Grant Wood and His Community

Subject: Art

Estimated Time: 45-50min.

Grade Level: 4th and up

National Standard(s):
Content Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas: Students apply subjects, symbols, and ideas in their artworks and use the skills gained to solve problems in daily life. (Art Standard)

Content Standard 4: Understand the visual arts in relation to history and cultures: Students describe and placed a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts

Content Standard 5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others: Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry. (Art Standard)

Objective: The student will be able to analyze how an artist can become successful when he is supported by his family and community.

Materials: KWL Chart, Video, Grant Wood and Me, pictures of Woman with Plants, Veterans Memorial Window, Lilies of the Alley, magazines and sales catalogues, construction paper, scissors, glue, pencils and crayons.

To obtain a copy of the Video: Grant Wood and Me, please contact:
Renee Sueppel, Museum Educator at (319) 366-7503 ext. 203 or via email at rsueppel@crma.org

Procedures:
1. Have students read aloud the background essay.
2. Have students individually write what they already know about Grant Wood, completing the K column of their KWL.
3. Together brainstorm what they would like to know about the Grant Wood, completing the W column of their KWL.
4. View video, Grant Wood and Me. While viewing the video, students should be writing down what they are learning about the Grant Wood, completing the L column of their KWL.
5. After the video, orally review what students learned.
6. Carefully examine, Woman with Plants, Veterans Memorial Window, Lilies of the Alley.
7. As a group, discover and describe the composition and details in each work of art. Discuss why the artist may have chosen the subject matter, the overall layout, medium and materials, specific design details for each work of art.
8. (Assessment) As a group, have students answer the following: How and where did Grant Wood become an artist? How did his community support him? How did he give back to his community?

Extension Idea: Choose a photograph or draw a portrait of a friend, loved one, or person you admire. Look at sales catalogues and magazines to find pictures of objects you associate with that person. Make a collage portrait. Draw a frame around the portrait also using designs or objects that symbolize the themes that your subject represents.
# KWL Chart

Name: ____________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do I <strong>already know</strong>?</td>
<td>What do I <strong>want to know</strong>?</td>
<td>What have I <strong>learned</strong>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**GRANT WOOD AT 5 TURNER ALLEY**
Grant Wood was a very talented, hard working artist. He taught himself to draw and from a young age was always busy making things out of whatever material he had on hand. Never wealthy, but always self-supporting, Grant Wood, the painter of American Gothic, was one of America’s most well known artists by the age of 40. Grant Wood was successful in part because of the early support he received from his family, his friends and his hometown community of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Grant Wood’s Community Supports His Art

Grant Wood’s mother, friends and community always supported his art. (Woman with Plant) Throughout his life, the artist took advantage of every opportunity to practice his art and eventually to support himself (and his mother) by doing what he loved—making art. When he moved to Cedar Rapids from the family farm, a neighbor gave him the opportunity to use their basement as a workshop to make crafts. When he was in high school, the teachers gave him the opportunity to design and paint stage sets for school plays and to illustrate the school newspaper and yearbook. The local art center gave him and his friend Marvin Cone the opportunity to learn from other artists’ work by letting them guard the art shipped in from across the country, sometimes even letting them sleep overnight to watch the paintings. Friends loaned Grant money so he could travel to other Midwestern towns and even Europe so he could learn from the art in major museums and take formal art classes in metalwork, drawing and painting. Back in Cedar Rapids, a friend invited Wood to teach art any way he liked at the junior high school. Another friend offered to let Grant decorate the second floor of his empty carriage house any way he wanted and to use it rent-free as his home and studio. The same friend invited Grant to show and to sell his art in his place of business—a funeral parlor. Businesses and institutions in his hometown asked Grant to design their logos. Prominent families hired him to paint decorative designs or make metal hardware for their houses and to paint their portraits. The city of Cedar Rapids asked him to make the largest stained glass window the United States had ever seen. (Veterans Memorial Window) The federal government hired Wood to administer the federal program for the arts for the state of Iowa during the Depression.

Grant Wood Thanks His Community

Grant Wood was always grateful for the support he received from his family, friends and community. He thanked his mother and his sister for their support by painting their portraits. He thanked his friends for encouraging him by sketching their portraits (as he did for his fellow soldiers during World War I) or assembling and painting a "bouquet" of "flowers" in a pot made from things he found on the street or around the house. (Lilies of the Alley) The best way that Grant thanked his community was, after traveling to Europe, by coming back home to say that, for him, his home state of Iowa was the best place to be inspired and to make his art. As a teacher in the junior high school and later as a professor at the university, Grant taught his students to love and to make art. As a supporter of other artists and to attract them to his home state, Wood started the Stone City Art Colony (1931-32). As a lecturer, he spoke all over the country about how important art is and how important it is for artists to be inspired by their own surroundings, even their own community.
Woman With Plants

Grant Wood, Woman with Plants, 1929. Oil on upsom board, 20 1/2 x 17 7/8 in.
Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Museum purchase. 31.1
Veterans Memorial Window

Grant Wood, *Lilies of the Alley*, 1925, ceramic, paint, wire and found objects, 12 x 12 x 6 1/2 in., Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Gift of Harriet Y. and John B. Turner 11.72.12.38