ABOUT THIS WORK

Abigail DeVille is known for her dense, formless installations that involve deep engagement with the history of violence against marginalized people and places.

For Lift Every Voice and Sing (amerikanskie gorki) (2017), DeVille created a hybrid structure inspired by the history of the United States whose form is based on sources as diverse as the Great Seal of the United States; the Underground Railroad; artist Jacob Lawrence’s 1941 “Migration Series,” sixty small paintings with texts that address the Great Migration of Black Americans to urban centers during the twentieth century; the Russian ice slide; and Augusta Savage’s destroyed sculpture Lift Every Voice and Sing from the 1939 New York World’s Fair.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will explore how artist Abigail DeVille uses found objects from a community to build a narrative.
VOCABULARY TERMS

INSTALLATION
A site-specific artwork, which needs to be constructed or arranged.

VESSEL
A ship or large boat.

TRANSPORTATION
A large work of art painted or affixed directly on a wall or ceiling.

ARTISTIC PROCESS
The process of shipping or moving an item from point A to point B.
ACTIVITY

MONUMENTAL FORMS

Age Range: 6-12 years old
Activity Duration: 40 minutes

Maintaining a long-standing interest in marginalized people and places, Abigail DeVille creates site-specific immersive installations designed to bring attention to forgotten stories, such as with the sculpture she built on the site of a former African American burial ground in Harlem.

Activity Pre-dissusion: Discuss with students the shapes they recognize in the work. Where have they seen shapes like these? Does the structure look like it has a particular function? If so, what do you think it is? If not, what’s missing that making them think that?

ACTIVITY MATERIALS

Colored Tape

Construction Paper (cut into various shapes)

Model Magic + Assorted Bamboo Sticks

12 Foot Ruler
ACTIVITY

MONUMENTAL FORMS

Age Range: 6-12 years old
Activity Duration: 40 minutes

Students will create a 3d sculptural forms inspired by artist Abigail DeVille. To build the model, students will use construction paper, tape, bamboo sticks and model magic. As an additional challenge ask students to design a structure that is a minimum of 12 foot high and free standing.

DeVille often works with objects and materials sourced from the area surrounding the exhibition site, and her theatrical aesthetic embodies the phrase, “One person’s trash is another person’s treasure.”
ACTIVITY

TOWER OF HOPE & FUTURE DREAMS

Age Range: 6-12 years old
Activity Duration: 60 minutes

Materials:
Tape, Construction Paper, Newspaper, Magazine, Markers

Students will work collaboratively as a group to create a 6-foot tower pillar that reflects words and phrases about their personal and community identity.

Questions to think about:

1. What is your family's origin?

2. Where do you envision yourself in the future?

3. How are you feeling at this moment? How do you relate and connect with your classmates? How are you different from your classmates?

4. What do you love about your community and Neighborhood?

Photo courtesy of teaching artist: Morel Doucet