African and African American Art History
Visual Arts Curriculum for High School Ceramics Classes

**Title of Unit:** Ceramic Plate Decorated with Indigenous Plants and Animals Using Glaze and Wax Resist

**Subject Focus:** African Art/Ceramics/Environmental art

**Grade Level:** 9 – 12

**Time to complete:** Project will take about 2 weeks

**Theme of Unit:** Indigenous plants and animals are often depicted in African Art and may function as symbols that are important to the artist’s culture

**Goal of Unit:** Students will understand why African artists chose various animals and plants as subjects for their art and translate those ideas and influences in creating their own original art.

By participating in this unit, students in grades 9 – 12 will be exposed to the sculptures, masks, and 2-D art of various African cultures and specifically the art of African American Artist, Baba Wague Diakite. They will examine plants and animals found in African Art and Wague’s work and discuss their importance to the artists’ cultures. They will compare techniques found in African Art with those used today in American and African American Art. They will examine plants and animals found in our own environment. And they will present what they’ve learned in a variety of activities, including a ceramics art project.

This lesson is consistent with Elements 1 Ancient Africa, 6 The soul of African Americans and 7 Contributions to the world and USA in the model for African and African American Studies Curriculum and is in compliance with Florida Statute 1003.42(2)(h) 2002: Members of the instructional staff of the public schools, subject to the rules of the State Board of Education and the district school board, shall teach efficiently and faithfully, using the books and materials required that meet the highest standards for professionalism and historic accuracy, following the prescribed courses of study, and employing approved methods of instruction, the following: (h) The history of African Americans, including the history of African peoples before the political conflicts that led to the development of slavery, the passage to America, the enslavement experience, abolition, and the contributions of African Americans to society. Instructional materials shall include the contributions of African Americans to American society.

**Benchmarks:**
**Writing Standards**  Research to build and Present knowledge
Benchmark LAFS.910.W.3.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. 

Cognitive Complexity: Level 2: Basic Application of Skills & Concepts

**Standards for Speaking and Listening**

**Presentation of knowledge and Ideas**

Benchmark LAFS.910.SL.2.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task. 

LAFS.1112.SL.2.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks. Cognitive Complexity: Level 3: Strategic Thinking & Complex Reasoning

**Reading standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12**

**Key Ideas and Details**

Benchmark LAFS.910.RH.1.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information. 

LAFS.1112.RH.1.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole. Cognitive Complexity: Level 2: Basic Application of Skills & Concepts

**Visual Arts Strand:** Critical Thinking and Reflection

Critical and creative thinking, self-expression, and communication with others are central to the arts. Assessing our own and others’ artistic work, using critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making skills, is central to artistic growth.

*(Standard C.1)* Cognition and reflection are required to appreciate, interpret, and create with artistic intent

- **Benchmark VA.912.C.1.1** Integrate curiosity, range of interests, attentiveness, complexity, and artistic intention in the art-making process to demonstrate self-expression.
- **Benchmark VA.912.C.1.3** Evaluate the technical skill, aesthetic appeal, and/or social implication of artistic exemplars to formulate criteria for assessing personal work.
- **Benchmark VA.912.C.1.4** Apply art knowledge and contextual information to analyze how content and ideas are used in works of art.
- **Benchmark VA.912.C.1.7** Analyze challenges and identify solutions for three-dimensional structural problems

*(Standard C.3)* The processes of critiquing works of art lead to the development of critical-thinking skills transferable to other contexts

- **Benchmark VA.912.C.3.3** Examine relationships among social, historical, literary, and/or other references to explain how they are assimilated into artworks

**Visual Art Strand:** Skills, Techniques, and Processes

*(Standard S.1)* The arts are inherently experimental and actively engage learners in the process of creating, interpreting, and responding to art

- **Benchmark VA.912.S.1.3** Interpret and reflect on cultural and historical events to create art

*(Standard S.3)* Through purposeful practice, artists learn to manage, master, and refine simple, then complex, skills and techniques. Demonstrate organizational skills to influence the sequential process when creating artwork

- **Benchmark VA.912.S.3.1** Manipulate material, techniques, and processes through practice and perseverance to create a desired result in two – and/or three dimensional Artworks
Benchmark VA 912.S.3.7 Use and maintain tools and equipment to facilitate the creative process.

Benchmark VA 912.S.3.11 Examine and revise artwork throughout the art-making process to refine work and achieve artistic objective.

Benchmark VA 912.S.3.12 Develop competence and dexterity, through practice, in the use of processes, tools, and techniques for various media.

(Standard F) Benchmark VA 912.F.1.2 Manipulate or synthesize established techniques as a foundation for individual style initiatives in two-, three-, and/or four-dimensional applications.

Benchmark VA 912.F.3.4 Follow directions and use effective time-management skills to complete the art-making process and show development of 21st-century skills

Visual Art Strand: Historical and Global Connections

(Standard H.1) Through the study of art, we learn about and honor others and the worlds in which they live(d)

Benchmark VA.912.H.1.3 Examine the significance placed on art forms over time by various groups or cultures compared to current views on aesthetics

Benchmark VA.912.H.1.4 Apply background knowledge and personal interpretation to discuss cross-cultural connections among various artworks and the individuals, groups, cultures, events, and/or traditions they reflect.

Benchmark VA.912.H.1.9 Describe the significance of major artists, architects, or masterworks to understand their historical influences

ELL (ESOL) Strategies:

Use authentic materials, Introduce vocabulary through pictures, Engage students in questioning techniques, Pair students with bi-lingual students

ESE Strategies:

Reduce quantity of work, Provide opportunities to orally complete assignments, Emphasize content in written communications, Use small group/individual instruction, Allow extra time

Vocabulary:

Attribute - a quality, property, or characteristic of somebody or something
Collage - a combination of different things; a picture made by sticking cloth, pieces of paper, photographs, and other objects onto a surface
Contour Line – A line that defines the edges and surface ridges of an object
Indigenous - originating in and naturally living, growing, or occurring in a region or country
Resist - to oppose and stand firm against somebody or something; a protective coating
Simplified - to make something less complicated
Stylized - drawn in an artificial style that does not look natural or real, but that is still pleasant to look at; to design something in a particular artistic style

Introduction – Lesson One (may extend into day 2)
Specific Objectives
1. Using the artist’s website, students will examine the ceramic plates and other art made by African artist Baba Wagué Diakité
2. Students will use art history books, text books, the Internet, and other print/media to examine African Art containing animals and plants.
3. Students will speculate on the symbolic use of animals and plants in African art based on the animal’s known attributes or the plant’s use.

Critical Thinking Skills: Bloom’s Taxonomy: Creating: Builds a structure or pattern from diverse elements. Put parts together to form a whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure.
Analyzing: Separate material or concepts into component parts so its organizational structure may be understood. Distinguish between facts and inferences

Materials:
Preprinted maps of Africa
Enough Resources (books, magazines, Internet, etc) to have one for each group
Large paper
Markers
Projector with Internet Access
Scrap paper for notes
Optional: One of Baba Wagué’s Books

Procedures:
Introduce the lesson by viewing of Baba Wagué’s website and explain the final visual art product will be modeled after one of Wagué’s Bowls depicting animals found in Africa.
Display teacher or student examples, if possible.
Explain that, to do the project, students must first learn more about the importance of animals and plants as they are used in African art. Students will then choose plants and animals that are indigenous to our own area to decorate their ceramic plates.
Optional: Google Adire Eleko Cloth of Nigeria and view the Dye and Resist methods used to decorate fabric
View Baba Wagué’s website and discuss the project. Ask if any students have seen his work in the Animal Kingdom Lodge at Disney World

Optional: What technique does Wague use that resembles the Dye and Resist methods used in Adire Eleco Cloth decoration?

Group students and provide each with a large paper to display their work.

Using the resources available, assign a different African artwork (depicting animals or plants) to each group. Encourage the groups to divide the work and put their individual contribution on scrap paper first.

While students are working Ask these essential questions:
Why was the particular animal(s) or plants used in the art work they are viewing?
What is the animal’s known attributes (strong, wise) or the plant’s use?
What features of the plants or animals are emphasized in the artwork?

Each group
- Should describe the artwork artist, title, date, medium, subject, physical appearance, etc
- Should cite their source
- Should make a sketch of the work
- Should locate the art work’s origin on a map of Africa
- Should interpret the purpose of the artwork and its significance to the culture (using information provided in the text)
- Give an opinion why the particular animal(s) or plants were used in the work based on the animal’s known attributes or the plant’s use

When the groups are finished, have them take turns presenting the results of their research (may take more than one class)

Assessment: Observation of students’ participation
Each group should have all the information listed on their paper in a legible and pleasing format. The oral presentation should be clear and loud enough for the class to hear and understand. The students should give their attention to, and demonstrate proper respect for, the presenters  Save the papers for later

Make a Ceramic Plate - Lesson Two (2 days)

Specific Objectives:
1. Students will incorporate slab rolling and the use of drape and press molds to make a ceramic plate.
2. Students will use tools correctly and store their work carefully in a designated area.

**Critical Thinking Skills:** Bloom’s Taxonomy: **Creating:** Builds a structure or pattern from diverse elements. Put parts together to form a whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure.

**Diversified Instruction:**
Students may be given smaller foam plates, as deemed appropriate

**Materials:**
Low fire white clay
Rollers
Slats (or rulers)
Foam plates 8-9”d (available through Office Depot)
Smaller foam plates
Thin straws (from school cafeteria)

**Procedures**
Wedge clay
Roll a large slab to cover plate (turning often) about ¼” thick
Press into the top of a foam plate using a second plate on top of the slab
Flip over clay and plates together
Trim clay around edge of plate
Remove the top foam plate
Using moist fingers or sponge, smooth the clay around the edge
Write name on foam plate
Flip over so clay is on top of plate and let dry

When leather hard, remove foam plate
   Optional: On the back of the clay plate, add a quarter size sprig, about ¼ “ thick
      (by scoring the plate surface slightly above the center and using slip )Run a thin straw between the sprig and the plate to make a slot to later add a wire to hang the plate
Carve name on back of plate
Bisque fire when bone dry

**Assessment:** Once pieces are bisque fired, they should be fairly thin, intact, have a smooth surface and edge, and an even thickness

**Research & Draw Indigenous Animals & Plants - Lesson Three (2 days)**

**Specific Objectives:**
1. Students will use books, the Internet, and other print/media to research indigenous plants and animals found in and around Tampa.
2. Students will label each animal or plant
3. Students will properly cite their source for their images

**Critical Thinking Skills:** Bloom’s Taxonomy

- **Creating:** Builds a structure or pattern from diverse elements. Put parts together to form a whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure
- **Evaluating:** Make judgments about the value of ideas or materials

**Materials**

- Resources for pictures of animals, birds and plants indigenous to the Tampa area
- Projector with Internet Access
- Students’ own devices with Internet Access
- Drawing Paper

**Introduction to lesson three**

- View the wildlife at [http://dongettywildlifephotography.com/](http://dongettywildlifephotography.com/) (Sort by Location)
- Have a class discussion of the animals seen in the photos
- Where can they be found? In what ecosystems? What other ecosystems are around Tampa? What are some other plants, trees, and animals that are common to our area?

- View Wagué’s website again, and discuss the way he stylized and simplified the pictures on his bowls (Emphasize that his work may not be copied)

- Suggest students research animals and plants on their own to use to decorate their plates and bring in drawings or photos

**Procedures**

- Distribute resources for students to research for their pictures to include on their plates.
- Students need to record information about each picture they use
  - In what area or ecosystem is the subject found
  - What is it called specifically (Not bird, but “Cardinal”)
  - Cite the source of their images
- Students must make sure the pictures they use are of an indigenous species
- On separate paper, make sketches small enough that 4-6 pictures will fit inside their plate
- Write the information about each image on the same paper
- Simplify the drawings so that they can be duplicated using only outlines and some contour lines

**Assessment**

- Observation of students working:
  - They should have a variety in size and shape of figures.
  - All subjects should be properly identified and represent indigenous species
  - Sources should be properly cited
  - Drawings should be simplified (contour line drawings)
Design a Colored Composition for a Circular Plate – Lesson Four (1 – 2 days)

Specific Objectives
1. Students will create a circular collage using their plant and animal drawings
2. Students will use the elements of art according to the principles of design to organize their composition with a variety of shapes and good balance between positive and negative space
3. Students will add color to achieve a visually pleasing composition

Critical Thinking Skills: Bloom’s Taxonomy Creating: Builds a structure or pattern from diverse elements. Put parts together to form a whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure Evaluating: Make judgments about the value of ideas or materials Applying: Use a concept in a new situation or unprompted use of an abstraction. Applies what was learned in the classroom into novel situations in the work place.

Diversified Instruction: More advanced students should be encouraged to add a pattern or other type of border around the edge of their design ESE students may center just one large drawing in their circle and add a solid colored border

Materials
Light box
Tracing paper
Drawing paper
8” Circle templates (use more plates)
Colored Pencils or crayons
(may use white crayon as a resist and watercolor instead)

Procedures
Trace the outlines of the drawings on a piece of tracing paper
Using the circle template (or plate) draw some circles on drawing paper
Cut out the pictures from the tracing paper and arrange them in a pleasing way inside the circle.
  - Pictures may overlap.
  - One or more may be placed in the center.
  - The design may be arranged in a radial pattern, but doesn’t have to be Watch out for too much negative space
Trace the outline of the animals into the circle A pattern or other border may be made around the outside edge
SAVE THE CUTOUTS!
Color the picture.
Make more than one arrangement of pictures and try more color combinations.
Choose the best arrangement and color combination for the glazing of the plate.

**Assessment:**
The students’ final choice for their plate decoration may be turned in for a grade
Use the district provided rubric with this specific criteria:
- Their notes with animal and plant identifications should be included
- All areas of the circle should be colored in their final design plan

**Transfer Design onto Bisque Ware – Lesson Five (1-2 days)**
(after Bisque fire and Plate decoration plans have been graded)

![Cutout images outlined with wax resist](image)

**Specific Objectives**
1. Using a resist technique, students will transfer their circular composition to their ceramic plate
2. Using proper brush glazing techniques, students will add color to their ceramic plate designs
3. Students will make proper use of tools and materials and follow prescribed procedures for storing work

**Critical Thinking Skills:** Bloom’s Taxonomy Creating: Builds a structure or pattern from diverse elements. Put parts together to form a whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure

**Materials:**
- Amaco non-toxic wax resist (from SAX)
- Low fire glazes (assorted colors)
- Small, fine brushes
- Small containers to share wax resist
- Scraps or shards of bisque ware
- Glass jar(s) of very hot water
Procedures

Have students practice brushing lines with the wax resist on some bisque shards or scraps before they work on their own plate.

Place the cut outs from tracing paper used previously on the plate in the arrangement chosen (using the colored plans as a reference).

Outline the shapes with the wax resist (brushing along the edge of their cut out – overlapping the paper slightly, will make a finer line).

Remove the papers and add some interior contour lines, as per the drawings.

Place the brushes in the hot water to melt the wax to clean them.

Allow time for the wax to dry on the plate.

Glaze the plate; glazing right over the wax resist where needed.

All the surface should be glazed.

Clean the foot, clean the bottom portion of the outside edge (no drips showing).

Fire pieces.

Assessment

Observation of students working:

Students should follow their original colored plan.

Materials should be handled properly.

All areas of the plate surface should be glazed evenly.

The outside bottom edge of the plate and the foot should be free of glaze.

Presentations of Finished Work – Lesson Six (1-2 days)

Specific Objectives

1. Students will relate what they have learned through a group shared presentation in the form of a class critique.

2. Students will submit a corresponding written report with a self-critique using the rubric.

Critical Thinking Skills: Bloom’s Taxonomy: Understanding

Comprehending the meaning, translation, interpolation, and interpretation of instructions and problems. State a problem in one’s own words. Remembering

Recall or retrieve previous learned information.

Materials

A display of the specific criteria for the assignment.

Students’ glaze ware

The poster presentations students did from Lesson One.

Procedures

Have a class critique.
Students should present their plate to the class, naming some of the images and explaining where the animals or plants live in the Tampa area. Get out the papers students did the first day of this unit (presentations) Referring to the papers, have a class discussion:

**Ask these essential questions:**
Do we relate to the animals and plants that share our environment differently than do (did) the people in Africa whose work we researched at the start of this project? Compare and contrast how we relate. What are the differences and why? What prompted the choices of animals and plants we depicted on our plates?

Have students fill out a rubric to **turn it in with their work** and have them include a written reflection on the class discussion of the essential questions:

**Assessment of the final product (ceramic plate with glazed design)**
Specific criteria
All surfaces should be glazed evenly (except the lines made by resist)
Lines should be even thickness and properly define the pictures on the plate

**Resources and links:**
Images of Baba Wagué Diakité’s Children's book covers copied from
http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_c_0_10?url=search-alias%2Dstripbooks&field-keywords=baba+wague+diakite&sprefix=baba+wague%2Caps%2C185

Image of plate with wax resist – example made by teacher, L. Campbell

https://babawague.wordpress.com/ Baba Wagué Diakité’s web site

freecoloringpagesite.com/ Printable map of Africa

Art & Man African Art Working with Sculpture Nov 1991, Vol 22 No. 2
“The Power of The Mask” pages 6 – 9

Beginning Sculpture, Williams, Arthur, 2005 Davis publications, page 194


africa.si.edu/ National Museum of African Art
Various African Art books found through CyberCat, the online library catalog for Hillsborough County Public Schools.

Various books on Florida Plants and Wildlife books found through CyberCat, the online library catalog for Hillsborough County Public Schools.

Editions of Baba Wagué Diakité’s Children’s books found through CyberCat, the online library catalog for Hillsborough County Public Schools.

The following rubric may be used for the assessments of lesson 4 and lesson 6 with the specific criteria described in the lessons (The Rubric can be found in HCPS’s Ideas (First Class) – Secondary Education – Art – Assessments and Rubrics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>4 - EXCELLENT</th>
<th>3 - ACCOMPLISHED</th>
<th>2 - EMERGING</th>
<th>1 - LOW QUALITY</th>
<th>0 - INSUFFICIENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Outstanding understanding of instruction, technique, design, and image sources</td>
<td>Above average understanding of instruction, technique, design, and image sources</td>
<td>Beginning to understand and apply instruction, technique, design, and image sources</td>
<td>Needs more instruction, understanding, and practice</td>
<td>Insufficient attempt and/or didn't show effort to meet guidelines of performance-based assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Exceptional solutions to compositional choices</td>
<td>Inventive solutions to compositional choices</td>
<td>Average and/or simplistic solutions to compositional choices</td>
<td>Poor compositional choices</td>
<td>Lack of attention to detail and craftsmanship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Meticulous attention to detail and craftsmanship</td>
<td>Close attention to detail and craftsmanship</td>
<td>Satisfactory attention given to detail and craftsmanship</td>
<td>Poor understanding of elements of art and principles of design</td>
<td>Insufficient attempt and/or didn't show effort to meet guidelines of performance-based assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Deliberate and successful use of elements of art and principles of design to express an original idea</td>
<td>Plans and uses elements of art and principles of design to begin to express an idea</td>
<td>Understands and starts to apply the use of elements of art and principles of design in a simplistic or basic way</td>
<td>Poor understanding of elements of art and principles of design</td>
<td>Insufficient attempt and/or didn't show effort to meet guidelines of performance-based assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 0</td>
<td>Imagines and produces complex, and/or self-expressive imagery</td>
<td>Shows evidence of experimentation with original imagery</td>
<td>Moderately resembles copyrighted images, resources, and/or provided examples</td>
<td>Relies heavily on copyrighted images, resources, and/or provided examples</td>
<td>Insufficient attempt and/or didn't show effort to meet guidelines of performance-based assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Comprehensive use of tools, media, and techniques</td>
<td>Skillful use of tools, media, and/or techniques</td>
<td>Moderate skill using media, tools and/or techniques</td>
<td>Low skill using media, tools, and/or techniques</td>
<td>Insufficient attempt and/or didn't show effort to meet guidelines of performance-based assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>