

The enduring idea of this lesson plan is identity. Let's start with defining and discussing how identity came to be; then introduce three artists who utilize identity in their works. The lesson will incorporate students learning, defining, and creating their own understanding of identity in a mixed media collage.

According to Webster's, the etymology of identity dates back to the Latin word "idem" meaning the same and in the late 16th century the meaning developed into the modern-day translation as a "quality of being identical." In relationship of human nature and the enduring idea, identity is defined by a relational within an individual that remains moveable and feasts of influential stimuli from the surrounding world. Some social theorists suggest that essentialism is key in defining identity to remain static and unchanging by categorizing individuals by race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. Others suggest a more non-essentialist approach or defer to one defining their identity is contingent of social constructions to form a relationship with values, meanings, and culture. In all, our identity is liquid, constantly changing and is a lens of perceptions to view the world.

The first artist to introduce is Teri Greeves and Native American visual artist of the Kiowa people. Greeves utilizes the medium of bead working to discuss identity of her own and of her people. Her work serves a dual purpose as an instrument to educate others about beadwork and represent her people and Kiowa people. Greeves employs a variety of different vessels to embody her message.

The second artist is Monte Yellow Bird and his ledger artwork as the contemporary artist exploring the concepts of identity. Monte presents identity of himself and his ancestral culture through a traditional tribal art form on ledger documents used during relocation of native tribes throughout the United States. According to Yellow Bird, the chosen medium and the depicted images "can help bad things lose power over us and help good things gain power in our lives. We can all develop narratives that help us understand some of the difficulties we face."

The third artist is Roberto Lugo who identifies himself as a 'ghetto potter' in his artist statement. Lugo was raised in the ghetto of Philadelphia which influenced how he shaped his own identity and convey the theme of identity through his work. He discusses the effects and prevalence of drugs, violence, and poverty throughout his neighborhood of Puerto Ricans. His forms and decorative styles explore this theme of feeling like an outsider in a privileged part of society.