



Lesson: Triptych

Grades 6 - 12

Core Content Area Language arts, social studies, visual arts

Themes Personal stories, values, and identity

Arts Vocabulary Artistic investigations, attributes, color, illustration, line, shape, texture, visual imagery, tableau

Materials Paper, markers/crayons, pencils, binding materials, digital photos
Optional extension: Add biographical research materials

Time If done as written, allow 45-60 minutes. However, this lesson can be divided into three mini-lessons, each about 25 minutes long:

1. Background + Step 1
2. Step 2 + refine image created in Step 1
3. Step 3 + Reflection

Background

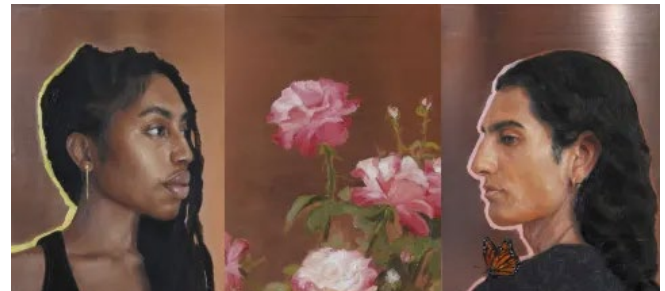
Everyone has a story to tell. In *Where Blooming Flowers Meet the Sky*, Zhuli shares important parts of her life story through a visual art technique called a “triptych.” A triptych is a set of three artistic works that are connected to one another and displayed together.



<https://wrightsonarts.com/pages/triptych-article-triptych-painting-wall-art>



<https://mammothmemory.net/art/art-vocabulary/common-terms/triptych.html>



<https://www.mendocino.edu/events/2023-annual-student-art-exhibit>

Here is what Zhuli included in her triptych:

Panel 1 “Oppressor” shows a white man arguing with a white woman while he paints a picture of a black family.

Panel 2 “Ancestor” shows Zhuli as a child reaching toward a magical tree filled with faces and her father in the sky.

Panel 3 “Master” shows Zhuli’s reflection in which she is fearful and cannot speak but has butterfly wings growing from her back.

If you were to create a triptych of three important elements of your life, what would you choose to include? What kind of things do you want people to know about you?

In this lesson you will create your own triptych that expresses the special people, causes, and values that matter most to you.

Lesson Procedure

1.) Triptych Panel 1 – Create an image that represents people who have made a significant impact on your life

These might be people who have cared for you, challenged you, and/or changed you in some way. Consider family members, friends, neighbors, teachers, teammates, classmates, and more.

- *How will you use color, line, shape and texture to show these people in your image?*
 - You might draw pictures of these special people in your life, you might write their names in their favorite colors, or you might think of a different way...

2.) Triptych Panel 2 – Create an image that represents a social issue or cause that is important to you

Some ideas for social issues and causes include;

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| ○ Climate change | ○ Youth voice | ○ Animal protection |
| ○ Food insecurity | ○ Gender equality | ○ LGBTQIA+ Rights |
| ○ Racism | ○ Single use plastics | ○ Arts in schools |
| ○ Curing diseases | ○ Bullying | ○ War and conflict |

- *How will you use color, line, shape and texture to show the cause you chose?*
- *Visually, how will Panel 2 connect with Panel 1? Repeated colors and shapes? A line(s) that flows from one panel to the next?*

3.) Triptych Panel 3 – Create an image that represents a value which is important to you

Values are a person’s principles. These are qualities, characteristics, or ideas about which a person feels strongly. Our values guide how we behave and relate to others. Common values include things like:

- | | | |
|------------|---------------|----------------|
| ○ Honesty | ○ Creativity | ○ Teamwork |
| ○ Loyalty | ○ Achievement | ○ Trust |
| ○ Fairness | ○ Reliability | ○ Education |
| ○ Respect | ○ Kindness | ○ Independence |
| ○ Empathy | ○ Success | ○ Courage |

- *How will you use color, line, shape and texture to communicate your chosen value?*

- For example, if you chose Kindness as your value, you might use a color like light blue to and a shape like a heart to represent this value. Or, you might draw a picture of a time when you showed kindness to someone – like sharing your toys or helping someone when they were injured.

4.) Reflection Questions

- What is one thing you are proud of or like best in your triptych?
- Did you have any moments like Zhuli where you found it hard to express yourself in your triptych? Why do you think it was hard for you?
- What surprised you about your creation?
- What themes did you have in common with others? Perhaps many students chose to include both family and neighbors in Panel 1, or many students chose similar values in Panel 3.

Extensions

1.) Conduct a Gallery Walk

Set a time for one-half of the group to show their work while the other half are the viewers. Then flip groups. After students have had the opportunity to see each other's triptych's, discuss or write on the following:

- What are some of the key people, experiences or values that showed up in students' creations?
- Were there any similarities or differences?
- What social issues or causes were represented?

2.) Triptych of a Change Maker

As a class, in small groups or as individuals, select civil rights or social justice leaders and research their stories so that you can create a triptych that expresses that leader.

Possible leaders could include Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott King, Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X, John Lewis, Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Cesar Chavez, Thurgood Marshall, among others, or living leaders like Ruby Bridges, Dolores Huerta, Greta Thunberg or Malala Yousafzai.

3.) Alternative to Drawing Pictures

As an alternative to drawing pictures, consider using collage to incorporate media elements like photographs, historical documents/images, and clippings from magazines and newspapers.

Alternatively, consider using a theatre format by working in groups to create "tableaus" which represent different elements from the triptych. Tableaus are frozen images created when a group of people pose together and hold their positions. Participants can use facial expressions as well as gesture and body positions to tell the story. The tableaus should use different height levels and dynamic shapes made with the body as the group represents people or objects in the picture. Physically present the sequence of tableaus to the rest of the class.