

Beyond Borders: Pattern and Portraiture Lesson Plan

UMMA Teacher Workshop / October 27, 2018

Introduction to *Beyond Borders: Global Africa*:

More than ever in the era of globalization, ideas traverse geographic, generational, and cultural boundaries, even as national borders seem to be closing. *Beyond Borders: Global Africa* reflects on this moment by considering how Africa and its artists have been at the center of complex histories of encounter and exchange for centuries. Portraits from this exhibition seek to elevate the importance and status of ordinary Africans as well as historic figures by placing them in photographs and monumental paintings with striking patterned backgrounds.

Objectives:

- Students will identify an inspirational figure, either personal or historical
- Students will use art historical conventions to create a portrait that references the complex layers of the subject's identity
- Students will create and share a narrative that elevates and honors the subject

National Core Standards:

- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

Grades: K-8

Time Required: One class period

Materials:

- Image of inspirational figure, from a magazine, personal photo, or created artwork
- Patterned paper, such as wrapping paper or coloring page
- Glue
- Scissors
- Card stock
- Tracing paper, optional

Activity:

1. Observe portraits created by Seydou Keita, Kehinde Wiley, and Victor Diop. Note similarities such as intricate patterned flat background and hyperrealistic portrait. What objects have the sitters chosen, or been placed with, to communicate their values?
2. Choose a patterned background that you think fits the personality of your subject.
3. Place the figure on the background, making intentional placement and background choices (such as Diop's circle around Frederick Douglass).
4. Choose one or two important props for your figure and draw them on the portrait with marker or pencil.
5. Finally, tell your subject's story on the reverse of your portrait. Why do they deserve this special place?
6. Share this story and image with your group. You could create a gallery of collected work.