

EMANCIPATION THROUGH THE ART OF META WARRICK FULLER

EDUCATOR COMPANION GUIDE

Overview:

This activity explores the historical context and motivations behind Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller’s visual representation of freedom in her sculpture *Emancipation*. It connects her work with the legacy of Juneteenth, the Emancipation Proclamation, and commemorative artwork within local Black communities.

This activity does not independently provide full review of the complex history of Juneteenth, Emancipation, the Civil War, the institution of slavery in the United States, and the ongoing struggle for civil rights in the 20th & 21st centuries. Educators are encouraged to first review resources like “Teaching Hard History: American Slavery” and “Teaching Juneteenth” from Learning for Justice (linked below), then use this resource to connect local Massachusetts art and artists within the larger historical context.

Learning Goals:

- Student will discuss the historical legacies of Juneteenth and the Emancipation Proclamation.
- Students will learn about a local artist and her artwork in relation to historical events.
- Students will reflect on progress and challenges related to their own lives.

Essential Question:

How do people reflect on and celebrate freedom for Black Americans? How do we understand challenges and recognize accomplishments?

Words to know:

- 13th Amendment: The amendment to the United States Constitution that formally abolished slavery. The Section 1 text says, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.” The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments together expanded legal citizenship and civil rights for Black Americans. However, like the Emancipation Proclamation, the Amendments failed to guarantee equal rights and treatment for people of color in the United States.
- Allegory: a symbolic representation
- Commemorate: recall and show respect for; celebrate
- Concept / conceptualize: organize around a main idea or theme
- Edify: to instruct and improve
- Emancipate: to free from restraint or control
- Emancipation Proclamation: President Abraham Lincoln’s January 1st, 1863 order that all enslaved individuals “shall be free.” The Emancipation Proclamation helped to progress the end of legal slavery in the United States, but it was limited in the liberties it actually provided.
- Enslaved person/peoples: A person/peoples held in bondage against their will. This person-first style language acknowledges the forced imposition of the institution of slavery.
- Freedom: the quality or state of being free: such as: the absence of necessity, coercion, or constraint in choice or action, and/or the liberation from slavery or restraint or from the power of another
- Introspective: thoughtfully reflective, especially on one’s own ideas and feelings
- Memorial/memorialize: serving to preserve remembrance
- National Emancipation Exposition of 1913: The celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, held in New York City, NY, October 1913. W.E.B. Dubois, as one of the event Commissioners and an artistic contributor, commissioned Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller to create

JUNETEENTH LESSON

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Framework Connections:

This activity and guide connect to educational frameworks from the Massachusetts Department of Education Learning Standards. Educators are encouraged to use and adapt the materials to supplement existing curriculum lessons.

	Content Standards	Reading	Writing	Speaking & Listening
History and Social Science, Grade 5	Topic 5: Slavery, the legacy of the Civil War, and the struggle for civil rights for all (5.T5. 5-7)	5.RI. 3	5.W.1	5.SL.1-2
History and Social Science, Grade 8	Topic 5. The Constitution, Amendments, and supreme Court decisions (8.T5.1)	8.RCA-H.7	8.WCA.1	8.SCLA.1
History and Social Science, HS US I	Topic 5. The Civil War and Reconstruction (USI.T5. 3-6)			
History and Social Science, HS US II	Topic 2. Modernity in the United States, ideologies and economies (USII.T2.1)			
Visual Arts Standards, Grades 5-8, Foundations-Advanced	Connecting: 11. Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding.			

Additional Resources:

- Danforth Art Museum: [The Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller Collection](#)
- [Harriet Tubman Park, Boston](#)
- [Museum of African American History, Boston](#)
- [The National Center for Afro-American Artists](#)
- [Juneteenth.com](#)
- Learning for Justice: [Juneteenth, Teaching Culture as Resistance](#)
- Learning for Justice: [Teaching Hard History](#)
- PBS UNLADYLIKE2020: [The Changemakers, Meta Warrick Fuller](#)
- Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: [Juneteenth Lesson](#)
- Contemporary Monuments to the Slave Past: [Emancipation](#)
- National Museum of African American History and Culture: [The Historical Legacy of Juneteenth](#)

Bibliography:

- 1."The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: The Sixth Annual Conference, " Crisis 8, No. 2 (June 1914): 82.
2. Murray, Freeman Henry Morris, Emancipated and the Freed in American Sculpture A Study in Interpretation. Washington, D.C.: Murray Brothers, 1916.
3. Ater, Renee, Remaking Race and History: The Sculpture of Meta Warrick Fuller. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011.
4. An Independent Woman: The Life and Art of Meta Warrick Fuller (1968). Framingham: Danforth Museum of Art, 1984.