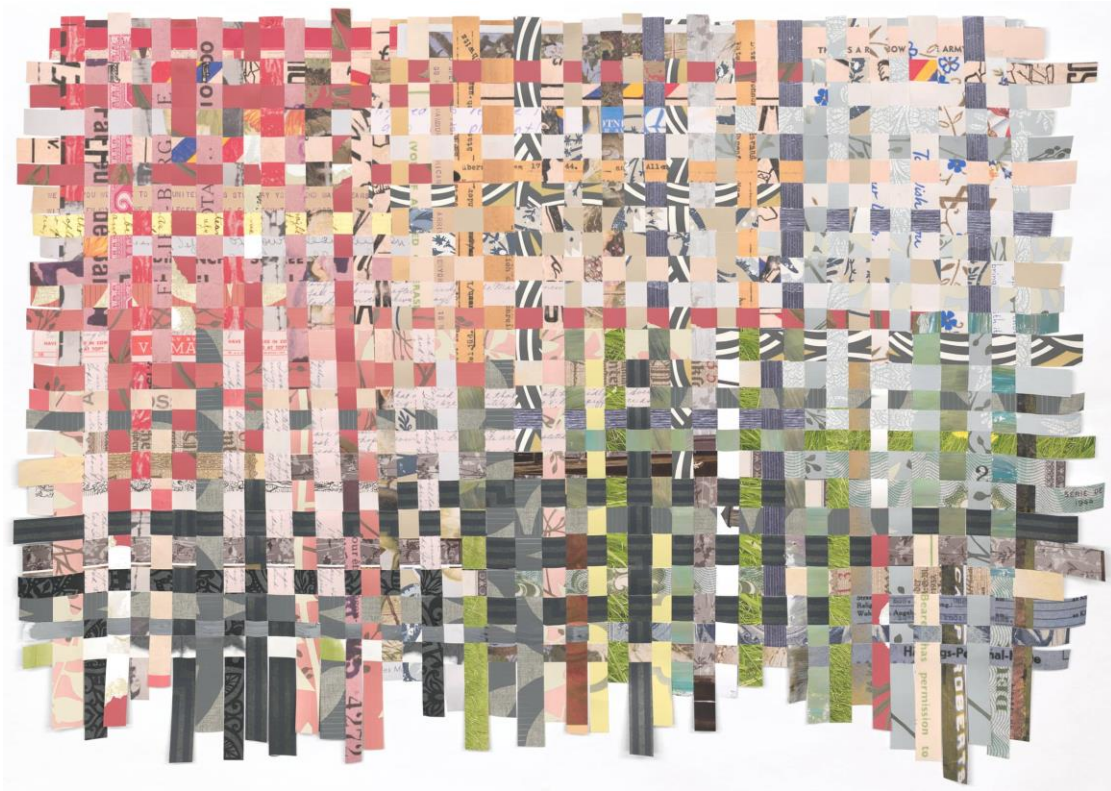


NEBRASKA STORIES OF HUMANITY INQUIRY #6

WEAVING STORIES THROUGH VISUAL CONNECTION



Woven Stories by Shiri Phillips

Shiri Phillips is honored to contribute to the Nebraska Stories of Humanity project, an initiative dedicated to preserving and sharing lived histories through storytelling and art. This work holds deep personal significance. The Holocaust is a meaningful and lasting part of the artist's story and family history—an awareness that continues to shape her perspective and practice. The dedication of this work during Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Commemoration Week) underscores its connection to remembrance, reflection, and the responsibility to carry these histories forward.

Created in collaboration with Beth Dotan and the UNL Center for Digital Research in the Humanities programming team, and supported by a University of Nebraska Arts and Humanities grant, this project builds upon an ongoing dialogue. Earlier works remain integrated into the evolving digital platform, reinforcing the idea that these stories are not static but are continually revisited, expanded, and sustained.

Phillips' woven works explore the idea of interconnection. Each piece moves beyond individual threads to reflect the relationships between stories—how they intersect, echo, and carry across generations. The weavings act as visual metaphors for shared human experience, emphasizing both individuality and collective memory. Through material and process, the artist seeks to hold emotion in physical form—creating work that is not only seen but felt. These pieces speak to resilience, continuity, and the enduring act of rebuilding.

View the dedicated art to the UNL Harris Center for Judaic Studies [here](#).

HOW CAN ART AND VISUAL METAPHOR DRAW CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HUMAN EXPERIENCES?

Standards and Practices	SS HS 4.2.a (US) Identify and evaluate how considering multiple perspectives facilitates an understanding of history.		
	SS HS.4.5.d (WLD) Synthesize historical information to create new understandings.		
	SS MS 8.4.3.a Identify how differing experiences can lead to the development of perspectives.		
	LA.12.W.4 Write arguments that develop a perspective with supporting reasons and evidence, organized as appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.		
	FA 12.2.2.a Design a personal artist statement by choosing from a variety of methods (e.g., poetry, multimedia).		
	FA 12.2.3.d Critique and defend how aesthetic choices impact the visual image and/or intended message.		
	FA 12.2.4.d Connect images, objects, and a personal work of art to convey a story, familiar experience, or connection to the world.		
Assessment	NOTE: Instructors should create an assessment tool that aligns with the language of the standards and their learning outcomes. For further considerations, please see the Hess Cognitive Rigor Matrix (Tool 5A) for additional guidance.		
Staging the Question	Students will use various historical artifacts, stories, and other primary sources from the Nebraska Stories of Humanity digital archive to develop their own artwork reflecting discoveries from the website. The focus of this lesson is to consider how remembrance, reflection, and responsibility might be articulated through art and visual metaphors as a bridge to understanding the human experiences conveyed in the collection’s artifacts.		
Supporting Question 1		Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
What connections can be drawn between the experiences of Holocaust survivors and liberators?		How does the integration of images or objects into a work of art convey, alter, or enrich the meaning of those images or objects? What possible ethical issues should be considered?	How can we creatively show the merging of personal experiences within a framework that demonstrates remembrance, reflection, and responsibility?
Formative Performance Task		Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Students will choose two individuals from the Nebraska Individual Profile Cards or Story links on the Nebraska Stories of Humanity website. They will compare the individuals’ experiences to identify similarities and differences. Students will be able to see how these stories exhibit commonalities and differences as experiences are woven into a larger narrative of historical events.		Students will learn about visual metaphors. Students will analyze one of Shiri Phillips’ weavings using analysis tools from the Library of Congress and the National Archives. Students will identify both the concrete and abstract elements of the artwork and consider ethical concerns.	Students will create their own artwork based on the stories they investigated and the items they recorded on the “Experience” worksheet in Supporting Question #1. Additionally, in their artists’ statements, students will provide written reflections of their choices and explain the visual metaphors they create in their artwork.

Featured Sources		Featured Sources	Featured Sources
• Stories of Humanity • Nebraska Individual Profile Cards (PDF) • Experiences Worksheet		• Understanding Visual Metaphor • Analyzing Primary Sources • National Archives Analyzing Artwork • National Archives Analyzing Photos • Phillips Weaving #5 + other sources included below • Phillips Weaving #6 + other sources included below • Phillips Weaving #8 + other sources included below • Analysis Worksheet	• Development and Reflection Worksheet - includes ○ Conceptual Image/Art Worksheet ○ Artist Statement and artwork
Summative Performance Task	Argument	Creating an art piece that incorporates artifacts from the Nebraska Stories of Humanity website provides students with the opportunity to interpret how they might grapple with and integrate documentation about wartime experiences from the Nebraska Stories of Humanity primary source collection. • Students should convey how visual metaphor, creative artwork, and analysis of artifacts might shape their reflections and forge a path to remembrance. They should also address ethical considerations regarding the incorporation of artifacts into artwork. • In class groups or a larger forum, students can share how this experience was a meaningful and creative process for them.	
	Extension	Display the artwork in an accessible space. Invite class groups that have studied the Holocaust to view the artwork and receive firsthand reflections from student artists. Encourage students to visit an exhibit or gallery featuring artwork that reflects Holocaust memory or its interpretations.	
Taking Informed Action	Students should discuss and reflect with their peers and the broader community about the process of constructing narratives through art and archival collections.		

**NOTE: Featured sources are suggested, and links are provided. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience should these links not function properly. Please [Search](#) in the NE Stories of Humanity or contact cdhrh@unl.edu.*

Overview of Inquiry

Teacher's Note:

Best Practices about Trauma-Informed Teaching, Social-Emotional Learning Skills, and the CASEL Framework

To facilitate the students' interaction with and introspection about these challenging materials, please provide them with an essential background on the history of the Holocaust. Excellent teaching guidelines can be found [here](#). Because the supporting questions and formative tasks in this Inquiry ask students to engage with emotionally difficult material, we recommend also using this [safely-in and safely-out guide](#) in your preparation to help them process challenging materials. Students will explore content related to personal experiences during the war. In these sources, letters might be mundane or desperate, photos can be difficult to view, and documents might contain upsetting information.

Teachers can refer to the CASEL Social-Emotional Learning Framework, focusing on SEL Instruction and Classroom Climate, as well as Self-Awareness, Self-Management, and Responsible Decision-Making. A teacher's awareness of students' ability and readiness will guide their decision about how students will engage with website content.

Learn more about the [CASEL Framework](#).

Throughout this inquiry, students will use various historical artifacts, stories, and other primary sources to create an interwoven art expression incorporating materials from the [Nebraska Stories of Humanity](#) digital archive. The focus of this lesson is to use art and visual metaphor to draw connections between different lived experiences of Holocaust survivors and US servicemen who lived in Nebraska. Teachers should guide and encourage students as they explore the web resource and formulate conclusions about the existing artwork by Shiri Phillips. Provide time for discussion in class, in small groups, or individually to help motivate creative direction.

- This inquiry can take **two weeks of class time** to complete, depending on scheduling.
- Use the linked student worksheets to guide your class through this Inquiry.

Nebraska High School US History, Language Arts, and Fine Arts Standards (suggested)

SS HS 4.2.a (US)	Identify and evaluate how considering multiple perspectives facilitates an understanding of history.
SS HS.4.5.d (WLD)	Synthesize historical information to create new understandings.
SS MS 8.4.3.a	Identify how differing experiences can lead to the development of perspectives.
LA.12.W.4	Write arguments that develop a perspective with supporting reasons and evidence, organized as appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
FA 12.2.2.a	Design a personal artist statement by choosing from a variety of methods (e.g., poetry, multimedia).
FA 12.2.3.d	Critique and defend how aesthetic choices impact the visual image and/or intended message.
FA 12.2.4.d	Connect images, objects, and a personal work of art to convey a story, familiar experience, or connection to the world.

Formative Performance Task 1

*WHAT CONNECTIONS CAN WE DRAW BETWEEN THE EXPERIENCES OF
HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS AND LIBERATORS?*

This section of the Inquiry will require about one to two 50-minute OR one 90-minute class periods.

Featured Sources for this Formative Task:

- [Stories of Humanity](#)
- [Nebraska Individual Profile Cards \(PDF\)](#)
- [Experiences Worksheet](#)

Students should become familiar with the Nebraska Stories of Nebraska website:

- Have students choose 2 profiles on the website and identify at least 3 similarities and 3 differences between them. Students should search the links in the Featured Sources and use the [Experiences Worksheet](#) to record their information.
- Create a blank timeline on a classroom wall and have students note survivor/liberator experiences on cards or sticky notes to attach to the timeline. Keep the timeline on the wall throughout the inquiry lesson.

Students will be able to see how their stories share commonalities and differences as experiences are woven into a larger narrative of historical events.

- Encourage small group sharing followed by full classroom discussion, allowing students to describe the survivor story they have been researching and the artifacts or documents they discovered. The critical conversations and descriptions they articulate verbally will help them formulate ideas for their artwork later.
 - What year might the individuals identify as significant? Why?
 - How do we correlate these experiences with the larger historical information that we are familiar with from WWII?
 - Consider your own life: How might someone else determine the most significant year of your life?
 - In what ways are these details important in telling our personal stories?

Formative Performance Task 2

**HOW DOES THE INTEGRATION OF IMAGES OR OBJECTS INTO A WORK OF ART
CONVEY, ALTER, OR ENRICH THE MEANING OF THOSE IMAGES OR OBJECTS?
WHAT ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED?**

This section of the Inquiry will require about one to two 50-minute OR one 90-minute class period.

Featured Sources for this Formative Task:

- [Understanding Visual Metaphor](#)
- [Analyzing Primary Sources](#)
- [National Archives Analyzing Artwork](#)
- [National Archives Analyzing Photos](#)
- [Phillips Weaving #5](#) + other sources included below
- [Phillips Weaving #6](#) + other sources included below
- [Phillips Weaving #8](#) + other sources included below
- [Analysis Worksheet](#)

Students will learn about analyzing artwork and visual metaphor.

- Begin with a class discussion about how images can be used to draw connections between human experiences by using visual art as texts.
 - Use this image from the Bea Karp collection in her daughter, Deborah Pappenheimer's artwork: <https://nestoriesofhumanity.unl.edu/deborah-pappenheimer#gallery-5>
 - How can the visual medium communicate things that literary texts might not?
 - Why is it also important to be able to verbally describe what is being seen in the artwork?
- Discuss Visual Metaphor
 - Visual metaphor definition – how might you define visual metaphor in your own terms?
 - [Visual Metaphor Definition](#)
 - “A visual metaphor is an image that the viewer is meant to understand as a symbol for something else... A visual metaphor is the representation of a person, place, thing, or idea by means of a visual image that suggests a particular association or point of similarity.”¹
 - What visual metaphors are conveyed in Deborah Pappenheimer's artwork?
 - How might these visual metaphors connect to shared human experiences previously discussed?

¹ From Wen, Xu, and Jin Liu. “Understanding Visual Metaphors: A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective.” *Image and Metaphor in the New Century*, edited by András Benedek and Kristóf Nyíri, vol. 3, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest University of Technology and Economics, 2019. Perspectives on Visual Learning, p.62.

Students will identify both the concrete and abstract elements of artwork and consider ethical concerns.

- In groups of 2 or 3, have students follow the [Analysis Worksheet](#) from the Featured Sources that includes the following guidelines:
 1. Utilize the links for [Analyzing Primary Sources](#), [Analyzing Artwork](#), and [Analyzing Photography](#) when proceeding with this activity.
 2. Review this description of [Visual Metaphor](#).
 3. Choose ONE of Shiri Phillips' weavings to analyze:
 - [Phillips Weaving #5](#)
 - [Phillips Weaving #6](#)
 - [Phillips Weaving #8](#)
 4. Continue to discover the integrated images from the NE Stories of Humanity website by opening the links with the corresponding artifacts used in the artwork.
 - Components of [Weaving #5](#):
 - [Clarence Williams' Ration Card](#)
 - [Postcard from Matthew Wagner to Miriam Grossman](#)
 - [Three Stamps from Palestine](#)
 - [Letter from Ernst Lorch to Alfred and Käte Speier, December 7, 1944](#)
 - [Stamps from "La Economica", Rosenberg story](#)
 - Components of [Weaving #6](#):
 - [Photo of Louis Leviticus, 1935](#)
 - [Oppenheimer Family Rosh Hashana Card, September 15, 1947](#)
 - Components of [Weaving #8](#):
 - [Irving Shapiro's Tattoo](#)
 - [Austrian Bank Note](#)
 - [Map of Paris](#)
 - [Mauthausen 8.8.1938 5.5.1945](#)
 - [Cabaret Theater Ticket](#)
 5. Discussion questions:
 - What ethical considerations are important when developing art from primary sources of Holocaust survivors or camp liberators?
 - With a weaving, what would happen if you took out a piece?
 - For example, how does the meaning of the weaving change if Irving's arm wasn't included?
 - How do you relate to the art and the human experiences of these survivors?

Formative Performance Task 3

***HOW CAN WE CREATIVELY SHOW THE MERGING OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES
WITHIN A FRAMEWORK THAT DEMONSTRATES REMEMBRANCE, REFLECTION, AND RESPONSIBILITY?***

The time for this section of the Inquiry will depend on whether students work in class or on their own time.

Featured Sources for this Formative Task:

- [Development and Reflection Worksheet](#)

Students will create their own artwork based on the stories they investigated and the items they recorded on the Experience worksheet in Supporting Question #1 or other materials.

Additionally, students will provide a written reflection on their choices, explaining the visual metaphors expressed in their artwork in an artist's statement.

Guidelines can be found on the [Development and Reflection Worksheet](#).

Part I – Creating a Weaving

- Review the dedicated artwork by Shiri Phillips on the worksheet.
- Prepare your own concepts and integrations utilizing artifacts from the collection that you have discovered in the table provided on the worksheet.
- Articulate the conceptual images or visual metaphors you might use in your work.
- Create your artwork.

Part II – Artist's Statement

- Write an artist's statement about your artwork (see descriptors from Shiri Phillips' statement):
Interconnection * Resilience * Continuity * Rebuilding * Intersect * Echo * Human Experience

Part III - Reflect with students on the process and creation of their artwork

- What are some important reflections you have about this activity?
- How did you incorporate the Nebraska Stories of Humanity materials?
- What metaphors did you use in your artwork?
- How does your artwork inspire others to remember, reflect, and take responsibility for sharing the lessons of the Holocaust?
- How does completing your artwork inspire you to remember and take responsibility for sharing what you have learned about the Holocaust?

Extension

Display the artwork in an accessible space. Invite class groups that have studied the Holocaust to view the artwork and receive firsthand reflections from student artists.

Encourage students to visit an exhibit or gallery featuring artwork that reflects Holocaust memory or its interpretations.

Taking Informed Action

Students should discuss and reflect with their peers, family, and the broader community about the process of constructing narratives through art and archival collections.

This lesson was created by Erin Kay Chambers, MA, and Beth Dotan, PhD, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.