

Painted Story Quilt

A visual story on fabric, based on the art of Faith Ringgold

(art+ social studies; art + literature)

Quilt-making spans multiple centuries and many different cultures. It's an art form that can teach basic math skills, record history, recycle cast-off materials, and encourage cooperative efforts within a group... just to name a few ideas!

Artist and author Faith Ringgold is renowned for her painted story quilts. She surrounds her narrative paintings with a quilted fabric border, which creates visual art that tells a story in color, texture, and pattern.

Students select a story to illustrate — either from a book, family history, or an experience of their own — then create their selected scene on fabric using watercolor pencils and pastels. With the remaining fabric, students design swatches to create a border, while learning about textile design in the process. Swatches may be shared among young designers, just as fabrics have been shared by families and communities for centuries the purpose of creating quilts.

GRADES 3-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. View examples of quilts and storytelling in art, especially Faith Ringgold's story quilts. Quilts often serve as recorded history of families, events, and cultures.
2. Cut muslin into 8" x 10" pieces and 4" square pieces (for the border). Plan one large and six small pieces per student. The area of fabric needed per student is approximately 8"W x 22"L. Save any scraps.
3. Cut felt in 14" x 16" pieces. Plan for one piece per student.

Process

1. Select a story and plan a visual interpretation by sketching it on paper. Place the 8" x 10" muslin piece over the sketch and trace the design. Tape it to the table or a piece of cardboard beneath to keep the fabric flat while drawing.
2. Remove the sketch and add color to the story using watercolor pencils and watersoluble pastels. For best results, test a variety of techniques first on a scrap of muslin:
 - a. Draw directly onto the fabric.
 - b. Wet areas of the image first with a small brush, then apply color.



Materials (required)

Design Works Unbleached Muslin, 45"W x 1 yd (63987-1001); share one yard among eight students

Blick Studio Drawing Pencil, 6H (22220-2062); one per student

Materials for adding color, recommend:

General's Kimberly Watercolor Pencils, Set of 12 (20502-1209); share one set between two students.

Portfolio Water-Soluble Oil Pastels, Set of 12 (20049-1012); share one set between two students

Blick Scholastic Wonder White Brush, Round size 4, (05857-1004); one per student

Felt by the yard, 36" wide x 1 yd, assorted colors (63201-); share one yard between six students

Delta Sobo Craft and Fabric Glue, 4 oz (23820-1004); share one bottle between two students

Optional Materials

Rocaille "E" Beads Assortment, 8 oz (60795-1005)

Creativity Street® Embroidery Floss, pkg of 24 skeins (63100-1009)

Dritz Embroidery Needles, pkg of 16 (62430-1001)

Craft Button Assortment, 1 lb (61495-1001)





Step 1: Create a story image on muslin using watercolor pencils and pastels.

Process

- Dip the pencil or pastel in water first, then add color.
 - Using a small brush, wet first then press against the pastel to load with color. Apply to the fabric.
- NOTE: Muslin will wrinkle when wet, but will flatten out when dry.
- As the painted story is drying, cut strips of muslin into squares and rectangles to be used for the border. Use patterns and colors that will further describe what is happening in the story.
 - After fabric has dried, glue large piece into the center of a piece of felt. Cut smaller pieces into squares and rectangles and arrange as a border around the image. Glue the pieces in place.

Options

- Add beads, ribbon, lace, buttons, etc. to the design with glue or stitching.
- Older students can use an embroidery needle and floss to define areas of the quilt with stitches.
- Younger students may use a fine-line marker to define areas and to make faux-stitches on their quilts.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Responding

Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work

Connecting

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.



Step 2: Glue the muslin to felt and design a border to surround it.



Step 3: Add optional enhancements such as stitching, beads, buttons, etc.