

Senegalese Jewelry

Lesson plan written by Jenny Marvel and Vicki Rovine

Overview Students will explore images of Senegalese gold and silver jewelry and consider its cultural and social significance for the women that design and wear it, how it is made, and its relevance to their own lives.

Essential Questions

- What does art tell us about the values or point of view of the artist? What does it tell us about the person who uses or wears the art?
- How do people use, experience, or take in art?
- What makes art valuable?

Grade Level K-5

Content Area Visual Art

Standard Alignment with NC Standards

Visual Art K.V.1 – 5. V.1 Use the language of visual arts to communicate effectively.

Visual Art K.V.2 – 5. V.2 Apply creative and critical thinking skills to artistic expression.

Visual Art K.V.3 – 5. V.3 Create art using a variety of tools, media, and processes, safely and appropriately.

Visual Art K.CX.1 – 5.CX.1 Understand the global, historical, societal, and cultural contexts of the visual arts.

Visual Art K.CX.2 – 5.CX.2 Understand the interdisciplinary connections and life applications of the visual arts.

Suggested Length of Time Four or five 40–45-minute sessions

Materials needed

- [Senegalese Jewelry slides](#)
- [PDF Senegal Photographs - Gold Jewelry Store Display](#)
- [PDF Senegalese Gold Jewelry – Smithsonian National Museum of African Art collection](#)
- [PDF Senegalese Imitation Gold Jewelry – Smithsonian National Museum of African Art collection](#)
- [PDF Senegal Photographs – Imitation Gold Jewelry Outdoor Market Display](#)
- [PDF Imitation Gold Jewelry from Senegal and Mali](#)
- Materials to create personal adornment (headwear or jewelry) from gold foil, thin metallic material, paper, art materials art materials (i.e. pipe cleaners, gold/silver paper, beads, yarn, etc.) or ordinary objects (i.e. paper clips, safety pins, twist ties, cloth, etc.)

Day 1 – Introduction and Examination of Senegalese Jewelry

Materials

- [Senegalese Jewelry slides](#)
- [3 Ws worksheet](#)
- Pencils
- Anchor chart paper or white board for recording class responses

Procedures

- Introduce Senegal by finding the country on a world map (Slide 1)
 - Senegal is a country in West Africa that has a rich history of personal adornment—clothing, hairstyles, cosmetics, and the focus of this lesson: jewelry.
 - Senegal is just south of the Sahara desert, with its coastline projecting into the Atlantic Ocean making it the Westernmost point in Africa.
 - This combination made Senegal an important connecting point between cultures from different parts of Africa, as well as from Europe and the Arab World.
 - Jewelry reflects this multicultural heritage.
 - Senegalese jewelers use all these influences to create unique styles that blend ideas from elsewhere with their own inspirations.
 - Ask children (record answers on white board or chart paper):
 - What is jewelry?
 - Who wears jewelry?
 - Why do people wear jewelry?
 - Senegalese women use jewelry and fashion to express their identity, show their wealth, and to respect those around them by showing that they care to make themselves elegant and beautiful. (Slide 2)
 - Women express this last idea—that taking care of and beautifying oneself is a way of honoring the community—through the term sañse. The women create their own designs that reflect their interests and then commission goldsmiths and jewelers to make necklaces, pendants, bracelets, or rings.
 - As a class, spend time looking closely at the images of Senegalese jewelry (slides 4-9)
 - Look closely at the image and describe what you see. Fill out the 3Ws chart for each piece. You may complete the charts as a large group, in small groups, or individually, depending on grade level/needs of each class. Younger grades may need modeling for the first couple of pieces.
 - WHAT is this jewelry made of? WHAT shapes, colors, materials do you see?
 - WHO might wear this jewelry?
 - WHERE and WHEN might they wear it?
 - After you have examined each piece, ask students, “What do you think is important to the people or culture that made this piece of jewelry?”
 - Continue the discussion by asking them about their thoughts about the jewelry pieces. What did they like the most about the jewelry? What did they like the least? Which one would you own and where would you wear it? Have students share their thoughts with a classmate or with the whole group.
 - Conclude the conversation by having the students think about what they (and their family members) wear to mark a celebration or a special occasion. Have students share with a classmate or with the whole group.
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Day 2 – Commissioning and Making Jewelry

Materials

- [Senegalese Jewelry slides](#)
- [Photos of senegalese jewelry + Commission Handout](#) (printed prior to class session)
- Pencils

Procedures

- Review the previous lesson with the students and remind them you are learning about jewelry making in Senegal.

- Review [Slide 2](#) of the slide deck and remind students that women in Senegal often design their own jewelry then commission artists to create it for them.
 - Commissioning: requesting artistic services for a fee; paying an artist to make a specific design
 - Oftentimes, the jewelry design reflects a specific event or celebration that it will be worn at.
- Jewelers and goldsmiths work at jewelry stores (slide 3) to create commissioned pieces.
 - It is the jeweler's job to use the design to make the object that meets the approval of the woman commissioning it.
- Divide the students into small groups (3-4 students each) and give each group a [printed image of Senegalese jewelry and the accompanying commission handout](#). Challenge them to create a list of words they would use to describe it if they were visiting a jeweler to commission that piece. Have the groups share their word lists and discuss their choices as a class.
- As a class, [watch video](#) (14:20) of Senegalese master jeweler Modou Fall Tall creating a Biconical pendant (Slide 10). After the video, ask students what they noticed. Discuss some of the steps involved in making the pendant.

Note, if you have extra time after the video, students may begin working on their own jewelry design (procedures listed in Day 3)

Day 3 – The Color Gold: Narrative or Perspective Writing / Create Jewelry Design

Materials:

- [Senegalese Jewelry slides](#)
- [Jewelry Design sheet](#)
- Paper
- Pencils

Procedures

- Pull up [Slide 2](#) and revisit the ideas from previous lessons
 - Jewelry as *sañse* in Senegal
 - *Commissioning* jewelers and goldsmiths to create jewelry designs
- Ask students to think about and share their own associations with gold. Record their ideas on board or chart paper.
 - What is the first thing you think about when you hear the word “gold”? Why?
 - What things can you think of that are gold?
 - THINK/PAIR/SHARE: What if these things were a different color? Would you feel the same or differently about them?
- Pull up [slides 4-9](#) and revisit the Senegalese jewelry images. Ask students
 - What would you think about this piece if it was not gold?
 - Do you think these pieces would be as valuable if they were not gold?
- Hand out the [Jewelry Design sheet](#) and instruct students to create their own piece of gold jewelry for commission.
 - Now it is your turn to draw and design a piece of personal adornment that they would like to wear, to express something important to them.
 - The piece could be worn anywhere on your body (necklace, bracelet, earrings, grill, ring, etc.)
 - The piece might show everyone what you love to do, what your favorite things are, what you want to be when you grow up. How can your piece show what's important to you?

- Make sure to be specific about shapes and details you want included in your piece. Think back to the lists you made when describing the pictured jewelry pieces for commission.
 - Give students time (20 - 30 minutes) in class for students to work on their designs – this activity may extend to Day 4.
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Day 4/5 – Creating Own Personal Adornment (use design from Day 2 or create new design)

Materials

- [Senegalese Jewelry slides](#)
- Art making materials will vary based on grade level: gold/silver colored paper, pipe cleaners, yarn, beads, fabric, model magic, markers, scissors, gold foil, etc.

Procedures

- Return students' Jewelry Design sheets from Day 3. Any student who has not finished their design may continue working while you continue the lesson.
- Remind students that you have been examining gold jewelry from Senegal, commissioned by women for *sañse*.
- Pull up [slide 11](#) and ask students to describe what they see.
- Revisit the 3 Ws chart as a class (slide 12).
- Flip to slides 13 and 14 to reveal that these jewelry pieces are not made of gold. Did they fool you?
 - How are these objects similar or different from gold jewelry?
- Tell students that many people in Senegal cannot afford to commission gold jewelry. Instead, they buy jewelry made from other materials at street markets (slide 15)
 - What do you see in these images?
 - How is this the same and different from buying jewelry from a store? (compare slide 15 with slide 3)
- Now students will make their own jewelry pieces out of alternative materials. Artmaking materials and experiences will need to be adjusted to suit the ages and abilities of your students. You will likely want to limit materials for younger students or introduce embossing or metal stamping to older students.
- This activity may extend into a 5th day.
- When students finish their design, they may present it to the class, explain the materials and techniques used, and point out how it demonstrates what's important to them.

Possibilities for Extension

Global Extensions: Research other global traditions in jewelry making and adornment.

Possible Art Terms:

Embossing: to decorate with a raised pattern or design

Easy Embossing for Kids in 5 steps – YouTube – www.youtube.com/watch?v=wobJ_HgTMtk

Metal stamping: hammering designs into metal with a tool

Stamping on Metal for Kids, DIY Craft – YouTube – www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I5LrSIfVDg

Filigree: a form of intricate metalwork used in jewelry and other small forms of metalwork.

Additional Educator Jewelry Art Making Web Resources:

- Family Activities: Good as Gold, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC
<https://learn.ncartmuseum.org/resources/family-activities-good-as-gold/>
- Curriculum Guide, Jewelry of Ideas: The Susan Grant Lewin Collection, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design www.scadmoa.org/sites/moa/files/2019-01/Jewelry-of-Ideas-lesson-plan.pdf
- Paper Jewelry Activity, *All Is Possible: Mary Ann Scherr's Legacy in Metal* exhibition, Gregg Museum of Art & Design <https://gregg.arts.ncsu.edu/exhibitions/all-is-possible/>
- "Five Jewelry Techniques to use in the Art Room," by Abby Schukei, The Art of Education
<https://theartofeducation.edu/2016/08/12/5-jewelry-techniques-use-art-room/>

Smithsonian National Museum of African Art collection

- Images and information of Senegalese Gold Jewelry from the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art collection
 - Tukolor artist (Senegal or Mali), *Korval* Necklace, Late 19th-early 20th century, [2012-18-15](#)
 - Wolof artist (Senegal), *Kostine* Necklace, 1930s – 1940s, [2012-18-4](#)
 - Wolof or Tukolor artist (Senegal), Pendant, 1930s-1950s, [2012-18-45](#)
 - Wolof or Tukolor artist (Senegal), Bracelet (*Loi de Lamine Guéye*), Mid-late 20th century, [2012-18-170](#)
 - Unidentified artist (Senegal), Bracelet, Late 20th century-early 2000s, [2012-18-182](#)
 - Wolof artist (Senegal), Ring, 1950s – 1970s, [2012-18-127](#)
- Images of Senegalese imitation gold jewelry from the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art collection
 - Unidentified artist (Dakar, Senegal), Earrings, Mid to late 20th century, [2012-18-34](#)
 - Unidentified artist (Dakar, Senegal), Necklace, Mid to late 20th century, [2012-18-33](#)
- *Good as Gold: Fashioning Senegalese Women*, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington DC
<https://africa.si.edu/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/good-as-gold-fashioning-senegalese-women/>

Bibliography and Web Resources:

- Johnson, Marian Ashby. "[Gold Jewelry of the Wolof and the Tukolor of Senegal](#)," *African Arts*. Vol. 27, No. 1, Memorial to John Povey (Jan., 1994), pp. 36-49+94-95 (16 pages)
- Amanda Maples, Marian Ashby Johnson, Kevin D. Dumouchelle. *Good as Gold: Fashioning Senegalese Women* exhibition catalogue, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington, DC, 2018.
- "Sañse: Dressing for Success," *Good as Gold: Fashioning Senegalese Women*, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington DC
<https://africa.si.edu/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/good-as-gold-fashioning-senegalese-women/good-as-gold-fashioning-senegalese-womensanse-dressing-for-success/>

- “Dressing to the Nines: Sañse” *Good as Gold: Fashioning Senegalese Women*, North Carolina Museum of Art (video length 1 minute)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekwWDMgiFw4>
- “In Senegal, Female Empowerment, Prestige and Wealth Is Measured in Glittering Gold”, Smithsonian Magazine, November 5, 2018
www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/senegal-female-empowerment-prestige-and-wealth-measured-glittering-gold-180970698/
- Biconical pendant by Senegalese master jeweler Modou Fall Tall (video length 14:20 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0WCxxvVHDA>
- “Moments in Metal: basket of Flowers Necklace” with NCMA curator Amanda Maples, Ackland Art Museum (video length 13:37 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dl6ORB3zbL4>