

There Is a Woman in Every Color Black Women in Art

Creative Response

Subjects: Art; English; Music; Theatre

Activity

1. **In the exhibition gallery:** Students will learn about the art in *There Is a Woman in Every Color: Black Women in Art*. They will each select a work they are drawn to and spend time studying it and noting their response to it.
2. **Outside of class:** Students will respond creatively to their chosen object. Depending on the course, the work could be a monologue, artwork, creative prose, poetry, or musical score.
3. **In the classroom or the exhibition gallery:** Students will present or perform their creative response. Depending on the location of presentations, they will present their work in front of either their chosen object or an image of it.

Note: There are about 40 objects in the exhibition that students can choose from (see examples on back).

For assistance with facilitating or adapting this activity, contact:

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Selected examples of works *with excerpts from interpretive texts*

Paula Wilson
Remodeled, 2007
woodcut, lithograph, collage
Bowdoin College Museum of Art

Paula Wilson often uses multiple techniques to reflect on cultural history and female identity. She collapses history, combining prehistoric animals with a stylized amphora vessel, a classical form. Vessels are a recurrent symbol in her work. They allow her to reference and draw inspiration from a variety of cultures while inserting her own perspective onto the form. Mindful of the legacies of cultural histories, Wilson, in describing her work, states: "I think there is a very strong Western and masculine art historical narrative that we are taught in school ... so a lot of my work is about an artwork coming to life and trying to understand itself and its own place in this history."



Alma Thomas
Double Cherry Blossoms, 1973
acrylic on canvas
Bowdoin College Museum of Art

Alma Thomas stated: "Painting released me from the limitations of the past and opened the door to progressive creativity." The limitations to which she refers is the expectation that all works produced by Black artists had to contribute to a "black aesthetic" or serve to counter hegemonic representational views of the Black community. Thomas's choice to employ abstract expressionism in her process was a refusal of these expectations, allowing her a freedom for self-expression and individual nuance. An avid student of color theory and modernism, most of Thomas's works are inspired by scenes in nature. Though born in Georgia, her family relocated to Washington, D.C., seeking relief from racial tension. She took her hometown's celebrated Japanese cherry trees as a source of inspiration for this work.