

Janice Mason Art Museum
LESSON PLANS FOR WIER EXHIBIT
Background Information

ARTIST NAME: Mary Sleigh

ART PIECE(S) ON DISPLAY: “Desert Landscape”

About the Artist

Mary Sleigh lives in Grantham, Lincolnshire, England. She is a [textile artist](#) and is a full member of The Embroiders Guild in London. She is an active member of The Practical Study Group, which is a diverse group of qualified, nationally and internationally known [textile artists](#) and [tutors](#), who have established a reputation for excellence since its beginning over 25 years ago. Community projects of this group provide opportunities to work with children and adults of all ages with a wide range of skills. She also teaches workshops and classes to explore ideas and design development.

Recently, her personal work has been influenced by her travel and study of tribal groups in Southern Africa. She is involved in promoting a Basket Project in a remote part of Namibia. This project aims to fund the development of a sustainable way of life for the nomadic Himba settlements. She said, “These experiences and journeys, together with memories and common bonds that connect people are important in developing my ideas”. Her works have been shown in selected exhibitions throughout England.

About the Art

[Color](#), [space](#), and marks made by people and the elements form the content of the finished pieces of Sleigh. Her ideas are expressed using hand colored and stitched surfaces, incorporating [found objects](#), such as porcupine quills, to emphasize the [tactile](#) qualities unique to [fabric](#) and [thread](#). She works with [mixed media](#) such as African [textiles](#), beadwork, hand colored and handmade paper, and [artifacts](#) to create [wall hangings](#), [embroidered](#) bags and handmade books. She has also designed and created handmade garments called “chasuble,” which is a series of layered stoles and a chalice veil. She created a large 20’ X 4’ wall hanging that is part of the historical industrial collection of the Museum of Iron in England. In this piece, she embedded fragments of the map of Ironbridge Gorge in Shropshire, dyed and printed cotton fabric bonded to handmade paper, hammered and embossed copper, and hand stitching. All of her work is hand sewn; she does not use adhesives in her work.

Landscape in Africa has provided the inspiration for much of her work. She also reflects the rhythms, all pervading pattern, and innovative and resourceful use of natural materials found amongst the people she studies. She shares the universal love for collecting “things,” and much of her work contains [found objects](#) from her travels.

The piece of [textile art](#) by Mary Sleigh in this exhibit is a hand sewn silk [textile](#) entitled “Desert Landscape”. This piece was the first of a series inspired by travel and research in a semi-desert region of Africa. She used hand dyed fabrics and hand stitching, including metal thread to create this piece. It was completed in 1998 and measures framed h 24” X w 11”.

Related terms

adhesives
artifacts
color
embroidered
fabric
found objects
humanitarian
mixed media
space
tactile
textile
textile art
textile artist
thread
tutor
wall hanging

Specific Lesson Plans

Grades K-5

Kentucky Core Content

AH-E4.1.34 Describe a variety of media and processes used to produce two-dimensional (2-D) and three-dimensional (3-D) artwork.

AH-E-4.2.35 Recognize that artists choose to express themselves in different styles and subject matters.

AH-E-4.1.42 Use a variety of media and art processes to produce two-dimensional (2-D) and three-dimensional (3-D) artwork.

AH-E-4.2.31 Identify various purposes for creating works of art.

AH-E-4.2.35 Recognize that artists choose to express themselves in different styles and subject matters.

AH-E-4.2.36 Styles: realistic, abstract, non-objective

Objectives

- To learn that Mary Sleigh is an English [textile artist](#).
- To understand what a [textile artist](#) does.
- To realize that Mary Sleigh uses different materials to make her [textiles](#).
- To know that Mary Sleigh's work is greatly influenced by her travels and research in the semi-desert region of Southern Africa.

Suggested Questions

1. Where does Mary Sleigh live?
2. What does Mary Sleigh do?
3. What does a [textile artist](#) do?
4. What materials does Mary Sleigh use in her [textile](#) pieces?
5. How is Mary Sleigh's work influenced by her travels and research in Southern Africa?

Related Activities

1. Let students take a walk around the school campus and pick up objects they could attach to a fabric. Give them a piece of fabric and let them attach their objects. Let them use glue even though Mary Sleigh did not use [adhesives](#).
2. Teach the students how to do a simple piece of [embroidered](#) work. Let them iron a pattern on their fabric and embroider that item. You will need iron on patterns, needles, fabric, and colored thread.

Grades 6-8

Kentucky Core Content

AH-M-4.1.32 Art Elements: line, shape, color (tints and shades) and color groups (monochromatic), form, texture, space (positive/negative and perspective), and value (light and shadow).

AH-M-4.1.34 Identify and describe a variety of art media, art processes, and subject matter to communicate ideas, feelings, experiences, and stories.

AH-M-4.1.35 Media: two dimensional-crayon, pencil, fabric, yarn, paint (tempera, watercolor), ink and pastels.

AH-M-4.1.39 Subject Matter: landscape, portrait, still life, abstract, and non-objective.

AH-M-4.1.42 Effectively use a variety of art media, processes, and subject matter to communicate ideas, feelings, and experiences.

AH-M-4.1.37 Art Processes: two-dimensional-painting, fabric design, printmaking, and mosaics.

AH-M-4.2.31 Describe and compare the characteristics and purposes of works of art representing various cultures, historical periods, artists, and/or styles.

Objectives

- To learn about Mary Sleigh, her life, her art, and what influences much of that art.
- To understand that Mary Sleigh uses many items to create her wall hangings, [embroidered](#) bags, and handmade books.
- To realize that Mary Sleigh has been involved in a [humanitarian](#) Basket Project.
- To know that color, space, and marks made by people and the elements form the content of the finished pieces of Sleigh.
- To know what [textile art](#) is.

Suggested Questions

1. Explain about Mary Sleigh including her life, her art, and the South African influences on her work.
2. What does Mary Sleigh use to create her wall hangings, embroidered bags, and handmade books?
3. Tell about Mary Sleigh's [humanitarian](#) Basket Project.
4. What forms the content of her finished [textile art](#).
5. What is [textile art](#)?

Related Activities

1. Have students get on the internet/go to library to see samples of [textile art](#) by other artists. Have them write a paragraph describing a selected item of [textile art](#). Remind them to include the [principles of design](#) in their discussion (balance, emphasis, pattern, repetition, contrast, variety, movement, rhythm, proportion, transition/gradation, and unity).
2. Have students design a [textile](#) wall hanging using natural materials they find in their environment. They should have a theme for their wall hanging. Hand sew the items to the wall hanging as Mary Sleigh does.

Grades 9-12

Kentucky Core Content

AH-H-4.1.31 Describe works of art using appropriate terminology.

AH-H-4.1.32 Art Elements: color and color theory: primary and secondary hues, values (tints and shades), intensity (brightness and dullness); color relationship: triadic, complementary, and analogous.

AH-H-4.1.33 Principles of Design: Balance (symmetry/asymmetry), emphasis (focal pattern), pattern, repetition, contrast, variety, movement, rhythm, proportion, transition/gradation, and unity.

AH-H-4.1.34 Defend personal interpretations of works of art and architecture by using arguments.

AH-H-4.2.39 Purposes of Art: persuasive (advertising, marketing, propaganda); formalist (abstract, non-objective, arrangement of elements and principles as subject matter).

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- To realize that Mary Sleigh has been involved in a [humanitarian](#) Basket Project.
- To know that color, space, and marks made by people and the elements form the content of the finished pieces of Sleigh.
- To know what [textile art](#) is.
- To use the [Four Step Method of Art Criticism](#) to critique a piece of textile art.

Suggested Questions

1. Describe what a [textile artist](#) does?
2. Tell about Mary Sleigh and her life?
3. What has influenced much of Mary Sleigh's [textile art](#)?
4. What is the main purpose of her Basket Project?
5. What kind of items does she use in developing her textile art?
6. Tell what you know about Mary Sleigh's [textile](#) "Desert Landscape". Use the [Four Step Method of Art Criticism](#) found on this web site to do this.

Related Activities

1. Have students get on the internet/go to library to see samples of textile art by other artists. Have them write a paragraph describing a selected item of textile art. Remind them to include the [principles of design](#) in their discussion (balance, emphasis, pattern, repetition, contrast, variety, movement, rhythm, proportion, transition/gradation, and unity).
2. Have students design a textile wall hanging using natural materials they find in their environment. They should have a theme for their wall hanging. Hand sew the items to the wall hanging as Mary Sleigh does.