Master Artists of the Bahamas

August 27-November 11, 2012

Education Packet

The Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts
http://www.mofa.fsu.edu
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Cover Image: Jackson Burnside, *Toxic Waste* (detail), 2010. Acrylic on linen, 54x78

For exhibition tours contact Viki D. Thompson Wylder at 850-644-1299
Sunshine State Standards
Visual Arts

**Elementary School**

Benchmark: VA.1.H.1.1. Discuss how different works of art communicate information about a particular culture.
Big Idea: Historical and Global Connections
Enduring Understanding. Through study in the arts, we learn about others and the worlds in which they live(d).

Benchmark: VA.3.S.1.2. Use diverse resources to inspire artistic expression and achieve varied results.
Big Idea: Skills, Techniques, and Processes
Enduring Understanding. The arts are inherently experiential and actively engage learners in the processes of creating, interpreting, and responding to art.

Benchmark: VA.5.H.1.1. Examine historical and cultural influences that inspire artists and their work.
Big Idea: Historical and Global Connections
Enduring Understanding. Through study in the arts, we learn about others and the worlds in which they live(d).

**Middle School 6–8**

Benchmark: VA.68.H.1.1. Describe social, ecological, economic, religious, and/or political conditions reflected in works of art.
Big Idea: Historical and Global Connections
Enduring Understanding. Through study in the arts, we learn about and honor others and the worlds in which they live(d).

Benchmark: VA.68.S.3.5. Apply two-dimensional techniques and media to create or enhance three-dimensional artwork.
Big idea: Skills, techniques, and processes
Enduring Understanding. Through purposeful practice, artists learn to manage, master, and refine simple, then complex, skills and techniques.

**High School 9–12**

Benchmark: VA.912.H.2.3. Analyze historical or cultural references in commemorative works of art to identify the significance of the event or person portrayed.
Big Idea: Historical and Global Connections
Enduring Understanding. The arts reflect and document cultural trends and historical events, and help explain how new directions in the arts have emerged.

Benchmark: VA.912.S.1.3. Interpret and reflect on cultural and historical events to create art.
Big Idea. Skills, techniques, and processes
Enduring Understanding. The arts are inherently experiential and actively engage learners in the processes of creating, interpreting, and responding to art.
Welcome to the Bahamas:

The Bahamas are a group of islands located 45 miles off the southern coast of Florida between the Northern Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The Bahamas consists of 700 islands and 2,400 cays (low coral banks) with an area of 5,358 square miles. Nassau is the capital and is located on the main island, New Providence. This island holds 70 percent of the Bahamas’ population. The Bahamas achieved its independence from Great Britain on July 10, 1973.

The Origins of Modern Bahamian Art – Tiffany Sirignano

The history of Bahamian Art can be traced to the first inhabitants of the Bahamas, the Lacayan Indians. The Lacayans produced pottery known as “Palmetto Ware,” which combined local red clay with burnt Conch shells. This type of pottery was typically undecorated. Unfortunately few objects remain from this civilization as the Lacayan were annihilated by the Spanish, who colonized the Bahamas during the early sixteenth century.

During the eighteenth century the Bahamian art world emerged in the form of itinerant artists and British colonials. Among these artists were British painters John Irving and Thomas Luny. Irving produced watercolor landscape paintings of the Bahamas while Luny created oil paintings of landscapes. One of Luny’s works, *Nassau Harbour*, is still on display in the Public Library. During the late nineteenth century several American artists also worked from the Bahamas including Albert Bierstadt and Winslow Homer, both of whom painted seascapes.

Recognition of native Bahamian artists did not begin until the second half of the twentieth century. Don Russell (1921–62) and Horace Wright (1915–76) are considered the “fathers of modern Bahamian Art.” Don Russell, an oil painter who mainly created seascapes and landscapes, founded Russell’s Academy of Fine Arts, Nassau, one of the first schools in the Bahamas to offer formal art classes. Horace Wright, a watercolor painter who depicted scenes of everyday life and individuals from Nassau’s elderly community, was the only art teacher working in the Bahamas’s public school system until 1960. It was the combination of improvements in education and economic growth during the 1960s and the Bahamas’s independence from Britain in 1973 that caused many Bahamian artists to emerge.

Since independence, Bahamians have attempted to define a national vernacular in art. While much of Bahamian iconography incorporates the nation’s African heritage, the masquerade tradition used in the Junkanoo Festival (see the following section on Junkanoo), and the country's natural environment, Bahamian painters identify themselves as either Expressionists with surrealistic tendencies or European naturalists (see the glossary). The Expressionists, consisting largely of the members of B.C.A.U.S.E (Bahamian Creative Artists United for Serious Expression) (see the glossary), were dedicated to raising awareness of the Bahamas’ African heritage and culture. Max Taylor, one of the artists featured in this exhibition, is considered the “founder of Bahamian Expressionism.” Although painting has become a prominent medium in the Bahamas the islands currently have no sculptural traditions. Painter Antonius Roberts, who is also featured in this exhibition, began exploring this medium through his indigenous wood sculptures in the mid-1990s.
What is Junkanoo? – Sophie Alsop

The Junkanoo Festival evolved from the traditions of West African Poro and Egungun dancers and was founded in the Caribbean by slaves during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During this time, slaves were sometimes allowed a Christmas holiday, during which they left the plantations and held a grand dance, now known as the Junkanoo Festival. Today Junkanoo is generally celebrated on Boxing Day (the 26th of December) and again on New Years Day very early in the morning (around 1:00 AM).

Over time, this festival has evolved to include not only dance, but also art and music. Today the forms and style of Junkanoo are some of the most celebrated in the Bahamas. This style revolves primarily around influences of folk elements and island tradition. The festival, and now the artistic style, of Junkanoo has become the ultimate national symbol for Bahamians.

Traditionally the performers in Junkanoo were predominately male. This was especially true in certain art forms, such as drum ensembles, which were exclusively male until 1899. While other similar festivals, such as the Trinidadian Carnival, are said to have been “taken over” by women, the performers in the Junkanoo festival of the Bahamas seem to remain mostly male, though both males and females celebrate the time of year. The strides being made by female artists, like Dede Brown, in the incorporation of the Junkanoo style into their artwork, is perhaps another step towards equality in the festival.
Interview with Candia Atwater — Founder of the Caribbean Museum in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands
- Caitlyn Cooney

Caitlyn Cooney (CC): Would you consider art to be a major part of society in the Caribbean region? Are there a good amount of artists that are able to make a living?

Candia Atwater (CA): There are A LOT of artists throughout the Caribbean islands, but only several can make a strong living. Many of those who make a living appeal to the commercial side of art in the Islands, which makes my job harder as a collector because I am looking for pieces created purely from passion rather than for money. Commercial art is too safe--it doesn’t take risks.

CC: How do many of the artists receive their training? Is there an art school, or is the artist usually taught by his or her family?

CA: There aren’t any art schools in the Islands that I know of other than in Cuba, but many artists born in the Caribbean are trained here when they are young either by family or friends and grow a passion for it, and then travel to the States to go to art school.

CC: Do they usually stay in the States?

CA: Many artists want to be exposed to new things. Therefore as far as I have seen, yes they will stay there for a long period of time. Some do eventually come back to their roots in the islands though.

CC: The artwork of the Bahamian artist, Stan Burnside, encompasses a fascination for strong women in the matrifocal society of the Bahamas; do you think those ideals of women carry over into other regions of the Caribbean?

CA: Now that you and I are talking about it, there are several artists that I know of who focus on family portraits. Sean C. Miller, from St. Thomas, studied the art of photorealism and began to paint families. Most every portrait he has done either only has the mother or has both parents, never just the father. I think that could tie into the same theme.

CC: Speaking more about women in the Caribbean art world, what percentage of artists are female would you say? What’s the general attitude towards female artists? Does the subject matter in their art differ from that of male artists?

CA: Unfortunately, many of the successful artists that I had spoken about before are men. Men usually have a larger following than the women. The artistic style and themes are similar between a man’s artwork and a woman’s artwork, and the artwork should be judged on quality, but unfortunately that is not always the case.
CC: Would you say that Caribbean artwork has a certain style? How would you describe that style? Are there certain issues or concerns, themes, or repeating subject matter?

CA: Everything is different here from art in the States. The light is different. The culture is different. Therefore the artistic style is going to be distinctive. The palette is very bright and the pieces are full of life. Many pieces have themes of food, dancing, music, celebration. It’s all very alive and it’s something that is innately in an artist who has been raised and taught here. They just see the world differently.

CC: So where do you see art of the Caribbean and the Bahamas moving in the future? Do you think it will continue to grow as a form of expression, or do you foresee it becoming an even bigger part of tourism?

CA: There is always going to be good art in the islands, it’s a big part of our culture. But the problem is that the cost of living is going up, and the artists forming art just for art’s sake are dying out. A lot of the young artists no longer see the value in traditional themes, and they are moving towards more progressive media such as 4D art and art with political themes like the lack of money or funding here. Art is a way to give people a form of positive expression. That’s why it is so important in school systems-- it ties everything together. And the kids making art these days, they’re so good! And they’re the ones making art from their souls, which is beautiful. It’s important to life here. There’s no life without art, and more people and teachers need to recognize that.
**Selected Artists from the Exhibition**

**Stanley (Stan) Burnside (b. 1947)** – Tiffany Sirignano

Stanley Burnside was born in Nassau, Bahamas. As a child he witnessed the artist Hildegard Hamilton painting a landscape of the Queen's Staircase – limestone steps carved by slaves in 1794 – near his home. This experience had a great impact on Burnside as an artist. In the 1970s he worked in the United States as a designer of album covers for notable R&B musicians. After returning to the Bahamas, he worked as an art teacher and a political cartoonist for the Tribune newspaper under the name “Sideburns.”

In 1991, through an effort to establish the Bahamas as a hub for talented and world-class visual artists, Burnside cofounded B-C.A.U.S.E. (Bahamian Creative Artists United for Serious Expression). This enabled prominent Bahamian artists to participate in a number of international shows. Burnside is also known for his collaborative work with the trio Burnside-Beadle-Burnside. This artistic group includes Burnside’s younger brother Jackson Burnside and close friend John Beadle, both of whom are featured in this exhibition. Burnside’s paintings often deal with culturally related subjects, such as the role of matrifocality (see the glossary) in the Bahamas.\(^1\) In addition, he shares his brother’s passion for local culture, ancestors, and history. He considers himself to be a landscape artist, painting the “landscape of his mind.” He likes to work with multiple paintings and can have many “in progress” canvases in his studio at one time.

**Brent Malone (1941–2004)** – Caitlyn Cooney

Brent Malone is widely considered to be one of the “fathers of Bahamian art” due to his great talents in multiple artistic disciplines such as drawing, painting, and sculpture. His work focuses on symbols which convey issues, characters, or events of the Bahamas. His art, such as his piece Junkanoo, represents the lively celebration of the history of the Bahamas. In Earth Mother and Dreams of Passion, symbolic costumes reference the Junkanoo festival, a celebration in Nassau that happens on New Year’s Eve commemorating the history of slaves in the Bahamas. The festival encompasses a celebration of Bahamian life through colorful costumes, loud music and tribal dancing.

Along with Max Taylor, Stan Burnside, Jackson Burnside, John Beadle, and Antonius Roberts, Malone founded B-C.A.U.S.E (Bahamian Creative Artists United for Serious Expression), which allowed Bahamian artists to expand beyond the Caribbean into areas such as Europe and South America. His accomplishment in forming the group made it possible to display their art in places such as the United States and Europe, and therefore spread their Bahamian influence. In this way, Malone assisted in the artistic community’s reputation and renewed creativity.

Malone’s career focused on the exhibition of his own artwork, but also on the launch of various galleries – the Loft Gallery, Matinee Gallery, Temple Gallery, and several others. These spaces were important for young artists, and thus the next generation. Malone wanted to ensure the continuation of the community of artists in the Bahamas. He received many awards due to this community involvement as well as his positive influence on Bahamian youth. After his death in 2004, his family founded the “NAGB (National Art Gallery of the Bahamas) Brent Malone Artist-in-Residence Program” to fund the projects of local artists and to further their education in the arts.

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\(^1\) Burnside sites his work as dealing with the role of “matriarchy” in the Bahamas. However, “matrifocality” is the term that best describes the culture of the Bahamas. (See the glossary for more information about the distinction between these terms).
Antonius Roberts (b. 1958) – Tiffany Sirignano

Antonius Roberts was born in Nassau, Bahamas. As a child, Roberts suffered from a slight speech impediment for which he compensated by focusing on his abilities in the arts. His work focuses on nature, conservation, humanity, and spirituality and he is viewed as one of the leading sculptors in the Bahamas. For many of his sculptures, Roberts collects wood he finds while driving around the island of New Providence. Roberts says that he is inspired by each piece of wood or material that he collects and he waits for the material to tell him what to do. Roberts prefers to locate his installations in places of historical significance. He believes the materials he uses and the location of his artwork allow him to invite viewers to interact with his pieces as opposed to simply reacting to what they see. Among Roberts’ most notable works is his series Sacred Spaces, which commemorates the first landing site of African slaves in the Bahamas. For the first sculptural installation of the Sacred Spaces series, he used the rooted stumps of casuarina trees to carve twelve female figures looking towards Africa. In addition to Sacred Spaces Roberts has created several other installation sites in Nassau and continues to work on new sites in Grand Bahama. Roberts has worked as an art teacher for many years and has worked on developing many art programs for children of the country. He was also the Bahamas’ only curator of art at the Central Bank, which functioned as the Bahamas’ preeminent exhibition space before the opening of the National Art Gallery. Roberts was a key developer of the Central Bank’s annual art competition, which was a rite of passage for many of the Bahamas’ top artists. In 1991, he cofounded B.-C.A.U.S.E. (Bahamian Creative Artists United for Serious Expression) (see glossary) with fellow Bahamian artists Brent Malone, Max Taylor, Stan Burnside, Jackson Burnside and John Beadle, who are also featured in this exhibition.

Maxwell Taylor (b. 1939) – Caitlyn Cooney

Maxwell Taylor is considered to be one of the first Bahamian master artists. He is well known for his work in ceramics, plywood sculpture, and painting, but his work in printmaking best shows his skill and passion for art. His work depicts social issues and historic themes of Bahamian culture such as slavery and the matrifocal familial structures within the enslaved populations of the past. In his woodcuts, Taylor expressed the hardships of African slaves, a strong element in the background of the Bahamas. Images such as Love and Responsibility show the difficulty female slaves experienced in supporting a family.

Throughout his career, Taylor struggled to gain recognition for his individualism and therefore found it difficult to make a living through his artwork. He was one of the few artists creating work for pure creativity rather than for money. He was also the only artist to work in plywood sculpture, truly setting him apart from his fellow artists. After almost twenty years of work, Brent Malone, a fellow Bahamian artist and close friend, featured Taylor’s work in an opening at Malone’s Matinee Gallery in Taylor’s first solo exhibition. Maxwell Taylor collaborated with several other Bahamian artists such as Brent Malone in the founding of B.-C.A.U.S.E. (Bahamian Creative Artists United for Serious Expression). Maxwell Taylor traveled extensively through Europe, continuing his observation of the social, political, and economic dynamics of those cultures. Taylor’s work, such as Ain’t I a Mother, ties together many cultural ideas and themes, often making his work universal in spirit.
Women in the Bahamas

A Matrifocal Society – Tiffany Sirignano

Although women seem to be outnumbered by men in the Bahamian art world, their role is significant in the matrifocal society of the Bahamas. In Bahamian culture, women often bear a role of domestic centrality as there is no “father figure” in the household. It is believed that this role has also influenced women’s power in the public domain since many are trained at an early age to take positions of political prominence. The exact origins of matrifocality in Bahamian society are unknown. However, there are many speculations as to its beginnings. For example, one theory states that during slavery, Afro-Guianese men typically occupied low socio-economic positions and thus their contributions to their family were minimal. Also, many of these men migrated in search of work and were no longer able to provide for their families as they aged.

A second theory focuses on the issues of class during slavery. Although sanctions existed against interracial marriage, it was common for high ranking men to form relationships with women of color. In fact, many of these women chose to bear children out of wedlock in order to grant their children a higher status, which would afford them greater social privileges. Whatever the cause for matrifocality in Bahamian culture, Caribbean women have always worked outside the home. Where women work, they are less dependent on men for financial support; thus they are able to act as the stable focus of their families.

Dede Brown. Untitled. China marker on paper
Dionne Benjamin Smith

Dionne Benjamin Smith was born in 1970 in Nassau, The Bahamas. In 1991 she earned a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and graduated with honors. Benjamin Smith comes from generations of printmakers on both sides of her family. Her own print work has been discussed and featured in critical art journals, such as Small Axe, published by the Indiana University Press. Benjamin Smith is considered a unique visual artist in the medium of printmaking and digital media as well as one of the top creative graphic designers in her home country. Her prints are described as bringing a “keen social commentary” to the art world.

Benjamin Smith’s work has been featured in art shows in the Bahamas, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany and can also be found in private collections around the world. Today, Benjamin Smith and her husband own and operate Smith & Benjamin Art & Design, a progressive art and graphic design firm located in Nassau. The firm specializes in graphic design, custom illustration, fine art, art promotion, art brokerage, and publishing. Every week the firm publishes an e-Newsletter called Bahamian Art & Culture, which highlights local and regional art news.

When Benjamin Smith was asked about what she hopes to achieve through her artwork, she responded, “...I am driven to tell a story, to shine a light, to make things clear, even to uplift and encourage. I hope to make people see the naked emperor riding atop the pink elephant. And though I tend to take on weighty subjects sometimes, I try to deliver the message with a bit of wit and whimsy – in an effort to offer a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down. It is my wish to engage the audience to think, see, and understand. And then, hopefully, to change the world around them for the better.”

Dede Brown – The Next Generation of Women Artists

Dede Brown was born in Freeport, Grand Bahama in 1984. At an early age, her family moved to Nassau where Brown spent most of her young life. After graduating from high school at age 17, Brown moved to the United States and began a degree in Interior Design and Photography at the Savannah College of Art and Design. She returned to Nassau in 2006 at age 22 where she landed a full time job as an interior designer at an architecture and design firm in the area. Four years later, Brown took a leap of faith, transitioning into a self-employed artist, designer, and photographer. Brown says on her website that “Integrating art, design, and photography into one career has been fun, fulfilling and an intriguing challenge.”

Brown is currently based in Nassau and, together with her partner and fellow artist Dylan Rapillard, has had three successful art exhibitions. The first of these exhibitions took place in 2009 at the Central Bank of the Bahamas. The exhibit consisted of a series of portraits and revolved around Brown’s interest in the human spirit and the way it emanates via human expression and human form. Through this work, Brown says she is exploring her Bahamian identity, incorporating aspects of Junkanoo, a symbol of Bahamianess. “My work is mainly based around figurative drawing and painting,” Brown explains, “primarily focusing on the female form; the current work I am creating explores self-identity, and the celebration of life” through ‘Junakoo.”

Brown is currently participating in the Artists-in-Residence Exchange Programme as part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. Brown plans to continue to explore her Bahamian identity. “Many of us want to belong, want to be proud of the country we are part of, so I do not seek to give this work a negative connotation but am merely exploring a subject that I deal with on a daily basis, particularly when not in The Bahamas.”
Suggested Arts Activities

Community Conservation in Clay – Tiffany Sirignano

Session Activity. Students will view the sculptural work and installations of Antonius Roberts and discuss his views on conservation. Students will also discuss the ways that conservation affects their community and will select one place (building or location) they would like to preserve. Students will construct a representation of this place using clay. In addition, students will learn about Roberts’ use of indigenous materials, such as wood and marble, and will gather their own natural materials to create a landscape for their clay pieces.

Grade Level. K-8  Time Needed. 3-4 class sessions

Materials. Images of Antonius Roberts’ sculptures and installations, clay, matte board, glue, assorted tools for carving into clay, pencils, paper, and assorted materials collected outside by students, such as sticks, leaves, and stones.

Vocabulary. Conservation, indigenous

Objectives.
- Students will learn about the concept of conservation and the way artists like Antonius Roberts utilize it in their artwork.
- Students will become familiar with the significance of using indigenous materials to create artwork.
- Students will demonstrate their knowledge of conservation by creating works of art that demonstrate the ways conservation can affect their community.

Procedure.
1. Introduce students to the sculptural and installation work of Antonius Roberts, such as his piece Without Wings and begin discussing the concept of conservation (see the websites on conservation listed below). In addition, discuss conservation by showing images of places in the community that are recognizable to students.
2. In small groups of 3 or 4, students will select locations from their community that they would choose to conserve.
3. Ask students to sketch the places they want to conserve. When the sketches are finished, each student will be given a slab of clay. The clay should remain flat on one side, as it will be mounted to matte board after firing, but the student should cut away and carve details into the clay. For older students, fine details, such as windows or doors for buildings, should be added.
4. Allow students to collect “indigenous” materials from outside to use in their artwork. Eventually after their clay pieces have been fired and glazed, students will place them on matte board. Students will arrange and glue their “indigenous” materials around the pieces, creating landscapes. A hot glue gun may be required for some materials.
5. Have students glaze their clay pieces, using a variety of colors and details.
6. After firing the clay pieces, assemble student artwork by hot gluing the clay pieces to the matte board. Ask students to write reflections about the reasons they chose to conserve this location.

Evaluation. Can students explain the meaning of conservation and the way it would help the places they chose in their community? Can students write meaningful reflections that discuss the personal relevancy for selecting their places? Can students identify the materials that are considered “indigenous” in their artwork?

Resources. For more information on conservation please visit the following websites.
- Antonius Roberts’ Website: www.antoniusroberts.com
- Conservation International: www.conservation.org
- The Conservation Fund: www.conservationfund.org
- National Resources Conservation Service: www.nrcs.usda.org

For more information on conservation in Tallahassee please visit the following websites.
- Coastal Conservation Association: www.ccaflorida.org
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection: www.dep.state.fl.us
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission: http://myfwc.com
- Florida Wildlife Federation: www.fwfonline.org and Tall Timbers: www.talltimbers.org
Matrifocal Mixed-Media Collage – Tiffany Sirignano

Session Activity. Students will view the work of Stan Burnside and discuss his focus on strong women in the matrifocal culture, or sometimes referred to as matriarchal culture (see glossary) of the Bahamas, and his interest in local culture, ancestors, and history. In addition, they will discuss his use of bright colors. Based on their own history and culture, students will select strong female figures from their own lives and create short stories accompanied by mixed-media collages that represent specific characteristics of these persons, or historical events.

Grade Level: K–5    Time Needed: 2–3 class sessions

Materials. Images of Stan Burnside’s paintings, particularly those focusing on matrifocality, large sheets of thick paper (possibly cardboard or matte board), small sheets of paper for writing, pens or markers for writing, brightly colored acrylic or tempera paint, magazines or other paper materials for creating collages, scrap fabric pieces, and paintbrushes

Vocabulary. Matrifocal, Bahamian culture

Objectives.
- Students will learn about the concept of matrifocality and Bahamian culture and the way Stan Burnside uses this in his artwork.
- Students will become familiar with the significance of using a variety of materials to express an idea.
- Students will demonstrate their knowledge of matrifocality and culture by creating works of art representing strong female figures from their own lives and the way these women affect history or culture.

Procedure.
1. Introduce students to the work of Stan Burnside, such as his piece *Dance with the Devil* and begin discussing the use of matrifocal figures and representations of local history and art in his work. In addition, discuss Burnside’s expressive use of bright colors in his paintings.
2. Ask each student to reflect on strong female figures from his/her own life by writing a short story describing her characteristics and the reasons she is important. Or the student may tell a story from his/her history of which she was a significant part.
3. After completing their stories students will paint either portraits of the selected persons or illustrations of the historical events. These should be painted on thick paper or cardboard using a variety of brightly colored paints. In addition, students should be instructed to leave spaces or omit details that will be added with magazines and scrap fabric. On each artwork there will also be a portion of the bottom of the paper left blank to which each student will transfer his/her story.
4. After the paintings have dried, students will add details and fill in remaining spaces using scrap paper, magazines, and fabric scraps.
5. When the collages are complete, students will fill in the blank spaces at the bottom of the works with the stories they wrote.

Evaluation. Can students identify strong female figures? Can students write meaningful stories describing the characteristics of strong women or can they write about historical events involving strong female figures from their own lives? Can students identify the expressive use of color in Stan Burnside’s work and transfer this knowledge to their own artwork?

Resources.
- For more information on matrifocality please visit the following website.
  - http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Matifocal
- For more information on matrifocality in the Bahamas please read the essay *Bahamian Kinship and the Power of Women* located at the following website.
  - http://www.nicobethel.net/nico-at-home/academia/bahkinship.html
Session Activity. Students will view Maxwell Taylor’s woodcuts from his *Immigration Series* and discuss the history of the slaves in the Bahamas, as well as the way Taylor’s images express the emotions of the women depicted. Using these woodcuts as inspiration, each student will create a print from a linocut using symbolic imagery to tell a story about a woman he or she admires due to the hardship faced by that woman. Students will explain the images and the reasons for their choices.

Grade level: 6–12  
Time needed: several class sessions

Materials. Images of Taylor’s *Immigration Series*, handout on history of slavery in the Bahamas (information found from link at bottom of page), small blocks of linoleum, linoleum-cutting tools, paper, black ink, brayers.

Objectives.

- Students will be able to discuss the immigration of slaves into the Bahamas, mainly focusing on the hardships of female slaves at the time in order to understand the motives behind Taylor’s artwork, but also focusing on their will to survive as strong human beings.
- Students will learn the importance of symbolism in historical and contemporary depictions of slavery.
- Students will create linocut pieces that convey the ideas of triumph over adversity using symbolism.

Procedure.

1. Introduce students to Maxwell Taylor’s work. Discuss the symbolic features of his work that represent the strength of female slaves in the late 1700s. Discuss the way Taylor employs aspects such as line, posture of the figure, and social context in order to enhance the meaning. Discuss the history of slavery and the way it impacted female slaves’ lives, as well as the way it continues to influence women in the Bahamas today, to better understand Taylor’s vision.
2. Discuss the use of symbolism in Taylor’s pieces: pose, dress, surroundings, relationships, and composition. Talk about the way these symbols explain the meaning of women’s lives under slavery in each of the images. Ask the students to research slavery images, and identify recurring symbols, particularly those that emphasize the humanity of slave women and men, and their urge to triumph over adversity.
3. Ask students to identify women they know who have faced adversity and triumphed. Ask them to write several paragraphs about these women to explain who they are, why they were chosen, and what difficulties they have overcome in order to make a positive impact on their surroundings.
4. With the women of choice in mind, as well as the recurring symbols studied, students will draw images onto blocks of linoleum and carve them to be followed by inking and printing. These will form images similar to the woodcuts of Maxwell Taylor.
5. Encourage the students to share with the class their aesthetic choices by explaining their use of symbols. Classmates will respond, sharing the messages the pieces communicate to the viewers.

Evaluation. Can the students identify the use of symbols in both Maxwell Taylor’s work as well as the work of the class? Did the students create images with various symbols to convey the hardships of their chosen female figures? Can the students explain their works and the way they relate to the work of Maxwell Taylor and his view of the humanity of enslaved women?

Resources.

- *Master Artists of the Bahamas* resource disk.
- [http://www.keyshistory.org/bahamas.html](http://www.keyshistory.org/bahamas.html) (history of slaves in the Bahamas)
Costumes for the Junkanoo – Caitlyn Cooney

Session Activity. Students will view Brent Malone’s Junkanoo painting and discuss the history and meaning of the Junkanoo Festival as well as the way Malone represents the spirit of the Bahamas. Using this painting, video representations, and historical information on the Junkanoo, students will create costumes for a hypothetical Bahamian participant of the festival.

Grade Level: K-12  Time Needed: several class periods

Materials. Fabric swatches, pastels, drawing paper, access to YouTube, image of Brent Malone’s Junkanoo and a handout on the history and meaning of the Junkanoo festival to the Bahamian culture (link to information at bottom of page).

Objectives.
- Students will be able to discuss the Junkanoo Festival including the way it represents Bahamian society and history—in order to understand the way Bahamian history has shaped the present culture.
- Students will learn the importance of the costumes in the festival and the way they represent Bahamian culture.
- Students will create example costumes that communicate the identity of a people.

Procedure.
1. Introduce students to Brent Malone’s piece, and then discuss the way he depicts the musicians of the festival. How do the patterns and colors make the students feel? What kind of society does he portray? Talk about the history of the Junkanoo Festival and the way it relates to Bahamian culture today.
   a. Discussion.
      i. Discuss the way Brent Malone represents the people of the Bahamas.
      ii. Relate some of our own festivals to that of the Junkanoo.
      iii. Talk about the significance of the festival and the way it impacts the Bahamian community, relating those same themes to our own festivals, for example the way costumes portray identity and theme and the way festivals symbolize history, etc.

2. Again, discuss the use of pattern and color, and the way it conveys identity before showing various videos from YouTube of the Junkanoo Festival in order to give examples of costumes and types of performances.

3. Ask the students to draw and collage examples of costumes they might see at the festival using pastels and fabric swatches. Using Malone’s painting and the videos for examples, the students will focus on the way color and pattern can convey a sense of identity.

4. Encourage students to share with the class their aesthetic choices by explaining the use of color and pattern. Relate these choices to historical meanings and cultural aspects of Bahamian culture. Classmates will share their responses to the drawings.

Evaluation. Can the students identify what distinguishes Bahamian culture from other cultures? Did the students create example costumes using color and pattern thoughtfully? Can the students explain their use of color and pattern in the costumes they created? Can the students relate their designs to the communication of identity?

Resources.
- Junkanoo videos on YouTube
- Master Artists of the Bahamas image disk
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Junkanoo (chosen due to simplicity of information from other sites)
**Compare and Contrast Artistic Viewpoints** – Caitlyn Cooney

**Session Activity.** Students will compare and contrast the two paintings *Gregory Town* by Eddie Minnis and *Bush Fire: This is the Dry Season* by John Beadle in order to better understand the way artists depict the culture of the Bahamas.

**Grade Level.** 9–12  
**Time Needed.** 2–3 class sessions

**Objectives.**
- Students will become more familiar with the culture of the Bahamas through their understanding of each artist’s work.
- Students will compare and contrast each of the works focusing on artistic elements such as color, composition, depiction of scenery, and their overall impression of the Bahamas.

**Procedure.**

1. The instructor will introduce each work to the students to start discussing the two different depictions of Bahamian culture.
2. Students will break off into groups of 3–5 and compare/contrast within each group, eventually coming to an overall conclusion of the meaning of the works and the way they represent Bahamian culture.
3. Students will answer the following questions:
   a. How do you think each of the artists employed use of color, line, composition, etc. in order to convey a certain idea or make a statement about Bahamian culture?
   b. How do the artists’ choices of media help them portray and reinforce their concepts?
   c. What do you think the artist was trying to say? How do you think each artist feels about Bahamian culture? Relate your answers to aspects and details seen in the artwork.
   d. Do you think these concepts are prevalent in modern depictions of your own environment? Give examples.
4. Each group will settle on an overall meaning for each work, inclusive of the work’s relationship to Bahamian culture, supporting the meaning with several reasons for the interpretation. Each group will then present their ideas via a powerpoint presentation with visuals to the class, sparking a discussion about each of the art pieces.

**Evaluation.** Did the students participate in the group work and the discussion? Did the students answer the four questions above? Did the students present their work in an organized manner? Did the students come to an overall conclusion about each of the artworks with strong evidence to support their ideas? Did the students present a powerpoint with visuals?

**Resources.**
- *Master Artists of the Bahamas* image resource disk.
Appendix

Glossary

B.-C.A.U.S.E. (Bahamian Creative Artists United for Serious Expression) is an organization founded in 1991 by several Bahamian artists including Antonius Roberts, Brent Malone, Max Taylor, Stan Burnside, Jackson Burnside and John Beadle.

Bahamian Expressionists. This group of Bahamian painters was founded by members of B.-C.A.U.S.E., who were dedicated to promoting the African heritage of the Bahamas.

European Naturalists. Bahamian artists who identify themselves as painting in a style aligned with a European type of naturalism. These painters create mostly landscapes with impressionistic characteristics.

Indigenous. Originating in and characteristic of a particular region or country; native

Matriarchy. A society in which females, especially mothers, have the central roles of political leadership and moral authority.

Matrifocal. A family unit or structure headed by the mother and lacking a father either permanently or for an extended period of time.

Matrilineal. The descent or kinship from parent to child through a straight, unbroken, female line.
Content Sources


"Home - Government." The Government of The Bahamas Web. Apr. 2012. <http://www.bahamas.gov.bs/wps/portal/public/gov/government/%21ut/p/b1/04_Sj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAuGjzOKNIkx9HRIHLHsItMQ3MDDxtDA3wcA8w9jP9jYAKisEKDAARwNC-8P1o_AqMTGAKsBlhZ9HFm6qkJFehEGWiaMiALGjzU0%21/dl4/dj/12d8ISEvZOFBIS9nQSE/)>


Evaluation

Was this material adaptable for introduction to your students?
All  Some  None

Did you feel the packet adequately provided the information and materials on the topics raised by the exhibition?
All  Some  None

Was the packet presented in an organized manner?
All  Some  None

Would you like to continue to receive materials from the FSU Museum of Fine Arts?
All  Some  None

Did you use any of the suggested activities in your classroom?
All  Some  None

If so, were they successful?
All  Some  None

Comments or suggestions:

Glass Window Bridge, Eleuthera, Bahamas