Questioning a Familiar Picture | Robert Colescott

Research and sources · 3–5 · 45–55 minutes × 2–4 sessions

Context for this inquiry

Use age-appropriate source images and avoid reproducing derogatory imagery

Teach with relevant originals

Use primary artworks, museum biographies, documentary sources or student-conducted observation. The collection cover is an original editorial graphic, not a reproduction of the artist’s work.

Starting sources

Research museum collections

https://americanart.si.edu/art/highlights/african-american

Search for the artist and original works

https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?search=Robert%20Colescott&title=Special%3ASearch&ns0=1

Smithsonian K–12 African American art resources

https://americanart.si.edu/education/k-12/resources/african-american

Looking questions

What do you literally observe? Which design decisions are evident? What is uncertain or missing from this source? What does a second source change?

Source critique

For an artist study, identify the artist, date and medium of each original work before discussing influence. For arts integration, record the data or primary text behind the artwork and test its accuracy.

Copyright, authorship and consent

Contemporary artworks and portraits may require permission for online reproduction. Link to authorized museum or artist pages rather than downloading and reposting. Seek consent for photographs of identifiable people. Public domain status depends on the specific image and jurisdiction; verify before publishing.

Connection back to the studio

Return to How can changing a visual convention reveal a bias? Use source evidence to justify a new artistic response: Reimagined advertisement that exposes a stereotype.