

African American Art: Contemporary Artists Teaching Resources



Overview: Engage students with the art of two contemporary African American artists: Diedrick Brackens and Stephen Hamilton. Looking closely at works by each artist – one a large-scale woven installation and the other a mixed-media piece – students will consider how each artist portrays histories and narratives relevant to their identities as African American men and more broadly in our communities today.

Curriculum: The Arts, Visual Arts, Social Studies, Cultural Studies

Grade Range: 6–12

Program Artworks:

- [shadow raze](#), 2022, Diedrick Brackens (American, born in 1989), Woven cotton and acrylic yarn, Charles Potter Kling Fund (2022.1796.1-4)
- [Joseph Lewis as Eze Nri](#), 2018, Stephen Hamilton (American, born in 1987), Acrylic, natural dyes and pigments on wood, and hand-woven, hand dyed cloth, The Hayden Collection—Charles Henry Hayden Fund (2020.226)

MFA/Boston

Teaching Resources

[Craft in America: Diedrick Brackens](#)

Segment from PBS Craft in America on weaver and artist Diedrick Brackens. (10:54)

Note: This is also viewable as short clips focused on specific aspects of Brackens' work, such as process, use of symbols, and connections between weaving and writing.

[The Founders Project – Stephen Hamilton](#)

The Founders Project was a 2018 multimedia installation project headed by Boston based artist and educator Stephen Hamilton. The project re-imagined Boston Public Schools high school students as the legendary founders of the West and West-Central African ethnic groups that are part of the ancestral base for the African diaspora. The pieces incorporated painting, weaving and sculpture traditions from each of the spotlighted ethnic groups.

[The Founders Project: Companion Resource](#)

13-page PDF resource on The Founders Project, including color images of the artworks, stories of the related founders, and links to sources and suggested reading.

[Sharing Black Stories: Artwork from the MFA, Boston Collection](#)

Designed for educators to use in the classroom, this slide deck features MFA objects that illustrate the creative expression of North American Black artists across time periods and media. Slides includes artwork images, information, and suggestions for teaching with these works.

[K-12 Distance Learning at the MFA – YouTube Playlist](#)

This playlist features previously recorded MFA K-12 webinar programs that highlight special topics and temporary exhibitions. See individual video descriptions for content description, grade level recommendations, and links to related Teaching Resources.

- [African American Art: Black Artists, African Roots](#) (35:08 video)

[MFA Instagram – Installation of shadow raze](#)

Time lapse video showing the installation of *shadow raze* by Diedrick Brackens at the MFA Boston.

[Many Hands](#)

In this 2-minute video, learn about the many hands that work in partnership at the MFA Boston to actualize an exhibition like [Tender Loving Care: Contemporary Art from the Collection](#), on view through July 28, 2025.