

Teacher Resource (GRADES: K-12)

FEVER WITHIN

THE ART OF RONALD LOCKETT

HIGH

HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ATLANTA

Through January 8, 2017



Ronald Lockett (American, 1965–1998), *A Place in Time*, 1989, wood, cloth, net, tin, industrial sealing compound, oil, and enamel on wood, Collection of Souls Grown Deep Foundation. Photograph by Stephen Pitken/Pitken Studio. © Ronald Lockett.

About the Exhibition

This exhibition marks the first retrospective of Southern artist Ronald Lockett, a passionately inspired figure whose work challenges the boundaries between self-taught and mainstream contemporary American art.

Participating in the tradition of painting and sculpture that emerged among his self-taught peers, Lockett worked with found materials, such as metal from abandoned buildings and fences, and drew inspiration from a symbolic cast of animal avatars to address themes of struggle, survival, and injustice in contexts that ranged from the autobiographical to the national.

This exhibition was organized by the Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The exhibition has been made possible in part by awards from the William R. Kenan, Jr., Charitable Trust and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding has been provided by the Department of American Studies Chair's Discretionary Fund for Southern Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

About the Artist

Largely unrecognized during his lifetime, Lockett (American, 1965–1998) had by the time of his death at age thirty-two produced an estimated four hundred artworks that embody a stunning evolution of artistic practice. Raised in Bessemer, Alabama, Lockett was heavily influenced by other self-taught African American artists in his close-knit community, including his cousin and mentor, Thornton Dial, Sr. (American, 1928–2016).



Photo by William S. Arnett, 1988.

Curriculum Connections

Visual Arts

Lockett used a wide variety of found materials in his work, including wire, nails, metal fencing, and shipping-crate lids.

- Pose the following questions to your students:
Why do you think Lockett used these materials?
How would his work be different if he had used paper and pen or canvas and paint? How does his choice of materials add to or take away from the meaning of his work?

Have students use a nontraditional object such as a piece of tin, a roof tile, or a piece of carpet as the starting point for creating a work of art. How might the material represent something else?

Lockett was inspired by the work of other artists.

Compare and contrast the following:

- Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* with Ronald Lockett's *Last Supper*
- The work of Anselm Kiefer with Lockett's Kiefer-inspired work *Cover of Night*

This exhibition highlights work by other artists from Birmingham and Bessemer, Alabama. These artists were linked to Lockett through friendship, family, geography, and their use of found objects:

- Thornton Dial, Sr.
- Thornton Dial, Jr.
- Richard Dial
- Lonnie Holley
- Joe Minter

In small groups, students can research one of Lockett's contemporaries. Group research can be combined to create an exhibition guide or presentation. Students might explore the following:

- How is this artist's work similar to or different from Lockett's?
- How is this artist significant to art in America?
- What stands out about this artist's aesthetic or use of materials?

English Language Arts

Lockett often used animals to represent themes in his artwork. The deer is a central figure in much of his work and serves as the artist's avatar. It often represented feelings of vulnerability.

- Use Lockett's interest in animals as a springboard to investigate similes. Have students write similes that identify animals they share similarities with, for example:
 - I am fast like a jaguar
 - I am busy like a bee
 - I am tall like a giraffe

As an extension, students can create Lockett-inspired paintings or found-object collages depicting their animals.

Additional Resources

<http://www.soulsgrowndeep.org/artist/ronald-lockett>



Ronald Lockett (American, 1965–1998), *Poison River*, 1988, wood, tin, nails, stones, industrial sealing compound, and enamel on wood, Collection of Souls Grown Deep Foundation. Photograph by Stephen Pitken/Pitken Studio. © Ronald Lockett.

Science

Ronald Lockett often explored environmental issues. He was concerned with pollution and the destruction of nature.

- Have students view and analyze *Poison River*. What reflects pollution or damage to the environment? How might a painting of a landscape unaffected by pollution look different?



Ronald Lockett (American, 1965–1998), *Civil Rights Marchers*, 1988, wood, metal, rubber, industrial sealing compound, and paint on wood, Collection of Souls Grown Deep Foundation. Photograph by Stephen Pitken/Pitken Studio. © Ronald Lockett.

Social Studies

Alabama was an epicenter of the civil rights movement. Lockett was keenly aware of the unresolved histories of injustice.

- Have students discuss the ways that this unresolved history presents itself today. How might *Civil Rights Marchers* apply to current events or societal issues? What do you think Lockett might have been trying to communicate? What do the colors and materials tell you about the atmosphere during the marches?

A number of Lockett's historical pieces celebrate the accomplishments of African American athletes. *The Inferior Man That Proved Hitler Wrong* is a tribute to Jesse Owens in the 1936 Summer Olympic Games in Berlin. Have students create their own works of art that pay tribute to an important African American figure. Students can write short essays to explain the personal importance of this choice.

- A list of important figures can be found here:
<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h3736.html>

Curriculum Standards

Kindergarten:

- VAKMC.1 Engages in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas.
- VAKMC.2 Formulates personal responses.
- VAKMC.3 Selects and uses subject matter, symbols, and/or ideas to communicate meaning.
- VAKCU.2 Views and discusses selected artworks.

1st Grade:

- VA1MC.1 Engages in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas.
- VA1MC.2 Formulates personal responses.
- VA1MC.3 Selects and uses subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning.
- VA1CU.1 Identifies artists as creative thinkers who make art and share ideas.
- VA1CU.2 Views and discusses selected artworks.
- VA1AR.1 Discusses his or her artwork and the artwork of others.
- VA1AR.2 Uses a variety of approaches to understand and critique works of art.
- VA1C.1 Applies information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.
- VA1C.2 Develops life skills through the study and production of art.

2nd Grade:

- VA2MC.1 Engages in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas.
- VA2MC.2 Formulates personal responses.
- VA2MC.3 Selects and uses subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning.
- VA2CU.1 Identifies artists as creative thinkers who make art and share their ideas.
- VA2CU.2 Views and discusses selected artworks.
- VA2AR.1 Discusses his or her artwork and the artwork of others.
- VA2AR.2 Uses a variety of approaches to understand and critique works of art.
- VA2C.1 Applies information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.
- VA2C.2 Develops life skills through the study and production of art.

3rd Grade:

- VA3MC.1 Engages in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas.
- VA3MC.2 Formulates personal responses to visual imagery.
- VA3MC.3 Selects and uses subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning.
- VA3CU.2 Views and discusses selected artworks.
- VA3AR.1 Discusses his or her artwork and the artwork of others.
- VA3AR.2 Uses a variety of approaches to understand and critique works of art.
- VA3C.1 Applies information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.
- VA3C.2 Develops life skills through the study and production of art.

4th Grade:

- VA4MC.1 Engages in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas.
- VA4MC.2 Formulates personal responses to visual imagery.
- VA4MC.3 Selects and uses subject matter, symbols, and/or ideas to communicate meaning.
- VA4CU.2 Views and discusses selected artworks.
- VA4AR.2 Uses a variety of approaches to understand and critique works of art.
- VA4AR.3 Explains how selected elements and principles of design are used in an artwork to convey meaning and how they affect personal responses to and evaluation of the artwork.
- VA4C.1 Applies information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.
- VA4C.2 Develops life skills through the study and production of art.
- S4P1. Students will investigate the nature of light using tools such as mirrors, lenses, and prisms.

5th Grade:

- VA5MC.1 Engages in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas.
- VA5MC.2 Formulates personal responses to visual imagery.
- VA5MC.3 Selects and uses subject matter, symbols, and/or ideas to communicate meaning.
- VA5CU.2 Views and discusses selected artworks.
- VA5AR.2 Uses a variety of approaches to understand and critique works of art.
- VA5AR.3 Explains how selected principles of design are used in an artwork to convey meaning and how they affect personal responses to and evaluation of the artwork.
- VA5C.1 Applies information and processes from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.
- VA5C.2 Develops life skills through the study and production of art.

6th Grade:

- VA6MC.1 Engages in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas.
- VA6MC.2 Identifies and works to solve visual problems through creative thinking, planning, and/or experimenting with art materials, tools, and techniques.

6th Grade continued:

- VA6MC.3 Interprets how artists communicate meaning in their work.
- VA6MC.4 Engages in dialogue about his or her artwork and the artwork of others.
- VA6CU.1 Discovers how the creative process relates to art history.
- VA6CU.2 Investigates and discovers personal relationship to community, culture, and the world through making and studying art.
- VA6AR.2 Critiques personal artworks as well as artwork of others using visual and verbal approaches.
- VA6AR.3 Reflects and expands use of visual language throughout the artistic process.
- VA6C.1 Applies information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.
- VA6C.2 Develops fluency in visual communication.
- VA6C.3 Expands knowledge of art as a profession and/or avocation.

7th Grade:

- VA7MC.1 Identifies and works to solve problems through creative thinking, planning, and/or experimenting with art methods and materials.
- VA7MC.2 Identifies and works to solve problems through creative thinking, planning, and/or experimenting with art methods and materials.
- VA7MC.3 Interprets how artists create and communicate meaning in and through their work.
- VA7MC.4 Participates in dialogue about his or her artwork and the artwork of others.
- VA7CU.1 Discovers how the creative process relates to art history.
- VA7CU.2 Investigates and discovers personal relationship to community, culture, and world through creating and studying art.
- VA7AR.3 Reflects and expands the use of visual language throughout the artistic process.
- VA7C.1 Applies information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.
- VA7C.2 Develops fluency in visual communication.
- VA7C.3 Expands knowledge of art as a profession and/or avocation and increases personal life skills through artistic endeavor.
- S7L2: Students will describe the structure and function of cells, tissues, organs, and organ systems.

8th Grade:

- VA8MC.1 Engages in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas.
- VA8MC.2 Identifies and works to solve problems through authentic engagement (thinking, planning, and experimenting) with art methods and materials, exploring the nature of creativity.
- VA8MC.3 Demonstrates how artists create and communicate meaning in artworks.
- VA8MC.4 Participates in aesthetic dialogue about his or her artwork and the artwork of others.
- VA8CU.1 Discovers how the creative process relates to art history.
- VA8CU.2 Investigates and discovers personal relationship to community, culture, and world through making and studying art.
- VA8AR.1 Critiques personal artworks as well as the artwork of others using visual and verbal approaches.
- VA8AR.2 Reflects and expands the use of visual language throughout the artistic process.
- VA8C.1 Applies information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.
- VA8C.2 Develops fluency in visual communication.
- VA8C.3 Expands knowledge of art as a profession and/or avocation and develops personal life skills through artistic endeavor.
- S8P4. Students will explore the wave nature of sound and electromagnetic radiation.

High School:

- VAHSDRMC.1 Engages in the creative process; imagines new ideas by using mental and visual imagery, conceptualizes these ideas by using artistic language and contextual understandings, and accesses learning. The student develops a personal artistic voice that gives unique form to these concepts.
- VAHSVAMC.2 Finds and solves problems through open-ended inquiry, the consideration of multiple options, weighing consequences, and assessing results.
- VAHSDRMC.3 Cultivates critical thinking and logical argumentation in aesthetics.
- VAHSDRMC.4 Analyzes the origins of one's own ideas in relation to community, culture, and the world.
- VAHSDRCU.1 Articulates ideas and universal themes from diverse cultures of the past and present.
- VAHSDRCU.2 Demonstrates an understanding of how art history impacts the creative process of art making.
- VAHSDRC.1 Applies information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.
- SSSocC3: Students will analyze social structure and interaction within society.
- SSSocSC4: Students will analyze the function of social institutions as agents of social control across differing societies and times.
- SSSocC1: Students will analyze forms of social inequality.
- SSSocC2: Students will analyze social change processes in a society.