MASON, BARBARA

LESSON OBJECTIVE(S):

- The students will gain greater understanding of the design principles of pattern, contrast, emphasis, and balance when they produce their own quilt squares.

MATERIALS:

6. Various artists, *Quilts of the 19th and 20th Centuries* (10B), specifically Greenlee's "Crazy Quilt"
7. Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe
8. Stitching Stars: The Story Quilts of Harriet Powers by Mary Lyons, specifically her "Story Quilt"
9. Tar Beach by Faith Ringgold
10. "Quilting the Sun" –a play by Grace Cavalieri
11. Art Materials (paper, pencil, markers, crayons, fabric scraps, scissors)

Time:

- 3 class periods

PROCEDURES:

1. Class One: Using guided questioning techniques, check student understanding of quilts, their uses (both practical household items and decorative art works), and their different styles. Display the Greenlee quilt (10B), pointing out its lines, colors, and spatial emphases.
2. We will also discuss the prevalence of quilt patterns such as those developed by American quilters during this time period. Other quilts and their relationship to art and storytelling, such as Harriet Powers' Bible story quilt will be introduced.
3. Students create quilt squares similar to the style of the Greenlee quilt. Randomness of lines and color contrasts are to be emphasized, as well as the informal balance achieved by using thin strips of color placed "this way and that." The term "contained crazy" quilt is compared to patterns developed by Amish and other American quilters during the twentieth century. Classroom paper squares are connected to form one "classroom quilt."
4. Class Two: Students are briefly taught about Harriet Powers' background, her story quilt themes, and the relative value that has now been assigned to her quilts (one is displayed in the Smithsonian).
5. Discussion will include our own adaptation of the story quilt method, using the story Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe. While I read the

story aloud, students note possible topics for quilt squares, using both phrases and sketches.

6. Class Three: Students help to assemble the story quilt, using simplistic fabric cutouts that are arranged to depict important parts of the story. This is the method used by Harriet Powers and other American women in this narrative art form. Her history is reviewed (see attached), and Lyons' book is discussed. Other forms of story quilting, such as Faith Ringgold's style, are discussed. These are again compared to the regularity of patterns developed in the Amish country.

Assessment:

- Evaluation of their work will be based on the following rubric:
    - Student demonstrates understanding of the principles of pattern, contrast, emphasis, and balance in producing the two different quilt styles.
    - Student demonstrates understanding of the elements of art that apply during this project (line, color, shape, form).
    - Student completes artwork or makes progress during each art class.
- At completion of the unit, students will be asked to answer the following reflective questions in writing:
    - How does the art work in either of these quilts relate to other subjects, such as math, social studies, etc.?
    - How does exposure to these art works, and their histories, improve my understanding and appreciation of art?