South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

Robert Penn
“Meaning of Symbols”

Provided by the South Dakota Art Museum
Brookings, South Dakota
South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

**Unit of Study:** Robert Penn, painter

**Title of Lesson Plan:** Meaning of Symbols

**Grade Level:** 3 – 5
South Dakota Content Standards

Fine Arts:

Visual Arts Standard One 3-4:
Students will describe how visual arts tell stories, express moods, or convey ideas.

Visual Arts Standard Two 3-4:
Students will understand selected techniques which give artwork detail.

Visual Arts Standard Two 5-8:
Students will describe the various techniques which give artwork definition and detail.

Visual Arts Standard Three 3-4:
Students will describe how selected works of art have recorded and preserved history.
South Dakota Content Standards

U.S. History:

3.US.2.2 Students are able to identify a community’s culture and history.

4.US.1.1 Students are able to explain factors affecting the growth and expansion of South Dakota.
South Dakota Content Standards

Speaking:

4.S.1.1 Students are able to use complete sentences to express ideas and convey information in a clear and organized manner.

4.S.2.2 Students are able to use informational and dramatic presentation strategies when communicating orally.

5.S.1.1 Students are able to present oral information in an organized manner, supporting it with appropriate details and examples.

5.S.2.2 Students are able to support informational communication through the use of various presentation strategies and tools.
South Dakota Content Standards

Reading:

4.R.5.2 Students can research a topic by gathering information from at least two sources.

5.R.5.3 Students can choose references to meet the needs of an assigned task.
Assessment Strategies

- Class discussion
- Observation using VTS
- Observation of group communication skills
- Creation of a class presentation following rubric requirements
- Group presentation to the class following rubric requirements
Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about South Dakota artist Robert Penn.
- Students will evaluate the art piece using VTS techniques.
- Students will research symbols found in Native American culture.
- Students will create a presentation in either GarageBand or PowerPoint.
- Students will present their information to the class.
Time Required

- Three class periods of 45 - 60 minutes each - two class periods for research and creating their presentations using GarageBand or Powerpoint, and one class period for group presentations.

Materials/Technology Needed

- Image of Robert Penn’s painting: “Pipe Carrier With Hawk”
- Access to the Internet and other library resources
- Access to GarageBand or PowerPoint
Background Information

- Robert Penn is a South Dakota artist who is half Sioux and half Omaha. While attending USD, he was a work-study assistant and protégé of the legendary Sioux artist Oscar Howe.
Lesson Description

- Show students the painting by Robert Penn titled, “Pipe Carrier With Hawk”.

- Using VTS observation, have students answer questions like:
  - What do you see?
  - What emotions do you feel looking at this painting?
  - What symbols of Native American Culture do you see?
  - What is the significance of color?

- Discuss as a class. Make a list of the different Native American symbols found in the painting.
Lesson Description continued

- Divide class into three or four groups. Have each group research one of the following Native American symbols:
  - Moon and its phases
  - Hawk
  - Peace pipe
  - Lightning (this one is a harder one to research)
Lesson Description continued

- Tell students that they will be creating a class presentation on their Native American symbol using either GarageBand or PowerPoint.
  - Each presentation must include (but not limited to):
    - Graphics of the symbol
    - Description of the symbol to the Native American culture
    - An interesting fact about the symbol
    - Each group member must participate in the presentation.

- Have groups present their symbol to the class.
Enrichment

- Have students read the Lakota myth of the White Buffalo Woman which relates to lightning and the origin of the peace pipe. (One version of the myth is found at http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/446430/the_lakota_myth_of_the_white_buffalo.html?cat=37.)
Bibliography/Resources

- South Dakota Art Museum Collection
  - Robert Penn


Robert Penn Presentation to Students
Robert Penn

http://www.aktalakota.org/index.cfm?cat=54&artid=274
Robert Penn

- Born May 27, 1947
- Brulé Sioux/Omaha artist
- Student of Sioux artist Oscar Howe at the University of South Dakota (USD) in Vermillion, SD
- Credits Oscar Howe as his single greatest inspiration and influence
- Began professional art career at 20 years old
- Artwork includes paintings, prints, and drawings
- Artwork blends white American culture with his Native American heritage
- One of South Dakota’s greatest contemporary Native American artists
Bibliography

• South Dakota Art Museum Collection
  • Robert Penn

• Native American Painting Collection at the South Dakota Art Museum
  • Robert Penn painting: “Vermillion River”
  • Robert Penn painting: “Urban Indian Series #4”

• Native American Print Collection at the South Dakota Art Museum
  • Robert Penn print: “Sitting Bull’s Account”

*For more information about Robert Penn, contact the South Dakota Art Museum
Pipe Carrier With Hawk

http://www.firstpeople.us/pictures/art/odd-sizes/pt/Pipe-Carrier-With-Hawk-707x1008.html
Other Examples of Robert Penn’s Artwork
Urban Indian Series #4

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Sitting Bull’s Account

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Vermillion River

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum