RAISING THE VOLUME

with Lauren Sloan

Black mixed-media art and design with Lauren Sloan.

Grades 6th & Up
Mastery of core subjects and twenty-first century themes is essential for all students in the twenty-first century. Core subjects include English, reading or language arts, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history and government, and civics. In addition to these subjects, schools must move forward to include not only a focus on mastery of core subjects, but also an understanding of academic content at much higher levels by weaving twenty-first century interdisciplinary themes into core subjects.

**Global Awareness**
1. Use twenty-first century skills to understand and address global issues.
2. Learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work, and community contexts.

**Civic Literacy**
1. Participate effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes.
2. Exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national, and global levels.
3. Understand the local and global implications of civic decisions.

**Work Creatively with Others**
1. Develop, implement, and communicate new ideas to others effectively.
2. Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work.
3. Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work; understand the real world limits to adopting new ideas.
4. View failure as an opportunity to learn; understand that creativity and innovation is a long-term, cyclical process of small successes and frequent mistakes.
5. Implement innovations.
6. Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the field in which the innovation will occur.
OVERVIEW

Everyone has a story. It’s our place to take a moment to listen. Once you listen, your eyes open. You can put yourself in someone else’s shoes and try to comprehend their experiences. You may be inspired, you may come away with more knowledge, or you may find a bit of yourself in someone else.

“Raising the Volume” is a series of Black stories. Stories about Black entrepreneurs, judges, authors, artists, and leaders in our community. Stories that need to be heard. Led by the Gaillard Center’s Artists-in-Residence, Charlton Singleton and Marcus Amaker, “Raising the Volume” gives a platform to Black community members and opens us all up to honest discussion.

As you introduce this series to your students, follow the bullet points below for discussion. Your students will find that they are challenged to think about uncomfortable things. Those conversations are what will help us change our world. In the words of Judge McFarland, “To break down racial barriers, start where you are.” Let’s start where we are and see what change we can bring to our community.

For each lesson, split your class into small groups for discussion or discuss as a whole. Choose the model that is the most comfortable for your students so they feel free to discuss opinions openly.

Teachers, if you are interested in scheduling a cross-school discussion on Raising the Volume Episode XXXV, please email Kailey Jones at kjones@gaillardcenter.org. Through cross-school Zoom calls, we can offer students from one school a different perspective on the video with students from a second school. We will schedule class-to-class meetings where whole groups can discuss various topics covered in Episode XXXV.
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EPISODE XXXV

(CLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH EPISODE XXXV)
LESSONS

Lauren Sloan is a mixed-media artist, meaning that she incorporates different art forms, materials and techniques into her art pieces. “Mixed media art is not a genre; it's an idea. By mixing different art media or media and processes, artists can express themselves in ways that would not be possible with a singular approach. There are many different ways to incorporate these media in your art, and each technique has a purpose.”

Below are three examples of Sloan’s artwork, with their different artistic medias listed. Observe the artwork carefully and see if you can notice the difference between the medias used and the message of the pieces. In your opinion, why do you think Sloan chose to use these specific medias? What impact do the different medias have on each artwork?

Later in their interview, Marcus Amaker asked Sloan what advice she would give to aspiring artists who want to make a full-time career in the arts. To this, Sloan responded: “I definitely would say that it’s a mindset. You have to stick with it, you can’t stop fighting for yourself, you have to always remember your ‘why’ and also surround yourself with supportive people… I don’t just stick with visual artists. I try to find other artists whether they are musicians or poets, just to surround myself with support because it’s not that easy, but it’s very doable if you don’t give up and you find creative ways to make it work.”

Reflect on the statement above. When Sloan says “to always remember your ‘why,’” what do you think she means by that? What is your “why?”

When speaking about the community of support that Sloan has cultivated for herself, she mentions Redux Contemporary Art Center in Charleston, “a nonprofit organization committed to fostering creativity and the cultivation of contemporary art through diverse exhibitions, affordable studio space for visual artists, meaningful education and outreach programs, and a multidisciplinary approach to the dialogue between artists and their audiences.” To learn more about Redux Contemporary Art Center, click here.

At the close of their interview, Sloan highlights the ways in which she expresses care for herself and recharges her artistic battery. For her, Sloan describes the importance of moving her body physically, in activities like cycling, swimming and jogging, to promote her mental longevity. What are some ways that you show yourself care? Why do you choose those activities specifically?

Follow Lauren Sloan on Instagram
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ABOUT LAUREN SLOAN

Lauren Sloan, born in Columbus, Ohio, is an artist and designer currently based in Charleston, South Carolina. She works across various mediums such as watercolor, mixed media, acrylic, digital and oil. Previously she was located in New York City where she started a female- and artist-led art collective called Fictional Art Collective (FAC). The goal was to create opportunities for emerging artists to be seen and heard. Additionally she worked at Christie’s as an Exhibition Designer, where she helped prepare for multiple art exhibitions under short deadlines. Her artistic approach is rooted in exploring the depths of human perception according to individual thought and aspects of the African Diaspora. Her method takes into account the principles and elements of design within every aspect of the creative process to express her surroundings so that she can draw creative inspiration from ordinary situations. Recently, she is focusing on a new series of paintings of iconic locations in Charleston that have shaped the African American experience.³

Marcus Amaker was named Charleston's first Poet Laureate in 2016. He’s also an award-winning graphic designer, an accomplished electronic musician, the creator of a poetry festival, and a mentor to hundreds of students. His poetry has been featured by PBS Newshour, SC Public Radio, Huffington Post, A&E Network, Charleston Magazine, and more. In 2019, he won a Governor's Arts Award. His poetry has been studied in classrooms across the country and has been interpreted for ballet, jazz, modern dance, opera, and theater. Amaker has recorded three albums with Grammy Award-winning drummer and producer, Quentin E. Baxter. His latest book is The Birth of All Things from Free Verse Press.  

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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