

LIVING IN A COMMUNITY

The folk artist has been commonly identified as that person who has had no formal art training and who creates from an inner passion and drive. Often materials are those found in the artist's environment – wood, recycled objects, salvaged tin, shells, natural vines and limbs – virtually anything the artist can find to help express his or her ideas. The folk artist makes a personal statement about his or her culture, religion, beliefs, family, or any subject which has deep meaning. The collection at Hickory Museum of Art features a diversity of artists and subject matter. Many of these artists began their works late in life when seeking a way to satisfy the creative urge or deal with inner visions.

GRADE LEVEL: 2-3

North Carolina Essential Standards: Social Studies

Estimated time: 60 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

- ◇ The student will compare and contrast life in a community through two works of art
- ◇ The student will apply the characteristics of the artist's community to his/her community
- ◇ The student will learn about three folk artists

MATERIALS:

- ◇ Visuals of *Hog Hill School* by Minnie Reinhardt, *Arts Center of Catawba Valley* by Barry G. Huffman, and *Ocracoke Lighthouse with a Washwoman* by Elnora Hamilton
- ◇ Recycled materials (boxes, wrappers, tissue tubes, paints, crayons, paper, glue)

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Minnie Reinhardt was born on January 1, 1898-one of eleven children-and lived her life in Vale which is part of Catawba County, North Carolina. She attended Hog Hill School as a child and often drew pictures on her slate. Ms. Reinhardt spent most of her life working on a farm and rearing her children. After undergoing cataract surgery in her seventies, she rediscovered the joy of light and color. One of her children gave her a paint set for Christmas and thus started a new life of painting. She started out with flowers, then progressed to memory paintings-depicting life as she remembered it in rural Catawba County. Ms. Reinhardt died in 1986.

Barry G. Huffman was born in 1943 in Georgia and raised in Sanford, North Carolina. She and her husband have been avid folk art collectors for many years and most pieces of the folk art exhibit at Hickory Museum of Art have come from the Huffman collection. Ms. Huffman has painted a number of subjects,

including “life as a mother” and images of historical Catawba County where she currently resides.

Elnora Hamilton was born in 1911 on Ocracoke Island off the coast of North Carolina. At the age of fourteen, she moved away from the Outer Banks and, upon retirement, returned in the 1970s. She attributes her beginnings as a painter to a fortune teller who told her she should paint. About twelve years later, she remembered this exchange when she painted a flower on a vase. In 1973 she began painting her first pictures. Her subject matter primarily reflects her life on the Outer Banks.

LESSON ACTIVITIES

Introduction:

- ◇ Talk about what a community is; what are some buildings that are found in all communities
- ◇ What are some jobs that people have in a community?

Discussion:

View the reproductions of *Hog Hill School* and *Arts Center of Catawba Valley*

- ◇ What do you see in each picture?
- ◇ The arts center pictured was once a high school; what are some characteristics of a school building?
- ◇ What are some differences between the school Ms. Reinhardt painted and the one Ms. Huffman painted? What are some similarities? Which would you like to attend? Why?
- ◇ Now look at the Ocracoke community painted by Elnora Hamilton. What are some buildings in this community? How is it different from your community? Would you like to live in this community? Why or why not?
- ◇ How does this community differ from the other two paintings?

Activity:

- ◇ Review the various buildings of a community and have each student select one that is special to him/her.
- ◇ Using the recycled materials, (boxes, tubes, milk cartons, etc.) have each student make a building. Then arrange all buildings on a table to represent a community.

POST ACTIVITIES

- ◇ Visit the Hickory Museum of Art to see the paintings and others that relate to community life.
- ◇ Visit a special community building - police station, fire station, courthouse, hospital, etc.
- ◇ Have each child choose a community worker and find information about that job. Share this with the class-maybe dress up as that worker and give a short oral report.

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

- ◇ Students expressed understanding of a community in terms of geography and makeup
- ◇ Students were able to articulate similarities and differences of community life from visuals presented
- ◇ Students identified characteristics of their own community and created a building based on their selection

RESOURCES

- ◇ *The Wonderful Tower of Watts* by Patricia Zilver , Boyds Mills Press, 1994 (the story of how a man's creative use of recycled materials made an impact on his community)
- ◇ *Stay Away from the Junkyard* by Tricia Tusa, McMillan Co., 1992