



Visual Blues—On the Move, Visual Art Syntheses of the Blues Impulse

Guide for Curriculum Unit 97.05.09
by Martha Savage

Students create art works informed by the blues. They discover how artists in visual art, music and writing have done the same. They see parallel roads artists whose work serves as complements of each other, and crossroads artists whose work intersects. Students understand, interpret, reflect and bring to the road their own contributions. Students sample from the blues experience both as observers and as creators. The blues come to life as an aesthetic encounter and as a lesson for living. The unit, structured as a collection of journeys, considers a range of human movement - actual and metaphorical, voluntary and involuntary, long distance and short distance, outward and inward, historical and personal. Blues is a transformation—for survival, relief, joy, hope and understanding. The blues are seen in historical context, in an art context, and are made accessible and relevant to young people. Wynton Marsalis's "Blood on the Fields," the art works of Tom Feelings in *The Middle Passage*, Romare Bearden, William H. Johnson, Jacob Lawrence, Horace Pippin, Bill Traylor, and selected written works of Gwendolyn Brooks, Rita Dove, Langston Hughes, and Albert Murray serve as cornerstones. A selection of art projects synthesizes the expression of artists and students.

(Recommended for Visual Arts, grades 6-12)

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