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Most professional artists have received years of training, but outsider artists, who haven't received a formal education, are guided solely by their strong, independent vision and drive to create artwork, often with the everyday materials at hand. The books in this annotated bibliography feature titles about self-trained, or outsider, artists, like Clementine Hunter, Grandma Moses, Bill Traylor, and Juan Quezada as well as a few unsung artists who deserve to be recognized. Share these inspirational books in the classroom to not only introduce children to folk art and other artistic styles but also to emphasize that creativity has no limits.

Bibliography

Art against the Odds. By Susan Goldman Rubin. 2004. 64p. illus. Crown, o.p. 700. Gr. 5–8.

In this unique overview, Rubin profiles artists who often have little or no training and have suffered incarceration, war, racism, poverty, or mental illness while working. Included are teenage graffiti artists, Japanese Americans incarcerated during WWII, and slaves who made quilts patterned with hidden directions to the Underground Railroad. In clear, accessible language, Rubin's stories show how making art can have a strong, unexpected impact, not only on the viewer but also on the artist.

Art from Her Heart: Folk Artist Clementine Hunter. By Kathy Whitehead. Illus. by Shane W. Evans. 2008. 32p. Putnam, \$16.99 (9780399242199). 759.13. Gr. 4–7.

Using window shades or whatever she could find and leftover paints from the plantation house where she worked, Clementine Hunter began to paint her world. Although forbidden by segregation laws to enter the art galleries that displayed her work, the self-taught Louisiana folk artist persisted. Thumbnails of her paintings and an afterword conclude this picture-book biography.

Charlie Russell: Tale-Telling Cowboy Artist. By Lois V. Harris. 2010. 32p. illus. Pelican, \$16.99 (9781589807587). 709.2. Gr. 2–4.

After forming animal figures with clay from his parents' St. Louis brick company, 15-year-old Charlie Russell headed

west in 1879. He became a cowboy and storyteller who befriended Native Americans and chronicled his adventures in detailed paintings and bronze sculptures. Black-and-white photos of the artist and reproductions of his pieces fill this biography.

Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave. By Laban Carrick Hill. Illus. by Bryan Collier. 2010. 40p. Little, Brown, \$16.99 (9780316107310). 738.092. K–Gr. 3.

Evocative verse and watercolor-and-collage illustrations introduce the South Carolina slave and artist named Dave and his pottery technique. His beautifully crafted jars also featured his deceptively simple poetry. This Coretta Scott King Award winner and Caldecott Honor Book closes with an essay that relates more about Dave's life and the importance of his artwork.

Dream Something Big: The Story of the Watts Towers. By Dianna Hutts Aston. Illus. by Susan Roth. 2011. 40p. Dial, \$16.99 (9780803732452). K–Gr. 4.

Over more than 34 years, Simon Rodia created elaborate sculptural towers on a triangular lot in the Watts neighborhood of L.A. Affixing bits of throwaway glass and pottery to a hand-wrought structure, Sam erected an enduring homage to his vibrant community. In poetic language, Aston tells a fictional story from the point of view of a young neighborhood girl, who grows up watching the towers take shape. Roth's mixed-media collages echo the towers while evoking an exuberance all their own. An author's note offers more information about the towers' construction and directions for building miniature towers.

Grandma Moses. By Alexandra Wallner. Illus. by the author. 2004. 32p. Holiday, o.p. 759.13. PreS–Gr. 3.

This illustrated biography of Grandma Moses—with quotations from her autobiography and artwork that recalls Moses' American primitive style—traces her lifelong interest in art. Though farm work and child rearing occupied her time for many years, the mental images she stored would serve as her subject matter when she became active as a painter in her seventies. Pair with W. Nikola-Lisa's *The Year with Grandma Moses* (2000).

High Riders, Saints, and Death Cars: A Life Saved by Art. By Nicholas Herrera. Illus. by John T. Denne. 2011. 56p. Groundwood, \$24.95 (9780888998545). 709.2. Gr. 8–12.

After an alcohol-related car accident, Herrera devoted his life to art. This candid photo-biography describes how and why this New Mexican folk artist blends Hispanic and biker culture, his work as a welder and mechanic, and religious iconography. Color photos of Herrera and his art, some of which reflects social and political commentary, appear throughout.

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CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS:
OUTSIDER ARTISTS
BY ANGELA LEEPER

I Heard God Talking to Me: William Edmondson and His Stone Carvings. By Elizabeth Spires. 2009. 56p. illus. Farrar/ Frances Foster, \$17.95 (9780374335281). 811. Gr. 6–12.

Moved by a religious vision at age 57, Nashville janitor William Edmondson began carving tombstones and whimsical figures out of stone in 1931 and went on to attract the attention of international collectors, eventually becoming the first African American artist to have a solo show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. This handsome poetry collection pairs full-page, black-and-white photos of Edmondson and his works with poems inspired by the images. A prose biography is appended.

In Her Hands: The Story of Sculptor Augusta Savage. By Alan Schroeder. Illus. by JaeMe Bereal. 2009. 48p. Lee & Low, \$19.95 (9781600603327). 730.92. Gr. 2–4.

Illustrated with acrylic paintings in earth tones, this fictionalized biography recounts how a young Augusta Savage molded the clay from her Florida home and eventually earned a spot at Cooper Union. An afterword explains how Savage became an influential sculptor during the Harlem Renaissance and includes photos of some of her important pieces.

It Jes' Happened: When Bill Traylor Started to Draw. By Don Tate. Illus. by R. Gregory Christie. 2012. 32p. Lee & Low, \$17.95 (9781600602603). 759.13. Gr. 2–4.

Saving up his memories of life as a slave, a hardworking farmer with a family, and a dancer on Saturday nights, 81-year-old Bill Traylor left his Alabama farm in 1935 for Montgomery. In the city, the self-taught artist began to paint these memories, and he was given a one-man exhibit in 1940. Vibrant acrylic and gouache illustrations re-create Traylor's folk-art style.

Magic Trash: A Story of Tyree Guyton and His Art. By J. H. Shapiro. Illus. by Vanessa Brantley-Newton. 2011. 32p. Charlesbridge, \$15.95 (9781580893855). 709.2. Gr. 2–4.

Fascinated with found art since his youth, artist Tyree Guyton returns to his Heidelberg Street neighborhood in Michigan and uses art to transform the ailing community. Rhyming refrains add punch to this picture-book biography, complemented by vibrant, energetic multimedia illustrations featuring found objects.

Mali under the Night Sky: A Lao Story of Home. By Youme Landowne. Illus. by the author. 2010. 40p. Cinco Puntos, \$17.95 (9781933693682). 709.2. PreS–Gr. 3.

The early life of artist and activist Malichansouk Kouanchao is shown in this picture-book biography. Young Mali loved catching tiny fish in the rice fields and helping her aunts make spicy food until civil war made her home in Laos unsafe and forced her family to flee. A final spread presents a

photo and a note from the real Mali, as well as a selection of her artwork.

On My Block: Stories and Paintings by Fifteen Artists. Ed. by Dana Goldberg. 2007. 32p. illus. Children's Book Press, paper, \$8.95 (9780892392407). 704.089. Gr. 3–6.

Fifteen artists recall their childhood homes and neighborhoods—from gardens, parks, and oceans to front porches, bunk beds, and Indian reservations—through artwork in a variety of media and accompanying essays. This multicultural selection about memories and place also includes a photo and a short biography of each artist. *Just Like Me* (1997) and *Honoring Our Ancestors* (1999) use similar formats.

The Pot That Juan Built. By Nancy Andrews-Goebel. Illus. by David Diaz. 2002. 32p. Lee & Low, \$17.95 (9781584300380); paper, \$8.95 (9781600608483). 738. Gr. 2–4.

As this picture-book biography recounts how Juan Quezada transformed his small Mexican town through pottery making, a cumulative tale set to the rhyme of “This Is the House That Jack Built” tells the same story in a lively format for younger readers. Illustrated with digital artwork in desert colors, this Pura Belpré Honor Book concludes with more details and photographs of Quezada's pottery process.

The Secret World of Walter Anderson. By Hester Bass. Illus. by E. B. Lewis. 2009. 48p. Candlewick, \$17.99 (9780763635831). 709.2. Gr. 2–4.

During his lifetime, Walter Anderson, a twentieth-century naturalist painter from Mississippi, spent weeks alone on a deserted island in the Gulf of Mexico, living rustically and painting to realize his secret world. Exquisite watercolors illustrate this snapshot of Anderson's later years, and the book concludes with a lengthy author's note as well as examples of his paintings.

Signed, Abiah Rose. By Diane Browning. Illus. by the author. 2010. 32p. Tricycle, \$15.99 (9781582463117). Gr. 1–3.

In this fictional story, accompanied by acrylic paintings in a folk-art style, Abiah Rose, a composite of female artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, realizes her talent for painting. Discouraged from signing her name, she dreams of a time when she'll no longer be anonymous. An afterword gives more information about women artists of the time period.

Yellowstone Moran: Painting the American West. By Lita Judge. Illus. by the author. 2009. 32p. Viking, o.p. 759.13. Gr. 1–3.

Tom Moran longed to paint the Wild West, and his dream came true when he accompanied an expedition to Yellowstone in 1871. Exquisite impressionistic watercolors illustrate his

Common Core Connections

The following are suggestions for implementing the Common Core State Standards with recommended books about untrained, outsider artists. You can find more information about the standards at www.corestandards.org.

In the Classroom: Guide students in short research projects about American folk art and have them present their findings in a written report or in discussions. Next, read *Signed, Abiah Rose*, by Diane Browning, aloud and have students relate this book's content and style to their findings.

Common Core Connections

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.2.** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

In the Classroom: Have students locate information about the artists in *Art from Her Heart*, by Kathy Whitehead, and *Grandma Moses*, by Alexandra Wallner. In written reports or in discussions, ask students to share what they've learned from their reading. Next, ask students to compare and contrast the lives and art of these two women.

Common Core Connections

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3.** Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.1.** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

In the Classroom: Read *Dave the Potter*, by Laban Carrick Hill, aloud, and discuss what students learn about Dave and his art from both the words and pictures. After sharing Dave's poems with students, discuss examples of figurative language. Next, have students create their own small pots out of clay or cover recycled jars and bottles with brown paper. Ask students to write their own poetry in the style of Dave and print it on their own pots.

Common Core Connections

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.7.** Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.4.** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

In the Classroom: Read aloud *It Jes' Happened*, by Don Tate, and *On My Block*, edited by Dana Goldberg, and have students identify what memories the artists saved and painted later in life. Next, have students write about a meaningful memory from their own childhood and illustrate it.

Common Core Connections

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.3.** Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1.** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

In the Classroom: Read J. H. Shapiro's *Magic Trash* aloud. Ask students to describe what they learned about Guyton and his work from both the text and the illustrations. Next have students collect unwanted classroom items (e.g., scrap paper, Popsicle sticks, and glue-stick caps) and household objects (e.g., paper-towel rolls, buttons, and beads) to create a trash-to-treasure station. Follow with a classroom art show.

Common Core Connections

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.7.** Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

arduous journey and the beauty he encountered. Some of Moran's works were presented to President Grant, who made Yellowstone America's first national park. A final double-page spread depicts one of Moran's paintings.

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