



REIMAGINE:

Contemporary Georgia Artists

TEACHER RESOURCE

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

Celebrating the skilled handwork of Georgia makers, artists, and community-builders, *"Reimagine: Contemporary Georgia Artists"* will spotlight a variety of visual art mediums from the Georgia State Art Collection in conversation with the current works of local artists from each of the hosting communities. Works in this exhibition will feature traditional paintings, photographs, and drawings by artists such as Nellie Mae Rowe, as well as craft traditions such as quilting and lacemaking, in order to uplift and connect the rich and diverse Southern art histories and communities of Georgia.

GENERAL GUIDING QUESTIONS

Encourage students to look at artworks closely. Engage in teacher/students or student/student discussion by asking questions similar to the following:

- For students who prefer guidance:
 - What is happening here? What do you see that makes you say that?
 - If we are looking at a scene – what do you think it might smell like in this scene? Sound like? What do you see that makes you say that? If we are looking at a more abstract piece, how can we use our imagination to still think about smell/touch/sound?
- For students who prefer independence:
 - What artwork or collection of artworks are you most drawn to? Individually or in small groups, go stand in front of the one(s) you like the most. Take two minutes to really look closely and notice all the details in front of you. (Optional: As a class, reconvene and allow students to share which artwork they chose and why, with the goal of helping each other notice things they may not have seen at first.)

Students process and learn differently! Encourage multi-modal participation as students navigate the galleries, such as:

- Provide students with paper, pencils, and some form of board so that they can sketch and write during their visit. For older students especially, let them know that this paper is their own independent thinking space and they don't have to turn it in/give it to anyone. Think about engaging students in timed observational sketching challenges to help them look at artwork closely and notice things they might have originally overlooked.
- Provide students with pipe cleaners and challenge them to replicate the lines and shapes they see in an artwork. Alternatively, ask students to take a seat on the gallery floor and give them

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each a small segment of yarn/string to do the same task. You may direct their eyes toward a specific line or shape, or allow them to look, notice, and choose their own.

- For a kinetic application, challenge students to replicate lines and shapes seen in an artwork with their bodies. Instruct them to use their fingers, arms, or legs – or let them choose. Students can also work together to recreate the lines/shapes/composition of an entire artwork in small groups; sometimes it helps to designate a “director” in each group to help.

ENGAGEMENT BY SUBJECT

Educators can use the following background information and engagement techniques as a guide of engagement possibilities and curriculum connections for K-12 students with the artworks in this exhibition. The examples listed here are not exhaustive of what is on display in the exhibition, but will help educators with general preparation. Full-size images of the artworks referenced here can be found in the separate [Teacher Images PDF](#).

1. SOCIAL STUDIES

Works in the State Art Collection were collected from the 1970s to the 1990s from active, working artists in Georgia. As such, the collection serves as a time capsule for this time period and demonstrates both contemporary art practices and continuing cultural practices in the state.

This mat by Georgia artist Sharon Grist exemplifies overshot, a style of weaving that was popular across colonial America and primarily used for bed coverlets. While used across the early colonies, overshot now has a distinct affiliation with Appalachian culture. As the rest of the early United States began to industrialize in various ways, overshot designs fell out of popularity, but because the rural Appalachian region remained relatively remote, overshot continued to thrive.



With Georgia's first cotton mill being established in Dalton, it's also worth mentioning that weaving has a special relationship with north Georgia, a hub of textile production.

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There is a similar story to broom-making. While broom-making by hand has fallen out of popularity in the United States in large part because of the introduction of synthetic bristles, it persists by select makers for their sculptural artistry and serves as a distinctly regional genre of décor. This specific broom was made by a broom-maker in north Georgia. R. E. Larmon was raised near Prater's Mill, where he brought his family's grain to be processed as a child. Now included on the National Register of Historic



Places, Prater's Mill began hosting an annual art fair in the 1970s to promote tourism and local economy. At this time, Larmon began selling his original brooms as well as cornhusk scrubbers and mops. The style of this broom's handle is distinctly Appalachian, while the broom head is what is known as a Shaker's head, developed by Quakers for maximum sweeping efficiency.

While craft traditions are crucial to understanding Georgia's history, the work of the three photographers also provide important perspectives regarding the passage of time and how much the landscape of Georgia had changed by the late 20th century. All three photos above were taken by different artists in the 1980s, and yet all are preoccupied with some iteration of the past – such as looking at a historic building through a contemporary lens, as in *Marlor House*, to providing commentary on shifting economy and the movement of people in *They Have All Moved Away*.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Across these various mediums, how are these artists acting as archivists? Do you think they intended to document the social and physical changes of Georgia with their artforms?
- What do you think it would feel like to make one of the craft items we see? How might the coverlet feel on your fingers, or what might this broom sound like when it sweeps?

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- In the case of the three photographs: What do you notice about the use of light and color across these three photographs? What do they have in common with each other, and how does each photo use them differently? How do these choices impact your perception of each?

GALLERY ACTIVITY

- Bring paper strips into the exhibition area and invite your students to “weave” with them. This may require a brief explanation of the “over and under” technique of weaving, and looking closely at the weaving on display. What color patterns or designs can your students make?
- Invite students to look closely at the overshot pattern they see. Explain that the people who created these patterns got to name them, which helped them teach the pattern to others. The names were often related to what the viewer thought the pattern resembled. What would they name this pattern, if it were up to them? Examples of overshot pattern names are: Chariot Wheels, Rocky Mountain Cucumber, and Sunrise on the Walls of Troy.
- Invite students to try to create a story/narrative that connects the three photographs we see. Ask them to share their ideas in pairs or small groups.
- For older students: Are there things that have been passed down to you, or certain things that are associated in your mind with memory and place? Write some of those things down; you don’t have to share them, but it might be interesting to compare those things to what we see within these craft traditions.

Relevant Georgia Standards

K-5th

- SSKG1 Describe the diversity of American culture by explaining the customs and celebrations of various families and communities.
- SSE1 Identify goods that people make and services that people provide for each other
- SS5H7 Trace important developments in America from 1975 to 2001.
- SS5G1 Locate important places in the United States.
- SS5G2 Explain the reasons for the spatial patterns of economic activities.

6th-8th

- SSIPS1 Compare similarities and differences. (Apply and Improve Mastered Skills)
- SSIPS10 Analyze artifacts. (Apply and Improve Mastered Skills)
- SS8G1 Describe Georgia's geography and climate.
- SS8H10.a Explain how technology transformed agriculture and created a population shift within the state.

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- SS8E2 Evaluate the influence of Georgia-based businesses on the State's economic growth and development.

9th-12th Sociology

- SSSocC1 Explain the development and importance of culture.
- SSSocC2 Evaluate how cultures evolve over time.

2. SCIENCE

(EARTH)

We can view the work *Etruscan Strata* through a scientific lens to help us look closer at its details. What are strata in reference to soil layers? What can we discover as we analyze the layers of earth we are viewing almost like an x-ray? What do we notice about sediment and how each layer relates to what is above or below it?



(LIFE)



While *Turtlemen with Turtlehooks* seems to be a portrait of two men engaged in turtle-hunting, this print can also be interpreted through an ecological lens with the help of cultural context and history. From the scene's background, we can infer that these two turtlemen are either in a coastal region, or a wooded area with some sort of body of water. Southern coastal states and island communities in the Caribbean have hunted turtles as a food source and for trade for many years. More recently turtling has been regulated in North America, due to the endangerment that tourism and overhunting has caused to several species. These regulations don't account for the cultural importance of turtle hunting to local populations in

these regions, particularly indigenous communities. This demonstrates why it is important for scientists to understand the social and historic background of certain behaviors, so that they can better negotiate and more effectively communicate with communities to find, in some cases, a middle-ground.

(CHEMISTRY)

When it comes to textiles, the chemistry of color making and dyeing is particularly crucial for an artist to understand. With *Coleus*, Tommye McClure Scanlin dyes all of the yarn that she uses to weave herself, a common practice among textile artists that allows for more nuance and agency in color selection. Many artists today are interested in natural dyeing practices, as synthetic dyes can be harmful and environmentally unsustainable. To do this, artists will forage for organic materials to add to their dye pots that will help them achieve the hue they are looking for.



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Understanding pH is very important in dyeing. For instance, with red, adding a base to the dye pot (such as soda ash) will make red dye become more purple. Adding an acid (like lime) will create more of an orange-red hue. Artists must be able to understand these relationships to create the colors that they need. We aren't sure what Tommye used to achieve the colors we see here and whether she used natural techniques, but we can at least imagine the pH relationship between the reds and purples in this piece.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did the artists across these pieces have to use similar skills to those of a scientist? How do you think these artists may have had to experiment?
- What scientific understandings did the artists across these works have to have in order to create the works above, or in order to think critically about issues in the world?

GALLERY ACTIVITY

- Take a scientific concept that you just learned in class. Using a pencil and piece of paper, try sketching a first draft of how you might be able to make a sculpture inspired by this concept. What would it look like? What would it be made of? What artistic decisions did you make?
- Prepare images of natural materials used for dyeing, and the colors they create as a point of comparison. An example might be cochineal and the range of colors it can create. Pass them around to students. Do they have a favorite? Do they have a hypothesis on how the colors we see in any of the weavings might have been made?

Relevant Georgia Standards

K-5th

- SKE2 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information to describe the physical attributes of earth materials (soil, rocks, water, and air).
- S3L1 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about the similarities and differences between plants, animals, and habitats found within geographic regions (Blue Ridge Mountains, Piedmont, Coastal Plains, Valley and Ridge, and Appalachian Plateau) of Georgia.

6th-8th

- S6E5 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information to show how Earth's surface is formed.

9th-12th

- Human Anatomy & Physiology: SAP1 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information to analyze anatomical structures of the human body.
- Chemistry: SC6 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about the properties that describe solutions and the nature of acids and bases.

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3. LANGUAGE ARTS



Visual Literacy

These works are excellent for developing and exploring visual literacy. Students can “read” Nellie Mae Rowe’s *The Hiker* to find visual context clues for story elements like setting, plot, and character. Rowe’s work generally came from a place of play for her, and invites imagination and exploration. *The Room Offers New Possibilities* is also perfect for inspiring students to build, whether independently or collaboratively, a narrative based around the question, “What is happening here?”

Southern Gothic



For older students, some photographic works in the exhibition lend themselves to a contemporary exploration of the “Southern Gothic” genre. What is Southern Gothic? How might these themes manifest in visual art? How do the landscapes and settings we see here, despite being captured in the 1980s, relate to a Southern Gothic lens? This is a great opportunity to both compare and contrast visual artworks with Southern Gothic literature by writers such as William Faulkner and Tennessee Williams, as well as explore the journalistic contributions of photographers capturing the South during the Reconstruction era and the Great Depression (via the Works Progress Administration).

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Shakespeare

“You can hold it in your hand and say: Alas, poor Red Skull Smoking (Yorick), I knew him (or her) well!” These are playful words that the artist behind *Red Skull Smoking* wrote about his piece. What would it look like for Hamlet to be holding this skull during his Yorick speech instead of a traditional human skull? What nuance can we locate in potentially comparing this skull to the King’s jester Yorick?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you see? What is happening in this work of art? Support your argument; what do you see that makes you say that?
- If we had to select a main character in this artwork, what might we choose and why? What if we don’t see a character – are there signs of one we can locate?
- What techniques do artists use to communicate their ideas to viewers?

GALLERY ACTIVITY

- Allow students to navigate the exhibition independently or in small groups, writing down the inferences they can make about “what is happening” in each work of art based on the visual clues they identify. Or, allow students to do deep-dives on specific works of art, especially if they include certain themes related to in-class material.

Relevant Georgia Standards

K-5th

- ELAGSESL1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade-appropriate topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

6th-8th

- ELAGSE6RL1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- ELAGSE6RL2 Determine a theme and/or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

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- ELAGSE6RL3 Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves towards a resolution.
- ELAGSE7RL3 Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how settings shape the characters or plot).
- ELAGSE8RL3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

9th-12th

- ELAGSE9-10RL7 Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums (e.g., Auden's poem "Musée de Beaux Arts" and Breughel's painting Landscape with the Fall of Icarus), including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.
- ELAGSE11-12SL1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- ELAGSE11-12SL2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

4. MATHEMATICS

Exhibition Design



A great STEAM application in an art exhibition is to challenge students to think about exhibition design. What work has to go into making an exhibition? How is the space designed – both to be thematic, but also to be a safe and accessible space for visitors? What research does a curator do? How is artwork safely installed? Asking students to navigate the space and collaboratively think about the “behind the scenes” of the exhibition is a great brainstorming and collaborative activity.

Artist Budgeting

Early on in his artmaking, one textile artist in the State Art Collection, Bill Alexander, would dumpster-divide for excess commercial carpet yarn discarded in Dalton, Georgia. Later, math became integral to his artmaking process – “I had a budget that I had to stay within on materials, so I had to figure out how

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many linear feet of tubing I was going to use... the idea is to buy neither too much nor too little.” He often used grids to help him map out his artworks and easily scale up his measurements, thus allowing him to accurately estimate how much yarn he would need for a project.

Weaving and Grids

Weaving relies on math; in fact, many weaving patterns utilize grids to communicate how to replicate certain designs. To be able to read these patterns, you have to understand basic mathematical processes. Ethnomathematics is a term that refers to the study of the relationship between math and culture, and is a subject that frequently references various weaving techniques found around the world. This emphasizes that whether or not we are explicitly talking about math, many culturally significant things we do as human beings are rooted in math.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In thinking about ethnomathematics, ask students if there are things they do in their everyday that might involve math? Are there things they do that require symmetry, or patterns? This is often present in folk art – for example, quilts or various cultural styles of rug weaving.

GALLERY ACTIVITY

- Ask students to think about how these artworks are installed. It might be a fun activity to challenge students with measuring artworks (being careful not to actually touch them or any of the walls of the exhibition space), calculate things like perimeter and area, and think about the diagrams that may have been created to make sure everything fit in this space before it was installed.
- Challenge students to curate their own exhibition. Maybe they take the works of art they see here and re-arrange them and brainstorm new ideas, or they generate their own artworks. What themes would their exhibition address? How would they consider the needs of visitors when designing their space? How would they attract potential visitors to their space?
- Inspired by weaving, challenge students to draw an artwork, use a graph to accurately scale this artwork up, and calculate approximately how many materials (e.g. yarn) they will realistically need to budget for in order to be able to purchase everything they need in advance. There are weaving calculators online that many weavers use for this purpose.

Relevant Georgia Standards

K-5th

- K.PAR.6 Explain, extend, and create repeating patterns with a repetition, not exceeding 4 and describe patterns involving the passage of time.
- K.GSR.8 Identify, describe, and compare basic shapes encountered in the environment, and form two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional figures.

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- 1.GSR.4 Compose shapes, analyze the attributes of shapes, and relate their parts to the whole.
- 2.MDR.5 Estimate and measure the lengths of objects and distance to solve problems found in real-life using standard units of measurement, including inches, feet, and yards and analyze graphical displays of data to answer relevant questions.
- 2.GSR.7 Draw and partition shapes and other objects with specific attributes, and conduct observations of everyday items and structures to identify how shapes exist in the world.
- 3.GSR.7 Identify area as a measurable attribute of rectangles and determine the area of a rectangle presented in real-life, mathematical problems.
- 4.GSR.8 Identify and draw geometric objects, classify polygons based on properties, and solve problems involving area and perimeter of rectangular figures.

6th-8th

- 6-8.MP Display perseverance and patience in problem-solving. Demonstrate skills and strategies needed to succeed in mathematics, including critical thinking, reasoning, and effective collaboration and expression. Seek help and apply feedback. Set and monitor goals.
- 6.GSR.5 Solve relevant problems involving area, surface area, and volume.

5. ADDITIONAL TEACHING RESOURCES

Here are a few additional resources to help connect the learning opportunities within this exhibition to the needs of your classroom:

Georgia Teaching Artist Registry

The Georgia Council for the Arts [Teaching Artists Registry](#) features qualified educators who have extensive training and experience in one or more artistic disciplines and are available to work in schools or throughout your community. The registry includes competitively evaluated professionals and ensures a high-quality standard for performances, workshops, residencies, and/or arts integration or STEAM-based activities, providing schools and organizations with the best artistic experiences. The registry also includes skilled consultants who specialize in developing professional learning in arts and education.

Teaching with Primary Sources

[Teacher's Guide: Analyzing Photographs & Prints](#)



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Lesson Plan Supplements

- For Fine Arts teachers: [GaDOE Inspire](#)
 - High school dance teachers can use the exhibition to provide meaningful, in-person material for the [Meaning Through Movement: Dance Phrase](#) lesson.
- Many teaching artists have recorded free videos to make their work more accessible and provide students an opportunity to learn, make connections to the curriculum, and get to know artists in the community. For example, students can engage with some of the textile objects in this exhibition and then participate in a video-based activity facilitated by Georgia-based quilter and teaching artist Marquetta Johnson, available on the following platforms:
 - Teaching Museum of Fulton County Art Speaks
 - [Making Art with Marquetta: Stamping with Everyday Objects](#)
 - [Marking Art with Marquetta: Shapes and Colors with Paper Quilts](#)
 - The Kennedy Center Teaching Artists Present
 - [Introduction to Story Quilting with Marquetta](#)