Educator Resources for *From Where I Stand*

Sheldon encourages using a variety of strategies to engage your students in critical thinking, reflection, and conversation around the works of art in the 2019–2020 Sheldon Statewide exhibition, *From Where I Stand*. The resources below provide ideas for incorporating its themes, discussions, and content into your classroom lessons. If your class is not able to visit the exhibition in person, you can bring the exhibition into your classroom using the individual image files and/or PowerPoint presentation of the exhibition, available at the following URL: https://go.unl.edu/statewide-educator.

**Thinking Routines**

Thinking routines are short, easy-to-learn strategies that guide and make evident students’ thought processes. Sheldon education staff and volunteer docents frequently use thinking routines with all grade levels, often combining multiple routines in the same discussion.

When addressing artworks in *From Where I Stand*, we recommend the following thinking routines:

**What Makes You Say That?**

*helps students build evidence-based reasoning and understand multiple perspectives*

- Look at the artwork and answer:
  - What’s going on?
  - What do you see that makes you say that?

**Parts / Purposes / Complexities**

*helps students build a multi-dimensional understanding of a topic*

- Choose an artwork and ask:
  - What are its parts, pieces, or components?
  - What are its purposes? What is it for or what does it do?
  - What are its complexities? How is it complicated in its parts, purposes, or the relationship between the two, or other ways?

**Beginning / Middle / End**

*helps students make observations and use imagination, patterns, and connections to extend ideas*

- Choose one of these questions:
  - If this artwork is the beginning of a story, what might happen next?
  - If this artwork is the middle of a story, what might have happened before? What might be about to happen?
  - If this artwork is the end of a story, what might the story be?

**Creative Questions**

*simulates and sustains curiosity and helps students discover the complexity of a topic*

- Brainstorm a list of questions about a work of art. Question starters include:
  - Why …?
  - What are the reasons …? What if …?
  - What is the purpose of …? How would it be different if …? Suppose that …?
  - What if we knew …? What would change if …?
- Review your brainstormed list and star the questions that seem most interesting. Select one to discuss.
- Reflect: what new ideas do you have about the work of art that you didn’t have before?

Thinking Routines are a key element of Visible Thinking and Artful Thinking, education programs developed by Harvard’s Project Zero. Learn more here: [www.visiblethinkingpz.org](http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org) and [www.pzartfulthinking.org](http://www.pzartfulthinking.org).
Activity Prompts
The following prompts are designed to serve as flexible jumping-off points and can be adapted to your classroom objectives and the grade level of your students.

- Write a poem or story from the point of view of one of the people in one of the artworks. Conversely, imagine the point of view of someone not pictured.
- Draw, paint, or collage an image of yourself in a landscape that is either real or imagined. Write about what you chose to depict and why.
- Look at Amy Cutler’s Astrid and discuss what you think is happening in the picture. Create your own fantastical scene with an accompanying written narrative. Try presenting your story in the form of a graphic novel or comic strip.
- Look at Faith Ringgold’s Sunflower Quilting Bee at Arles. Talk about why Ringgold chose to include these particular women in her image (see exhibition text). Discuss what significant figures from history you would bring together for a conversation. Younger students could perform a skit acting out this meeting, while older students could do their own research on the women in Ringgold’s print.
- Go outside to investigate the landscape surrounding your school, recording observations in a journal or log. Discuss or write about how the landscape makes you feel and how you think it impacts your school or community. Compare your school landscape to other landscapes and note the similarities and differences (e.g. your home, the park, a city). Consider both natural and manmade elements of the environment.

General Discussion Questions
We recommend discussing the following questions while looking closely at one or more works of art from the exhibition. Individual image files and a PowerPoint with all works in the exhibition can be found at https://go.unl.edu/statewide-educator.

- How does the person or group of people depicted in the image interact with their surrounding environment? Are they active or passive? How would their actions change if they were placed in a different landscape? How might the landscape affect the way the inhabitants feel, how they choose to act, or what they choose to do?
- Describe the landscape that surrounds you. How does it affect your daily life, or that of your family or the people in your town? How might your answer change if you lived near the ocean or in the mountains?
- How might the life of a person depicted in the work of art compare to your own? What is the same or different about your lives? How can you use historical or cultural context to develop your interpretation?
- The works in this exhibition vary in their degree of realism and abstraction. Choose an abstract work and look at how the artist has portrayed the figures and environment. Compare/contrast this image with a more realistic representation. Why might an artist choose to portray a landscape through abstraction?