



- THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR FOLK ARTS IN EDUCATION

**CONTEXT** Since piloting our [Culture, Community, and the Classroom \(CCC\)](#) series in 2018, we have engaged traditional artists from diverse communities and connected them with public school teachers and museum educators in learning residencies. CCC uses a three-phase series model, starting with a 12-hour professional development workshop that includes artists, culture bearers, and regional educators learning together. The second phase pairs artists and teachers working together in a classroom. The final phase brings everyone who participated together in a program showcase to reflect on what was learned and to strengthen peer networks and connections. This lesson plan was shared with us by a teacher who participated in the CCC program. It can be adapted for use with a local artist in another region. Or, [Contact Us](#) to learn how to invite the named artist in this lesson to your learning space.

**WHAT WE LOVE** What happens when you bring students out of the classroom and into a working artists' studio? This residency began in the classroom with a painting workshop led by a professional icon painter. Then, students had the opportunity to see the impact of the artist's work when they visited the local church where his icons cover the walls and ceilings. Seeing his work in-person inspired students to ask questions about the intention of the icons and their role in communicating narratives to parishioners, leading to deeper inquiry and insights.

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## CULTURE, COMMUNITY, AND THE CLASSROOM GUEST ARTIST LESSON PLAN

**LESSON TITLES: Iconography**

Creating Form with Color - Painting Pomegranates

Visiting St. Sophia's - Viewing Masterworks & Interviewing the Artist

**AUTHOR AND TEACHER:** Helen Martin

Helen Martin is an art teacher at New Scotland Elementary School in Albany, NY.

**ARTIST COLLABORATOR:** Altin Stojah

**ART FORM:** Icon painting

**LENGTH:**

One-hour studio session

One-hour visit to St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Church

**NEW YORK STANDARD(S) ADDRESSED:**

VA:Cr2.1.6 a. Experiment and develop skills in multiple artmaking techniques and approaches through practice.

VA:Re7.2.5 a. Identify and analyze cultural associations suggested by visual imagery.

VA:Cn10.1.4 a. Develop a work of art based on observations of surroundings.

VA:Cn11.1.5 a. Explore how works of art and design contribute to the quality of life within a culture.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.7 Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem).

#### **MATERIALS/RESOURCES:**

- **8”x 8” canvases**
- **acrylic paints**
- **paintbrushes**
- **Artist Portrait**
- **Artist Statement**

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#### **THE TEACHING POINT:**

In the studio session students will learn how to create form using four shades of a color.

In the visit to the St. Sophia’s Church students will view the artist's work and have the opportunity to ask him questions. These questions may include, but are not limited to: How the work was created. How the artist developed his interest in this type of work. The stories associated with the images in the work.

#### **PURPOSE/CONNECTION:**

The artist teaches a discrete painting skill that the students will use in their next painting assignment.

Students will also be introduced to an art style with a strong historical connection and narrative depiction. The discussion around these works will connect the students to a preliterate era.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN—Visit One (first hour)**

#### **Engagement:**

Students will view a photograph (Artist Portrait) of the artist at work and be introduced to him as a master craftsman (Artist Statement and personal introduction).

Pomegranates will be displayed and introduced as a fruit new to most students.

#### **Model/Demonstration:**

The artist will model each step in the painting process and assist students in achieving the expectations of each step.

- Drawing outline shape of pomegranate
- Adding first and darkest color around edges, thickest at the bottom
- Adding second and third lighter tints to the inside of the figure to build the illusion of a 3-D form
- Adding white mixed with colors to add highlights to the form

#### **Share/Closure:**

Students will be photographed with their work and their paintings will be displayed in the hallway.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN—Visit Two (second hour)**

### **Engagement:**

Students will be invited into the chapel at St. Sophia's to view the artist's work.

### **Interview:**

Students will each write a question for the artist before the visit to St. Sophia's. These questions will be generated from their experience meeting the artist in the studio session and photos of the artist's work.

Additional questions will be generated by the experience of seeing the work in person.

### **Independent Exploration:**

Students will view the modern work of Kehinde Wiley and create self-portraits. They will include the strategy of using multiple tints of a color to create form in their portraits.

### **Share/Closure:**

Students will have the opportunity to add paint to a current mural the artist is working on.

### **Assessment:**

Students will create paintings as gifts for the artist to thank him for sharing his time and knowledge.

### **Final Reflection:**

The students responded wonderfully to Mr. Stoja's gentle and respectful approach. They also did really well with the step-by-step lesson. At the church they were in awe of the work and at first shy about asking their prepared question. After a few minutes experiencing the work the questions began to flow. They changed from being about how Mr. Stoja had done the images to wonderings about the story they represented. These are children who do not often ask a lot of questions about abstract ideas, but the paintings really pushed them to be verbal because they wanted to know more. All in all, I think we all learned a lot.





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