EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

MOAD presents

The Ease of Fiction

APRIL 26 - AUGUST 27, 2017

How to Use This Guide When Visiting MoAD

The Ebook of Fiction Resource Guide is most compatible for use with students in middle school and above; however, the content may be adjusted to meet the learning targets for other age groups. The Student Vocabulary Sheet, Questions to Use at MoAD, and Lesson Plans should be used to prepare students for a focused museum visit. MoAD Group Tours are great tools to allow students to deep dive into the content presented in the Resource Guide. More information on Group Tours may be found on our website at https://www.moadsf.org/visit/school-tours.

When visiting MoAD, give each of your students a copy of the Questions to Use While at MoAD to further engage them in the context of the artwork. Be sure to have students answer the Reflection Questions as soon as possible after your visit to the Museum. These are designed to help students think deeper about what they experienced during their visit to the exhibition.

We sincerely hope you find this Educator’s Resource Guide helpful and welcome any comments or feedback you may have. Additionally, we would love to hear how you chose to implement the material in your classroom or program. If you create handouts or discover new resources, please send us an email with your resources attached, and we will share these with other educators.

Respectfully,

Demetri Broxton
MoAD Senior Director of Education • education@moadsf.org

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The Ease of Fiction, curated by Dexter Wimberly, presents the works of four African artists living in the United States as the foundation of a critical discussion about history, fact and fiction. The exhibiting artists, ruby onyinyechi amanze (b. 1982, Nigeria), Duhirwe Rushemeza (b. 1977, Rwanda), Sherin Guirguis (b. 1974, Egypt), and Meleko Mokgosi (b. 1981, Botswana), present recent paintings, drawings and sculptural works that explore issues of cultural identity, personal agency, and the very notion of “African art.”

The exhibition’s title evokes the idea that people are often more comfortable accepting or believing what is told to them by those in power, rather than challenging and investigating the authenticity of information presented as historical fact. Interweaving their personal experiences and memories into broader historical contexts, these artists create work that is in strident opposition of passive acceptance.

The artists’ cultural backgrounds, as well as geographic diversity, create an opportunity for a provocative examination of varied perspectives of the truth. Although these artists are from four different African countries, their work addresses universal issues that are relevant across all borders.

Dexter Wimberly
Curator, The Ease of Fiction
Cultural Identity
The identity or feeling of belonging to a group: nationality, ethnicity, religion, locality, or any social group that has its own distinct culture.

Kaffraria
The descriptive name given to the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Kaffir is a racial slur for Black people in South Africa. The territory experienced 100 years of war between indigenous Xhosa tribes and European invaders.

Mashrabiya
An Arabic term for a window enclosed with carved wood latticework. Usually located on the second story of a building or higher.

Indigenous
Originating, growing, living, or occurring naturally in a particular place or environment; native.

Imigongo
Rwanda’s only known form of traditional visual art. Geometric designs are created from natural pigments and cow dung. Traditionally, imigongo was painted on inside walls. Now it is sold to tourists as wall hangings.

Settler Colonialism
Colonialism that functions through the elimination and replacement of indigenous populations with an invasive settler society. Land is the key resource in settler colonies.
QUESTIONS TO USE

While @ MoAD

1. Find the drawings by Ruby Onyinyechi Amanze.
   a. What country was Ruby born in?
   b. What are the different characters included in her drawings?
   c. Find the character drawn by Ruby that you find the most interesting. Describe what you find interesting about the character? What do you think he or she represents for Ruby?
   d. Focus on one of her drawings that most interests you. What do you think is happening in the picture? What do you see that makes you say this?

2. Find the paintings by Duhirwe Rushemeza.
   a. What country was Duhirwe born in?
   b. How does Duhirwe make her paintings look like they are cut from a cement wall?
   c. Where have you seen designs like these?

3. Find the paintings and drawings by Meleko Mokgosi.
   a. What country was Meleko born in? What details in his artwork give you a sense of what his homeland looks or feels like?
   b. What animals and types of people do you see in his artwork?
   c. How are the drawings organized in the museum’s gallery? How is this different than how paintings are usually organized in a gallery space?

4. Find the sculptures & mixed media works by Sherin Guirguis.
   a. What country was Sherin born in?
   b. How does Sherin’s work reflect the architecture from her homeland?
   c. Describe the shapes you see in Sherin’s sculptures? How do you think the shapes add to the meaning of the artwork?
1. Ruby Onyinyechi Amaze includes images of herself in several of her pieces, such as the woman in the center of kindred (2014), where she is sitting with family figures with animal heads or sometimes no heads at all. In what ways do you think these characters reflect Ruby’s identity and personal history as someone born in Nigeria, raised in Great Britain, and now living in the United States?

2. Meleko Mokgosi’s charcoal and pastel drawings include images of dogs. Some of the dog breeds are native to the southern region of Africa and other breeds were brought when white ‘settlers’ migrated to southern Africa. How might the dogs add to the story told by Meleko’s artwork?
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

After Your Visit

3. Sherin Guirguis’ large-scale paintings on paper reference the mashrabiya screens found all over Egypt and other parts of the Arabic world. Mashrabiya’s were places where women could see activity happening on the street below, but the screens would make them invisible to people on the street. In this way, they serve a similar function to a veil or burka (n.) – a long, loose garment covering the whole body, worn in public by some Muslim women. How does this understanding change how you view Guirguis’ artwork?

4. Duhirwe Rushemeza, born in Rwanda, uses materials and a technique of painting called imigongo, to reflect her homeland. Imigongo painting is the only known traditional art form originating in Rwanda and was almost lost due to the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Though Duhirwe’s art does not depict images of the Rwandan genocide, how might her artwork speak to the legacies of war and famine?
ruby onyinyechi amanze* was born in Nigeria in 1982 and currently lives in the United States. She and her family immediately moved to the U.K., where she was raised until she was 13 years old. As someone with a not-so-easy to categorize identity, amanze sought to determine her own definition of personal identity. Her fantastical drawings include an ever-growing cast of characters, including Audre the Leopard, Pidgen, and ada the Alien – often described as the artist’s alter ego. These characters and others were envisioned during amanze’s travel to Nigeria, where she studied in 2012-2013 as a recipient of a Fulbright Scholars Award in Drawing. Her works on paper are influenced by textile design, photography, printmaking, and architecture.

* ruby spells her name and ada in all lowercase letters.

Sherin Guirguis is a Los Angeles, CA based artist who was born in Luxor, Egypt in 1974. Her family moved to the U.S. when she was 14 years old. Guirguis is inspired by the life and work of Huda Shaarawi, an Egyptian feminist leader and nationalista. Some of Guirguis’ artwork is directly inspired by the door of Shaarawi’s house, which was one of the last functional harems in the country. According to the artist, her work seeks a language that describes the state of otherness that follows her wherever she goes. Influenced by Middle Eastern architecture and West Coast Modernism, Guirguis often reproduces the geometric latticework patterns found in traditional wooden screens (mashrabiya) that act like an architectural veil, and which separate the public from the private. Guirguis’ work examines how her personal identity was constructed, while also examining history and memory. Her artistic vocabulary involves a blend of abstraction, pattern, and geometry, and her materials include hand-cut works on paper embedded with gold powder and gold leafing.

EXHIBITION ARTISTS

Meleko Mokgosi was born in Botswana in 1981 and moved to London in 2003 to attend art school. He earned his B.A. at Williams College in Massachusetts and completed his MFA at UCLA. Mokgosi’s work references the past and current conditions of Botswana and South Africa, including the anti-British rebellions of the Xhosa people and the continuing influence of Christian missionaries on the region. Mokgosi references history painting, film, and philosophy to create his large, impactful works. The artist uses photos and clippings from his native Botswana, to create realistic depictions of people, objects, domestic dogs, and other animals, which usually fade into more abstract settings—often a simple, white background.

Duhirwe Rushemeza was born in Kigali, Rwanda in 1977 and now lives and works in New York City. Her work evolved from printmaking, a practice she developed in response to the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Her art references issues of displacement, personal and material memory, cultural adaptation, and what it means to be an immigrant today. She focuses on materials that change over time, such as iron oxide, which rusts over time, as well as industrial thin-set mortar and concrete, to create her paintings and installations. Rushemeza’s work suggests the deteriorating colonial buildings she witnessed on the coasts of Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana in her youth. She also finds inspiration in Rwanda’s imigongo paintings – low-relief artworks, often with geometric designs, which are made with a paste of cow dung mixed with natural minerals.

Meleko Mokgosi, *Untitled*, 2016. Charcoal and pastel on paper. Courtesy of the artist and Honor Fraser Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

For the vocabulary section, there are several ways to teach students the terms. There are 12 terms. Depending on the size of your group, you may want to divide students into groups of three or four students and assign each group a couple of the vocabulary terms. Have students visually represent what the vocabulary term means by creating a drawing which illustrates the vocabulary word. For texture, for example, the students can draw sandpaper or a feather to describe that texture is what something feels to the touch or looks like it feels. Students need to be comfortable with all of the vocabulary terms in order to complete the next group of activities.

**Two-Dimensional**
flat artwork or elements in a piece of art. Measured only by height and width. Paintings and drawings are two-dimensional.

**Pattern**
repeating shapes or forms in an artwork.

**Monochrome**
artwork that is made using only black and white or in different tones or shades of only one color.

**Background**
the area or scenery behind the main person or object (focal point) of a piece of art.

**Figurative**
art that refers to anything from the real, living world, especially containing the human form.

**Mood**
the general feeling you get from a piece of artwork. Usually created by the arrangement of the elements of art.

**Three-Dimensional**
artwork that extends into three planes: height, width, and depth. Sculpture and pottery are three-dimensional.

**Shade**
the lightness or darkness of a color. Usually created by adding black to a color when mixing colors.

**Negative Space**
the space that surrounds an object or subject in an artwork.

**Foreground**
the portion of the scene that is closest to the viewer or in front of the subject of the piece of art.

**Value**
the lightness or darkness of tones or colors.

**Medium**
the materials that are used to create a work of art: oil paint, pastel, marble, bronze, etc.

**Movement**
the path your eye takes through the piece of artwork.

**Texture**
the way things feel or look like they might feel if they were touched.

**Space**
the sense of depth created in a piece of art.

**Elements of Art** – line, color, shape/form, texture, value, space – the visual components that make up a piece of art.

**Vocabulary**
- **Negative Space**
  the space that surrounds an object or subject in an artwork.
- **Shape**
  flat or two-dimensional objects in art.
- **Color**
  the hue of reflected or projected light.
- **Line**
  the lines in a piece of art work.
- **Form**
  an element in art that is three-dimensional.
- **Value**
  the lightness or darkness of tones or colors.
- **Medium**
  the materials that are used to create a work of art: oil paint, pastel, marble, bronze, etc.
- **Movement**
  the path your eye takes through the piece of artwork.
- **Texture**
  the way things feel or look like they might feel if they were touched.
- **Space**
  the sense of depth created in a piece of art.
VIEWING ART WITH A CRITICAL EYE

INTRODUCTION
Artists often use deep conceptual and interpretational thinking to create their artwork. The artists featured in The Ease of Fiction use their critical thinking skills to not only understand their past, identity, and to critique the present, they must also synthesize all their research into artwork that conveys a message. Students of art must also use their ability to critically examine and understand visual information to more fully understand the media rich world that we currently live in. To fully understand and participate in our global community, students must be able to examine an image, gather, comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize visual clues they see within images.

TELLING YOUR STORY THROUGH ART
Now that students have explored the artwork featured in The Ease of Fiction, they are ready to create their own artworks. This project should be personalized and focus on the students and an important moment in their lives. Students should choose a memory which made an important impact on their personal history. Keeping in mind that some students may have experienced trauma in their lives, it is important for educators to ensure safe space for students to reflect and process their emotions. However, the ability to problem-solve and reflect on life experience can serve as a powerful learning tool for students.

VOCABULARY

Identity – who a person is or believes they are, or the characteristics of a person or a group that distinguish the person or group from others.

Pattern – A repeated form or design used to decorate things.

Portrait – A carefully organized painting, drawing, photograph, or sculpture of a person, which focuses on who the person is, their identity, their social status, and/or how they feel or look.

Symbol – A sign, shape, or form that represents an idea or an emotion.
Identity Scratchboard Portraits

Time: 2-4 class periods

Overview: Students will investigate portraits and how different techniques can affect the interpretation of their artwork. Students will then make their own scratchboard self-portraits to explore and express their self-identity.

Objectives:
Students will –
1. View a variety of portraits and draw inspiration for their self-portrait project;
2. Practice using visual arts vocabulary, critical thinking strategies, and problem solving skills to create self-portraits;
3. Write an artist statement, poem, or short essay to describe their self-portrait.

Materials (per student):
Student Planning Sheet
Scratchboard – these come in a variety of underneath colors, i.e. white, silver, gold, rainbow.
Scratching Tool
Clipboard
Optional:
An assortment of portrait examples
Mirrors (I recommend the stand-up self-portrait mirrors found at art supply stores)
Digital cameras and a printer
Tracing paper
Scissors
Pencils
Black ink pens or Sharpie markers
Erasers
White and/or metallic colored pencils
Artist tape or paper clips
Wax-free art transfer paper or a large stick of graphite

Procedure:

Step 1: Show students a variety of portraits. You may use the portraits found throughout this resource guide or show students portraits from various times throughout history: Ancient Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Renaissance, Middle Ages, Victorian America, and/or Contemporary portraits. While viewing the portraits, have students discuss:
- What do the portraits say about the person being portrayed?
- Are the subjects important people? What visual clues make you think this?
- Are there any symbols in the portraits that help you to identify the subject of the portrait? If so, what are the symbols?
- How are portraits different than selfies?
- How do portraits represent the power or social status of the person being represented?
- How do images shape how you view a person or group of people?

Step 2: Have students complete the Student Planning Sheet. The sheet will help students generate ideas for completing their own portraits. After they have completed their planning sheet, have students share their planning sketch with a partner or in small groups. Additional portraiture ideas may be found in the MoAD DandyLion Educator Resource Guide available for free download at http://www.moadsf.org/learn/educator-resources/.

Step 3: Students will transfer their sketches to the surface of the scratchboard. Before students begin scratching the surface of their large scratchboards, you should give each of them a very small square of scratchboard to practice making a variety of marks. The style of mark making that a student chooses can greatly impact the way the piece looks and the emotion it conveys. A variety of mark making examples are on the Student Self-Portrait Planning Sheet.

Step 4: Students will write an artist statement, poem, or short essay to describe their self-portrait. The writing piece should be displayed with the student’s self-portrait.

Step 5: Students should present their pieces for the class and/or their families in a student showcase. Students should be prepared to discuss their artistic and stylistic choices and how these choices reveal their unique identity.
STUDENT SELF-PORTRAIT PLANNING SHEET

Name:

Date:

In this project, you will create a self-portrait using a scratchboard and scratching tools. The self-portrait should show something about you besides just what you look like. Use the following planning sheet to make decisions about what you want to include in your self-portrait.

1. What are some of your most important qualities? Are you smart, sporty, loud, quiet and shy, or an artist? How could you show this in a portrait?

2. Describe a memory that had an important impact on your life? Where were you and what was around you?

3. What colors come to your mind when you think about the memory that played an important part in shaping your identity?

4. Will your portrait be in profile (showing the side of your face), ¾ angle, or will it show your full face? Why are you making this choice?

5. Are there any important signs or symbols you want to include in your portrait? What are they?

6. Will you include your full body, part of your body, or just from your shoulders up? Why?

7. If you include your body, what will you wear?

8. Will you include a background? If yes, what will you choose for your background? If not, will you have a pattern in the background?
9. Use the space below to create a sketch of your self-portrait.
Optional: You may work from mirror or you may take a portrait using a digital camera and transfer the image to your sheet.
Transferring Your Sketch:

Depending on the materials provided by your teacher, there are two ways to transfer your drawing and both will give you great results.

To transfer your drawing onto the scratchboard

1. Lay a piece of tracing paper over your final drawing and using a hard, sharp pencil, trace all the lines onto the tracing paper.

2. If you are using a large stick of graphite, you will need to scribble on the back side of the tracing paper—being sure to completely and darkly cover the back of your drawing with graphite. If you are using art transfer paper, skip to step three.

3. Place your tracing paper sketch, graphite covered side down, on top of your scratchboard. If using transfer paper, place the dark side down on top of your scratchboard and then place your tracing paper sketch on top of the transfer paper. Use artists tape or paper clips to keep your layers of papers in place.

4. Transfer the lines from your tracing paper sketch by going over them with a hard, sharp pencil. You will want to press firmly to ensure the lines transfer to the surface of the scratchboard.

5. Carefully remove one corner of the tracing paper and/or transfer paper from the scratchboard. Before completely removing everything, make sure that your lines transferred. If you pressed hard enough, you should be able to see the lines on the surface of the scratchboard. If not, try again, pressing a little harder with your pencil. If the lines transferred, but they are difficult to see, you can use a white or metallic pencil to make the lines easier to see.

6. Using a scratching tool, carefully scratch away the black layer of the scratchboard to reveal the color beneath the surface. You want to carefully consider the patterns and designs you use to make your marks. Below are some examples of lines you can use. If you make a mistake, you can use a black ink pen or Sharpie to fill in small areas of the scratchboard.

7. When you have completed your self-portrait, write a poem to explain your portrait, the symbols you used, the important memory that inspired your portrait, and anything else you think is important for people to know about your artwork.
The learning goals in this resource guide may be adapted to meet the standards in almost any subject or grade level. Due to the themes of the exhibition connected to identity and the complexity of some of the content, much of the content is most easily adaptable to middle school and high school classrooms. However, the content can meet the content standards requirements for many of the elementary grade levels.

**VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS**
To see which Visual Arts Standards are met in each activity, please visit the California Visual and Performing Arts Standards at http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/vpastandards.pdf

**HISTORY/ SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS**