

Overview

By Mary Erickson, Ph.D., with Arizona art teacher, Kathy David.

Family Matters is a three-lesson unit plan designed in conjunction with the Family Matters exhibition at the Gallery at Tempe Center for the Arts.

Preview the Family Matters exhibition [PowerPoint](#)

Themes

- *Theme in Life:* We are all influenced by our families.
- *Theme in Art:* Artworks can reveal complex and simple truths about families.

Key Questions

Lessons approach the themes through three key questions.



1. How do artists use rhythm to unify a complex composition?



2. How do artists use analogous (harmonious) colors to unify a complex composition?
3. How do artists express layers of meaning by juxtaposing (combining) images, and symbols?

Community Connections

Many towns and cities in Arizona are built on top of earlier settlements, which, in turn, sometimes are built on even earlier habitations. Archeologists dig down through layers built up over time to uncover evidence of those who lived here long ago. The canals of modern Phoenix retrace ancient Hohokam canals. Builders and developers sometimes accidentally discover artifacts from another time.

Families are a lot like cities, built up in layers over time. If we dig down into our memories or search for family artifacts, we sometimes discover important foundations we can build on today or maybe even a few things we would rather forget.

Lessons

One: [Layers in My Family \(pdf\)](#)

Two: [Family Rhythms \(pdf\)](#)

Three: [Family Layers \(pdf\)](#)

Resources

[Preview of Family Matters Exhibition PowerPoint](#)

[Layers in My Family PowerPoint](#)

[Exploring Family Rhythms at the Tempe Center for the Arts \(pdf\)](#)

[Family Layers PowerPoint](#)

[Questor Questions: Uncover Layers of Family History \(pdf\)](#)

Supplies

Essentials

- poster board or paper heavy enough to paint on.
- paint - whatever you have available (acrylics, watercolors, tempera, etc.)
- pencil
- magazines
- scissors
- glue sticks
- paint brushes
- markers or colored pencils for drawing and adding definition
- newspaper to cover work surface and to collage with.

Optional

- tissue paper
- starch for collaging tissue paper
- wire
- foam core
- linoleum pieces and cutters
- acetone, brayer, cotton balls for magazine image transfers
- old credit cards to use as palette knives
- templates and stencils
- sponges or toothbrushes for applying paint
- crayons for younger students

Credits

Kathy David and Mary Erickson for photos

Artists Lynette Andreasen and Stephen Marc for artwork images.

Estimated Time

Previsit Lesson = 20-40 minutes

TCA Visit Lesson = Field Trip

Postvisit Lesson = 300-750 minutes (At the secondary level, the time will vary depending on whether students make thumbnails in advance, students' prior knowledge of rhythm and analogous colors and degree of focus on experimental painting. At the elementary level, if students use simple media, such as markers or crayons, and you focus either on analogous colors or rhythm, not both, much less time will be required.)

Lesson One: Layers in My Family

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify members of their close and extended families.
2. Students will be able to describe roles played by specific individuals in their families.
3. Students will be able to describe representations of families in artworks.

Arizona Visual Arts Standard

CREATE: Creative Process Artworlds: PO 101, 201 & 301: Contribute to a discussion about ideas for his or her own artwork.

Preparation

Preview *Layers in My Family* PowerPoint, *Family Matters Preview* PowerPoints and *Questor Questions: Uncover Layers of Family History* pdf

Consider whether you will bring your own family photos, old school photos and family keepsakes or heirlooms (such as birth or wedding announcements; sport, theme park or theater tickets; favorite childhood toy; trophy or other award; piece of jewelry, etc.) to use as examples of objects that remind you of people, events or values in your family.

Decide whether you will use *Questor Questions Uncover Layers of Family History* handout to extend class discussion of work by Stephen Marc.

Resources

[Layers in My Family PowerPoint](#)

[Family Matters Preview PowerPoint](#)

[Questor Questions: Uncover Layers of Family History pdf](#)

OPTIONAL: photos and other meaningful family objects

Activities

Unit Preview: Use the *Layers in My Family* PowerPoint (slides 1-5) to introduce the theme in life: “We are all influenced by our families.” Ask students to volunteer to list people or animals whom they consider to be members of their families. Explain that families can vary, may include near and distant blood relatives, may include others formally or informally adopted as family members and include people who have passed on but are still remembered.

Use the *Layers in My Family* PowerPoint (slides 6-8) to introduce the theme in art: “Artworks can reveal complex and simple truths about families.” Ask students to volunteer roles played by people in their families, such as organizer, playmate, teaser, helper, teacher, buddy, supporter, tradition keeper, worker, storyteller, etc. Explain that every family is different and each member of a family plays some role within it.

Guided Practice: Explain that some artists use photos of family members, other images or symbols to say something about families. If you choose, show examples of such photos, images or objects from your family or ask students to describe meaningful people, images or objects from their own families.

Ask students to carefully observe and identify people and other objects that Stephen Marc included in his digital photo montage to show the Sugg family (*Layers in My Family* slide 6). You may choose to extend this discussion using *Questor Questions Uncover Layers of Family History* handout.

Practice and Assessment: Display artworks reproduced in the *Family Matters Preview* PowerPoint. Ask students to identify people shown in artworks and what each is doing and then to speculate about various roles each person might play within a family. Additionally, ask students to look carefully for other items shown in the artworks that help the viewer get a fuller idea about a family, for example, clothing, furniture, jewelry or rooms.

Introduce the key questions students will be working with if they complete the Family Layers project in lesson three of this unit:

1. How do artists use rhythm to unify a complex composition?
2. How do artists use analogous (harmonious) colors to unify a complex composition?
3. How do artists express layers of meaning by juxtaposing (combining) images and symbols?

Vocabulary

ancestors
family roles
digital photo montage

Extension Activities

WRITING: Students interview older members of their families and write up family memories to share with others in their immediate or more distant families. See [Arizona Landscapes Exhibition Unit: Oral History Interview](#) (pdf) to instructions from family interview in *Arizona Landscape* history lesson.

Assessment Checklist

- ____ Students will be able to identify members of their close and extended families.
(Discussion during *Layers in My Family* PowerPoint presentation.)
- ____ Students will be able to describe roles played by specific individuals in their families.
(Discussion during *Layers in My Family* PowerPoint presentation.)
- ____ Students will be able to describe representations of families in artworks.
(Discussion during Family Matters Preview PowerPoint presentation and discussion of artworks in *Family Matters Preview* PowerPoint.)

Lesson Two: Family Rhythms at the TCA

Objectives

1. Students will be able to analyze rhythm within artworks.
2. Students will interpret how rhythm adds to the meaning of an artwork.

Arizona Visual Arts Standards

- EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 101: Identify an element and principle in an artwork that supports its meaning and/or purpose.
- EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 201: Describe an artist's use of elements and principles in an artwork (and how) it supports its meaning and/or purpose.

Preparation

Read and make copies of *Exploring Family Rhythms at the Tempe Center for the Arts* worksheet. The worksheet begins by comparing rhythm in visual art to rhythm in music. Decide whether your students will better understand this idea with a simple, introductory clapping exercise in which you ask them to clap the rhythms of a couple of well-know children's songs, such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," "The Barney Song" or "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. You might decide to add more grade-appropriate popular tunes with which your students are likely to be familiar. Such an activity can be carried out in your classroom supplemented by YouTube videos, other audio recordings or even on the bus before arriving at the TCA.

Make arrangements for field trip to the TCA.

Before your visit, talk with assigned TCA docent, if possible. Provide the docent with a copy of "Exploring Family Rhythms at the Tempe Center for the Arts" worksheet in advance of your trip and discuss the extent to which students might complete any or all of the worksheet at the center or whether any or all of the questions or ideas might be addressed during their tour.

Read optional *Questor Questions Uncover Layers of Family History* pdf and decide whether you might want to use it to follow up after a visit to the *Family Matters* exhibition.

Resources

- [Exploring Family Rhythms at the Tempe Center for the Arts worksheet](#)
- [Family Matters Preview PowerPoint](#)
- [Questor Questions Uncover Layers of Family History pdf](#)

Activities

Introduction and Application: Distribute *Exploring Family Rhythms at the Tempe Center for the Arts* worksheets to all students, and ask them to respond to as many questions as they can during their tour. If writing and drawing responses on the worksheet is not practical or possible during the tour, use the worksheet to guide students in focused observation as circumstances permit. For example, you might use questions on the worksheet when students assemble or travel to the TCA or when they assemble for or travel back to school.

Take notes on any new information presented by the docent as well as interesting questions, observations or responses made by your students during their tour. If the circumstances of the visit do not allow students to complete their worksheets, explain that later, in class, you will lead a discussion of visual rhythms in works by Stephen Marc, Lynette Andreasen, and Kathleen Scott Moore using online *Family Matters* Preview.

Assessment Checklist

- ___ OBJECTIVE: 1. Students will be able to analyze rhythm within artworks.
(Completion of *Exploring Family Rhythms at the Tempe Center for the Arts* worksheet)

- ___ OBJECTIVE: 2. Students interpret how rhythm adds to the meaning of an artwork.
(Completion of *Exploring Family Rhythms at the Tempe Center for the Arts* worksheet)

Lesson Three: Family Layers

Objectives

1. Students will be able to use rhythm to unify diverse images and symbols within a composition.
2. Students will be able to use analogous colors to unify diverse images and symbols within a composition.
3. Students will be able to explain how juxtaposing (combining) images or symbols can create new or layered meanings.

Arizona Visual Arts Standards

- CREATE: Creative Process: PO 001, 102 & 202: Contribute to a discussion about ideas for his or her own artwork.
- CREATE: Elements & Principles: PO 101: Identify and use elements and principles in his or her own artwork.
- CREATE: Elements & Principles: PO 201: Identify, select and use elements and principles to organize the composition in his or her own artwork.
- EVALUATE: Meanings & Purposes: PO 201. Discuss how an artist uses subject matter, symbols and/or themes to communicate meaning and/or purpose in an artwork.

Preparation

Preview [Family Layers PowerPoint](#)

GRADE LEVEL ADAPTIONS

This lesson is designed for secondary students. The *Family Layers* PowerPoint includes brief introductions to rhythm and analogous colors as well as a variety of mixed media techniques. You may want to adapt your focus based on your students' prior knowledge of rhythm, color theory or various media techniques.

You can simplify this lesson for elementary students by asking them to find images in magazines that remind them of their family members or activities they do together, etc., glue them onto the paper, paint over the photos and paper with watercolors (so you can still see the photos), then draw pictures of their family members on top of the paint.

Resources and Supplies

- *Family Layers* PowerPoint
- poster board or paper heavy enough to paint on.
- paint - whatever you have available (acrylics, watercolors, tempera, etc.)
- pencil
- magazines
- scissors
- glue sticks
- paint brushes
- markers or colored pencils for drawing and adding definition
- newspaper to cover work surface and to collage with.

OPTIONAL

- tissue paper
- starch for collaging tissue paper
- wire
- foam core
- small pieces of linoleum and linoleum cutters
- acetone, brayer, cotton balls for magazine image transfers
- old credit cards to use as palette knives
- templates and stencils
- sponges or toothbrushes for applying paint
- crayons for younger students
- Karen Michel's *The Complete Guide to Altered Imagery: Mixed Media Techniques for Collage, Altered Book, Artist Journals and More* (published 2005 by Quarry Books)
- Traci Bunkers Creates a Visual Journal on [YouTube](#)

Activities

Review: Review the theme in life: “We are all influenced by our families” and the theme in art: “Artworks can reveal complex and simple truths about families.” Also review the unit’s three key questions: 1) How do artists use rhythm to unify a complex composition? 2) How do artists use analogous (harmonious) colors to unify a complex composition? 3) How do artists express layers of meaning by juxtaposing (combining) images and symbols?

Assignment: Explain to students that they are to demonstrate what they have learned by creating a Family Layers artwork. It should:

1. be inspired by the students’ own families (or perhaps their families as they would like them to be).
2. include at least three layers of paint or paper.
3. use rhythm to create unity.
4. use analogous colors to create unity.

Review and Idea Generation: Display the first eight slides of “Family Layers” PowerPoint to stimulate students to think of images and or symbols they might use to represent their own families (or perhaps their families as they would like them to be). Secondary students can make thumbnails. You can ask elementary student to cut out images and/or symbols from magazines and try arranging them several ways on a background sheet of paper.

Feedback: Consult with each student to discuss and assess thumbnails. With younger students you might ask students to show you several ways they could arrange their images and symbols on a background.

Definitions and Examples: Display slides 9-19 to introduce rhythm and analogous colors.

Techniques: Display slides 20 through 26 to introduce a variety of techniques students might use in their work.

Student Sample: Display slides 27 through 29 as an example of one high school student’s reflection on her Family Layers artwork.

Reflection Assignment: Ask each student to reflect on his/her artwork addressing the following questions.

ARTISTIC PROCESS

1. What materials and techniques did you use to make your artwork?
2. How did these materials and techniques help you to communicate your ideas about your family?
3. What challenges did you face while creating the artwork?
4. What did you do to overcome those challenges?
5. What do you think is the most successful thing about your design? Why?

ARTIST INTENTION

1. Discuss the symbols and words that you used and what the artwork means.
2. How did you use rhythm to help unify your artwork?
3. What analogous color scheme did you use and how do those colors help to communicate the story of your family?

Presentation: Display completed Family Layers artworks. Ask each student, in turn, to share his or her artistic process and intention. Follow each student's presentation with open discussion by the entire class.

Vocabulary

- analogous colors
- collage
- composition
- juxtaposition, juxtapose
- rhythm
- symbol
- typography
- unity

Assessment Guides

OBJECTIVE 1: Students will be able to use rhythm to unify diverse images and symbols within a composition.

Exceeds Expectations: The rhythmic repetition of one or more visual elements creates a strong sense of unity in the artwork.

Meets Expectations: At least one visual element is repeated in a way that helps unify the artwork.

Approaches Expectations: At least one visual element is repeated several times in the artwork.

Fails to Meet Expectations: No visual elements are repeated in the artwork.

OBJECTIVE 2: Students will be able to use analogous colors to unify diverse images and symbols within a composition.

Exceeds Expectations: The effective use of analogous colors creates a strong sense of unity in the artwork.

Meets Expectations: Analogous colors are repeated throughout the artwork in a way that helps unify it.

Approaches Expectations: Analogous colors appear several times in the artwork.

Fails to Meet Expectations: The artwork includes several colors.

OBJECTIVE 3: Students will be able to explain how juxtaposing (combining) images, or symbols can create new or layered meanings.

Exceeds Expectations: The student persuasively explained how the combination of images and/or symbols in his or her artwork suggested new or layered meanings.

Meets Expectations: The student explained how s/he used images and/or symbols to create meaning in his or her artwork.

Approaches Expectations: The student mentioned images or objects s/he chose to include in his or her artwork.

Fails to Meet Expectations: The students made comments about his/her artwork.