



## The Folks of Folk Art

Guide for Curriculum Unit 93.04.10  
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Folk art is a subject I've been interested in for quite a long time. Its traditions seem to be born out of the rural areas of the country with each artist creating his or her own set of rules. Because it is a type of art usually not influenced by trends or fads it is the type that makes a definite statement. It is a pleasure to see the charm, energy and ingenuity incorporated into these pieces.

My unit is an in-depth look at those folk artists who have become known as "outsiders." The common thread in these artists is their lack of a formal academic training and their simple, unpretentious approach. Their works were guided by personal visions and needs, and their creative methods used any available materials—materials most would consider junk.

The first group of artists I choose are Bill Traylor, Moze Tolliver and Jimmy Lee Sudduth. These elderly artists began to create in order to fill a void in their lives. Next Howard Finster and Sister Gertrude Morgan are included. These artists were inspired by visions and religion. Their works are their preaching technique. Finally I choose two environmental artists, Simon Rodia and James Hampton. These eccentric men were obsessed with a passion to create a great masterpiece which took years to complete.

The goal of this unit is to introduce children to a group of artists whose lifestyles have been a little different. The student lessons attempt to establish the idea that art, like beauty, is in the eyes of the beholder and that each one of us possesses the talent and the ability to create a masterpiece.

(Recommended for Art, Grades 5-9; Career Education, Grades 5-8 or Social Studies, Grades 5-6)

### **Key Words**

*American Art Folk Painting*

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