RAISING THE VOLUME

with Marcus Amaker & Charlton Singleton

Jirah Perkins explores art and being you.

Sixth Grade and Up
CORE SUBJECTS AND 21ST CENTURY THEMES

Mastery of core subjects and 21st century themes is essential for all students in the 21st 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 21st century interdisciplinary themes into core subjects.

Global Awareness
1. Use 21st 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, and 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 XV, please email Sterling DeVries at sdevries@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 XV.**
Raising the Volume
Episode XV: Jirah Perkins explores art and being you.

(Click the image to watch Episode XV)
LESSONS

In the interview, Marcus Amaker asks Jirah Perkins, “Why is it important to have Black art created by women?” Jirah Perkins responds with, “Only we can tell our story [...] people try to tell it and rewrite it from their narrative.”

What do you think of the question and the answer? Do you agree? Do others try to step in and tell a story there is no way they can personally understand? Do we see this in our media? Is it possible to tell a story that does not belong to you? Give examples for either side.

Jirah Perkins is the visual artist of “Miss Mary Mack: An Homage to Black Girl Nostalgia.” Her paintings represent childhood experiences of Black girls and highlight joyful experiences. She says, “I was really focusing on Black women and what it means to be a Black woman.”

Go to Jirah Perkins’ website, Ujori Fine Art. Look through her Miss Mary Mack Collection. Why do you believe these paintings focus on what it means to be a Black woman as Jirah Perkins states above?

Read more about the collection here, and see examples of artwork on the next page.

A piece of advice that both Marcus Amaker and Jirah Perkins share is to never be afraid to ask for help. We cannot do everything.

Think of a time when you needed to ask for help and didn’t. What was the outcome? Think of a time when you did ask for help. How did the outcome differ?

As an artist, Jirah Perkins shares, “Always be protected. Not every room is a room for us.”

Unpack this quote. What does she mean and how does this cross over from artistry to everyday life?

Marcus Amaker and Jirah Perkins close with telling others to, “Be You.”

Why is this important? At what point do we decide that being ourselves in enough, or do we innately know this?
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MISS MARY MACK COLLECTION

“Miss Mary Mack”
Oil and Acrylic on Canvas

“Roots”
Oil and Acrylic on Canvas

“Pump it Up”

“Royal Crown”

“Our Narrative”
Acrylic on Canvas

“Slide”
Acrylic on Canvas

All images taken from ujorii.com
ABOUT JIRAH PERKINS

Jirah Perkins is a multidisciplinary artist based out of Charleston, South Carolina. She has been creating ever since she was a child. Art has always been her favorite way of expressing her creative voice and has stood as a tool of therapy. She experiments through different mediums and styles with a focus on women empowerment. Jirah incorporates her photography references, bold colors and textures and even poetry to create a sensory experience through her work.

Her most recent collection, “Miss Mary Mack”, focuses on the representational meaning of childhood handgames. This collection involves the use of abstract and realistic subjects to depict the flair and unadulterated joy of black-girl hood.

Website: https://ujorii.com/
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/ujorii/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Ujoriifineart
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ABOUT MARCUS AMAKER

Marcus Amaker was named Charleston, SC’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. Marcus has recorded three albums with Grammy Award-winning drummer and producer, Quentin E. Baxter. His latest book is The Birth of All Things (Free Verse Press).
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