

CRAFT IN AMERICA

A VERY NOBLE CARE EDUCATION GUIDE

Background Reading

"The cars tell a story because they form a part of history." - Leandro Gómez Quintero

In this lesson, students are introduced to Cuban artist Leandro Gómez Quintero. A former teacher of history and philosophy, he uses cardboard and refuse found on local streets and beaches to create small-scale models of the vintage cars and trucks in his remote city of Baracoa. He is especially drawn to the Willys Jeeps that were first imported to Cuba during World War II. The models are painstakingly detailed and aged so they realistically represent aspects of daily life in Baracoa. Students view a video to learn how Leandro Gómez Quintero works, the materials that he uses, and the reasons behind his choice of subject matter. After viewing the video and participating in discussion, students brainstorm ideas for a scale model that represents an aspect of their own life or an interest of theirs. Students problem-solve translating scale and proportion, and they experiment with basic materials to achieve desired effects in their finished models.

Key Concepts

- Making art can be playful and enjoyable.
- Artists use creative experimenting to solve problems when making art.
- Artists practice skills to help them develop and refine their artworks.

Critical Questions

- How can making art be playful and enjoyable?
- How do artists experiment when making art?
- How can art skills help us develop and refine our artworks?

Objectives

Students will:

- Students will understand that the process of making art can be playful and involve problem solving.
- Students will experiment to solve problems while making a miniature model.
- Students will practice skills to help them develop and refine their chosen model.

Interdisciplinary Connections

- Spanish: The video is a good source for learning some Spanish vocabulary since Leandro Gómez Quintero speaks Spanish, and English subtitles appear when he speaks. You might make a list of words he uses such as paper, cardboard, recycling, bicycle, etc. for students to listen and look for. Also, any students who are fluent in Spanish can help any non-Spanish speaking classmates to listen for and locate the words, as well as help with pronunciation.
- Social Studies: Possible lesson topics might include the following:
 - The role of Willys Jeeps in World War II.
 - Trade issues that affect Cuba, which lead to Leandro Gómez Quintero's need to "resolve," as his friend says, the problems of scarcity of art materials (and of automobiles.)
 - A look at the complex, historic relations between the United States and Cuba.

CRAFT IN AMERICA

A VERY NOBLE CAR EDUCATION GUIDE

- Geography: Use a wall map (or print copies of a smaller map) that includes southeast states in the U.S. (especially Florida,) the Gulf of Mexico and adjacent land, and the Caribbean states (including Cuba, with Baracoa highlighted) so students develop a sense of the location where Leandro Gómez Quintero lives.

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

This lesson addresses the following standards. The performance standards listed here are directly related to the lesson's goals.

- Visual Arts/Creating #VA:Cr2.1.8a
Demonstrate willingness to experiment, innovate, and take risks to pursue ideas, forms, and meanings that emerge in the process of artmaking or designing.
Process Component: Investigate
Anchor Standard: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Visual Arts/Responding #VA:Re7.1.8a
Explain how a person's aesthetic choices are influenced by culture and environment and impact the visual image that one conveys to others.
Process Component: Perceive
Anchor Standard: Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- Visual Arts/Connecting #VA:Cn11.1.7a
Analyze how response to art is influenced by understanding the time and place in which it was created, the available resources, and cultural uses.
Process Component: Interpret
Anchor Standard: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Worksheets

- Worksheet 1: A Very Noble Car
- Worksheet 2: Making It Work
- Worksheet 3: Telling a Story

Materials

- Sketchbooks
- Pencils, markers
- Paper of all kinds: colorful scraps, newsprint, and plain copy paper
- Index cards for artist's statements
- Rulers
- Templates and stencils; especially shapes for tracing
- Protractors and/or compasses for drawing circles and other shapes
- Paper punches
- Scissors
- Craft knives or X-acto knives
- Placemat sized pieces of cardboard or plastic cutting mats to protect tables from knives
- Cardboard: Collect (and flatten for use) thin cardboard boxes such as cracker, candy and cereal boxes; as well as corrugated cardboard boxes.
- Tape
- Glues: hot glue guns and glue sticks; white glue
- Brass paper fasteners

CRAFT IN AMERICA

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- Staplers and staples
- Sturdy large eyed needles and string for potential attachment methods
- Paint (acrylic or tempera) and paintbrushes
- Collected materials inspired by those in the video: bits and pieces of broken objects, discarded cups and utensils (cleaned off after lunch), discarded plastic bags, lids and caps from containers such as toothpaste, empty product containers and bottles (such as shampoo) of all sorts.
- Optional: paper maché materials for further sculpting possibilities

About Leandro Gómez Quintero

Leandro Gómez Quintero (b. 1976, Baracoa, Cuba) uses paper, cardboard and found objects to create models of American cars and Jeeps, all of which are used as methods of transportation in his hometown. They are individually hand painted and detailed to mimic the original vehicle. His sculpture represents Willys Jeeps from 1942–1955, as well as Dodge Power Wagons, GMCs, and Fords from the era. These sculptures are representations of what his community sees on a daily basis and Leandro hopes to preserve and offer knowledge through his art, as well as reflect the history of transportation and everyday life in Cuba. Quintero says, “They bring humor and call attention to the fact that we are an isolated community within a country that has been isolated for many years. By showing the people a part of their everyday lives in a lighthearted way, they come to appreciate and can smile at some of the difficulties that we encounter in just trying to live our lives and getting from one place to another.”

(Courtesy of International Folk Art Alliance, 2017)