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Expressions of Anti-Racism through Painting: The Puerto Rican Community from West Side Story to Connecticut

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West Side Story, the film on video, is the tale of two rival New York City gangs. The specific location is Spanish Harlem on the West Side of Manhattan in the 1950's. The Jets are an Anglo gang lead by Riff and the founder, Tony. The Sharks are a Puerto Rican gang lead by Bernardo and Chico. The two gangs rival for territory within the local community patrolled by Officer Krumpski. The screenplay written by Ernest Lehman, under the direction of Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins, with music by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by Steven Sondheim won 10 Academy Awards in 1961. It is considered a modern American classic.

Based upon William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, it is the love story between Bernardo's sister Maria, who recently arrived from Puerto Rico, and Tony, the former leader of the Sharks.

The rivalry between the two gangs, who meet on neutral territory to attend a dance, is expressed through distinct lines of behavior that prohibit Maria and Tony from seeing one another.

This conflict demonstrates the prejudice against Puerto Ricans by the Anglos as well as the equally intense dislike expressed by the Latinos towards the Anglos.

Maria and Tony seek to bridge these cultural differences and fall in love, in spite of the family groups unacceptance of the relationship. This leads to a major confrontation between the two gangs. Maria has asked Tony to prevent the gangs from fighting, for it will lead to no good for everyone. He attempts to do so, but unfortunately does not succeed and Bernardo kills Riff in a knife fight. In return Tony kills Bernardo.

Tony finds Maria to explain the sequence of events, and they decide to run away. Anita, Bernardo's girlfriend, acts as a messenger in the plans and arrives at the soda shop where Tony is hiding. He awaits Maria's arrival, while Anita is confronted by the Jets who are at the soda shop as well. She defends herself, but in anger tells the gang to inform Tony that Maria is dead, shot by Chico. Chico is the Shark member who had planned to marry Maria. When Chico finds out about Maria's relationship with Tony, he shoots her and plans to shoot Tony.

This story is all a lie, but it throws Tony into a spin and he runs through the streets looking for Chico. Meanwhile, Maria walks towards the soda shop where she plans to meet Tony for the getaway. Tony sees her and is overwhelmed with joy. As they run to each other in a school playground and embrace, Chico appears and shoots Tony.

This final scene of remorse, with Tony's death and Maria's loss brings the two gangs together. It is a tragic ending to the conflict in search for tolerance and resolution.

This summary is a narrative of the history of Puerto Ricans settling in New York City in the 1950's. Today, the story is very different. Forty years have passed since the film was made and many changes have taken place. The story, set to music and dance, gives an overview of the conflicts and struggles of one particular minority group dealing with prejudice. I have chosen this film as the main visual motivation to introduce my eighth grade students to the theme of racism. Though the film is about the Puerto Rican community in 1950's New York City, it is also about universal issues of conflict and resolution that Shakespeare wrote about in *Romeo and Juliet*. In fact, according to Humphrey Burton's biography of Leonard Bernstein the origins for *West Side Story* began when Jerome Robbins came to Bernstein with a proposal to write a serious musical based on playing Romeo in a contemporary way, entitled *East Side Story* (Burton, 187).

The concept was a modern version of *Romeo and Juliet* set in the slums of New York City during the Easter-Passover celebrations. Feelings are intense between Catholics and Jews, Juliet is Jewish and Romeo is Catholic. The love story and street gangs, conflict and the tragic death of the hero was the original story line. The time factor and complex evolution of a Broadway production from concept to final production took nearly ten years. It changed into a story of prejudice between a feud of aristocrats that keep the lovers apart, to the prejudice of their Puerto Rican and Anglo families. In being updated to the realities of the 1950's the depiction of life for struggling immigrant groups becomes a vast presentation of social and economic difference told through song that is serious, yet simple enough, for eighth grade students to relate to and understand.

The idea for this unit has its origins in the summer of 2000 when I attended a workshop conducted by Dr. Ruth Glasser. It is entitled, *Aqui Me Quedo: Puerto Ricans in Connecticut*. Dr. Glasser presented the history of the Puerto Rican community and it's growth in Connecticut. The need for field workers in the shade tobacco fields of the Connecticut River Valley near Hartford played a major role in the expansion of the Puerto Rican community.

The unique status of Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens as a result of the Spanish American War provided a work force of seasonal employees at the close of World War II. Most of the workers returned to Puerto Rico in the off-season, but a few remained in the states and began working at factories in various cities.

In 1917, when Puerto Ricans first became citizens of the United States they began to migrate to the main land in large numbers. New York City in particular was a major choice for relocation. By 1960 New York City was home to more than 600,000 people of Puerto Rican birth or parentage (Glasser, 9).

The Puerto Rican community in New York City inspired the creation of *West Side Story*. The Broadway production opened in September of 1957 and was released on film in 1961.

The migration of Puerto Ricans to other states has steadily continued according to Dr. Glasser. They came to Connecticut and to jobs that no one else wanted, the lowest paid and least skilled jobs on farms and in factories. This added a cultural ingredient to the Connecticut population that, over time, has become a distinct Puerto Rican community. Puerto Ricans come from a multi-cultural, multi-racial background. Centuries of mixing between the islands original inhabitants, Africans, Spanish, and other European colonists, has created a diverse people (Glasser, 15). According to 1990 figures Connecticut has the sixth largest Puerto Rican population in the United States. The city of Hartford is 27.3% Puerto Rican and New Haven has a Puerto Rican population of 10.6%. These figures are even higher by more recent population updates.

In Puerto Rico there is a wide range of racial diversity. American terms of "black" and "white" simply don't make sense, and have resulted in curious types of discrimination. Massive waves of migration have taken place from Puerto Rico during the post World War II era, a time of shrinking industrial employment in the Northeastern and Mid-western United States. According to Dr. Glasser this may provide some explanation for prejudice against Puerto Ricans, since they became increasingly visible in Connecticut during hard economic times. It has been easy for some commentators to blame Puerto Ricans for the state's economic and social problems.

"Aqui me quedo," from the title of Dr. Glasser's study of Puerto Ricans in Connecticut means "I'm here to stay." The study provides the story of a group of citizens struggling against tremendous odds to build communities. Puerto Ricans have worked quietly and determinately to raise their families. Their rich cultural heritage and history is not generally known and this unit is an attempt to make students more familiar with the historical and cultural roots of Puerto Rico and its development over the past fifty years in Connecticut.

From the shade tobacco fields of the Connecticut River Valley near Hartford, an area approximately 30 miles wide and 90 miles long, the migration of Puerto Ricans to Connecticut evolved into the development of growing communities.

Today, with the success of popular culture, Ricky Martin and Jennifer Lopez are so much a part of the American contemporary scene that it is hard to believe that these performance artists are breakthrough artists accepted in the main stream as part of an evolving aspect of American development in relation to the Latino community. This evolution can be traced through the career of Rita Moreno and her role in *West Side Story*. However, the acceptance of the Puerto Rican communities did not happen instantly. In fact, it was a slow and difficult evolution.

The first Puerto Rican in Connecticut may have been Jose de Rivera, a wealthy sugar and wine merchant who came from New York to live in Bridgeport in 1844 (Glasser, 25). This glimpse into the past reflects the history of trade for Connecticut ships docked in various islands in the Caribbean. Puerto Rico was one such island.

Connecticut ports such as New Haven, Bridgeport, Norwich, and New London sailed ships loaded with cattle, horses, grain, lumber, and other products from the Connecticut River Valley. They returned with sugar, molasses, rum and occasional slaves back to New England.

Years of trade between wealthy Puerto Rican merchant families and the Northeast coast of the United States resulted in some upper-class parents sending their children to elite universities such as Yale (Glasser, 31).

This Puerto Rican presence in Connecticut, though it began with wealthy merchants, attracted professional and skilled workers from the island during the 1860's. Glasser documents Puerto Ricans who settled in New Haven and who fought in the American Civil War. In 1862, Augustus Rodrigues joined the 15th Connecticut Regiment. He reached the rank of Lieutenant and returned to New Haven in June 1865 to become a New Haven Firefighter (Glasser, 31).

The closing of the 19th Century ended with the war between Spain and the United States. Connecticut volunteers, 3400 in number, as well as the manufacture of guns and military equipment from New Haven and Bridgeport enriched the local economy and aided the United States (Glasser, 33).

With the U. S. victory over Spain, Puerto Rico became a possession of the U.S., making it easier for Puerto Ricans to come to the mainland. Under the provisions of the Jones Act of 1907, Puerto Ricans officially became

citizens of the U.S. (Glasser, 33). Because of this unique status, though New York City was the primary destination for most Puerto Ricans in the early years of the 20th Century (1917-1940), Puerto Ricans began to settle in various locations in Connecticut like Waterbury and Meriden. During the 30's and early 40's Puerto Ricans were recruited for war-related industries in Connecticut, but most came to live in a world where Puerto Ricans were practically unknown. Within this atmosphere, Puerto Ricans had little reinforcement to hold onto their culture (Glasser 37).

The aftermath of World War II brought great changes to Connecticut towns with a large increase in Puerto Rican settlers. The recruitment of Puerto Ricans to Tobacco Valley from 1946 on, accounts for the increase in Puerto Rican settlers. The industrialization of the island of Puerto Rico resulted in a sharp decline of the agricultural labor force by 78% from 1940-1979 (Glasser, 45). This created unemployment on the island and encouraged migration to the mainland. From the 1940's to the present day, the Puerto Rican population in Connecticut has steadily increased.

This growth is reflected in the student population at Conte West Hills Magnet School. My decision to design a unit that approaches issues of racism through a musical, within the context of the art room, is an outgrowth of heightened awareness of the behaviors of my art students. It also reinforces my belief in the importance of the use of art as a non-verbal form of expression.

It is in the context of what we seldom talk about that the unique qualities of art expression make a positive contribution to our lives and the lives of our students. My choice of *West Side Story* was intentional, because I wanted a visual way to engage the thinking of the students without discussing prejudice directly. As students become involved in the story and their enjoyment of the music contributes to their understanding of the issues of conflict, our class discussions will move in the direction of emotional feelings. *West Side Story* is far enough in the past to create a safe distance for discussion. It also allows for bringing the story up to date and terms like love, anger, betrayal, trust, fear, retreat, fighting, forgiveness, and acceptance will have a direct connection to the actual series of events presented in the video.

It is difficult to find a film whose language is appropriate for middle school aged children, and that also expresses the issues of prejudice and racism in a powerful and effective manner.

The closing credits of *West Side Story* use city walls covered with graffiti. This example will be used as our first lesson in the art room. Upon mural paper the students will re-enact the experiences of writing on city walls. Because the music is so effective, the sound track from the film will also be played, engaging the students in the creation of a graffiti wall. Using their own names and some of the images that are on the screen, this mural will be the first venture into self-expression. Because scale plays a major role in this mural I will encourage students to draw with marker, then paint their own personal symbols and discuss how friends join together.

1. What do they think about the names Jets and Sharks?
2. What name might they choose instead?
3. What are the reasons behind forming a group or gang?

The mural will be on the wall and worked on over a period of several weeks. We'll make additions and changes as the lessons progress. Because the students come from diverse backgrounds, the opportunity to incorporate symbols from their own heritage, and the scope of our discussion which begins with the film and it's Puerto Rican/Anglo conflict will be broadened. The use of other languages upon the mural will be encouraged and discussion of what Art is and whether graffiti qualifies will also come about.

As the mural evolves, issues of color, line, and form will be spoken about and ways of achieving visual import will be explored.

The second lesson will be an outgrowth of the graffiti wall. As the wall and it's evolution will represent the process of working together through words and symbols to create a community of response, the follow up lesson will be very individual. They will create a visual narrative in pictures that expresses their own personal dreams for the future. This idea will be connected to Maria and Tony's dream of finding peace and quiet in their world which is so filled with conflict.

Suggestions for their narrative story will include depictions of where you live, what you like to do, and what you might want to be when you grow up. We will discuss the career choices available to the characters in the film, for example, working in a drug store selling soda or working in a bridal shop sewing dresses. In the second lesson cross- references to the film will be made. It is at this point in the sequence of lessons that the term Surrealism will be introduced. The presentation of dreams from our imaginations and putting elements together in a picture that normally do not exist together to create a dream-like effect will be demonstrated. Dreams as nightmares as opposed to using the term dream as aspiration will also be addressed. The students will make their determination of how they wish to express their dream and what they mean by the question: What is your dream?

As the Dream assignment moves towards completion, a further explanation of surrealism will be presented. It is at this point that dreams as expressed through representational images will be expanded upon. We will talk about how to express subconscious ideas through gestures and movement. The term automatism will be introduced and lesson three will be presented with the works of Jackson Pollock, as an example of Abstract Expressionism.

This lesson, in particular, will attempt to expand upon what we have been talking about in regard to the film. Demonstration of different techniques for brush work, splashing, overlapping, wet on wet paint, mixing and gesture drawing will be shown in the context of Pollock's approach to painting.

We will talk about our dreams, not in the context of representational images, but from the inside out, trying, like Pollock, to express our inner emotions through the painting process. In order to accomplish this, it will be necessary to prepare an area in the art room, covering it with plastic and newspapers to allow free use of the paint. This is important in the context of successful use of materials as it connects to the goal of the lesson to express feeling without having to explain anything to others.

The students will have intellectually understood the ideas behind gesture painting and how it expresses feelings, but to take the process seriously will require a balance between structure and freedom. The fun part of gesture paint can sometimes result in a lack of respect for the process since it is messy and without obvious visual content in terms of recognition.

The students at this juncture will be aware that Jackson Pollock was exhibiting in New York City at the very same time that *West Side Story* was on Broadway and that high art and folk art can be in the same time and

place. This connection between these two very different aspects of life in New York City will be illustrated by showing the students "Blue Poles," a large painting by Pollock painted in 1953. It is 83" x 192.5" in size, approximately 7' x 17'. Its surface treatment, scale, and use of color have some direct connection to the elements on the graffiti walls. Emphasis upon the time factors and how art and ideas connect through it require no special explanation, "You see something you like, and you use it" will be discussed.

Jackson Pollock states:

"When I'm in my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. It's only after a sort of 'get acquainted' period that I see what I have been about. I have no fears about making changes, destroying the image, etc., because the painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through. It's only when I lose contact with the painting that the result is a mess. Otherwise, there is a pure harmony, an easy give and take, and the painting comes out well" (O'Hara, 32).

To get the students to understand Pollock's words and experience, to a degree, some of the process, is the task of their lesson.

One possible approach is to simplify the materials and work only with black and white paint as the first exercise. I know from previous experience that it can be helpful in mastering the technique, but for some students black and white are not the desired colors of their feelings. Therefore, it denies the opportunity for a more honest emotional expression. It will probably be suggested, but not required, that black and white be a starting point.

I envision lesson three as a series of experiments by the students and will ask that they complete at least three paintings in this expressionistic style. I will encourage them to experiment with the paint and try various sizes of paper. In talking about the final piece, I will also suggest that they cut out portions of the painting that they may like better than others. The editing process is an aspect of expression that makes the free flowing nature of expressionism through painting more appealing to some students who find the process "too easy," and don't respect the results.

All these various responses are difficult to measure, but if the students give the lesson its full scope of experimentation, it will be possible for them to see the connections between what Pollock was attempting to do and their own efforts.

Lesson four will build upon the variety of results the students have achieved from the painting experience in lesson three. It will differ in one major respect. Color. The students will be asked to select a specific emotion that they connect with from *West Side Story* and match it with one color in their next painting. This monochromatic expression is designed to focus upon one element as opposed to a wide range of feelings. How they decide what to choose and how it is matched to a specific color should further define their ability to make specific choices. The reduction process is part of visual organization skills that require letting go of some aspects of gesture painting and making specific one emotional idea, color is feeling.

When the color lesson is complete, a critique will take place that represents the three previous paintings of lesson three with the color painting of lesson four. Class discussion and response to the works will be held as well as any connections the students might see between the four paintings and graffiti wall. At this critique the subject of racism will finally be discussed directly. Question prompts such as:

1. What is it?
2. How have we seen examples of it in *West Side Story* ?
3. What is the connection between the four paintings and racism?

This discussion will vary with different age groups. I anticipate that it will emerge in different ways, but that some students will see a connection between the freedom of expression used in their paintings and the lack of restriction in how the paintings were created.

Reference will be made to Jackson Pollock and his style and the style of the film and its music. The discussion may continue according to the interest of the group. The goal of the lesson is to review what we have seen and bring the painting experience based in the 1950's into the present.

Lesson five will be in the library and focus upon the use of the Internet. Students will be asked to research a contemporary artist of color- Puerto Rican or African American. Once they have made a selection and read about their artist and seen an example of his or her art work, they are to return to the art room and create a piece of their own, inspired by the artist they've chosen. Suggestions include: Jacob Lawrence, William Johnson, and Puerto Rican folk artists. This lesson offers the opportunity to seek out a variety of artists that relate to the topic of expressionism. I will ask the students to closely examine the work of the artists they have chosen to see if some of the issues which *West Side Story* brought forth are present in the work of their chosen artist.

Lesson six is the final coming together of the group. A group drawing in which one student begins a drawing before passing it on to another will be explored. This final lesson is transformational in nature and will attempt to bring together the variety of art experiences and ideas that have been explored through the graffiti wall, the dream work, the three free form paintings, the emotional color lesson, and the artist research. How all of this comes together is difficult to predict. The unit will take place over a period of four weeks beginning with film, *West Side Story* . Though the unit is planned in sequence with a variety of art lessons which bring the student through a series of experiences rich in technique and art history, the final outcome will be determined by the participation of the students, their ability, and their willingness to engage in the process of expression.

To keep the lessons enjoyable and upbeat so that it doesn't feel like a social studies approach of data removed from art, is not difficult to achieve. What is challenging is to help students make connections between the film and the realities of contemporary community as it relates to their own lives. Since the elements within the school reflect some of the diversity represented in the film, it is possible that students will be able to make connections and gain insight into their own environment and community of the present.

To achieve this clarity, a final project that puts the choice of expression upon the student may be the goal. Possibly a written essay of their thoughts and related experiences to the unit; specifically, what they enjoyed most and what they did not like.

The question of anti-racism ends the search for closure of the unit. The idea that we must face our stories, our histories, in order to grow and evolve is evident in the ending scene of *West Side Story* . Why must extreme loss be part of growth? What is one of the positive results of Tony and Bernardo's deaths?

I would like to have the students see the changes that have taken place since the ending of *West Side Story* and attempt to articulate those changes not only for the Puerto Rican community in Connecticut, but for themselves as they understand it. This will be achieved by a summary of achievements that reflects the growth of America into a more multi-cultural nation that continues to practice a philosophy of openness to change and growth.

The process of expressing emotion in painting is a way of learning that encourages action with materials on paper. It is an active process. It does not guarantee that the issues of racism will be resolved, but it does provide for the opportunity to express some of these thoughts within a safe place. To use the art experience in this manner provides a voice for thoughts that are sometimes difficult for students to express. *West Side Story* had provided a framework for expression that brings forth issues that are still with us: fear, rejection, seeking a better place. Art used in the service of these expressions is a worthy endeavor.

Lesson One: Graffiti Wall

The closing credits of *West Side Story* use city walls covered with graffiti. Upon mural paper the students will re-enact the experiences of writing on city walls.

Objectives

Students will

1. Create a graffiti wall using their own name or personal symbol.
2. Examine their own understanding of the film as a source of inspiration.
3. Listen to the music from the soundtrack as an effective motivation.
4. Make connections between the characters and cultures depicted in the film to their own lives.
5. Focus upon cultural differences and similarities between New York City in 1950 and New Haven in 2001.
6. Express through their name/symbol and other visual means their emotional response to the film.

Procedures and Materials

1. Students will draw on the large scale mural paper their responses to the film.
2. Using magic maker, paint, and mixed media such as pastels, crayon, chalk or cray-pas students will work on the mural wall as a group.

3. Discussion of the names and symbols will be further explored through specific questions:
 - a. What do you think about the names Jets and Sharks?
 - b. What name might you choose instead?
 - c. What are the reasons behind forming a group or gang?

The mural will be on the wall and worked on over a period of several weeks. As other lessons in the unit progress, students may wish to return to the mural and make changes or additions.

Evaluation

As the mural evolves our discussion from the film and its Puerto Rican/ Anglo conflict will be broadened and the use of other languages besides English and Spanish will be encouraged. Issues of color, line, and form will be spoken and ways to unite the overall composition of the mural wall will be talked about. Two evaluations will take place on the graffiti wall, one in the beginning and one after the five lessons are completed. (3 class periods for mural creation).

Lesson Two: Personal Dream, Surrealism

Students will now go from a group mural activity to a very individual drawing assignment.

Objectives

Students will

1. Create a visual narrative in pictures that expresses their own personal dreams for the future.
2. Utilize their knowledge of Maria and Tony's dream for finding peace and quiet in their world which is so filled with conflict.
3. Examine the term Surrealism and be aware of different uses of the term "dream" as in nightmares as opposed to using dream as aspiration.

Procedures and Materials

1. Students will see examples of surrealism as an introduction to their dream narrative. Dali in particular will be used as an example of Dream imagery.

2. Students will work in pencil on white drawing paper with watercolor and create dreamlike effects. Clarity of their ideas will be discussed.
3. Students will make their determination of how they wish to express their dream and what they mean by the question: What is your dream?

Evaluation

We will talk about how effectively the works express subconscious ideas through gestures and movement. The term automatism will be introduced in preparation for the works of Jackson Pollock and his style as it connects to Surrealism and leads to an example of Abstract Expressionism. The narrative dream drawings will be discussed from a story approach. (Two classes for drawing and one class for evaluation).

Lesson Three: Abstract Expressionism, Jackson Pollock

Students will talk about dreams, not in the context of representational images, but from the inside out, trying, like Pollock, to express their inner emotions through the painting process. In order to accomplish this, it will be necessary to prepare an area in the art room, covering it with plastic and newspapers to allow for free use of the paint.

Objectives

Students will

1. Intellectually understand the ideas behind gesture painting.
2. Be aware that motions of their marks in paint on paper can be as effective in expressing their dreams as telling a story.
3. Be introduced to the paintings of Jackson Pollock who was exhibiting in New York City at the very same time that *West Side Story* was on Broadway.

Procedures and Materials

1. Students will see a reproduction of the painting "Blue Poles" painted by Pollock in 1953.
2. Students will study the surface treatment, scale, and use of color in this large 7'x17' painting as a direct connection to the elements on the graffiti walls.
3. Painting will begin with a demonstration of various gesture techniques. Three paintings in this expressionist style will be requested from each student.
4. Encourage students to experiment with paint and try various sizes of paper.
5. Suggest that students cut out portions of the painting that they may like better than other

parts.

6. The editing process is an aspect of expression that makes the free flowing nature of expressionism more appealing.

Evaluation

Upon completion of three separate paintings we will discuss the work and how it relates to Jackson Pollock's style and to their personal expression.

Lesson Four: Expression Through Color

Building upon the variety of results achieved from the expressionistic use of paint in Lesson Three, the follow-up lesson will differ in one major respect, color.

Objectives

Students will

1. Select a specific emotion that is connected with one aspect of *West Side Story* and match it with one color.
2. Focus on one monochromatic expression and paint that emotional response.
3. Reduce the visual organizational skills that require letting go of some aspects of gesture painting.

Procedures and Materials

1. Students will paint in one color upon paper and try to express one specific emotional idea from the film; color as feeling.
2. Painting freely on paper continues using the techniques from Lesson Three, but focuses on one color.

Evaluation

When the color lesson is complete, a critique will take place that represents the three previous paintings of Lesson Three with the color painting of Lesson Four. Connections will be made between the four paintings and the graffiti wall. At this critique the subject of racism will be finally discussed directly. Question prompts include:

1. What is it?
2. How have we seen examples of it in *West Side Story* ?
3. What is the connection between the four paintings and racism?

Reference will be made to Jackson Pollock and his style of painting and the style of the film and its music. The discussion will lead to a review of what we have seen and bring the painting experiences based on the 1950's into the present. It is here that a further discussion of Puerto Rican in Connecticut will be introduced in preparation for Lesson Five. A summary of the growth of the Puerto Rican population as it relates to New Haven and to the school population is presented in greater detail.

Lesson Five: Internet Research

The students will work on the library computers and use the Internet. Students will be asked to research a contemporary artist of color - Puerto Rican or African American. Once they have made a selection and read about the artist and seen an example of his or her artwork they return to the art room and create a piece of their own inspired by the artist they have chosen.

Objectives

Students will

1. Research a contemporary artist of color on the Internet.
2. Return to art room and create a piece of their own inspired by the artist they have chosen.

Procedures and Materials

Students will create a new work inspired by their chosen artist in a media of their choice: pencil, watercolor, tempera, clay. This lesson offers the opportunity to seek out a variety of artists that relate to the topic of expression. Suggestions will be made to include: Jacob Lawrence, William Johnson, and Puerto Rican folk artists.

Students will be asked to closely examine the work of the artists they have chosen to see if some of the issues which *West Side Story* brought forth are present in the work of their chosen artist.

Evaluation

The works created by the students will be displayed on the wall beside the graffiti wall. Our discussion will seek to make connections with the previous lessons and the newly inspired work.

Lesson Six: Group Drawing

This lesson is the final coming together of the group. A group drawing in which one student begins a drawing before passing it on to another will be explored.

Objectives

Students will

1. Work in magic marker and paper.
2. Begin a drawing and pass it to the student next to them.

Procedures and Materials

This lesson is transformational in nature and will attempt to bring together the variety of art experiences and ideas that have been explored through the graffiti wall, dream work, three free-form paintings, emotional color lesson and artist research.

Evaluation

The group drawing will provide an opportunity to bring together the ideas of the group and make a full circle to the original motivation of *West Side Story*. Expressions of emotion in a variety of ways lead to the final goal of expressions of anti-racism. What that looks like is difficult to predict, but it is possible that through these artistic exercises a better understanding of racism and anti-racism will be achieved by the students who have participated.

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