be viewed as a sort “mystical body armour” which is “experienced aesthetically through the senses.” Their surfaces are “loaded with protective script.”

A fascinating ethnic group is the Dogon located in the districts of Badiagara and Douenta in Mali, West Africa mostly along an escarpment called the cliff of Bandiagara. The precise origin of the tribe is unknown. In their stories of origin they tell of creation Gods who came from the sky via some sort of space vehicle and who will return one day. They

call themselves “Habe” which translates to pagan meaning stranger. Some believe they are descended from the ancient Egyptians. Some believe they brought with them ancient knowledge in the form of oral traditions which may have come from the Egyptian priests. Dogon creation tales are laced with metaphors similar to the Aborigines and other groups. The stories allow its people to comprehend the past, the present and the future. According to the Dogon, Nommo was the first living being created by Amma, the Sky God and creator of the universe. Some describe the Nommo as Merfolk; Mermaids and Mermen amphibious creatures that were a metaphor for the collective unconscious. This is a mythical figure quite popular in the imagination of children from fairy tales and movies.

The Dogon are famous for astronomical knowledge which was passed through their oral traditions dating back thousands of years. Many tales reference the star system Sirius. Sirius is the Dog Star the Egyptians link to the God Isis. Scientist verified this knowledge in the 19th and 20th centuries. In the 1930’s the French anthropologist Marcel Griaule and Germain Deiterlin sat down with four Dogon priests and shared some of their most revered secrets. They talked of the star Sirius which is 8.6 light years from earth. The priest revealed that Sirius had a companion star which was invisible to the human eye. They knew that this particular star moved in a 50 year elliptical orbit around Sirius. Since the 1800 astronomers had suspected Sirius A had a companion star. It had been observed that the path of the star wobbled. It was astronomer Alvin Clark who discovered the second star making Sirius a binary star system. The Dogon had named Sirius B Po Tolo. For an ancient people, without great technology as we know it, the Dogon told of the Earth revolving around the Sun, Jupiter and its many moons, and Saturn with its many rings.

Among the variety of oral traditions the people use is the tale or the fable. These can be imaginary adventures featuring various hero figures. Most children of this age can easily relate this to today’s superheroes. Another is the myth. Long narrated stories are built on strong beliefs and might even be linked to the occult. These myths are taken quite seriously and seldom doubted. The epic is another common form. In the epic the exploits of some well known figure are narrated. Genealogies, which are the detailed accounts of a dynasty of a people, and epics are often put to song by griots (oral historians) and are accompanied by musical instruments. Many African artworks feature proverbs which illuminate vivid truths.

Departure

The tradition of looking back for guidance and assistance is strong in African cultures. The past and present are ever connected, not unlike the Aboriginal dreamtime, a comparison that can be discussed with students. For Africans the dead are present in the fortunes of the living. Masking traditions often are associated with honoring and celebrating the achievements of the dead. The masquerade is a powerful art form which

plays an important role in many African communities. In Benin for example, the performance by the great Egungun masks speak to the cult of the dead. Villagers in Benin are of the belief that the performance puts them in the presence of their dead ancestors. The purpose of the masquerade is to cleanse and reconcile the community. Spirits are said to be lifted and optimism is engendered. The rite is performed by initiated men. Children can design oral history questions about the persons in their own families who have passed on and their legacies within the family. Comparisons could be made to Mexico's Day of the Dead.

Women

The role of women does not go unheralded in African societies. They are child bearers, elders, and key forces in agriculture, economics and the social and political makeup of the community. They are represented in many different art forms from pottery, sculpture, musical instruments and masking. The Efe Gelede dance masks of the Yoruba people of Nigeria are a powerful example. It is important for children to understand the important roles that mothers, grandmothers and other female figures play in family life. Questions can easily be designed to have them discuss important female figures in their own lives and to create portraits of them or illustrations about the things they do for us. Some artworks show feminine ideals of beauty and grace with elaborate hairstyles and scarification. Ideal beauty is both physical and moral. This is an interesting area for students to discuss how ideals of beauty are different from culture to culture and one generation to the next. This allows for many different types of comparisons.

Beauty, personal adornment and status are important in African society as it is elsewhere in the world. Hairstyles, scarification and other forms of body adornment serve a dual function of beautification as well as communicating information about the individual. One might infer from certain choices whether the individual was married, what their social status was, their ethnic identity. Textile arts are often used in this way such as Adinkra cloth.

Recognition of Power and Authority

Many artworks are designed specifically for rulers or important elders. Their leadership is celebrated and their accumulated wisdom is felt to provide informed counsel, as they are believed to be directly linked to departed divine kings or chiefs, who in turn are believed to be directly linked to various deities. The royal art of Benin provides beautiful examples of bronze plaques showing authority figures. Ornate stools, intricately carved doors, sculpted figures, weapons and libations cups are also exceptional examples of works celebrating their accomplishments. Here I like for students to compare many examples of artworks and art objects belonging to royalty. The flags of the Dahomey are story cloths of the Kings authority. The king, important elders, councils and associations often order the creation of masks, sculptures, textiles and other utilitarian objects to project their ruler status. In many cultures the powers of control and grace associated with the lion or the leopard are appropriate symbols for the ruler. The king is the greatest of all killers, serene and powerful in the face of any obstacle and deeply connected to the spirit world. Special fabric is woven in intricate patterns by some of the world's best weavers, called prestige cloth.

Lineage

The survival of traditions depended upon raising healthy children who would ensure proper burial customs were adhered to, so that contact with ancestral spirits would not be broken. Initiation into secret societies was a format for passing on sacred knowledge to the young male and female. It is here that the history, philosophy, the moral and practical knowledge needed to conduct oneself was conveyed. Some rituals might require enduring physical pain which is seen as a sign of maturity and bravery, an indication that the individual can withstand life's challenges. Children of this age can relate this to clubs. In some cases tasks must be performed, important values which enhance the development of the individual and the group are imparted. Masks are an important part of these ceremonies. Some instruct, some frighten, and some protect. Students have experience with masks and mask making is an enjoyable art for them. Questions can be designed about the different roles a mask can play in other societies. Oral histories about the lineage of students in the classroom should provide a wealth of discussion as my classroom is culturally diverse with many English as second language learners. Students can research their own genealogies in writing and record family members who might remember back the farthest. For further research genealogical societies can be contacted to allow students and their families to attempt to even get beyond the living.

Aboriginal Art

The aborigines speak of *jiva* or *guruwari*, a seed power which was deposited in the earth. What has now come to be known as Aboriginal art has distinctive graphic elements which are grounded in religious rites and tribal ceremonies belonging to a nomadic people. It had been represented chiefly through sacred drawings on cave walls using ritualistic designs. The images are evocative of stories and legends of ancient hero figures of The Dreamtime. These artistic expressions of mysterious realities were characterized by carefully executed series of dots, spirals, arches, and circles. Designs like this appeared in various formats: on bark, on stone, on shields, and applied to people's bodies during initiation ceremonies led by elders. About twenty five years ago these techniques began to appear on canvas. Other art forms in which we will view these stylistic references are rock and bark paintings, baskets and beadwork. The dot paintings are another contemporary form of storytelling.

For the Aborigines the Dreamtime is the Eternal Now not just the distant past. Much like the African societies we have discussed the people feel compelled to keep unbroken links between their ancient past, their present and future. In the beginning the earth was bare and plain, there was darkness. There was neither life nor death. The sun moon and stars slept beneath the earth. The ancestors had not yet awakened. During The Dreamtime the ancestors walked the earth in animal form, as kangaroos, lizards, and emus or as half human half animal or half plant beings. Two such creatures, the Ungambikula who wandered the earth and found half made humans, part plant and part animal are lying formless, vague and unfinished by a watering hole. Using their great stone knives they carved the humans we know. When they had finished this great task they returned underground or became rocks or trees. Cotemporary reenactments of stories like this must be told by an elder or respected community member, and while they may be told to an outsider, they must be told by an Aborigine. The Dreaming or "Tjukurrpa" also means "to see and understand the law." It is translated from the Arrente language. According to Bill Neidjie, an aboriginal man from Kakadu who was recorded in 1983, "Our story is the land...it is written in those sacred places. My children will look after these places that are the law. Dreaming place you can't change it, no matter who you are. No matter you rich man, no matter you king. You can't change it."

Oral communication is greatly valued and widely used in the Aboriginal community. In this way concepts and beliefs associated with The Dreaming are passed on. Oral traditions including storytelling, dance, songs, and craft making are used to give instructions and directions. As with African cultures specific values and practices, laws and history are kept intact through these practices. Oral history is shared in a variety of accepted ways; on message sticks, story or sand painting, rock or bark paintings and

through ceremonies where body art is often used in the telling of important stories. Some of the stories are personal stories about a particular person's life while others hearken back to the creation. Students can easily design oral histories about someone in their family they feel has an interesting life story or a favorite person in their neighborhood or church.

Ancient paintings and carvings on rock are found over a wide area. Some are still used today. Some are secret and sacred and have limited access by outsiders. In these sacred places permission must be asked of the spirits to enter. Myths and legends, sung poetry all of which may be acted out in rituals is passed down from generation to the next. While some explain creation others demonstrate to the young the repercussion of breaking traditional laws.

Legends of the Dreamtime are handed down by word of mouth and by totem from generation to generation in initiation ceremonies quite similar to those found in the African societies we discussed earlier. The lifestyle is based on living in harmony with the land their ancestors have walked for thousands of years. Across the continent there are four hundred distinct Aboriginal groups and yet all generally describe Dreamtime journeys of ancestral beings that created the land and the laws to govern it. Art is considered a key ritual in Aboriginal culture as it was in the African groups. Art can delineate territory or record historical events or affect political or social areas. Ancestral events can be recreated in art. It's believed the spirits reside in the works of art themselves and are part of the potent spirit.

Two styles developed in Western Australia were solid background with highly developed main figures. On the Eastern side whole sheets were filled complicated patterns often referred to as clan patterns with detailed mythological meanings. Student can have interesting experiences developing personal symbols about things that are important to them and recording each other stories about why they chose certain symbols which can be used in Aboriginal style paintings.

One of the many goals of a multicultural education is to help students become accustomed to and accepting of the mythologies of cultures other than their own. It must challenge their assumptions and help them discover humanity the world over is linked in multiple ways. Our study will engage students' critical thinking skills as we decode a variety of artistic traditions on the two continents. I chose these particular cultures because of their rich artistic traditions which I feel are particularly accessible to this age group. There are a wide variety of art forms which can be chosen for lesson ideas. The unit will allow student to explore to ancient cultures who developed undisturbed for many centuries.

Ceremony, celebration and ritual are key aspects of culture. We seek to broaden of understanding of ceremony and ritual in the lives of human beings. What is their impact? How are the rituals and ceremonies different and yet similar from culture to culture?

Many of the artworks which can be created lend themselves quite readily to oral discussion about family and tradition, hopefully leading students to investigate their own genealogies and appreciate more the struggles and accomplishment of their own families. Oral history will lead to perhaps a deeper look at the artworks, and a closer analysis of styles and techniques. Students will gain a multilayered knowledge of African and Aboriginal people through their artistic traditions. The student will be able to discuss the values and belief systems of cultures quite different than their own. This is a way for students to begin to understand the motivations of artists in times and places that might be quite different than their own.

VISUAL ARTS AND COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

- All students describe the meanings they find in various works from the visual and performing arts on the basis of an aesthetic understanding of the art form.
- All students relate various works from the visual and performing arts and literature to the historical and cultural context within which they were created.
- All students produce, perform or exhibit their work in the visual arts, music, dance or theater, and describe the meanings their work has for them.

Our study will engage students in the critical thinking skills necessary to decode a mythology that is different than their own. The instructional strategies in the unit will provide students with an enhanced view of Africa and Australia. Students will increase their knowledge of how cultural beliefs are embedded within works of art which affects their form and function. We will be able to draw comparisons in how various cultures recognize important events in their lives. We can examine a variety of art forms and tie them to their cultural underpinnings. We will compare oral story telling with visual storytelling to see how the two media are different. What is the advantage of each medium?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

It will be interesting and revealing to compare both continents to the United States and draw conclusions about the differences and similarities. This first segment is our opportunity to read research and create inquiry questions about the continents.

I will define for students what oral history is, which is to capture the spirit of the people and not just list events that happened to them. Students at this age have a fairly good grasp of early American history and some of the events that have shaped this country. We can listen to some oral history of ordinary Americans, for example who suffered through the depression and hear firsthand accounts of people experiences. I would show some of the photos by Dorothea Lange so that students could relate an image to the people who are speaking. We will want to talk about how oral histories and oral traditions are similar and how both can be translated into visual arts.

I would like students like students to understand the role of the oral historian is to translate the experience of ordinary people or even famous people into a form the students can relate to. Firsthand experience lends itself much better to capturing the imagination of the students who can then relate the experiences to their own life.

It will help for us to view video and internet resources which will allow for oral history interviews with some of the traditional artists. This will allow us to understand their motivations, their concerns with style and traditions and to hear and see reflected in their work the continuity of culture they transmit through their work. Both of the chosen countries have a layered richness to their traditions that allows knowledge acquisition on many levels.

Maintaining tradition is paramount to the Aboriginal artists. As in America the arrival of Europeans proved created great strife for the Aborigines. The Europeans pushed the Aborigines off their ancestral lands, oppressed them mercilessly and some cases killed vast numbers of people. There were 600 different Aboriginal groups based on the languages. The Dreamtime is at the center of their spiritual being and art forms are an interpretation of that force.

The teacher will read several Aboriginal stories to the students. An excellent source book is Gadi Mirrabooka's Australian Aboriginal Tales from the Dreaming, Retold by Pauline E. McLeod, Francis Firebrace Jones and June E. Barber. We will discuss the story and look at the illustrations. In addition we will listen to some of the Dreamtime stories that have been recorded and told by the elders. Some of these are stories that have been passed down from one generation to another for centuries. Other stories will be the life experiences of the artists themselves and the influences on their art.

The Dreaming stories are integral to the Aboriginal spiritual consciousness. They are embedded with protocols for social behavior with consequences and disciplines for those who break tradition. Virtue is based on adherence to ancestral laws, thus keeping the Dreaming stories alive in the form of song, dance, painting and ceremony. There is a tale of the frilled lizard that was once a man but performed the wrong ritual during an

important ceremony and was then transformed into the funny looking lizard for all eternity.

Songs illustrate the Dreamtime and others tales of the land. Dances and diagrams drawn in the sand accompany oral tales. This drawing on the ground is a very important feature of Aboriginal art and is part of the sacred activity of marking the dreaming track. The patterns are taught to each new generation of that society. Most often the patterns trace the journey of an ancestral spirit.

Students will view reproductions of Aboriginal art and discussing the symbols and important attributes of the art. There is great emphasis on ancestor spirits in the art. Each region of the society has its own ancestor spirits. Some of the most well know are the Sky Heroes of southern, the Seagull Hero of Western Australia, the Great Earth Mother and the Rainbow Serpent of the Northern Territory. These stories define the parameters of the art and are told both visually and orally in the art. It is believed each person is watched over by his or her own particular spirit. This lends itself well to a production activity and an oral history activity.

Students of this age have a great penchant for fantasy. They can try to imagine and discuss what these creatures or spirits might look like or create their own imaginary beings and create paintings of these beings using traditional Aboriginal styles of painting such as the dot painting style or the X-ray style which shows the animals as if their bodies were transparent. We will sketch out our ideas on brown Kraft paper to imitate the bark surface some artists use. We use a rich palette of colors and finally use special brushes to create the dot common to certain groups.

The Rainbow Serpent, a major mythological being for the Aboriginal people typically associated with Northern Australia is a story that will be particularly appealing to students of this age. Their natural love of fantasy and bright colors makes this an excellent subject for a clay sculpture. Students will look at reproductions of artworks featuring the rainbow serpent. They will sketch their idea of what they think this powerful serpent might have looked like or create their own modern version of the rainbow serpent. They will model their serpent in clay and we will fire them with a range of glazes to imitate the colors of the rainbow.

There is a wonderful You Tube video clip of the Rainbow Serpent by Alexander Kushnov that students can view. It is an animated film of the serpent forming beneath the earth and coming forth providing life on earth. The Rainbow Serpent Tale is perhaps the oldest continuing religious belief in the world dating back several thousand years. The Rainbow Serpent is the protector of the land, its people, the source of all life. The Serpent is a permanent inhabitant of the waterholes and in control of life's most precious

resource, water The Rainbow Serpent can be both benevolent and malevolent if laws are broken and proper respect is not shown.

In Aboriginal art the serpent has a snakelike body combined with other characteristics, other animal's heads, limbs and a singular tail unlike most snakes. Sometimes the serpent is combined with water lilies as the snake is associated with waterholes. An interesting discovery during the research reveals that this cosmic serpent is known both in Southern Africa and in Australia. The Luba of Zaire tell of a rainbow King whose spirit lives on as a serpent which sometimes takes the form of a rainbow.

Students can research creation legends from their homelands and create an oral history of some of the myths and legends they discover. They will want to know the similarities and the differences from culture to culture. They will want to find common threads. They can tie these findings with any visual forms the stories might tell.

An interesting oral tradition of the Aborigines is that of Songline. The Aborigines believed that their ancestors had been poets and had sung the world into existence. According to legend each totemic ancestor is believed to have scattered a trail of words and music across the landscape leaving his footprints or Dreaming Tracks. The tracks are ways Aborigines communicate with each other. A song is both a map and a direction finder. If you know the song you can find your way across the country. A Songline allowed you to stay in touch with those who share your Dreaming, your relatives.

Students will view video and internet resources of African art along with in class reproductions. We will examine sculpture, masks, textiles, pottery, and furniture. We will discuss traditions that create the parameters in which the artists work. The cultural and religious underpinning discussed earlier in the paper will be thoroughly explored. As with the Aborigines concern with ancestors is paramount. Maintaining connection with the powerful spirits of ancestors is crucial to the fortunes of the living.

Students will conduct interviews with their own oldest living relative and discover some of the challenges they faced in making their way in life. My students are from diverse backgrounds and many are English as second language students. In our interviews we will discover that our ancestors have faced many challenges in providing a life for their descendants including the parents of the students.

As stated earlier many masks are designed to pay homage to ancestors. In Africa the masquerade is an art form that is ancient and influential. Mask making is an exciting activity for children. There are a wide variety of mask types. The people believe a mask can protect or heal. It is used in teaching the newly initiated or in commemoration of the dead or powerful kings. They are used initiation to honor elders and leaders. In the community. The mask serves as a medium between the living and the spirit world. Students will create a mask to honor their ancestors. They can use symbols and colors

that represent their nationalities. Animal symbols are used to represent lineage in many cultures as animals are seen to possess powers that humans do not. Animals represent a totem or charm for many groups.

Aboriginal children are given animal names along with their family names. This animal name is their Dreaming name. The people believe that when they dance their Dreaming they reconnect with the creator beings and the time of creation. Students can be asked to choose an animal persona for their mask. We use a plastic armature and a paper mache pulp to create the mask form. We will use tempera paint to add color. Additional materials can be used to add texture such as seeds, shells, feathers, dried fibers such as raffia as other found objects. Students will then conduct interviews with each other to discuss the nature of the mask. Some of the questions which will be asked:

- Which ancestor is represented in the mask?
- Who in the student's family has told him this ancestor story?
- In what way are these ancestor stories similar to those we have explored in the Aboriginal and African art?
- How does the form of the mask represent something about that ancestor's personality or accomplishments?
- What are some of the obstacles this ancestor faced in his life in America?
- Using appropriate art terminology, discuss the aesthetic choices made in the mask creation.

The art of Africa is complex and evocative. As we examine some of the masks, sculptures, textiles, pottery, plaques and furniture we will again see how traditional values are at the center of the art forms. We would like to get an understanding of how these artworks were used in their traditional settings and not just how they appear in museums out of context. We must remember most of the objects were not made to be used as "art" but as ordinary everyday objects or in ceremony or ritual. Some objects were used only by a select few, some in secret, and some were community property.

We mostly think of artworks as being embedded with stories. We use our art vocabulary to decode the stories the artist tells. Here we focus on how the artist uses the elements of art: LINE, SHAPE, COLOR, TEXTURE, VALUE AND FORM and the principles of art: RHYTHM, BALANCE PATTERN, CONTRAST, EMPHASIS, AND UNITY.

Students will conduct an interview with a local artist who works in a traditional style. One of the artists my students will work with is an African American quilter. This artist, Tina Brewer, is nationally known and frequently exhibits locally. She is a frequent artist

in residence in the local schools. She speaks frequently of the influence of African art on her choice of imagery and symbol. Her quilts speak of the lives and concerns of Africans in Africa and Africans in America. The students can ask questions related to her life influences. What art and artists have inspired her? What are the processes she uses to create her quilts? They can compare some of her processes from conception to completion to their own art-making process. What is the life of a professional artist like? How does the process of bringing her ideas to life make her feel?

The students will make a story quilt. The quilt will tell the story of their family members and some of the things that are important to them and have shaped their lives. There is a famous slave quilter named Harriet Powers whose work the students will view. She is famous for her two bible quilts which were believed to be a direct transfer of ideas from the Dahomey prestige cloths of West Africa. This will lend itself to another oral history activity. The students will interview each other to find out what the symbols in the quilt represent. Who are the family members represented? What story does the quilt tell?

Another commonality among the two cultures is body adornment which while universal appears to be used in very similar ways on both continents. Body adornment allows humans to determine how they are presented to the world. Adornment can be used either on the body via tattoos, painting or scarification or for the body as in jewelry or garments. Among the African cultures there are a range of traditions, scarification, elaborate hairstyles, body piercings as well as specific ways to wear clothing or jewelry to communicate certain ideas. There is elaborate and intricate beadwork and braiding of the hair which is another way to communicate attitude and status.

For the Aborigines even the rock paintings show people wearing a variety of body art. Hunters painted their bodies and wore nose pins, necklaces and armlets and sometimes elaborate headdress. These were often used at funerals or initiation ceremonies or to show status. Today necklaces or nose pins may indicate the society to which one belongs. Body decoration with clays and ochers and sometimes feathers is done for certain rituals. In the story of Luma Luma the people of Western Arnhem Land say their giant ancestor spirits taught the people specific body designs. Before his death he cut a pattern of lines in his chest to show the people how each segment of the design represented an area of his country. The people were instructed to wear these designs during important ceremonies. Thus ceremony, ritual, and tradition, three keys component to both of these cultures determine how one presents oneself physically and maintains that connection with ancestors.

Students can compare how people in America today use hairstyles, clothing and body decoration to communicate attitudes. Piercing, tattooing and unusual hairstyling are quite common. Where once these practices were used in ritual, as social etiquette or as a way to show clan, now they appear in a different light. Athletes, celebrities and ordinary

people have become very attracted to body art. Students can conduct interviews with people who have elaborate body art and find out what some of the designs and symbols they have chosen mean to them. We can compare some our findings.

OTHER ACTIVITIES WHICH CAN BE INCORPORATED

- Interview other local artists
- Do an oral history of a community art event.
- Discuss with artist how the artist style has changed over time and the influences that have caused this change.
- Interview artist about how to achieve a certain style or technique.
- Do an oral history of classmate reflections on the unit of teaching—what new things they have learned—what they liked about their artwork they like the best—what about their artwork they might do differently the next time.
- Postcards from Africa and Australia-students choose an object, celebration, custom, geographic region or fact to show (draw) and tell about (write) in a picture postcard.
- Journaling—the students will record their thoughts as their impressions, feelings, questions, opinions and interesting facts about their research of Africa and Australia.
- Explore the nature and use of ritual in our daily lives and in the lives and cultures of others. How do rituals communicate ideas and beliefs? Find parallels through comparing and contrasting.

LEARNING TO LOOK QUESTIONS;

TITLE _____

COUNTRY _____

ETHNIC GROUP _____

-The thing I noticed first
was _____

-It caught my attention
because _____

-The shape of the object would be considered a: SQUARE RECTANGULAR
ROUND OVAL TRIANGULAR shape: circle one

-The material used to create this work is mostly: WOOD METAL STONE CLAY
FABRIC SHELL OTHER. Circle one.

-Visually the surface is: SHINEY DULL SMOOTH ROUGH PLAIN FANCY
PAINTED CARVED. Circle one

-The colors are WARM COOL BRIGHT DARK. Circle one.

-I like this work

because _____

I think the artist was trying to

communicate _____

NATIONAL VISUAL ART STANDARDS ADRESSED BY THE UNIT

Content Standard #1 Understands and applies media techniques and processes related to visual arts

Content Standard #2 Knows how to use the structures (e.g. sensory qualities, organizational principles, and expressive features) and functions of art

Content Standard #3 Knows a range of subject matter, symbols and potential ideas in the visual arts

Content Standard #4 Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

Content Standard #5 Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

Content Standard #6 Makes connections between visual arts and other disciplines

Academic standards for Arts and Humanities

-All students describe the meanings they find in various works from the visual and performing arts and literature on the basis of aesthetic understanding of the art form.

-All students evaluate and respond critically to works from the visual arts and performing arts and literature of various individuals and cultures, showing they understand important features of the works.

-All students relate various works from the visual and performing arts and literature of context within which they were created.

-All students produce perform or exhibit their work in the visual arts, music, dance or theater, and describe the meaning their work has for them.

The unit will incorporate critical attributes for visual arts: HISTORY, AESTHETICS, APPRECIATION AND PRODUCTION.

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Bingham, Jane. *Aboriginal Art and Culture*. Chicago Illinois, Raintree 2005. This work looks artifacts as a primary source to explain the culture and history of the people. It includes a multitude of art forms and stories from the Aboriginal people. It is from a series of books investigating world cultures. It looks closely at a variety of objects and explains many of the oral traditions of the Dreaming or the time of creation.

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Hulan, Renee and Elgabbrod, Renate. September 2008, *Aboriginal Oral Traditions: Theory, Practice, and Ethics*. This work is a collection of essays that covers a broad

range of subject matter related to oral traditions, the continuance of language and culture, knowledge of the environment, economy, and education.

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Mirabooka, Gadi, *Australian Aboriginal Tales from the Dreaming, Retold by Pauline E. McLeod, Francis Firebrace Jones and June E. Barker*. World Folklore Series 2001. Thirty three unaltered stories told by three Aboriginal storyteller custodians with approval of Aboriginal elders.

Pitcon, John, *The Art of African Textile: Technology, Tradition and Lurex*, Lunt Humphries Publisher London 1995. This work explores an astonishing array of styles, techniques and motifs. One really gets a true sense of expressive nature of these textiles as an advanced art form. It is filled with exceptional illustrations and discusses the changing and fluid nature of this expressive art form.

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Dallas Museum of Art, *Black Art: Ancestral Legacy: The African Impulse in African American Art, 1989*. This book explores what has long been overlooked in studies of American Art—the fact that “Africanisms” have survived in and influenced the nature of African American Art.

The Art Institute of Chicago, Department of Museum Education. *Arts of Africa*, 1998. A comprehensive guide to the collection of the Chicago Museum of Art, this manual is an extremely useful tool in understanding the modes and complexity of African Art. It spans works from ancient to modern photos and reproductions and multiple paths for approaching the study of African art.

Sasser, Elizabeth Skidmore. *The World of the Spirits and Ancestors, and the Sub-Saharan Africa*, Texas Tech University Press, 1996. This book is an invaluable resource for learning about the lands and peoples of the Sub Saharan regions. A variety of art forms are explored and discussed with an emphasis on sculptural traditions, materials and techniques and the underlying aesthetic values.

Thompson, Robert F. *Flash of the Spirit*, New York, Vintage Books 1984. This book encompasses the full spectrum of African American visual arts from folk arts to fine arts and discussed the influence of the arts of Africa, ancestral legacy.

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WEBSITES

Art and Life in Africa

<http://artnetweb.comguggenheim/africa/africamap.html>

<http://www.nmafa.si.edu/pubaccess/index.htm>

<http://www.mnh.si.edu/africanvoices>

www.iu.edu/cws/cwp/library/aavaahp.htm-227k

www2.lib.virginia.edu/artsandmedia/artmuseum/africanart/index.html - 3k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) African Art: Aesthetics and Meaning: On Line Exhibit Catalog

African Americans in the Visual Arts: A Historical Perspective, Melvyn Sylvester

www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/aavaahp.htm

This is a complete website devoted to an encyclopedic list of African Americans in the Visual arts in America from the earliest African American artists like Scipio Moorehead of Boston and Joshua Johnson of Baltimore who used their talents to purchase their freedom. Various key time frames are discussed like the Harlem Renaissance and others concluding with discussion of contemporary African American artists. The site encompasses other art forms as well and speaks individually of a long list of artists from

other disciplines. This site is notable also for helping to make connections to traditions that crossed the Atlantic and are present still in the art of many African Americans.

www.liu.edu/cwis/clup/library/aavaahp.htm. This is a useful resource on meaning aesthetics in African art. It includes visual resources and images of a variety of types of artworks.

Art History on the Web Witcombe.sbc.edu/ARTHafrica.html. A good resource for a general overview of art history from ancient to modern, focusing on various time periods and styles.

The Center for Liberal Arts (<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/ollection-former/curatorial-browsing>) Visuals and storytelling of the Dreaming

National Geographic Society Xpeditions (<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas/index.html>) Explore the Australian continent. The site includes maps, stories, and views of the people.

{<http://www.dreamtime.net.au/why/index.cfm>/ Why stories are told

{<http://www.dreamtime.net.au/dreaming/dreamtime.htm>} Information on the Dreamtime

EDSITEment.com. A huge collection of lesson plans on all subject areas including the visual arts. Links can be found to the Gallery of New South Wales where one can view a large collection of Aboriginal

Dot Paintings and hear numerous Aboriginal storytellers.

Native Web

{<http://www.nativeweb/org/>}

-History of Australia [<http://dreamtime.net.au/ingigenous/index.cfm>]

-Aboriginal rock art [<http://www.aboriginalartonline.com/regions.php>]

-Why the Stories are Told [<http://www.dreamtime.net.au/dreaming/dreamtime.htm>]

DVD's

Australia's Aborigines, National Geographic Society

Arts as a Verb in Africa: The Masks of the Bwa Village of Boni This video documents the opening celebration of the masks of the Bonde family in Boni in late

February 2005. Dozens of masks and thousands of people appear to dance and honor spirits that watch over them.

African Masks: Burkina Faso Three videos of masks in performance. The first video is older footage from the 1970's and 1980's of the Mossi, Bwa, Bobo, and Nuna masks.

African Art in Performance: The Winiama Masks of the Village of Ouri Dozens of masks, representing chameleons, bush buffalo, antelope, dangerous one horned spirits, monkeys and others in performance in the village of central.

African Weaving: Spinning, Strip Weaving in Burkina, Kente in Ghana The strip woven cloths of the Asante and Ewe peoples of Ghana are well known in Europe and America, but few have seen the techniques by which these brilliant works are made. The video also includes indigo dyeing and weaving in Burkina Fasso.

Arts of Ghana: Brass Casting, Pottery, Adinkra, Kenete, Stool Carving The video documents the technologies of brass casting, pottery, stool carving, Kente, weaving and drumming among the Akan people of Ghana.

www2.lib.virginia.edu/artsandmedia/artmuseum/africanart/index.html - 3k African Art: Aesthetics and Meaning: On Line Exhibit Catalog

ORAL HISTORY WEBSITES

[Www..vivavoices.org/websites.asp](http://www.vivavoices.org/websites.asp) The voices in the visual arts oral history projects launched in 2004 a

University of the Arts in London provides insights for artists, crafts people, curators and others.

www.eric.ed.gov/Ericwebportal/custom/portals/record – Drawing from the Well. Oral History and Folk Arts in the Classroom and Community. Each segment describes a different project approach for introducing students in elementary through high school to oral history and the folk arts.

www.thehistorymakers.com/programs/dvl/files/Lewis/ This oral history interview with Samella S. Lewis who is renowned for her contributions to African American art and art history.

[http:// writingacts.wordpress.com/2009/03/08/record-create-oral-history](http://writingacts.wordpress.com/2009/03/08/record-create-oral-history) Oral history is now a significant method for understanding the contexts of art and design practices.

Drawing from the Well. Oral History and Folk Arts in the Classroom.

-Oral Tradition: Resources Materials Social studies: Visual Arts.