

Teaching Materials for Helena Wadsley and Diana Hartnett Exhibit

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

*How do the MATERIALS of an art piece influence the MESSAGE or STORY that the piece of art is telling? **if students attended the Veronica Walker/Marjorie Butler/Shannon Goodhead exhibit, then this question is an extension of that learning.*

ARTIST INFORMATION

Helena Wadsley: Installation (books and other materials).

Instagram: [@helenawadsley](#)
[Helena Wadsley Website](#)

Exhibition explanation: “This exhibition transforms books into sculptural forms that draw attention to histories embedded in language. I alter the book in a way that speaks to its contents. Most of the works incorporate a textile technique such as sewing, weaving, or knitting. Each altered book tells a new story.”

Intention: “I am interested in how we navigate the unspoken language of our bodies’ reactions to our surroundings. My work considers science and literature to identify entrenched attitudes about gender while combining craft techniques with drawing, video, and poetry as a way of understanding the psychogeography of a place.”

Process: “I tailor the materials and techniques to the project. This means that I am constantly learning new approaches, often pushing the limits of a material’s capabilities with each work.”

Diane Hartnett: BW Acrylics on (reclaimed) Wood

Instagram: [@batwoodstudio](#)

Exhibition explanation: “This exhibition is a collection of black and white acrylic paintings on live edge wood slabs. The focus is to draw the viewer into my realistic landscapes and challenge them to see the contrast, textures and tones within the picture itself.”

Intention: “Black and white makes you look at light differently and how it creates shadows to make contrasting elements. It’s not complicated with bold, bright colours. I want people to experience the power of a black and white painting.”

Process: “This wood used to be the siding on our family cabin at Babine Lake. The wood slabs are all different sizes and they all have different textures and markings. If there are any holes or imperfections on the wood I will leave it and try to incorporate it into the painting. The outside edge is left raw so any lines or formations that were created under the bark are shown. Each painting is made with acrylics and then finished with a clear varnish on both sides of the piece.”

PRE-VISIT CONNECTION ACTIVITIES

Outcome of activities: conversation.

Materials needed: none.

- Have students view this piece of Helena Wadsley's : https://www.instagram.com/p/ChSPjYyLjlh/?hl=en&img_index=1. Have students think-pair-share about what strikes them about it (the painting is also in PNG form at the end of this document).
- THEN, share this context from the exhibition info: *This exhibition transforms books into sculptural forms that draw attention to histories embedded in language. I alter the book in a way that speaks its contents.... Klondike has a stone placed over every racist and misogynist word in Pierre Berton's text about the Yukon gold rush; there are about 300 pebbles weighing down the book.* (simplify wording depending on grade level).
- Have students think-pair-share: how does this information change how they see or feel about the piece?
- Have students view this piece of Diane Hartnett's: https://www.instagram.com/p/DFZRe0HRdJD/?img_index=1. Have students think-pair-share about what strikes them about it (the painting is also in PNG form at the end of this document).
- THEN, share this context from the exhibition info: *This exhibition is a collection of black and white acrylic paintings on live edge wood slabs. This wood used to be the siding on our family cabin at Babine Lake. The wood slabs are all different sizes and they all have different textures and markings. If there are any holes or imperfections on the wood I will leave it and try to incorporate it into the painting.* (simplify wording depending on grade level).
- Have students think-pair-share: how does this information change how they see or feel about the piece?

View the following videos and online galleries showcasing different forms of reclaimed art, to get a sense of all the ways people make art from used materials! Option to continue to discuss the relationship between materials and impact.

- Collage art (video): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pD4D3vG61ic&ab_channel=eastofhoney
- Beach garbage art (video; watch from 1:18 - 3:30) https://youtu.be/nX3aBiadDtY?si=r_ueRgcjMBev8-E5&t=78
- Driftwood art: <https://tanyabub.myportfolio.com/work>
- Recycled metal art: <https://kalifano.com/en-ca/collections/large-than-life-metal-art>

POST-VISIT REFLECTION ACTIVITIES

Outcome of activities: Wood and Word Mobile

Materials needed (per student):

1. *1 piece of reclaimed wood, driftwood, or branch, tring, twine, or yarn (4–5 pieces, each about 12–18" long)*
2. *Old book pages, newspapers, or magazines*
3. *Scissors*
4. *Glue stick*
5. *Hole punch (or tape)*
6. *Optional: beads, buttons, scraps of fabric, feathers, wire, nature items*

Reflection on new learning:

- Sharing circle: make a circle and ensure that no one is in front or behind anyone else. Explain that a sharing circle is an Indigenous method of learning, and it's just as important of a job to be a listener as a speaker. Teachers can pre-read about circle pedagogy and protocol here: <https://passthefeather.ca/sharing-circles/>.
- Have students go in a circle to respond (or pass) to the following questions:
 - *What was your favourite piece and why? How did it make you feel?*
 - *How did the MATERIALS of that piece influence the MESSAGE or STORY that the piece of art is telling?*

Art activity: Wood and Word Mobile

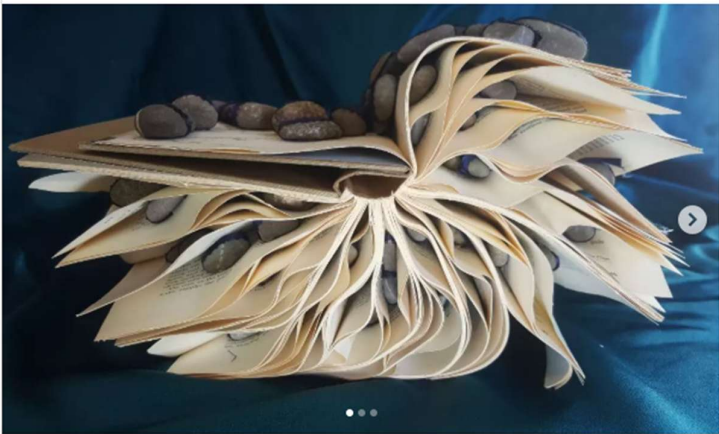
1. Encourage students to think of a message or theme: e.g., "hope," "growth," "my community," or "the land and me."
2. Choose Your Words:
 - a. students cut out words or short phrases from old book pages or magazines that speak to their theme.
 - b. *Optional: they can write their own words on scraps if they don't find what they want.*
3. Assemble the Word Strips:
 - a. glue words/phrases to small pieces of sturdy paper, cardboard, or leftover book page pieces.
 - b. hole punch each word piece so it can be hung.
4. Decorate and Balance:
 - a. tie strings to the wood base. Each string can hold one or more word pieces, spaced out like a hanging mobile.
 - b. Students can also tie on reclaimed decorations (fabric scraps, buttons, leaves, etc.).


Final closing piece:


Display + Share: have a gallery walk where students explain the theme of their mobile. Each student should share:




- *Why did you choose those words?*
- *How do you want people to feel (or what do you want them to think) when they see your mobile?*

Helena Wadsley:




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Pierre Berton's Klondike, written in 1958, is a history of the gold rush that changed the area around Dawson City, home of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in people, in many profound ways. One of the first things I noticed in the landscape was the massive amount of dredge tailings-- piles of rocks from digging through the river bed for gold more than 100 years ago. I collected stones and used them to cover outdated words in Berton's

55 likes


August 15, 2022


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SEP






 **batwoodstudio and outofhandsmithers**
Smithers, British Columbia

 **batwoodstudio** 20w
Hudson Bay by Moonlight, 3x 4x8 acrylic on wood slab. You can find this one @outofhandsmithers #hudsonbaymountain #acrylicpainting #blackandwhite #fullmoon


 **pine_needle_designs** 19w
Oh! Amazing! Love this ❤️
1 like Reply
View all 1 replies


 **bulkleyvalleybrewery** 19w
Gorgeous!!
1 like Reply
View all 1 replies

78 likes

January 28

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Diane Hartnett: