ABOUT THIS PACKET

This teacher packet has been created as a flexible resource for introducing your students to works from the permanent collection at the Georgia Museum of Art. We hope that you may use it as a toolkit to facilitate open-ended discussion of these pieces.

The materials in this packet have been developed for students in grades K–5, with specific activities for each grade level. Please feel free to adapt them to suit your needs. This packet includes:

- About the Georgia Museum of Art
- Background information, discussion questions and activities for selected works of art from the permanent collection
- Color reproductions of 12 works of art from the museum’s collection, available in a slideshow format for download on our website at: http://georgiamuseum.org/file_uploads/gmoa_teaching-packetPermanent-collection_slides.ppt

ON THE COVER:

(Deatil)
Eugenie McEvoy
(American, 1879–1975)
“Taxi! Taxi!” ca. 1933
Oil on canvas
36 x 32 inches
Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia;
Extended loan from the Schoen Collection,
Princeton, New Jersey
GMOA 2000.52E
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ABOUT THE GEORGIA MUSEUM OF ART: ART FOR EVERYONE

For more than 60 years, the Georgia Museum of Art has played a central role in the preservation of the visual arts in Georgia. The museum strives, most of all, to fulfill the legacy of its founder, Alfred Heber Holbrook, and provide art for everyone, removing barriers to accessibility and seeking to foster an open, educational and inspiring environment for students, scholars and the general public.

Founder Alfred Heber Holbrook initially began his art collection in 1940 with his wife Eva Underhill Holbrook and continued to collect after her death that same year. A retired lawyer from New York, Holbrook generously made an initial gift of 100 paintings in Eva’s memory to the University of Georgia to establish a museum and served as the museum’s first director.

Visitors today may find it difficult to believe that the Georgia Museum of Art once consisted of only two galleries on the ground floor of the old university library on North Campus when it opened, in November 1948. In 1996, the museum relocated to a state-of-the-art, 52,000-square-foot building on the university’s East Campus. Today, the museum houses around 12,000 of works of art. The Georgia legislature designated the Georgia Museum of Art the official state museum art in 1982. The museum completed an expansion and renovation in January of 2011, adding more than 16,000 square feet in new galleries, an outdoor sculpture garden, a large lobby and additional storage space. The new galleries now allow for continual viewing of the museum’s permanent collection, and a dedicated education classroom that hosts many exciting events for students and families.

Partial support for the exhibitions and programs at the Georgia Museum of Art is provided by the Georgia Council for the Arts through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly. The Georgia Council for the Arts also receives support from its partner agency, the National Endowment for the Arts. Individuals, foundations and corporations provide additional museum support through their gifts to the University of Georgia Foundation. The Georgia Museum of Art is ADA compliant; the M. Smith Griffith Auditorium is equipped for the hearing impaired.

The Georgia Museum of Art organizes its own exhibitions in-house, creates traveling exhibitions for other museums and galleries and plays host to traveling exhibitions from around the country and the globe.
VISITING THE GEORGIA MUSEUM OF ART

The Georgia Museum of Art offers a diverse schedule of educational programs for all ages. Visit our website at georgiamuseum.org or call 706.542.4662 for more information.

The museum is located in the Performing Arts and Visual Arts Complex on the East Campus of the University of Georgia. The address is 90 Carlton Street, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.

Parking is located adjacent to the building; bus turn-around is provided. Handicapped accessible. Admission is free.

➤ GUIDED TOURS

The Georgia Museum of Art can provide docents (trained volunteers who conduct tours of exhibitions) who are eager to share their knowledge of the museum and its exhibitions. With advance notice, a docent can develop a tour that can relate to classroom work or act as a culminating object-based learning experience. By using information that the students have already learned, docents are able to ask questions to motivate students to become active participants in their own learning experience. Please call the museum at 706.542.4662 or visit the website at http://georgiamuseum.org/visit/tours to schedule a tour at least two weeks before your visit.
WHAT IS A MUSEUM?

A museum is an institution dedicated to collecting, preserving, studying, protecting and displaying objects of lasting interest or value, such as works of art or cultural artifacts. The Georgia Museum of Art holds a collection (or group of things) of works of art that are available for everyone to come visit and learn from.

➤ LOOKING AT ART IN A MUSEUM

Although you can look at art in magazines and books, on the computer and on posters, nothing can substitute for the experience of seeing works of art in person. The best place to do that is in an art gallery or a museum like the Georgia Museum of Art. When you see a work of art, you can look at details in paintings, drawings, photographs and prints that are lost in reproductions, and you can look at sculptures from many points of view.

➤ MUSEUM MANNERS

When visiting a museum, there are certain things you should remember about how to behave. At the Georgia Museum of Art, we call these guidelines our Museum Manners, or “M&M’s.” When you visit the museum, please keep the following in mind:

• The museum is a place where people can concentrate on the art at which they are looking. You don’t have to whisper, but please use inside voices in the galleries, and raise your hand to ask questions.

• Because the works of art are fragile, there is no running or jumping in the museum.

• Even though our hands may look clean, they have oils on them that you cannot see and that will damage the art if you touch it. Please stay at least 12 inches, or an arm’s length, away from the art you are viewing and never touch the art.

➤ PEOPLE AT THE MUSEUM

In addition to visitors at a museum, there are many people who work and volunteer there. Some of the people you may see when you visit a museum include:

DIRECTOR
Serves as a leader and administrator for the entire museum. Represents the museum in contacts with the public.

CURATOR
Originates ideas for exhibitions, researches and writes text for catalogue and labels. Oversees the care for, display of and information about objects in the collection.
REGISTRAR
Keeps track of all museum objects and maintains records of ownership and borrowing. Manages collection and arranges insurance and shipping when works are on loan to other institutions.

EDUCATOR
Plans tours and other programs for museum visitors of all ages. Helps visitors learn about and connect to the art on display.

PREPARATOR/DESIGNER
Prepares work for the exhibition (matting, framing) and travel (builds crates to ship the art). Designs exhibitions, builds pedestals and armatures, chooses paint colors for the walls, works with the curator to decide the placement of works and how to hang them and maintains the exhibition while it is up in the galleries.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS STAFF
Write and distribute press releases and announcements to inform schools and the community about events and activities at the museum. Oversee production of museum publications, such as newsletters and exhibition catalogues.

OFFICE MANAGER
In charge of the museum’s financial affairs such as overseeing the budget, making sure bills are paid on time and paying staff salaries.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
Raises money to help run the museum by contacting individuals, businesses, government agencies and charitable foundations.

MEMBERSHIP OFFICER
In charge of the museum’s membership programs: groups of people and businesses who pay an extra fee to support the museum and enjoy special benefits.

SECURITY STAFF
Ensure the safety of visitors and the art at the museum. Assist visitors with questions.

DOCENT
A gallery teacher who volunteers to conduct tours for museum visitors. Helps answer questions about the objects in the museum.

MUSEUM SHOP MANAGER
Arranges and displays merchandise, handles money and helps visitors in the shop.
MUSEUM TIPS FOR ENGAGING WITH ART

The following activities are designed to equip your students with tools to help them engage with works of art in a museum setting.

EXPLORING THROUGH THE FIVE SENSES

Choose a painting and ask your students the following questions:

• Imagine you are in this painting. What sounds do you hear?
• What do you smell? What in the painting made you think of that smell?
• Do you see anything that might feel very soft to touch? What might be very rough or hard? Do you see any other textures?
• Describe what you see with your eyes.
• Use movement and facial expressions to show what is happening in this painting.

CREATE YOUR OWN WALL LABEL

Help your students become museum experts before they ever set foot in the door by teaching them how to read wall labels and think about how that information might help them understand the object better.

Have your students create a wall label for a work of art they have made. Explain to them the different parts to include:

• Artist Information – Name (Nationality, birth and death dates)
• Title of Work, Date of Work
• Medium (Materials used to create the work)
• Collection and donor information
• Accession number (this is how the museum keeps track of the works in its collection)

You can ask them to experiment with different parts of this wall label to change the story of the work of art. For example, if your student has made a drawing of a shoe and lists Kryptonite as the material, this detail may begin to tell the audience a story. Is the title “Shoe”? Maybe the student could use the title to keep telling the story. If the material is Kryptonite, maybe we can call the drawing “Superman’s Demise.”

EMBODIED RESPONSE

Have students respond to a work of art by mimicking poses or facial expressions. Have them act out the scene. Ask them what in the work of art made them respond in that way.
PAUL REVERE

SET OF THREE EARLY AMERICAN TEASPOONS
“The British are coming!
The British are coming!”
—Paul Revere

Paul Revere (American, 1735–1818)
Set of three early American teaspoons, ca. 1770
Silver
Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia; Gift of Henry D. and Frances Y. Green
GMOA 1998.5.1–3
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Paul Revere was an important figure during the American Revolutionary War. Because of his work as a silversmith, he knew many people in Boston, which led to his being involved in politics. He began gathering intelligence about the movements of British soldiers and was an express rider for the Boston Committee of Correspondence, carrying important news, messages and other information to members of the Continental Congress and other groups as far away as New York and Philadelphia.

On the evening of April 18, 1775, Paul Revere rode to Lexington, Massachusetts, to warn Samuel Adams and John Hancock of the approaching British troops. On his midnight ride to Lexington, Revere informed people in the countryside of the impending British attack, shouting his famous phrase, “the British are coming! The British are coming!” After the American Revolutionary War broke out, Revere served as lieutenant colonel in the Massachusetts State Train of Artillery and commander of Castle Island in Boston Harbor.

Following the war, Revere continued to expand his businesses, running a hardware store and a foundry and opening the country’s first copper mill. He also remained involved in politics and community groups, was a Freemason and served as the first president of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association. Paul Revere died in 1818, at the age of 83, leaving behind five children and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

John Singleton Copley
(American, 1738–1815)
“Paul Revere,” 1768
35 1/8 x 28 1/2 inches
Oil on canvas
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Gift of Joseph W. Revere, William B. Revere and Edward H.R. Revere 30.781
(courtesy Wikimedia Commons)
ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

This set of three teaspoons dates from around the year 1770. Paul Revere made them at his silversmith workshop in Boston, Massachusetts. The spoons are fairly simple in design, with a delicate monogram engraved on the handle of each. The spoons also show Revere’s distinct maker’s mark, a unique symbol or signature that artisans use to sign their work and guarantee the quality of the items. For smaller pieces such as these teaspoons, Revere’s maker’s mark was his initials — PR — stamped in block letters. For larger pieces, such as teapots, he used his full name — REVERE — stamped in block letters in a rectangle.

In Colonial America, owning fine silverware such as these spoons was a sign of wealth and refinement. Silver was costly, and the average family would have used heavier, less expensive pewter utensils. Prosperous families could commission silversmiths such as Revere to engrave their initials on sets of silverware as a way of identifying who the items belonged to as well as a way of displaying their wealth in their homes.

Process: Silver utensils and tea sets were created by heating the silver to very high temperatures until it was molten, then pouring it into molds to cool and form silver bars. These silver bars formed the raw materials that silversmiths would then heat and hammer into different shapes using anvils and special tools. Silver is a very malleable metal, and as it is forged the silversmith heats the metal to a glowing red and then plunges it into cold water. When the silver piece is done being shaped, the metal is tarnished and not very shiny. The rough forging marks must be smoothed out with a special hammer, and then the entire piece is polished to a brilliant sheen.

➤ QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

• Spend a few moments looking quietly at the three spoons. What do you notice?
• What do you think these spoons might have been used for? What makes you say that?
• Can you find Paul Revere’s maker’s mark on the spoons? Have you ever noticed marks like this on any silverware you have used?
• What do you think the engraving on the spoon handles might stand for? What purpose do you think this would serve?
• How do these spoons compare to other silver spoons you have seen before?
• What are some similarities and differences between these spoons and the spoons you use in your everyday life?

VOCABULARY

monogram — typically a person’s initials, usually interwoven or otherwise combined in a decorative design, used as a logo or to identify a personal possession
**maker’s mark** — a unique symbol or signature that artisans use to sign their work and guarantee the quality of the items

**molten** — liquefied by heat

**tarnish** — lose or cause to lose luster, especially as a result of exposure to air or moisture

**ACTIVITY: CREATE YOUR OWN MAKER’S MARK**

Materials: Paper, pencils, polymer clay (or any other clay), clay tools such as pin tools, sculpting knives, etc.

Artists use a maker’s mark to sign their work.

Have students use a pencil and paper to make initial sketches to design a maker’s mark using their initials, full name, a symbol or any combination of the above.

Then have your students form a spoon or other utensil out of clay and add their maker’s mark to their work.
THEODORE ROBINSON

“GATHERING PLUMS”
“There is always a delightful sense of movement, vibration and life.”
—Theodore Robinson

Theodore Robinson
“Gathering Plums,” 1891
Oil on canvas
Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia; Eva Underhill Holbrook Memorial Collection of American Art, gift of Alfred H. Holbrook
GMOA 1945.76
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Theodore Robinson was born in Vermont and grew up in Illinois and Wisconsin. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and the National Academy of Design in New York. He participated in the founding of the Art Students League, and then went to Paris to study with French artists. His work appeared in the 1877 Paris Salon exhibition. In 1879, Robinson moved to Venice, where he befriended artist James Abbott McNeill Whistler. He returned to the United States later that same year and settled in New York.

Over the next few years, Robinson worked on a number of mural projects in Boston and New York (including decorations for the Metropolitan Opera House) and traveled back and forth between Paris and New York. He was heavily influenced by French impressionism, especially the bright, airy colors and broad brushstrokes of Claude Monet. Robinson met Monet at Giverny in 1891 and was on friendly terms with the artist. Robinson likely attended at least one of the impressionist exhibitions in Paris and other exhibitions of European artists in Boston, where he would have seen works by Monet, Edouard Manet, Pierre Auguste Renoir and Camille Pissarro.

ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

Like Monet, Robinson often created a series of images of the same subject. This painting is one of a series of orchard paintings he made at Giverny, based on a photograph he took.

Impressionist artists often used photography to help compose their paintings; in this case, Robinson used a grid to transfer the image to the canvas. He also cropped the original image so the sky is not visible and added another female figure in the lower left corner of the composition. Robinson uses bold, expressive brushstrokes and vibrant colors in a mosaic-like pattern to depict the dappled sunlight of the orchard.
A cyanotype photograph Robinson made in preparation for his painting

➤ QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

• What do you think the weather was like on that day and why?
• How would you describe the texture of this painting?
• What kinds of colors are used in this painting?
• Does this painting capture a certain mood? What about this painting makes you say that?
• What words would you use to describe this setting, or place?
**VOCABULARY**

**impressionism** — This movement in art history, whose name was coined by its critics around 1867 in France, attempted to capture the feeling of a fleeting moment through light and color.

**mural** — a painting or other work of art executed directly on a wall

**Claude Monet** — known as the father of French impressionism

**composition** — the artistic arrangement of the parts of a picture

**ACTIVITY: CAPTURE THE MOOD**

Materials: warm colors of paint, cool colors of paint, brushes, water, sturdy paper

Impressionists were interested in capturing the feeling of a moment using light and color. They often created series of the same subject. Monet painted the Rouen Cathedral many times in different colors to capture different feelings throughout the day. This painting by Robinson is one of a series of orchard paintings he made.

Walk your students through painting the same subject twice. First, give them only warm colors and have them paint the scene in the daytime. Next, give them a palette of cool colors and have them paint the same scene at night. Discuss how these colors affect the feeling of the scene.
PIERRE DAURA

UNTITLED (GREEN APPLES)
“All I have ever wanted to do is find a way to paint. I have painted. I have worked. I have given myself to art. That is what I wanted since my very early age . . . to be an artist, good or bad . . . . that is what I am.”

—Pierre Daura

Pierre Daura (Catalan-American, 1896–1976)  
Untitled (green apples), ca. 1939–55  
Oil on panel  
Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia;  
Gift of Martha Randolph Daura  
GMOA 2003.327
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Pierre Daura began his life as Pedro Francisco Daura y Garcia in 1896. Eighteen years later, his French identity papers were issued with the name Pierre. He attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Barcelona, known as “La Llotja,” where he received a formal art education from teachers such as José Ruiz y Blasco (Pablo Picasso’s father) and Joseph Calvo. When he was 14 years old, Daura rented an art studio with some of his friends, and he sold his first painting at their inaugural exhibition.

In 1914, Daura moved to Paris to pursue a career as an artist. While in Paris, he studied painting with Émile Bernard and engraving with André Lambert. After the outbreak of World War I, Daura did compulsory military service in Mahon, Minorca, from 1917 to 1920, then traveled extensively throughout Spain, France and Belgium, creating landscape paintings during his journey. In 1923, Daura was working on a mural for a hotel in Normandy when the scaffolding collapsed. He was seriously injured, and the resulting nerve damage from this accident rendered his left hand useless and permanently clenched. Overcoming his impairment, Daura continued to paint and exhibit his work in Barcelona and Paris. In 1928, Daura and four other artists were rejected by the prestigious Paris Salon, which favored more traditional, less abstract art. The five artists joined forces and held a critically acclaimed exhibition at Gallery Marck called “Cinq Peintres Refusés par le Jury du Salon” (“Five Painters Rejected by the Salon Jury”). That same year, he married Louise Blair, an American art student from Richmond, Virginia.

Daura was also one of the founding members of Cercle et Carré (Circle and Square), a group of international artists who promoted geometric construction and abstraction. Although they only held a single exhibition, in 1929, it is considered a foundational event in the abstract art movement. The Dauras had one child, Martha, in September 1930; she became an adored model for both of her artist parents. Daura exhibited his work frequently until the Spanish Civil War in 1937, in which he fought and was injured. After refusing to return to Spain after his injury, Daura lost his Spanish citizenship. He and his family moved to Virginia in 1939. Over the course of his life, Daura painted a variety of subjects including landscapes, still lifes, portraits, figure studies and abstractions. He died on January 1, 1976.
ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

This painting is a **still life**. It shows seven bright green apples on a table. They are arranged on top of a light-colored cloth, which has many folds and curving lines. The bright colors and energetic brushstrokes are characteristic of Daura’s work at this time. Instead of using black and white to create dark shadows and bright highlights, he creates three-dimensional form using color. He combines multiple perspectives into one image; for example, we can see the top and the side of the table at the same time.

This way of modeling objects using color and combining multiple viewpoints into one image are characteristic of the artist Paul Cézanne, who heavily influenced Daura’s work. Daura said of Cézanne: “For many years, Cézanne had been really my guiding star.” Daura was an important figure in the beginnings of the **abstract** art movement. Many art historians believe that abstraction could not have happened without Cézanne’s innovations because he created the groundwork and original thought that later led to total abstraction. Cézanne believed that everything in nature could be reduced to its original shape: a cone, sphere or cube.

➤ QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- Spend a few moments looking quietly at this work of art. What are some things you notice about it?
- What objects do you see in this painting? This painting is an example of a **still life**. A still life is a work of art that shows an arrangement of a group of objects.
- The shadows in this painting are not really black. What colors do you see in the shadows?
- What kinds of shapes do you see?

VOCABULARY

**abstract** — freedom from representational qualities in art  
**still life** — a painting or drawing of an arrangement of inanimate objects  
**portrait** — a work of art in which the subject is a person or a group of people

ACTIVITY: THINK LIKE DAURA! ABSTRACT STILL LIFE

Materials: Drawing paper, shape tracers (optional), rulers, pencils, markers

Set up a still life for your students. Ask students to re-create the image using basic geometric shapes. Students can begin drawing the image with pencils and then color in their shapes with colored markers. They can break down the image into a highlight color, a shadow color and a main color. Use blue or purple for shadows instead of black and yellow or pink for highlights instead of white. Explain to them that this is an abstracted piece and does not need to look exactly like the still life.
ELIZABETH JANE GARDNER

“LA CONFIDENCE”
“I know I am censured for not more boldly asserting my individuality, but I would rather be known as the best imitator of Bouguereau than be nobody!”

—Elizabeth Jane Gardner
ABOUT THE ARTIST

In 1868, Gardner was the first American woman to exhibit at the Paris Salon. She was awarded a gold medal in 1879 and 1887, making her the only American woman ever given this award by the Salon. In Paris, she studied under the figurative painter Hugues Merle, the well-known salon painter Jules Joseph Lefebvre and William-Adolphe Bouguereau. She married Bouguereau in 1896.

Gardner adopted Bouguereau’s style so successfully that some of her work was mistaken for his, but she was a very independent woman. She applied to the police for a permit that would allow her to wear men's attire so she could attend art classes that used a live model at the famous Gobelin works, which banned women. She was an astute businesswoman and an excellent linguist, switching from her native English to French, Italian or German, and her ability to work her way into the social networks in Paris earned her sales and portrait commissions.

ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

“La Confidence” is French for “the secret.” The painting deals with themes of friendship, virtue and secrets and allows viewers to experience an intimate, whispered secret between two young peasant girls, a popular subject among 19th-century painters. The girl on the right holds a letter and forget-me-nots. These flowers were a symbol of affection and were commonly placed in love notes at the time.

The curves formed by the girls' arms mimic the bend of the stone structure and the handles of the water pitcher. The female friendship depicted here promoted ideals of femininity. The girls' bare feet as well as the unbroken pitcher in the bottom left of the frame suggest innocence.

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Art collector and banker George I. Seney gave the painting to the Lucy Cobb Institute, a place of higher education for local girls in Athens. The painting was one of the most popular in the collection and hung over a mantel in the school’s parlor, where it served to teach morals and “encourage[d] the study of art and cultivate[d] the taste of the student for the best in art” at the finishing school.

James Herbert (painter, filmmaker and UGA professor) used the painting in the 1991 music video for R.E.M.’s “Low.” This video provoked controversy when visiting 5th-graders viewed it in 1992.
 QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

• What items do you see in this picture?
• Why do you think the artist chose to include these items?
• Where does this scene take place? What can you tell about the environment the girls are in?
• What time period do you think this work shows? How can you tell?
• What are the two girls doing? What do you see that makes you say that?
• What do you think the girls are whispering about?
• What do you think the letter might say?
• This painting was made before most people had telephones, so letters were a common way to communicate. If you had to write a letter to your friends instead of calling or texting them, what would you write about the most? What do you like to talk to your friends about?

VOCABULARY

Salon — an annual exhibition of works of art by living artists, originally held at the Salon d’Apollon

figurative — representing forms that are recognizably derived from life.

theme — a subject or topic

symbol — a thing that represents or stands for something else, especially a material object representing something abstract

ACTIVITY: FRIENDSHIP PORTRAIT PHOTO BOOTH

Materials: colored construction paper, hot glue or tape, popsicle sticks, large fancy frame (make or find one before the activity)

Have your students divide into groups and design photo booth props that symbolize their personalities as well as their friendships. Then draw the props on the construction paper (for examples: a basketball because we met on the basketball team, sunglasses because we shine so bright, necklaces because we love to dress up, magic wands because we both love stories about magic, elephant ears because we are good listeners, etc.). Once they draw their objects, have them cut them out and attach them to a popsicle stick with glue or tape. They are now ready to pose with their friends in the frame and have their picture taken.
EUGENIE MCEVOY

“TAXI! TAXI!”
“In the hurly-burly of Fifty-seventh Street you remember McEvoy’s ‘Taxi Taxi’ and applaud once more, in retrospect, the amazing skill with which technical difficulties have been tossed off by this artist. Not often does one encounter such sang froid as that.”

—New York Times, 1933
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Eugenie McEvoy led a life of privilege, adventure and independence. A champion teen sharpshooter, she toured the world billed as the “Little French Annie Oakley,” defeating in competitions the king of Belgium, the army champion of Alabama and cowboy gunmen of the American West. She even instructed an entire Canadian regiment on proper gun handling. It seems that anything McEvoy pursued she succeeded at.

ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

McEvoy’s global travels supplied her with ample exotic scenery and imagery for her artistic pursuits. In “Taxi! Taxi!”, she deftly contrasts the dark interior of the cab with the chaotic colorful activity of the street outside. It is notable that this picture was painted in the 1930s during the Great Depression.

The viewer assumes the point of view of the couple in the backseat; we can see their feet propped up and their faces reflected in the glass divider window. Movement is expressed by the various angles of the lines in the cars in this image, and we can feel the tightness of the street as we look ahead at the green bus so close to the blue car.

➤ QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

• In this painting, McEvoy depicts everyday people in New York City in 1933. What words would you use to describe this scene? What are people doing out on the street?

• Five Senses: Imagine you could walk into this painting. What would you see? What smells might waft through the air? What sounds could you hear? What sensations would you feel? Is this a bumpy ride or a smooth ride?

• Contrast the sounds, sights and smells you might experience inside the cab versus outside the cab.

VOCABULARY

Elements of Art — Color, Form, Line, Shape, Space, Texture, Value

Principles of Design — Balance, Contrast, Movement, Rhythm, Emphasis, Unity, Variety
**ACTIVITY: TAXI! TAXI! TILTING IMAGE!**

Materials: Frames (can be made out of poster board or cardboard), white paper, black paper, glue, gel pens, colored markers

Have your students draw a picture of a place they would like to visit with markers on the first piece of paper.

Then have them trace a tilted square on the black piece of paper with a gel pen. This will be the windshield of their taxi.

Then have them use the gel pens to draw themselves driving the car.

Once they finish, have them cut out the tilted windshield window, and glue the black piece of paper on top of their scenic destination.
REGINALD MARSH

“LIFEGUARDS”
“I like to go to Coney Island because of the sea, the open air, and the crowds — crowds of people in all directions, in all positions . . . . moving — like the great compositions of Michelangelo and Rubens. I failed to find anything like it in Europe.”

—Reginald Marsh
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Art historian Lloyd Goodrich, a lifelong friend of Reginald Marsh, writes of the artist that his “gift was for picturing human beings in the mass, in crowds, and for recording their variations in physiognomies and physiques; and few artists of his time did this with such keenest and gusto.” Marsh graduated from Yale University in 1920 and moved to New York, where he worked as an illustrator for the Daily News, Harper’s Bazaar, the New Yorker and Vanity Fair. He also took classes at the Art Students League. Marsh traveled abroad and studied works of Old Masters both in New York museums and in Europe.

Marsh documented all aspects of life in New York City and is especially known for his depictions of crowded streets, subways, burlesque hotels and amusement parks. He traveled with a sketchbook nearly everywhere he went and did quick plein air drawings of people and scenes around him. His work reflects the gritty reality of the Depression and urban life, often in a satirical manner. He remarked that he found New York City’s “dumps, docks and slums, all wonderful to paint.” By the early 1930s, he began to use photography to capture everyday people, places and events. He used these photographs as references for his paintings, combining different groupings and scenes together in the final compositions.
ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

Marsh first sketched Coney Island in the early 1920s, when he was sent there by a Vanity Fair editor to depict the beachfront site south of Brooklyn. Coney Island was first connected to the rest of the city by an extension of the subway system in 1920, and quickly became a popular destination for thousands of urban dwellers looking to escape the city. Coney Island was also famous for its amusement parks, boardwalk activities and food; it was known as “the empire of the nickel” for its cheap, sometimes gaudy entertainment. As many as a million people are reported to have visited in a single day in the height of Coney Island’s popularity. Marsh returned to Coney Island again and again and was fascinated by the huge crowds of people.
QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

• What are these people doing?
• How would you describe the brushstrokes and lines Marsh used?
• What kinds of things do you like to do at the beach?
• Imagine you are in this painting. What sounds do you think you might hear?
• Have you ever been in a place as crowded as the beach in “Lifeguards”? What was it like?

VOCABULARY

illustrator — a person who draws or creates pictures for magazines, books, advertising, etc.
plein air — painting outdoors
satirical — using humor, irony, exaggeration or ridicule to expose and criticize people’s behavior

ACTIVITY: COLLAGE LIKE REGINALD MARSH

Materials: pencils, watercolor paint, watercolor paper, water cups, brushes, magazines, scissors, glue

Marsh used photographs as a reference to create scenes that felt crowded and were full of interesting poses showing movement and activity.

Have your students create their own dream vacation. Where would they go?

Have them draw a horizon line and then paint in a background with colors that show their destination. Set this sheet of paper aside to dry.

Then have students collect pictures of things, people, trees, animals, etc., from magazines. What things do they like? They can then glue in these cut-outs to create their dream vacation getaway.
Joaquín Torres-García

“San Rafael”
“A work of art must not represent nature but exist as the concrete embodiment of an idea. It must be self-contained, defined by its own order and inner rhythms.”

—Joaquín Torres-García

Joaquín Torres-García
“San Rafael,” ca. 1928
Oil on panel
Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia;
Gift of Martha Randolph Daura
GMOA 2011.485
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Although he is considered the father of Latin American constructivism, Joaquín Torres-García spent more than 40 years of his life in the United States and Europe. His family moved to Spain in June 1891, when he was 17. Torres-García studied painting with Josep Vinardell and then attended the Academia de Bellas Artes and Academia Baixas after his family moved to Barcelona in 1892. Torres-García met and collaborated with Pablo Picasso and architect Antoni Gaudí during this time.

In 1918, Torres-García began designing wooden toys as an extension of his teaching assignments; these toys used very simple forms to make highly complex constructions, an early example of what he would do in his later constructivist art. Torres-García observed his four children at play, and seeing that they broke their toys to learn how they functioned, he realized that the toys didn’t answer the child’s need to learn through play. He designed toys in parts that could be changed out, then teamed with a carpenter to produce and sell these “art toys.”

Torres-García settled in Paris in 1926. Late in 1929, he met the painter Piet Mondrian, who was a major influence on his work. Along with Michel Seuphor, they founded the artists’ movement Cercle et Carré (Circle and Square). The group went public in 1930 with a journal and group exhibition of 46 artists at Galerie 23, Paris. The main goal of Cercle et Carré was to provide an artistic alternative to the dominant Parisian movement of surrealism, and the association served as a forum for abstract artists to explore their ideas. Torres-García ultimately left the group in 1930 after several disagreements with Seuphor.

After viewing ancient tribal and pre-Colombian art in Paris and New York, Torres-García was inspired to include geometric and symbolic forms in his work. He was particularly interested in connecting with the indigenous cultures of South America. He called this new style “universal constructivism”; it combined a grid-like, abstract structure (inspired by Mondrian’s work) with
symbolic images. Torres-García saw the integration of symbol and grid as a humanistic response to Mondrian’s aesthetic. He set out to develop a personal system of signs drawn from a wide range of sources, including indigenous Inca masonry and Peruvian textiles, architecture and ceramics, so that his paintings could be read as a kind of *pictograph* or *hieroglyphic* text.

After a short period of time in Madrid, where he exhibited, taught and gave lectures, Torres-García returned to Uruguay in April 1934. There he founded the Asociación de Arte Constructivo (Association of Constructivist Artists) and published the journal Circulo y cuadrado, which introduced the *avant-garde* art movements of cubism, neoplasticism and constructivism to artists in his home country. He published extensively on the theory of art, and partly due to his 1935 call for artists to invert the traditional hierarchy of art by placing Latin America before Europe, has many Latin American followers. Torres-García died on August 8, 1949, in Montevideo.

ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

Painted shortly before the founding of Cercle et Carré, this painting marks an important moment in Torres-García’s development of his abstract style. Its grid-like composition is indebted to Piet Mondrian’s theory of reconciling polar opposites, embodied in the meeting of vertical and horizontal lines. The pictographic abstractions of people and buildings it includes are one of the hallmarks of his mature style and show his interest in pre-Columbian objects and designs. Some of Torres-García’s work was inspired by exhibitions he saw of ancient art of the Americas at the New York Museum of Natural History and Paris’ Musée d’Antropologie in 1928. Torres-García sought inspiration from the symbolic and *pictographic* forms of pre-Columbian art, and his characteristic use of grays and earth pigments also echoes these ancient art forms.
QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

• Take a few moments to look closely at this painting. What do you notice?
• How is it similar to or different from other works we’ve looked at?
• What do you notice about the colors the artist has chosen for this painting?
• What other toys can you take apart and put back together?

VOCABULARY

**constructivism** — a style or movement in which assorted mechanical objects are combined into abstract mobile structural forms. The movement originated in Russia in the 1920s and has influenced many aspects of modern architecture and design.

**surrealism** — a 20th-century avant-garde movement in art and literature that sought to release the creative potential of the unconscious mind, for example by the irrational juxtaposition of images.

**avant-garde** — new and unusual or experimental ideas, especially in the arts, or the people introducing them.

**geometric** — geometric shapes such as circles, triangles or squares have perfect, uniform measurements and don’t often appear in nature.

**abstract** — freedom from representational qualities in art.

**pictograph** — a pictorial symbol for a word or phrase.

**hieroglyph** — a stylized picture of an object representing a word, syllable or sound, as found in ancient Egyptian and other writing systems.

ACTIVITY: DESIGN YOUR OWN HIEROGLYPHS

Show your students some examples of indigenous peoples from South and Central America and other examples of Torres-García’s work. What similarities can they find? What kinds of universal symbols does Torres-García use? The idea of using symbols to represent ideas has a long history, and is also very prevalent in today’s culture in the form of emoji. Have students create a grid-like background and develop a work of art using existing emoji, or invent their own and assign them unique meanings.
JACOB LAWRENCE

“CHILDREN AT PLAY”
“The human subject is the most important thing. My work is abstract in the sense of having been designed and composed, but it is not abstract in the sense of having no human content.”

—Jacob Lawrence
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jacob Lawrence was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in 1917. He and his two younger siblings grew up in foster homes and settlement houses in Pennsylvania. When Lawrence was 13, his mother moved them to Harlem in New York City. They were enrolled in the Utopia House, a community center that had an afterschool arts program run by African American artist Charles Alston. Lawrence continued studying with Alston into the early 1930s, during the Harlem Renaissance. The Harlem Renaissance was a flourishing of art, music, literature and culture in the African American community in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. Lawrence attended the American Artists School on scholarship, then worked in the easel painting division of the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA). While working for the WPA, he completed two narratives of 30 panels each about Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman.

In 1940 and 1941, Lawrence completed his most well-known series of paintings, “The Migration of the Negro.” This series of 60 panels shows the mass exodus of African Americans who moved north after the end of the Civil War in search of a better life. Lawrence’s parents were among those who migrated between 1916 and 1919. The “Great Migration” series brought Lawrence great acclaim when he was only in his mid-20s and was purchased by the Museum of Modern Art and the Phillips Collection. Lawrence married Gwendolyn Knight, a fellow artist, in 1941 and served in the US Coast Guard in World War II. He taught at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, the Pratt Institute in New York and the University of Washington in Seattle. He died in 2000.

ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

In “Children at Play,” painted in Harlem following World War II, Lawrence presents an everyday urban scene. Painted in bright, primary colors and flattened forms, the painting shows a group of young girls playing squares, a game similar to hopscotch. The faces of the children are similar to African masks that Lawrence would have been familiar with from his studies with Alston at Utopia House in New York. Using dynamic, diagonal lines, Lawrence captures the essence of the liveliness and movement of their body language. Red, black and green—the colors of the Pan-African flag—dominate the painting. Lawrence was inspired by the people he saw around him in Harlem and wanted to depict everyday scenes in the African American community.
QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

• Begin by taking a few moments to look quietly at this painting. What do you notice?

• What do you think the figures in the painting are doing? How can you tell?

• Have you ever played a game like the one in this painting? What was it like?

• What colors do you see?

• What kinds of lines or shapes can you see? Follow the lines created by the children’s arms and legs through the painting. How do the lines help your eye move through the work?

• Does this work seem static (or still) or active and full of movement? What creates that effect?

• Imagine you are in this painting with the children at play. They are playing in a bustling neighborhood in New York City. What sounds might you hear? What smells might drift through the air?

VOCABULARY

Harlem Renaissance — a flourishing of art, music and culture in the African American community in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City

Elements of Art — Color, Form, Line, Shape, Space, Texture, Value

Principles of Design — Balance, Contrast, Movement, Rhythm, Emphasis, Unity, Variety

ACTIVITY: EVERYDAY IN THE LIFE OF YOU

Materials: acrylic paint, sturdy paper, paintbrushes, water cups

Have your students paint a scene that is common in their everyday experience of life.

What is something they see every day? Who are the people they see every day?
ELAINE DE KOONING

“BACCHUS #81”
“Every artist returns to things — the drawings that you make as a child or as an adolescent and the ideas that you have as a young beginning artist — no doubt they crop up again and again.”
—Elaine de Kooning
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Elaine de Kooning was part of the abstract expressionist movement. This style of art developed in New York in the 1940s after World War II. Instead of painting something—a landscape or a portrait of someone—abstract expressionists made art that celebrated the act of painting. This group of artists was also very interested in abstraction, or art that does not realistically depict its subjects, instead focusing on color, shape, line and movement. Artists such as Jackson Pollock used new techniques, including staining the canvas and splattering paint on the surface of the painting to achieve expressive, gestural effects in their work.

ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

De Kooning’s “Bacchus #81” is part of a series of more than 60 large paintings that the artist worked on for 6 years. They all show the same statue in the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris. She worked from the sketches she had made of the statue while she was visiting in 1976. Sketches are quick drawings or paintings that the artist uses to practice his or her idea before starting on a larger canvas or paper. De Kooning used her sketches to remember what the statue looked like so that she could paint it when she was back in the US.

De Kooning was the Lamar Dodd School of Art’s first visiting professor at the University of Georgia, from 1976 to 1978, during which time she made the first painting in this series. This particular painting, however, was painted in her New York studio, based on a watercolor sketch that De Kooning completed on-site in Paris.
➤ QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

• Take a few moments to look at “Bacchus #81.” How is it different from other pieces we’ve seen so far? Is it similar to any we have seen?

• What kinds of lines do you see? What texture can you find?

• How would you describe the brushstrokes De Kooning used in this work?

• Look at the image of the statue of Silenus by Jules Dalou that inspired De Kooning’s “Bacchus” series. Can you see any similarities between the original statue and her painting? How did she change or transform the subject in her painting?

VOCABULARY

abstract expressionist — a development of abstract art that originated in New York in the 1940s and 1950s and aimed at subjective emotional expression with particular emphasis on the creative spontaneous act (e.g., action painting).
**Elements of Art** — Color, Form, Line, Shape, Space, Texture, Value

**Principles of Design** — Balance, Contrast, Movement, Rhythm, Emphasis, Unity, Variety

**ACTIVITY: ACTION PAINTING**

Materials: Paint, squirt bottles, marbles, sturdy paper, plastic, sealable Tupperware containers

Have your students place a sheet of paper inside a plastic container, squirt a few colors of paint on top and drop in a few marbles.

Then have them place a lid on the container, being sure it is sealed all the way.

Finally, shake, shake, shake it up to make your mini action painting.
RADCLIFFE BAILEY

“7 STEPS”
“I love it when I walk into a gallery or museum and it says ‘American Artist.’ I’m very proud of my makeup, but my makeup is many different people and many different experiences. I believe in making things that become so personal, they become universal.”

—Radcliffe Bailey

Radcliffe Bailey (American, b. 1968)
“7 Steps,” 1994
Encaustic on burlap and mixed media
Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia; Gift of the Larry D. and Brenda A. Thompson Collection of African American Art
GMOA 2011.576
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Radcliffe Bailey’s family moved to Atlanta when he was 4 years old. As a child, he spent a lot of time with his grandfather, who was a blacksmith. The two made birdhouses together, which helped spark Bailey’s love of art and creative work. His mother was a teacher who valued the arts, and she sent him to art classes in Atlanta, some of which were taught by famous artists such as Romare Bearden.

Bailey knew he wanted to be an artist from a young age. He continued taking art classes throughout high school. He studied sculpture and painting at the Atlanta College of Art, where he earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in 1991. When Bailey was in art school, his grandmother gave him a collection of more than 400 old tintype photographs of his family dating back to the 1800s. Bailey said of these photographs:

“I received these images at a time when my work was in transition . . . some date from the time of the Civil War. Some of my family members were in northern cities and they fought in the war. The photographs are really about the history of us all. They are just as much American as African-American.”

He incorporates these photographs and other images with found objects in his mixed-media collages and assemblage sculptures on wood or canvas. D. Eric Bookhardt wrote of the people depicted in Bailey’s work: “Formally posed and attired, they return our gaze with the impassive eyes of those who have seen much but are in no great rush to talk about it. Instead, it is their uncanny silence that speaks to us.”

Bailey became a well-known and successful artist very quickly after graduating from the Atlanta College of Art. His work has been shown in museums and galleries all over the United States and the world, and he still lives and works in Atlanta.

ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

This work of art uses mixed media, which means it incorporates different kinds of artistic media all in the same work, such as painting, sculpture, found objects, photography, collage, etc. Bailey used a technique called encaustic, which involves using hot melted wax mixed with pigment as a painting medium.
Radcliffe Bailey’s work uses old family photographs given to him by his grandmother and layers of different media that evoke ideas of memory, time, history and heritage. He incorporated found objects in this work—images, materials or objects that are not originally intended as a work of art and are obtained, selected and exhibited by an artist.

This work centers on an old black-and-white tintype photograph of two African American children. Their style of dress tells us that this is an old photograph, dating from the late 1800s or early 1900s. The photograph is set into a cutout portion of the work, flanked by dried flowers and a small canvas bundle and covered with Plexiglas. Layered pieces of rough, burlap-like carpet material painted in swirls and drips of pale greens and yellows make up the remainder of the work.

Dried flowers, paper fans, nailed pieces of metal and stamped ironwork-like scrolls dot the surface. Handwritten words and a bit of the alphabet can be found as well. A wooden ladder with the number 7 painted on the top makes up the right side of the work (seven is Radcliffe Bailey’s favorite number). Seven lights sit atop the ladder, and a rubber fire hose runs along the outside edge of the work.

➤ QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

• Spend a few minutes looking at this work. What’s going on here? What do you notice?
• Look at the photograph of the two children in the middle. What do you notice about their facial expressions? What about their clothing? When do you think this photograph was taken?
• This work consists of many different materials and found objects. What objects can you find? What different materials does the artist use?
• The rough burlap carpet layers create an interesting texture on this work of art. (Texture is the feel of a surface or fabric.) What other textures can you find?
• What do you notice about the ladder on the right side of the work?
• Repetition is when an artistic element is repeated again and again in a work. What repeated elements can you find in this work of art?
• Bailey often uses family photos in his art. Do you have any family photographs at home? Why do you think some people think it is important to keep old photographs of family members?
VOCABULARY

tintype photographs — photographs printed directly on a piece of tin

collage — a combination or collection of various things

encaustic — using pigments mixed with hot wax

ACTIVITY: FOUND OBJECT ART

Have your students bring in found objects, or take them on a nature walk and collect found objects like the flowers in Radcliffe Bailey’s “7 Steps.” Incorporate the objects into a mixed-media work of art.
GEORGE SEGAL

“YOUNG WOMAN IN DOORWAY”
“I deal primarily with mystery and in the presentation of mystery. If I cast someone in plaster, it is the mystery of a human being that is presented. If I put him next to an object, it also raises a question about the nature of that object.”

—George Segal
ABOUT THE ARTIST

George Segal was born in New York in 1924. His family ran a butcher shop in the Bronx and later moved to a chicken farm in New Jersey. Segal was interested in art as early as elementary school. He stepped away from studying at Cooper Union to help out on the farm; later, he continued his education, graduating from New York University with a teaching degree. He used this degree throughout his life teaching in secondary and higher education.

Segal began his artistic journey as a painter but later moved toward sculptural processes. He felt he could not say what he needed to in paintings, even though he had expanded to huge canvases and was painting life-size figures, so he tried sculpture. In one of Segal’s classes, a student brought in recently designed medicinal bandages used to set bones. Segal immediately showed an interest in this material. He began using them to create plaster figures. His first work of art using this technique is “Man Sitting at a Table,” from 1961. Segal made casts of his figures in parts, with the head, torso, arms and legs all cast separately and assembled later. Segal called this process “selective realism.” He said:

A mystery takes place that I never expected, and it’s different each time . . . . I think that’s why I continue casting, otherwise I’d have been bored to tears and gone on to something else long ago. First of all the wetness shows the muscles and bones underneath the clothing. It saturates the clothes to the point where you can see bone structure underneath. The discomfort of the person is of such a nature that they can’t pretend with me; they have to relax, and they’re just as stoic and brave, or screaming or hysterical as they really are.
Segal’s figural groupings are often shown in everyday settings — waiting to cross the street, standing in a doorway, sitting at a bus stop. Many critics and academics associate Segal with the **pop art** movement of the 1960s, along with Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and Jasper Johns. Like these artists, Segal’s work addresses the conditions of modern daily life, but he never identified himself with any particular artistic movement.

**ABOUT THE WORK OF ART**

“Young Woman in Doorway” is an example of Segal’s later plaster-cast work, painted a dark gray. For Segal, the experience of the everyday was interesting; he explained that he wanted his art to deal with places and moments familiar to him. Thus, his daughter modeled for this sculpture, giving the figure’s form a shape with which he was personally familiar. The title, however, refers to her only as “young woman,” generalizing the scene so that the viewer can also identify with the specific moment.

As he often did in his sculptural work, Segal grounds this work through his use of the door and the frame, creating a **minimalistic tableau**. Thus, Segal captures the **gesture** of a moment, aligning the viewer’s experience with his own.

➤ **QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING**

- Take a few moments to look at this sculpture. What do you see?
- Where do you think this woman is? Is she coming or going?
- Look at the way the woman is standing. How do you think she feels? What makes you say that?
- Why do you think Segal paints his sculpture dark gray? What color would you have painted it and why?

**VOCABULARY**

**pop art** — art based on modern popular culture and the mass media, especially as a critical or ironic comment on traditional fine art values

**minimalism** — a trend in sculpture and painting that arose in the 1950s and used simple, typically massive, forms

**tableau** — a group of models or motionless figures representing a scene from a story or from history

**gesture** — an action performed to convey one’s feelings or intentions
ACTIVITY: MAKE LIFE-SIZED FIGURES LIKE SEGAL

Materials: Plaster cloth, plastic wrap, and scissors

Choose a body part, like your hand or a friend’s elbow. Wrap the body part in plastic wrap, not loose, but not too tight either! Do not cut off your circulation.

Then wrap it in moistened plaster bandages. Again, please be sure not to cut off circulation! Make several layers for a sturdy mold.

Use scissors very carefully to remove the mold, using as few cuts as possible. One cut is preferable.

Once the mold of the arm has been removed, carefully tape it back together. Let it dry, then paint it.
Various makers
Gullah Geechee baskets, ca. 1990
Sweetgrass and pinestraw
Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Allen Green
(American, 1907–1998)

As an expert sweetgrass basket artist, Green dedicated his talents to teach others how to sew sweetgrass coils with palmetto fronds. Green learned at a young age how to harvest the grass, gather natural materials and assemble tightly crafted vessels in the Hog Hammock community of Sapelo Island, Georgia. His legacy lives on in the talents one student in particular, Yvonne Grovner.

Yvonne Grovner
(American, b. 1960)

A student of Allen Green, Grovner lives on Sapelo Island in the Golden Isles of Georgia. Although she first learned how to sew sweetgrass baskets for utilitarian use, she has now reached a level of creativity in her designs unmatched by other artists within the Gullah Geechee community. A recent commission — a large fanner more than 6 feet wide — required years to complete! Grover continues to live, sew and teach on Sapelo and throughout the United States today.

GULLAH GEECHEE CULTURE

Gullah Geechee culture represents a direct link from North America to Africa. This unique culture was shaped by enslaved Africans brought to the southeastern US from the rice-producing regions of West and Central Africa. Brought to the New World and forced to work on the coastal plantations of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, Gullah Geechee people developed a separate language and distinct cultural traditions that reflected their West African ancestry closely. The Gullah Geechee retained many aspects of their creole culture due to geographic barriers that isolated their island communities. After their emancipation from slavery, the Gullah Geechee remained isolated by choice. In these rural areas, they continued their language, arts, crafts, religious beliefs, folklore, rituals and culinary traditions with little outside influence. Today, the people of the Gullah Geechee nation continue the traditions they inherited from their West African ancestors.

The Gullah people live on the coast of South Carolina and the surrounding islands (including St. Helena, Hilton Head and Mt. Pleasant). The Gullah language is a combination of English and West African dialects and is often compared to Creole. The Geechee people live on the coastal islands of Georgia.
ABOUT THE WORKS OF ART

The sweetgrass baskets made on the Golden Isles (the sea islands of the southeastern US coast) are similar to those from coastal West Africa because both places have similar natural resources. Enslaved Africans brought to the US through the transatlantic slave trade had to adjust to a foreign environment in many ways, yet the shared climate provided a somewhat familiar environment and people were able to maintain some traditions from their homeland. These included African stories, music and art making, all of which contribute to our modern American culture. Sweetgrass baskets were made as functional objects for harvesting rice. Now these crafts are better known as works of art because of the history they teach and as handmade objects created by skilled men and women.

Sweetgrass is a strong material used to make the coils of the baskets. Sweetgrass is increasingly hard to collect due to the rapid development of the coastal lowcountry area. Sweetgrass baskets are sewn, not woven. Palmetto fronds are often used to sew coils of sweetgrass together in baskets. The green outer skin of the palmetto plant dries beige and is stripped with a dull knife to make a
strong binding. Some basket makers also incorporate pine needles into their baskets for decorative color accents. Flattened nails, spoons and dull knives are used as tools to sew the baskets.

The two large, flat baskets are fanners, which were used in a technique of rice harvesting called winnowing. Winnowing is a technique that was introduced in the US by enslaved West Africans. From the introduction of rice to North America in the late 1600s to well into the 20th century, fanner baskets were used to separate rice grains from husks. Pounded grains of raw rice were placed in a fanner and tossed into the air or dropped from one basket to another. As they fell, the wind blew away the chaff (or husks), leaving the rice ready for cooking. Fanners were also used to carry food and even to cradle babies while their mothers worked in the fields.

➤ QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

These baskets are examples of decorative arts. Decorative arts are objects that are made for utilitarian use — they serve a purpose. Furniture, pottery, baskets and silverware are all examples of decorative arts. The objects in this room were used every day, not just for special occasions, and would have been found in a typical person’s home. These objects all have stories to tell — they tell us what people’s lives were like long ago.

• Look closely at the baskets. What kind of materials do you think these might be made from?
• What function do you think they might have served?
• Discuss the purpose of the fanner and how the baskets were made.
VOCABULARY

utilitarian — designed to be useful or practical

decorative — serving to make something attractive; ornamental

fanner basket — used to toss rice into the air for winnowing as well as to carry food and cradle babies

winnowing — a technique used to separate rice grains from husks. Pounded grains of raw rice were placed in a fanner and tossed into the air or dropped from one basket to another. After the wind blew away the chaff, the rice was ready for cooking.

ACTIVITY: PAPER PLATE WEAVING

Materials: Paper plates, colorful yarn, tape, hole punch

Give your students the following instructions: First punch a hole in the middle of the paper plate using a hole punch or a pencil. Then create holes at one- to two-inch intervals around the outside edge of the plate.

Cut a long piece of yarn. Tape one end of the yarn to the back of your plate, near the center hole. Pull the loose end of yarn up through the center hole to the front of the plate. Then thread it through one of the holes on the outside edge of the plate to the back. Once you have a line from your center hole to an outside edge hole, you can pull the loose end of yarn up through the center hole to the front of your plate again. Continue doing this, working your way around each outside edge hole until you have lines of yarn radiating out from the center and all your outside edge holes have been used. Then tape your loose end to the back of your plate and cut away any extra yarn.

You can now choose colors to weave into this radial circle. Tape your first color to the back of your paper plate and pull the loose end through the center hole again to the front. Weave it over and under your radial yarn, around the circle. Continue until you’d like to change colors, at which point you can tie a new color of yarn to your first color and keep on weaving until your plate is full. Finally, tie off the end of your yarn at the edge of your plate to one of your outer edge holes and cut away the extra.