



INTERNATIONAL
MUSEUM OF WOMEN

Global Beauty: Inside and Out

Objective: Friends, family, culture, society and individuals define beauty. Using art created by women from all over the world, we will explore definitions of beauty. The objective of this workshop is to expose students to a global perspective of beauty and to challenge societal/personal norms of beauty.

Estimated time needed to complete workshop 90 minutes

Materials:

- Images from 'Women of the World : A Global Collection of Art'
- Map of the world
- Arts supplies: scissors, glue, tape, markers, colored pencils, pens/pencils, and paper (different textures and colors)
- Varied magazines, both national and international, variety to include nature, sports, food, diverse ages, ethnicities and sexual orientations
- Large notepad

Equipment:

- Instant/Polaroid cameras (optional)
- CD player and CDs (optional)

Ground Rules:

- Please use positive language, no put downs
- Be respectful and listen to others when they are talking
- Please do not talk while others are talking
- Please turn off cell phones
- Please keep what is said here confidential
- Have fun, be creative, and speak up!

Workshop:

1. Introductions (10 minutes)

Facilitators introduce themselves and provide a verbal or preferably written outline for students, including the ground rules which should be developed with students. A fun, short introduction game is always a good way to begin a program. A simple question that everyone answers pertinent to your workshop can be an easy way to ease into a topic. Facilitators should participate in this activity as well. In this exercise the introduction of international music via CD or cassette is especially fun.

Questions to introduce the topic of beauty could include:

- Describe something or someone that is beautiful
- Can we do something beautiful?
- Can we feel beauty?
- Name something beautiful about yourself.

2. Large Group Discussion of “Women of the World” Images (15 minutes)

Wall Mural of images from “Women of the World: A Global Collection of Art” should be displayed on a wall or table prior to students entering the room.

This activity introduces students to global art created by women. It also supports and encourages critical thinking and geographic knowledge. Before introducing the images and activity, facilitators will share some facts about women and art:

- While 90% of artists’ models are women, only 5% of all artwork in museums is made by women.
- The images that will be shared today are important for all of us because they are by women and let us learn about their everyday lives around the globe.

The “Women of the World: A Global Collection of Art” exhibit, sponsored by the International Museum of Women in San Francisco in 2003, displayed images reflecting the perspectives of 174 women living in 174 countries around the world. Through a variety of artistic practices (paintings, woodwork, glasswork, fiber art), they answered the question, “What image represents woman?” Although no two images were alike, they shared the common theme of what it is like to be a woman in this world.

Remind everyone that there are no wrong answers and that we want to hear their voices. Ask students to select a picture from those displayed that speaks to them about female beauty. Facilitators can ask the following questions as each piece is selected:

- Why were you drawn to this piece?
- Share something you find beautiful about the piece. Does this fit or change your ideas about beauty?
- What country do you think this artist is from and why?
- Can the student locate the country of this artist on the map?

- Have any students/facilitators been to this country who might share additional information?

Facilitators then provide information about the piece (see end notes), including the artist, country of origin, and intentions of the artist. Return selected images to their original space. Repeat this process for about 15 minutes or at least six images have been selected.

3. Group Magazine Collage (10 minutes)

This activity explores media and societies' influences on how we are perceived as women and girls.

Distribute magazines to the group, and ask them to tear out pictures that represent beauty. Facilitators should designate a space near the Women of the World Mural where students or a facilitator (with tape) will place their images. Facts about women/young girls and beauty can be shared while the students are selecting their images.

Here are some facts and statistics about women and beauty:

- In the U.S. in 2000, people spent 6 billion dollars on makeup.
- 20 billion dollars was spent on diet products and services - in addition to the billions that were paid out for health club memberships and cosmetic surgery. (National Geographic)
- It is estimated that every 2 seconds, a Barbie doll is being purchased for a young girl somewhere in the world. If Barbie were human, her measurements would be 33-18-28 inches or 83.8 – 45.7 – 71.7 cm which is "almost not possible anatomically" (Marilyn Motz - professor at Bowling Green State University).
NOTE: it really catches the students' attention when you measure out a piece of ribbon that's 18 inches or 45.7 centimeters long and say: "Ok, everybody look: If Barbie were a real woman her waist would only be this long." Take the ribbon and try to wrap it around one of the facilitators' waists...it barely reached halfway around one of the facilitator's waists of 'average' size.
- About 90 percent of people with eating disorders are adolescent and young women. NOTE: ask students why they think these numbers are so high. "Do you think that if girls are purchasing Barbies every 2 seconds, they might think Barbies represent a woman's beauty and strive to look similar while harming their health?"
- In Papua New Guinea "...Men are the objects of beauty," says anthropologist Nancy Sullivan. "To be masculine is to be well made-up." NOTE: this fact points out how disproportionate the expectations for women to be objects of beauty are in most societies. Men as objects of beauty may bring a few giggles to some students, so say it just goes to show that everyone is different and people all over the world hold different beliefs.

- In the U.S. in 2000, people spent 6 billion dollars on fragrance. Hair and skin-care products drew 8 billion dollars each, while fingernail items alone accounted for a billion.
- According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, almost 3 million cosmetic procedures were performed in the U.S. in 1998.
- According to a study at the Harvard Eating Disorders Center in Boston, 80% of women are dissatisfied with their bodies.
- In 1998, doctors in the U.S. performed 47,000 cosmetic procedures on teens alone

4. **Discussion of the Collages** (15 minutes, large group)

Ask students to view the collage they created. What are the similarities and differences between their collage and the Women of the World collage?
One facilitator should ask the large group questions about their findings while the other records the group's responses. Be sure to touch upon certain issues reflecting body image, identity, and ethnicity. Facilitators may want to ask the following questions to further engage students:

- What is the general body type of the people? Why?
- Do they appear confident, happy, submissive, or assertive?
- What are they doing in the pictures?
- How do these images differ in terms of their geographic locations?
- What's the average age of the images?
- What are their ethnicities?
- Can you relate to these images?
- Who and what is left out? (Older people, certain ethnicities and activities, female athletes, eating (healthy). Who created these images?
- Does the collage fit your ideas of beauty?
- Ask students to notice the differences and similarities between the images from the two collages.

5. **Venn diagram** (Individual, 10 minutes)

If time permits have students individually work on a Venn diagram that compares and contrasts collage one and two. This is a time for them to more personally define where they find beauty in the collages. Be sure that all students are familiar with the Venn diagram format, and explain that one circle represents collage 1 (images from Women of the World) and the other circle collage 2 (magazine images). Students will write down what they find beautiful about the two collages within the intersection of the two circles. Did students discover new ideas of beauty?

6. Open Studio Activities (30 minutes)

- Students create a personal collage from magazines exploring their idea(s) of beauty. If Polaroid cameras are available, students may choose to take pictures of what is beautiful in their outside or indoor environment. Remind students to think about the definition(s) of beauty that were just discussed and explore those in their collages.
- Students may alternatively write about what beauty means to them in the form of poetry or a short essay.

7. Clean-up (5-10 Minutes)

End Notes

Resources:

Medic8® Family Health Guide <http://www.medic8.com/healthguide/articles/anorexia.html>
Beauty and Body Image in the Media http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotyping/women_and_girls/women_beauty.cfm
Media Portrayals of Girls and Women: Introduction http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotyping/women_and_girls/index.cfm

Women of the World Artists:

Cambodia - *Theoung Minn*

She arrived in America with her family in mid-1980s. She volunteers at nursing homes and performs traditional Cambodian dances at local functions. She studies at the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other languages Program at California State Sacramento. Her primary desire is to return to Cambodia one day to help rebuild it.

Being Cambodian women means having to maintain two identities. One is my parents' expectation and the other is who I really am. My painting depicts these two sides, which are sometimes hard to blend.

Cambodia is located in South East Asia.

Croatia - *Sonja Vuk*:

Women grow up on fairy tales, love novels, and romantic movies. We expect a perfect prince to wake us with a kiss. When dreams become reality and we think "the perfect one is here," we find there is no recipe in fairy tales for everyday life. Reality hurts.

Croatia is located in south- eastern Europe in the Balkan Peninsula.

Democratic republic of Congo-*Nathalie Ndolo*

This pregnant woman is on her way back from the farm. She carries a basket of cassava and tubers and a bucket of water. Her daughter carries her little brother and a pot of water. The girl will not go to school because African custom obliges daughters to help their mothers.

She has a small arts workshop where she draws, paints, and plays music.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is in Central Africa, the third largest country on the African continent.

El Salvador-*Karlisima*

She came to US with her siblings in 1984. She attended Washington University in St. Louis, majoring in painting. She teaches art, paints on commission, and is employed as a copyist by the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

This painting represents the way I see myself, as an introspective woman, meditating, with wisdom gained through experience. I feel strong and proud to represent El Salvador and my Mayan heritage through my work.

India-*Jhumka Gupta*

A woman can be subtle as water, as raging as fire, as fruitful as the earth, or as encompassing as air. The Hindu goddess Durga symbolizes strength. Her many arms and third eye represent divine power. The objects she holds illustrate aspects of femininity.

Kuwait- *Thuraya Al-Baqsam*

In waiting, six Kuwaiti women hope for the return of their husbands, sons, and brothers who were taken hostage during the brutal Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The women reflect sadness, worry, anger, and confusion. The white spots in the background are the women's dreams. Their light blue clothes are typical of what women wear when they pray. Light blue also represents innocence.

Thuraya Al-Baqsami is a journalist and illustrator in Kuwait. She has written short stories, children's book, and art criticism.

Liberia-Cecilia King

The designs and patterns represent a women's roles. Her eyes are shut because she sees the world through her mind's eye and interacts with it through her heart. Her mouth is closed because she has to move quietly. The world does not consider talkative women beautiful, so she has to have move quiet strength. The figure in the hair symbolizes a women's desire for freedom.

Cecilia King is a self-taught artist whose lithographs are in galleries and private homes around the world.