



Academic Resources for Teachers & Students

**Illuminations of
Africa's Wildlife: Its
Beauty, Its Struggle
to Survive**

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kimballartcenter



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Lesson Overview

Lesson Plans

Designed to extend and enhance the learning experience of our exhibits while linking to core curriculum subject matter.

Lesson Objectives

- To analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, ideas, and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art.
- To analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry.
- To describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with the visual arts.
- Art as activism.
- To explore concepts of co-existence.

Core Curriculum Tie-Ins

Ninth through Twelfth Grades: Visual Art, Language Arts, Science (ecology), Geography

Lesson Overview

On the ARTS tour, students will learn about the work of Beverly and Dereck Joubert, and their call to action through their profound and beautiful photography of endangered animals. This lesson extends that learning. Using Homer's painting of a house in the Bahamas, students are introduced to the climate and geography of this island nation. Then, working in groups, they will research possible pollutants and provide solutions to protect the inhabitants and land, providing ideas for co-existence. Lastly, they will imagine daily life in the Bahamas by writing a journal entry.

Length Of Lesson: One to Three Class Sessions

Supplies

- World Map
- Computers with internet access for student research
- Writing Materials
- Copy of Winslow Homer's "Native Huts, Nassau", 1885
- Copy of "Climates Around the World" Map

Illuminations of Africa's Wildlife: Its Beauty, Its Struggle to Survive

Exhibition Overview

Beverly Joubert's work is a call to action. Big cats, rhinoceros, and elephants are in crisis, facing extinction after years of rampant poaching and habitat loss. As artists, conservationists, and National Geographic Explorers-in-Residence, Beverly and her husband, Dereck Joubert, have spent decades fighting for these beloved creatures. Through their internationally renowned wildlife films and other conservation efforts, the Jouberts celebrate the stunning beauty and power of these animals, urging viewers to recognize the consequences of inaction.

With stories of this fight for survival, Beverly Joubert's photographs demonstrate the artist's deep compassion for her subjects. Her work at the Kimball Art Center is accompanied by thoughts, lessons, and illuminations by the Jouberts of their 30 year journey with some of the world's most remarkable wildlife.

Lesson Plan

Warm-Up Questions

- View Winslow Homer's "Native Huts, Nassau", 1885. Ask students in what type of climate they think this house is located? What visual cues help them draw their conclusions?

Background

In 1884, Maine artist and illustrator Winslow Homer received a commission from Century Magazine to illustrate an article called "A Midwinter Resort" about Nassau, the port city of the Bahamas. When Homer went to the Bahamas later that year, there were only about 150 visitors at the height of the vacation season. Nassau was just beginning to develop a reputation as a destination for those suffering from illnesses made worse by the cold winters of the Northeast United States.

During the two months he stayed on the island, Homer painted more than thirty watercolors of a variety of subjects, including island architecture, sponge and coral fishing, fruit trees, and the unusual features of the landscape. He was also particularly interested in the day-to-day activities of the island's black inhabitants. They were former slaves and descendants of slaves brought by English planters to work on plantations, and their lives remained particularly difficult. In *Native Huts, Nassau*, Homer illustrated the thatched house of a black family. This style of building had been transplanted from Africa and was, according to a contemporary account, "the most sensible house covering for this climate." The house was elevated to avoid being flooded during storms. Wooden shutters protected it from strong winds and heavy rain. The shutters could be closed to keep out warm air during the hottest part of the day and opened in the cooler mornings and nights.

Native Huts, Nassau is painted in watercolor on paper. Light washes of color allow the texture of the paper to show through. In some places, the paper is not painted at all, so that its whiteness—not paint—creates the highlights of brilliant tropical sunlight.

Lesson Plan Continued

Guided Practice

- Using a world map, have students answer the following questions: Where are the Bahamas located? What kinds of landforms are they? What kind of climate do the Bahamas have? (Two clues are the proximity of the islands to the equator and the palm tree seen in the painting. Use the “Climates Around the World” map to assist students.)
- What factors of their geography and climate make the Bahamas a popular vacation spot? In 1885, when Homer traveled to the Bahamas, what transportation would he have used to get to the port city of Nassau? (Boat) What about today? What about Nassau’s geography makes it welcoming to boats? (Inlets that are deep and sheltered from wind and rough seas.)
- People often use natural resources that are plentiful and nearby for building materials. Many tropical locations have palm trees. How have palm trees been used in the building of this house? (Leaves for thatched roof.) Why are wooden shutters appropriate for houses in a tropical area? (To protect from strong winds, heat, and rain; to help control interior temperature.) Why would the house be up on blocks? (To keep it dry during floods and storms.)
- Some residents of the house are visible just inside the door. What are some of the daily activities you think they might do, based on the climate, natural resources, and geography of the island?
- In Native Huts, Winslow Homer occasionally allowed the white of the paper to show through the watercolor. Where can you see this? (The sky, the sand.) Why do you think he chose these areas? (They are where the reflections are brightest.)

Lesson Plan Continued

Activity

Students will break into smaller groups to conduct research in order to answer the following questions:

Do you see any pollution in this scene?

- What kind of pollution could affect an environment like this?
- What are ways you could protect beaches and waterways if you lived in the Bahamas?
- What ways do you envision humans, eco-systems and wildlife co-existing?

The following resources are a good start:

- The Environmental Protection Agency's "Learn the Issues" about pollution.
- The United States Geologic Survey site offers satellite images of environmental change and descriptions of issues affecting particular locations.
- National Geographic's website includes hundreds of science and geography lesson plans. The site also features printable maps, photographs, online exhibitions, and games.

Lesson Extension

• Individually, students will write a journal entry imagining daily life in the Bahamas. They may choose to write about their experience in either the present day or the time this painting was created (1885). In picturing themselves in this setting, they should consider the following questions: How would the climate affect what you wear? what you eat? the kinds of outdoor activities you would enjoy? Based on the geography and natural resources of the Bahamas, what kinds of jobs are available on the islands?

www.nga.gov

Resources:

www.wildlifefilms.com

www.causeanuproar.org

www.ted.com/talks/beverly_dereck_joubert_life_lessons_from_big_cats

Great Plains Conservation

www.bigcatinitiative.com

www.greenmuseum.org

Vocabulary

Change

Make or become different

Environmental Art

- Informs and interprets nature and its processes, or educates us about environmental problems
- Is concerned with environmental forces and materials, creating artworks affected or powered by wind, water, lightning, even earthquakes
- Re-envision our relationship to nature, proposing new ways for us to co-exist with our environment
- Reclaims and remediates damaged environments, restoring ecosystems in artistic and often aesthetic ways

Environmental issues

Are harmful effects of human activity on the biophysical environment.

Environmentalism

A social and environmental movement, addresses environmental issues through advocacy, education and activism.

Five Elements of Art

Line, shape, value, texture, color.

Conservation

The action of conserving something, in particular. Preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment, natural ecosystems, vegetation, and wildlife.



Winslow Homer
American, 1836–1910
Native Huts, Nassau, 1885
watercolor, graphite, and gouache on wove paper, 36.8 x 53.5 cm (14 1/2 x 21 1/16 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon