

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS:

Reflections on The War in Afghanistan

American Friends Service Committee

Student Activity Guide

Art Meaning: Symbol, Metaphor, and Beyond

Godwin-
Ternbach
Museum



Art and Meaning: Symbol, Metaphor, and Beyond

Memorializing Civilian Casualties

Pre-Museum Activity

About the Exhibition

Windows and Mirrors: is an exhibition that features the terrifying sacrifices innocent people in Afghanistan have to endure everyday.

The mural *Bamiyan Buddha and Weeping Women*, shows a statue of Buddha, located in Bamiyam, Afghanistan. In the late 1800's King Abdurrahman, emir of Afghanistan, defaced it since its Mongol features offended him. Later, in 2001 the Taliban destroyed the remaining parts of the statue based on their belief in Islamic Sharia law that states religious "idols" should be destroyed.



Activity

While studying this work of art answer these questions.

1. What do you see in this work?

2. What in the painting makes you say that?

3. How does the artist express the emotions represented in the mural?

4. What emotions do you experience when looking at this piece?


5. What questions do you have about the work?

This artwork expresses a sense of loss of this icon of art and devotion as a casualty of war. The weeping woman's cries increase in size from left to right. It represents all of mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, grandmothers, and aunts who have lost loved ones to war.

While sitting in front of this piece reflect on how the image differs from when it was viewed on a screen in the classroom. Does it give you a different impression in the exhibition? Compare the emotional portraits that were done in the class prior to your museum visit with the women in the painting.

Museum Activity

Acting out emotions based on the work of art as it relates to war.



Find the painting *Bamiyan Buddah and Weeping Women*.
How did this artist approached the theme of war?

What might be the purpose of this painting?

What in the picture makes you say that?

Break up into groups of 4 and act out what you think the emotional journey of this painting is. The rest of the class will draw the groups poses is the space below.

Back in the Classroom

Create an Emotional Portrait and Border

This mural is divided into 108 rectangles, an auspicious number in many cultures. 1= Bindu (Creation, Sanskrit) 0= Shunyata (Emptiness), 8= Ananta (Infinity). The border is painted in traditional Afghani applique style.

1. What do you notice about the border that surrounds the images in *Bamiyan Buddah and Weeping Women*?
2. What do you notice about the facial expressions of the women portrayed?
3. To complete the emotional sketch create a border using geometric shapes made into a pattern going around the artwork.

Geometric Border Pattern:



Example:

