

Celebrate Black Art and History
2025-2026 School Year
Grades: 6-8

Lesson Overview

Students will celebrate and explore the work of Tomashi Jackson to understand how the artist uses images from history, color, and layering in her art. Inspired by their personal culture and identity, students will create a multilayered mixed media artwork that reflects their history and identity.

Learning Objectives

Essential Questions

- How does Tomashi Jackson use color, transparency, and layering in her work?
- How can the students use art to express the many layers of themselves?
- What can the students learn from history through art?

Students will be able to . . .

- Experiment with transparency, layering, and cutouts.
- Practice representing identity through symbols using shapes, colors, objects, and words.

Performance Tasks

- Discussion-based observation
- Art-making exploration

Vocabulary

- Color
- Contrast
- Emphasis
- Layering
- Metaphor
- Mixed media
- Social commentary
- Transparency
- Unity

Materials

- 6" x 9" tracing paper
- 6" x 9" transparency sheet
- Colorful construction paper or cardstock
- Scissors
- Spools of string or thread
- Hole punchers
- Paper clips
- Colorful Sharpies
- Image from the High's collection

High Museum of Art Collection Connection

- [Tomashi Jackson, Is Anyone Gonna Be Saved? \(1948 Middle of Voter Registration Line\) \(1965 Abernathy and King Watch the Signing of the Act\)](#)

Sample Works of Art



Procedure

Introduction (10 minutes)

Introduce students to Tomashi Jackson's [Is Anybody Gonna Be Saved? \(1948 Middle of Voter Registration Line\) \(1965 Abernathy and King Watch the Signing of the Act\)](#) as a starting point to discuss the themes and references used in her work.

Tomashi Jackson's work reminds us that history is not fixed. It is layered into our everyday lives. By mixing bold colors, abstract shapes, and powerful images from history, she asks us to look closely, ask questions, and imagine what role we play in shaping the future. Jackson uses layers to show the complexities of the past and how the present is shaped by our shared histories.

What do you notice? Where do you see colors and layers? What could the colors and layers represent? How can you use layering to tell your story?

Demonstration (10 minutes)

Share the example and demonstrate how to layer papers; cut out windows and shapes to reveal imagery underneath; use paper clips to keep work aligned; and use Sharpies on transparency sheets.

Art Making (25 minutes)

- **Past (Base Layer):** Ask students to choose a work of art from the collection in the samples provided. This will be the base layer of their work of art. Do not cut this layer. Students may add color or symbols that represent some aspect of their personal history.
- **Present (Middle Layer):** Students can then cut shapes or windows in the tracing paper and cardstock or construction paper to *frame* or *reveal* the past. Encourage them to add symbols of who they are today. This can refer to their personal interests (hobbies, moods, favorite colors), identity, or relationships.
- **Future (Transparency):** For the last layer, students will add a sheet of transparency paper and use Sharpies to depict their dreams and goals through colors, shapes, or words.

To finish the work of art, students will secure the layers with paper clips. They will then punch two to three holes at the top of the work and bind the three layers together with string. Once the string is secured, the paper clips can be removed.

Reflection and Cleanup (10 minutes)

Ask students who feel comfortable sharing to share their work, as well as the thought process behind it. Some example questions could include:

- *When you manipulated a layer, such as cutting out a window or adding a layer of color to the transparency sheet, how did it change your personal story?*
- *How does your artwork connect to Tomashi Jackson's way of showing history and identity?*

Allow time for students to tidy their stations and throw away scraps.

Georgia Standards of Excellence Alignment

Social Studies

SSSoc1C1 Analyze forms of social inequality.

a. Explain how unequal distribution of power and resources affects the life chances of individuals in that society. b. Analyze the sources and effects of stratification on the basis of social class, race and ethnicity, gender, age, and emotional, mental, and physical disabilities.

Visual Art

VAHSVA.CR.1 Visualize and generate ideas for creating works of art.

VAHSVA.CR.2 Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan and create works of art.

VAHSVA.CR.3 Engage in an array of processes, media, techniques, and technology through experimentation, practice, and persistence.

VAHSVA.CR.4 Incorporate formal and informal components to create works of art.

VAHSVA.CR.5 Reflect on, revise, and refine works of art considering relevant traditional and contemporary practices as well as artistic ideation.

VAHSVA.RE.1 Reflect on the context of personal works of art in relation to community, culture, and the world.

VAHSVA.RE.2 Critique personal works of art and the artwork of others, individually and collaboratively, using a variety of approaches.

VAHSVA.RE.3 Engage in the process of art criticism to make meaning and increase visual literacy.

VAHSVA.CN.1 Develop personal artistic voice through connecting uses of art within a variety of cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts.