



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1993 Volume IV: The Minority Artist in America

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## **Points of View: Looking at Five Contemporary Female Artists of Color—Amalia Mesa-Bains, Howardina Pindell, Faith Ringgold, Bebe Saar, and Pablita Velarde**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 93.04.11  
by Eva Scopino

The focus my curriculum unit is the lives and works of five contemporary female artists of color: Amalia Mesa-Bains, Howardena Pindell, Faith Ringgold, Bebe Saar, and Pablita Velarde. I chose this subject not to label artists by gender or ethnicity, but in an effort to contribute to multicultural art education and help expand awareness of contemporary artists and the achievements of women artists.

These five artists share issues across cultures. They overcame discrimination and create empowering art based on their lives and experiences as women and minorities. They look at the world with multiple points of view: as artists, as women, as persons of color. All five use art as a vehicle to preserve the traditions of their cultures, confront issues of heritage, racism, gender, and stereotype, and/or reflect or document issues about their people. They each work with cultural and female traditions in non-traditional ways. Mesa-Bains, Pindell, Ringgold, and Saar use objects from various cultures and traditionally female art forms such as sewing, quilting and collage in new ways to create mixed media objects and assemblages. Velarde retells and portrays traditions of her Tewa Indian heritage in a nontraditional way—through documentary and mythic paintings. In her day, only Tewa men painted. The unit includes biographies on each artist, discussion of their work, a glossary of terms, and hands-on art activities and lessons inspired by or based on their work.

By focusing on these artists, I hope to help students deepen self-awareness and get in touch with their cultural heritage, transcend barriers between “craft” and “fine art,” increase awareness of the achievements of women artists, use art as a vehicle for confronting discrimination and stereotype, expand creativity by experimenting with materials in new ways, and find role models and cultural heroines.

(Recommended for Art or Women’s History, Grades 5-12)

### **Key Words**

*Female Artists Art History*

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