

## **Souwere in Senegal (Sous-Verre)**

Lesson Plan by Stacey Sewall

### **Brief Overview**

Sous-verre means “under glass” in French. The Wolof word for the technique is Souwere. This technique is also known as "reverse glass painting," because in this form of art, the artist paints on the back of a piece of glass, and paints the image in reverse order. Facial expressions and details are painted on first, and background scenes are applied last, with drying time in between each layer. This lesson plan teaches this art form through the lens of Senegalese culture. Students will use substitutes for glass such as acetate sheets or transparency paper to create a souwere (sous-verre) of their own.

### **Essential Questions**

- Why do people make art?
- What does art tell us about a culture?
- How does art tell a story?

### **Intended Grade Levels 3-5**

#### **Standard Alignment with NC Standards**

*Standards listed here are for 3rd grade, but may be amended for older grades*

- 3.V.1.4 Understand characteristics of the Elements of Art, including lines, shapes, colors, textures, form, space, and value.
- 3.V.2.1 Create art through a process that includes generating ideas, planning solutions, and producing original art.
- 3.V.2 Apply creative and critical thinking skills to artistic expression.
- 3.V.2.3 Create art from realistic sources of inspiration.
  
- 3.V.3 Create art using a variety of tools, media, and processes, safely and appropriately.
- 3.V.3.2 Use a variety of media with refined skills.
- 3.V.3.3 Create art using the processes of drawing, painting, weaving, printing, stitchery, collage, mixed media, sculpture, ceramics, and current technology
  
- 3.CX.1 Understand the global, historical, societal, and cultural contexts of the visual arts.
- 3.CX.1.5 Use local, natural, or recycled resources to create art.
  
- 3.CR.1 Use critical analysis to generate responses to a variety of prompts.

**Suggested Time** 3, 45-50-minute lessons

## Materials

[Google slides](#)

Gathered natural materials such as leaves, flowers, grass, feathers

Acetate pages or transparency paper-- enough for each student

Black acrylic paint and fine brushes/toothpicks OR sharpies

Acrylic paint in different colors

Brushes of different sizes and textures

Fixative spray

Optional: cardstock for mounting

## Procedures

### Day 1

- Introduce the unit by asking students what they know about the country of Senegal. You may want to point Senegal out on a map or show [photos](#) of the country.
- Tell students that over the next few lessons, they will be learning about a special art technique from Senegal. This technique may be called:
  - Souwere (“soo-where”) in the Senegalese dialect called Wolof
  - Sous-verre (“soo-vair”) in French
- Before you tell the students about the technique, allow them to observe the image on slide 1 and ask what they notice.
  - What materials is the artist using?
- Show the images on slide 2. Instruct students to take some time to look closely at the images.
  - What do you see?
  - What do you think you know about these pieces of art?
  - What do you wonder?

*note: you may either call on students to share their ideas aloud, have them discuss them with a partner, or have them record their ideas in a chart on paper*

- Tell students that sous verre works are created by painting layers of paint on glass BACKWARDS so when you flip it over, the image is reversed.
- Show the video on slide 3. In it, the artist Anta Gaye teaches a group of American educators how to create sous verre pieces inspired by nature.
  - Instruct students to pay careful attention because beginning next time, they will be creating sous verre pieces of their own.
- THINK | PAIR | SHARE What steps are involved in creating a sous verre artwork? What materials do you need?
- Ask students to bring in inspiration materials next time: natural materials, photos, etc. that they may want to incorporate into their sous verre projects.

## Day 2

- Prior to the lesson you may want to gather some natural materials for students to use as inspiration. You may also choose to take a nature walk outside to gather materials.
- To introduce the activity, remind students of the sous verre artwork by showing the images on slides 4-5.
- Ask students what they can remember about the process of creating a sous verre. Write the steps on the board.
  - Step 1: Place inspiration materials down on the table
  - Step 2: Place acetate/transparency on top
  - Step 3: Trace the outline of the object with black paint OR sharpie
  - Step 4: Once outline is dry, dab paint on. Try different techniques and tools to paint!
  - Step 6: Lift it up to see your progress.
  - Allow paint to dry in between layers!
  - Be spontaneous-- there are no mistakes!
- Pass out art materials: acetate/transparency paper, sharpies or paint and brushes (note: some students may benefit from having the top edge of their transparency paper taped down to the desk/table)
- Students will begin tracing the outlines of their inspiration materials. The goal for the day is to finish these outlines before the end of the lesson.
- As students work, you might like to play [music from Senegal](#).

## Day 3

- Students will use a variety of colors to paint the next layer of their composition. Make available a variety of different types of brushes, dabbers, paper to crumble, etc. so students can experiment with painting techniques.
- Students should work to finish their pieces today.
- Once the work is dry, spray the painted side of each student's work with fixative spray to preserve it. You may also choose to mount it on cardstock for greater stability.