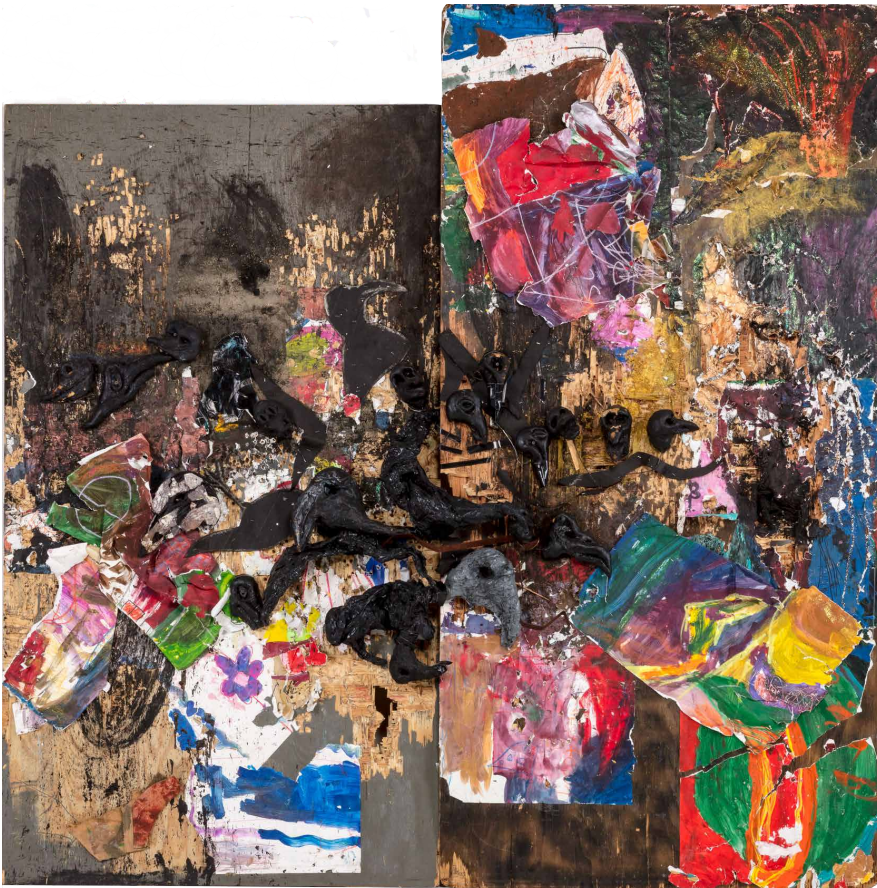


Expanding Stories

Expanding Universes

Lesson Plan

Suggested for 2nd–7th grades



Abigail DeVille (born 1981) is an artist who creates large sculptures and installations, often incorporating found materials from the streets in urban centers like New York City. She uses layered materials and oral and written histories to explore the interwoven story of the past, present, and future. Her artwork connects the texture on the sidewalk outside your window to the wide expanse of the city, the world, and the universe.

Abigail DeVille
Harlem World, 2011

DeVille’s sculptures and installations focus on the history of racist violence and gentrification. Her work often involves a performance element that brings the artwork out of its exhibition space and into the streets. DeVille has organized public events, which she calls “processionals,” in cities around the United States including Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and New York City, where she explores the stories of marginalized communities.

Harlem World utilizes bricolage, the process of layering a wide variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional materials to construct an environment. The surface spills outward with an explosion of activity, both distressed and vibrant. Built out of the detritus of her home and neighborhood, *Harlem World* speaks to the claustrophobic spaces of the urban environment, while at the same time meditating on the larger universe around us.

Objective

Students will learn about Abigail Deville and explore community and history by transforming found objects into a collaborative artwork.

Essential Question

What histories do we carry with us?

Vocabulary

Bricolage

Construction or creation from a diverse range of available materials.

Artifact

Handmade object that represents a particular culture or period.

Symbol

Something that stands for something else, especially a letter, figure, or sign that represents a real object or idea.

Rubbings

Impressions of a surface made by using pressure and friction to capture texture on paper.

Figurative

Depicting a recognizable human or animal form.

Abstract

Composed of patterning, color and geometry that is not easily identifiable and can be interpreted many ways.

Materials

Cardboard paper

Powdered graphite/charcoal

Stencils

Tape/glue gun and glue sticks

Butcher paper

Newsprint paper

Blue, yellow, and red acrylic paint

Paintbrushes

Oil pastels

[Material Histories catalogue](#)

Preparation

1. Cover a large wall, floor, or table top surface with the butcher paper; this will be where students create the mural.
2. Introduce *Harlem World* and discuss using visual inquiry.
3. Review vocabulary words and have students find examples of each in DeVille's artwork.
4. Take a mindful walk around your neighborhood and ask students to pick up artifacts they are interested in and make rubbings of surfaces in the neighborhood.
5. Have students reflect on memorable moments spent in their neighborhoods. Ask students to write down specific images that they remember.

Methods

1. Create a dialogue with your students about history, memory, and representation by brainstorming a list of different symbols and artifacts that are related to their understanding of home.
2. Have students draw the artifacts and symbols on the paper to create a background that depicts the patterns and colors of their neighborhood.
3. Have students begin to collage their rubbings and artifacts onto the mural composition. They can add layers of drawing or painting on top of the collage.
4. Ask students to think about how layers in a collage are similar or different to layers in a city.

Reflection

1. Ask students to describe the mural. What emotions do they feel looking at their mural?
2. Ask students where they see cohesion or unity in the mural. Chaos?
3. Ask students to write about how the process of gathering materials and creating the collaborative mural shifted their understanding of their neighborhood.



Abigail DeVille
Harlem World, 2011
Found wood panels, latex enamel, tempera,
paper pulp, paper, and tape
72 x 96 in.
The Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum purchase
with funds provided by the Acquisition Committee
2014.12.3