

## Hildegard Center for the Arts “Heroes Among Us” “My Hero” Painted Story Quilt

Adapted with permission from Blick Art Materials’ “Story Quilt” Lesson Plan  
([www.dickblick.com/lesson-plans/painted-story-quilt](http://www.dickblick.com/lesson-plans/painted-story-quilt))

*For Grades K-12 in the areas of Art, Social Studies and Literature*

**Purpose:** In conjunction with their studies of “Heroes”, Students will create art in the form of a quilt that tells the story of a Hero

### **Objectives:**

- Students select and use subject matter, symbols and ideas to communicate meaning
- Students use the theme “Heroes” to demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks
- Students reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to their theme

National Standards that may be met:

- Students describe how different materials, techniques and processes cause different responses.
- Students use different media, techniques and processes to communicate ideas, experiences and stories.
- Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner.
- Students describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses.
- Students explore and understand prospective content for works of art.
- Students select and use subject matter, symbols and ideas to communicate meaning.
- Students demonstrate how history, culture and the visual art can influence each other in making and studying works of art.
- Students understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art.
- Students describe how people’s experiences influence the development of specific artworks.
- Students understand there are different responses to specific artworks.

Quilt-making spans multiple centuries and many different cultures. It’s an art form that can teach basic math skills, record history, recycle cast-off materials and encourage cooperative efforts within a group...just to name a few ideas. Artist and author Faith Ringgold is renowned for her painted story quilts. She surrounds her narrative paintings with a quilted fabric border, creating visual art that tells a story in color, texture and pattern.

In this lesson, students are asked to select a hero (and possibly the story behind their heroism) to share through painting (or using a silk screen process) a scene on fabric using water-soluble pastels and watercolor paint. The remaining fabric is painted with complimenting colors and patterns to make a border and glued when dry to a piece of felt. Students are encouraged to share swatches with one another, just as fabrics have been created and shared in quilt making for centuries. As an option, students define key shapes with embroidery stitches and add beads or other embellishments.

### **Materials:**

- Sets of water-soluble wax pastels
- Assorted colors of liquid watercolors
- Sable round brushes
- 6-well trays
- Unbleached muslin (need 12" x 16" per student)
- Black felt (need 12" x 16" per student)
- Elmer's tacky glue
- Water
- Paper Towels

Optional: glass beads, embroidery floss and needles, additional embellishments

### **Process:**

- Ask students to select the Hero (and possibly the scene portraying heroism) they wish to use for their art and make sketches. Muslin is translucent enough that sketches may be placed beneath and traced.
- Paint the story on a portion of the muslin, approximately 8" x 10". Water-soluble wax pastels and watercolor work well. The wax pastel acts as a resist with the watercolor and is used to draw details in the painting. Fabric will absorb watercolor and make soft edges. Note: muslin will curl when wet but will flatten again when glue is applied.
- Older students will paint shapes and pieces of the story, cut them out and assemble them together; younger students will simply paint on the piece of fabric without cutting it apart.
- Glue the story painting to the center of the piece of felt, making sure the edges are securely attached. Trim any unraveled fabric.
- Cut the remaining pieces of fabric into 4" squares and paint the pieces that will be used in the border. Use patterns and colors that will further describe what is happening in the story. Allow to dry and cut the 4" pieces into squares or rectangles. Students may be encouraged to share some of their pieces so they incorporate other's paintings into their own. Glue the border in place around the story painting.

### **Options:**

- Older students may use embroidery needle and floss to carefully define certain areas of the quilt with a variety of embroidery stitches.

- Beads, ribbon, lace, buttons and other materials can be incorporated into the design with glue or stitching.
- Younger students may use a fine-line marker to define certain areas of the painting or to make “faux” stitches on their quilt.

**Conclusion:**

- Students will identify the hero they have selected to portray
- Students will explain the story/figure they have created to the class and how they used their art to tell this story
- Students will write an artist statement that tells of the story told in their quilts and any insights into their creative process