

**Neuberger Museum of Art**

**AMERICAN PEOPLE, BLACK LIGHT:  
FAITH RINGGOLD'S  
PAINTINGS OF THE 1960S**

**Lesson Plans**

# Neuberger Museum of Art

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Distribution of lesson plans in conjunction with American People, Black Light: Faith Ringgold's paintings of the 1960s have been underwritten by the JPMorgan Chase Foundation

# Plan 1 LIVING PICTURES: THE ART OF FAITH RINGGOLD

A lesson plan prepared by Teaching Artists Ian Driver and Tiffany Soares in consultation with the Education Department of the Neuberger Museum of Art in conjunction with the exhibition *American People, Black Light: Faith Ringgold's Paintings of the 1960s*.

**Materials required:** Ringgold books, music player, images of paintings by Faith Ringgold

**Length of lesson plan:** 45 mins

**Age Group:** This lesson plan can be adapted for K-12. Responses may vary, but the lesson is flexible so as to meet learners where they are in development. (For example, a high school class may have a discussion about the concept of irony in a painting called *Between Friends* that shows a disconnect between two people, whereas an elementary school group may inquire about how one shows they are a friend and the idea that in some cultures eye-contact expresses connection or respect, and what it might mean when it is lacking.

All age groups can learn about the context of the artist's life and what she was observing of tension and inequality during the 1960s and students may explore how this relates, or does not relate, to their own observations of race, class, ethnic, and gender relations today. All students may question strategies for how they might navigate the world today with respect for self and others.

**Overview:** Using the low-risk drama technique known as tableau, students will apply and expand their knowledge of Faith Ringgold's artwork and the social context of her life and work. By asking participants to take on the roles of people or objects to create living pictures, students will provide teachers with instant assessment of student comprehension of specific facts, concepts, or big ideas that are embedded in the artist's work and philosophy, and do so in a fun and engaging way.

## Picture Prompts

The teacher or teaching artist leads a discussion about the painting *Between Friends*. The teacher asks three provocative questions to spark close looking, interpretation, and dialogue:

- "What bugs you about this picture?"
- "Who has the power in this picture?"
- "Whose voice is being represented in this picture?"

For each of these questions, the teacher asks "what in the painting makes you say that? Tell me more about what you see."

Discussion should touch upon four aspects:

1. Focus/gaze: "In what direction are the people/figure's eyes gazing? At each other or apart? How would you characterize their relationship?"
2. Levels: Are any of the figures or other elements in the painting above or below another in the composition?
3. Spacing: How close how far apart are the figures and other elements in the painting. Are they spread out, packed together,
4. Title: Does the title seem fitting, or surprising? Does it seem ironic?"

## Tableau

**Into tableau** – Once we have inquired about and reflected upon the picture the participants are broken into groups. Using the title of the picture (*Between Friends*) as a guide, the groups will create a living picture based on the ideas we've discussed in the picture prompt discussion.

**Tableau creation tips** – during the course of their creation, each group will be side coached by the teacher so that fundamentals of tableau creation (focus/gaze, levels, and spacing) will be introduced.

**Presentation** - Each group will present their tableaux and everyone reflects upon them in the same way as we reflected on the original picture.

## New Work

**New Title** - Each group is provided with a new title, taken from another piece of artwork in the exhibition or available online. NOTE: They have NOT seen this piece yet, so they are working only from the title. Some titles from the exhibition include the following:

*The In Crowd*, 1964

*Civil Rights Triangle*, 1964

*For Members Only*, 1963, and

*Neighbors*, 1963

*Watching and Waiting*, 1963

*Three Men on a Fence*, 1964

*Hide Little Children*, 1966

Select images can be found online at [www.neubergmuseum.org](http://www.neubergmuseum.org), in the exhibition catalog, and on the artist's website, <http://www.faihringgold.com/ringgold/images.htm>

**New tableau** - Using the title provided, and by focusing on the questions "who has the power?", and "Whose voice is being represented", they create a living picture to match the title.

**Reflection and revelation of the original** - Each tableau is presented, reflected upon, and then the group is shown the original painting. Discussion of the differences, similarities etc. follow.

**Questions for reflections written, or discussed** - Responding to/handling in responses to those questions that may lead to personal or private responses should be optional.

How do an artist's choices express emotion, tension, and relationships?

Read about Faith Ringgold's life and the history of discrimination and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. How do her paintings capture the mood of that period of history and her experiences?

How do we communicate through words and body language; how do we express ourselves by what we say and what we do? Do you think individuals in all cultures, age groups, and situations express themselves in the same way? Might it be different at home, in school, at work, during sports practice, or other social situations?

How might words and situations be interpreted differently?

Is there sometimes more than one “right” answer when describing a situation? How do individual perspective, feelings, and experiences affect how a situation is interpreted?

Have you ever felt good/bad/nervous/relaxed /powerful/ etc. based on where you were sitting in a room, or how someone looked, or didn’t look at you?

Describe how you would you make a new student feel welcome to the class , not only with words.

This material has been underwritten by the JPMorgan Chase Foundation.

# Plan 2 FRIENDSHIP

Written by Linda Stephenson with the Neuberger Museum of Art Education Department

**Goal:** This lesson offers an opportunity for students to view and discuss art relating to the meaning and dynamics of friendship and social group participation and/or alienation. In addition to visual art, students will also be exposed to film and music, and have an opportunity to create their own dramatic scenes, songs, and artwork relating to the lesson theme.

**Intended Audience:** The following lesson is especially appropriate for middle school students, but may also work with high school and upper elementary grades. It can be adapted to meet learning standards in language arts, English as a second language arts, social studies, art, and school programs for prevention of bullying.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to

- View and discuss two of Faith Ringgold's paintings from the *American People* series
- Consider what it means to be a friend
- Consider why groups develop inclusive or exclusive behaviors
- Decide whether or not it is possible for people of different backgrounds to become friends, and what the advantages and disadvantages are of such relationships
- Write imaginary dialogs
- Compare and contrast visual art and the lyrics of a song
- Paint their own picture depicting a friendship
- Rewrite dialogs into short plays
- Create an original song about a group
- Capture their song or play digitally

**Materials:**

1. Painting: Faith Ringgold, *Between Friends*, 1963
2. Painting, Faith Ringgold, *The In Crowd*, 1964
3. Song: Dobie Gray, *The In Crowd*, 1965, access on *You Tube*:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WWsOUk9O5g>
4. Play and/or film: Alfred Uhry, *Driving Miss Daisy*, Theatre Communications Group, 1988
5. Art making material

6. Writing material
7. Cameras and/or camcorders

**Points of entry:** The lesson is divided into parts. Teachers may use all or some of these activities. Steps 1-6 can be a separate lesson. Steps 7-12 can be a separate lesson, or can follow steps 1-6. Step 12 can be done alone after viewing Ringgold's paintings. Steps 13 and 14 can be done separately. Step 15 is a culmination of any and all parts of this lesson plan.

### **Part I Looking at Art**

1. Open a class discussion by asking the students to think about someone who is a good friend. Instruct students to write down words and phrases that describe how they like their friends to act. Have students compare their lists to other classmate's lists, asking for volunteers to share. Discuss what the most important qualities of a friend are based on the students' lists. Note these characteristics on the board.
2. Have students look at Faith Ringgold's painting, *Between Friends*. Ask them to describe what they see and think about the relationship between the two women in the painting. Ask if any of the qualities of a friend pertain to the relationship depicted in Ringgold's painting.
3. Ask students how Ringgold's use of line, shape and color support their ideas about the relationship of the women in the painting, and if they think racial differences influence friendships.
4. This painting was done in 1963. Ask students for historical contextual information regarding civil rights and woman's rights in America at that time. Have students do some research and share their results.
5. Working in pairs, have students create imaginary dialogs of about five lines each between the two women.
6. Have pairs present their dialogs.

### **Part II Insider/Outsider: Analyzing the lyrics to a song**

7. Ask students if there are different groups in their school or neighborhood, and what membership in these groups is based on. Ask students what groups they belong to, and what purposes are served by belonging to these groups.
8. Look at Faith Ringgold's painting *The In Crowd*. Ask students to describe what they think is going on in the painting. How does the sole black man appear to feel? What do they think Ringgold had in mind when she made this painting?
9. Listen to Doobie Gray's version of the popular 1960's version of the song "The In Crowd" on You Tube.
10. According to the lyrics, what advantages does being a member of the in crowd offer? Ask students if they agree or disagree. What does it mean to be "in" or "out"? How does this hurt or help people? What can students do to help each other avoid the pain of being "out"?
11. Ask students to find and share other songs (or create their own, more contemporary versions) that sing about group participation, joys and sorrows.
12. Ask students to compare and contrast the song lyrics to what Ringgold may have had in mind when she created the painting *The In Crowd*

### **Part III Considering friendship in a film or a play**

13. Have students read the play or view the film (or excerpts) *Driving Miss Daisy*. This is a story about the growing friendship between an elderly white woman and her African American chauffeur over a 25-year period. This friendship is one of a kind because Daisy and Hoke are so different—they are of different gender, race, age, religion, and social class. Ask the students: Why do you think the two became friends, instead of remaining just employer and worker? How do you think they overcame all of their differences? Make a chart such as a Venn diagram to visually compare and contrast characters.
14. Using the dialog students created in relation to the painting *Between Friends*, have students create short plays. Discuss the play as a literary genre meant to be acted out before an audience. Encourage students to add material to the play, which will demonstrate how the two women can overcome their differences, and become better friends.

### **Part IV Exhibition and Performance**

Offer students an opportunity to create paintings depicting friendship.

15. Have students exhibit their artwork with an artist's statement attached, perform their songs, and/or present their plays to another class or the whole school.

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# Plan 3 FLAGS

Written by Linda Stephenson with the Neuberger Museum of Art Education Department

**Goal:** This lesson offers an opportunity for students to view and discuss Faith Ringgold’s flag art, and to learn about the historical and political circumstances at the time Ringgold created these works. Optionally, students may delve into the laws regarding desecration of the American flag as they relate to the right of free speech, and may experiment with the flag motif as a symbol in visual art. Students can also learn about the use of words as symbols in art and music.

**Background:** Many artists have used the flag motif in their work, including Faith Ringgold. Ringgold acknowledges the influence of Jasper Johns’ flag series in her work, but viewed it as incomplete. She writes: “. . .I wanted to show some of the hell that had broken out in the States, and what better place to do that than in the Stars and Stripes”<sup>1</sup> Ringgold used flag art to make strong political statements. The two works included in this lesson plan, which are part of this exhibition, include references to violence and invective language. Teachers are advised to preview the pieces.

**Intended Audience:** 7th- 12th grade, particularly United States History/Social Studies, Art, English/US Literature, and music classes

**Objectives:** Students will be able to

View and discuss two of Faith Ringgold’s flag paintings, one from the *American People* series, and the other from the *Black Light* series.

Consider the use of words and pictures as symbols

Gain an understanding of some aspects of the political climate in the United States in the mid to late 1960’s through Faith Ringgold’s art

Create their own flag art

Listen to and analyze the symbolism in a popular song from the 1960’s

## Materials:

1. Access to paintings in the exhibiton and/or images available online at [www.neubergermuseum.org](http://www.neubergermuseum.org) or <http://www.faithringgold.com/ringgold/images.htm>

*The Flag Is Bleeding*, 1967

*Flag for the Moon, Die Nigger*, 1969

2. Access to computers for research

3. Art making materials: paper, markers, paints, etc.

4. Writing materials

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<sup>1</sup> Faith Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge: The Memoirs of Faith Ringgold* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), p. 158. See also pages 181-186 for a full account of Ringgold’s involvement in the People’s Flag Show in 1970, and her subsequent arrest. For additional discussion of Faith’s organization of the Peoples Flag Show, 1970 and subsequent arrest, see the eponymous poster of cut paper and pen and the silkscreen, *The Judson 3*, 1970.

## America in the 1960's through Faith Ringgold's flag art

1. **Introduction:** Ask the students what a symbol is. Explain that a symbol is something that stands for something else, and that some symbols are in the form of pictures as well as words. A flag can be a symbol for a country. The sun is a popular symbol for happiness or the start of good things.

2. Ask students to look for symbols in newspapers, magazines, books or online. Draw (copy) three symbols and write next to them what they mean. Explain to your classmates.

3. Look at Faith Ringgold's painting *The Flag Is Bleeding*. Describe what you see. Ask the students what they think Ringgold was trying to convey in this work. Why do they think she used a flag motif? Ringgold writes about this painting on pages 157-158 in her autobiography *We Flew Over the Bridge*. This is one of Ringgold's best-known early paintings, and much has been written about it in scholarly essays, which you may want to consult. Ask students to find out what was happening in the United States at the time Ringgold created this painting (1967) e.g., civil rights, race riots, and to report their findings to the class.

4. There are three figures in the painting: a black man, a white man, and a white woman. Some people have wondered why there isn't a black woman in the painting, if Faith Ringgold herself is a black woman. Is she present as the painter, or is she invisible? Asked students what they think. Ask students to find out about the women's movement and the perspective and participation of women of color.<sup>22</sup> How did Faith Ringgold deal with being both black and a woman? Students wonder if other archetypal figures should be included. Suggest that students might research other documented struggles for rights past and present that include a use of symbols.

5. Look at Faith Ringgold's painting *Flag for the Moon: Die Nigger*. The message in this work is not obvious at first. Ringgold ingeniously "hid" the language in the design. Why? "Die" and "nigger" in particular are very strong words. Why does she hide the language? This painting is part of a series called *Black Light* in which Ringgold did not use white paint. Is this painting about what is hidden, or invisible, or what can or cannot be ignored? Is it about a message being said literally -outright, or just below the surface? Who do you think is saying it and how? Again, what do the students think Ringgold was trying to convey in this work, and why did she use a flag motif? (Hint: This painting was made during the famous first lunar landing during the summer of 1969, and the iconic images of the American Flag being planted on the moon. For many, it is seen as a moment of hope and triumph, but how does it contrast with issues on the ground of poverty, inequality, and war?

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<sup>22</sup>Note that feminist scholar, Michele Wallace, Ph.D (Ringgold's daughter) wrote a groundbreaking book *Black Macho and the Myth of the The Superwoman*,(Dial Press, 1979) that criticized sexism in Black Nationalist movements.

## Suggested Activities

1. Invite students to create their own art using iconic symbols, with or without words. They may choose to symbolize searing contemporary issues, or representations of their own hopes and dreams for the future of the United States. These flags could be displayed around the school with accompanying artists' statements explaining the meanings.

2. History/Social Studies classes might be to investigate the right to free speech and the controversial attempts at passing laws concerning the desecration of the American flag. They might debate the issue in class or write an essay or research paper.

3. Students might research popular music from the 1960s and how the writer's use symbols to express their observations of the world at that time. See an example of a discussion of George Harrison's *Here Comes the Sun* below.

Other songs to discuss include *A Change is Gonna Come* (1963) by Sam Cooke. In October 1963, Sam Cooke was arrested and thrown in jail after refusing to be turned away from a Shreveport, La., hotel which had initially accepted his reservation.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=17267529>

### The world according to the lyrics of a song by George Harrison

Ask students if they have ever watched the sun rise. If so, where were they? Why were they there? Whom were they with? What did they think about? How did they feel? Have students organize their answer in a graphic design in the shape of a sun. Each of the sun's "rays" can contain the information who, what, when, where, why, and how, with the student's name in the middle round body of the "sun".

Have students listen to the song *Here Comes the Sun* by George Harrison. Explain who George Harrison was, and that the song tells how people (black and white?) were feeling in the late 1960s, the same time period of Ringgold's flag paintings.

Background: This is a song written by George Harrison, a member of the Beatles, a world-famous singing group from the 1960s. "Here Comes the Sun" is from the Beatles' *Abbey Road* album.

*Here Comes the Sun*

By George Harrison

Here comes the sun, here comes the sun,

And I say it's all right.

Little darling it's been a long cold lonely winter

Little darling it feels like years since it's been here.

Here comes the sun, here comes the sun,

And I say it's all right.

Little darling the smiles returning to their faces,

Little darling it seems like years since it's been here,

Here comes the sun, here comes the sun,

And I say it's all right.

Sun, sun, sun, here it comes.

Sun, sun, sun here it comes.

Sun, sun, sun here it comes.

Little darling I feel that the ice is slowly melting,

Little darling it seems like years since it's been clear. Here comes the sun, here comes the sun,

It's all right, it's all right.

**Discussion questions:**

What do you think the sun stands for in this song?

"Smiles returning to their faces" seems to say that something good is starting to happen. What other words tell you that something good is coming?

What are all the signs that there will be a change for the better?

Some people think that George Harrison was talking about the whole world when he wrote this song.

The words "the ice is slowly melting" might have meant that some countries were beginning to become friendlier with each other. Using your knowledge of historical events, think about what some of the other words in the song might mean about our world.

Compare and contrast Faith Ringgold's view of life in 1960's America to that of George Harrison's view as expressed in his song and Sam Cooke's A Change is Gonna Come.

What are your thoughts on this song and its connection to the condition of our world today? How do you think Faith Ringgold would answer this question?

# Plan 4 MASKS

Written by Linda Stephenson with the Neuberger Museum of Art Education Department

**Goal:** This lesson offers an opportunity for students to view and discuss art, create their own masks, read and analyze a poem, and write their own poetry. In addition, students will also have an opportunity to discuss why and how people show and hide emotions.

**Intended Audience:** The following lesson is appropriate for elementary, middle school and/or high school level students. Teachers can make age-appropriate adjustments. It can be adapted to meet learning standards in language arts, English as a second language, social studies, and art.

**Points of entry:** The lesson plan is divided into three parts. Teachers may use all or some of these activities. Steps 1-5 may be one lesson. Steps 6-14 may be an independent lesson, or may follow and build upon steps 1-5. Step 15 offers expansion activities for all parts of the lesson plan.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to

- View two of Faith Ringgold’s paintings from the Black Light Series.
- Discuss line, color, shape and composition of each mask painting.
- Consider literal and figurative uses and meanings for mask wearing.
- Read and discuss a poem by Paul Lawrence Dunbar.
- Understand the concept of a mask as a metaphor in the poem.
- Understand the use of meter and rhyming couplets in poetry.
- Compare and contrast visual art and literature.
- Compare and contrast the lives and historical contexts of the work of two African Americans, a visual artist, and a poet.
- Write their own poems.
- Create their own masks using a grid.
- Engage in performance art using masks and poetry.

**Materials:**

1. Painting: Faith Ringgold, *Big Black*, 1967
2. Painting: Faith Ringgold, *Man*, 1967
3. Poem: Paul Lawrence Dunbar, “*We Wear the Mask*”
4. Art making material (this is at the discretion of the teacher and what is available)
5. Writing material

## Part I Looking At Art

1. Have students look at each of the paintings, *Big Black* and *Man*. Ask them to describe the shapes, colors, lines, and overall composition of each of the paintings.
2. Ask students to do preliminary pencil sketches of the paintings, paying attention to the grid lines and each of the elements of the composition that fall within the shapes.
3. Ask students about each mask painting in terms of emotions. How would you feel if you were wearing either one of these masks?
4. Provide background information on Faith Ringgold:

Faith Ringgold is an African American artist who was born and grew up in Harlem. She majored in art in college and she taught art in New York City for many years. She is also a writer who has written many books that are interesting for children and adults alike. She is famous for her story quilts in which she uses paintings and words. *Big Black* and *Man* are two of her earlier art works done in the 1960's. They are part of her *Black Light Series* consisting of a total of twelve paintings. For the *Black Light* paintings, Ringgold explored the use of a new palette, a way to express on canvas the idea of "black is beautiful." This concept countered the prevailing view that white racial features were superior to and more beautiful than those of black people. She incorporated her interest in African rhythm, pattern, and repetition. The mask-like face, first introduced in an earlier series of her paintings, the *American People Series*, reappears in the *Black Light Series* in many forms. In *Man* (1967) and *Big Black* (1967) the mask face is more abstract and superimposed on a background composition of multicolored rectangular shapes.

(Extensive background material is available on Faith Ringgold's life and art. One of the best sources is her own autobiography entitled: *We Flew Over the Bridge*, Duke University Press, 2005. See pages 161-164 for information about her *Black Light Series*.)

5. Transition: discuss the different reasons people choose to wear masks. Introduce the metaphor of a mask being a device for people to hide their real feelings, and explain that there are many different reasons why people choose to hide their feelings. Ask the students:
  - Have you ever been in a situation in which you felt like crying, but smiled instead?
  - Have you been in a situation in which you felt angry, but put on a calm face instead?
  - Think about the situation. Write down a brief description of the situation.
  - Discuss your experience with a small group of classmates.
  - Make two quick pencil sketches to show the way you felt and the face you showed.
  - Share your sketches with your group.
  - Discuss the different reasons people choose to wear masks. Is it helpful or harmful to wear masks?

**Extension activity relating to Faith Ringgold's masks:** Do online research about the use of masks in diverse African cultures. Faith Ringgold and many artists of all races have viewed African masks as powerful, expressionistic, forms that offered an alternative of ideal beauty that countered the classical forms of Eurocentric art schooling. Additionally, many African Americans have consciously embraced African and African inspired fashion, craft, music, and objects as an empowered embrace of one's heritage.

Have students print images and do mini-presentations on their findings.

## Part II Reading and Analyzing a Poem

6. Read the following poem. Think about how and why people choose to hide their feelings.

### *We Wear the Mask*

By Paul Lawrence Dunbar

We wear the mask that grins and lies,  
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes-  
This debt we pay to human guile;  
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,  
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be otherwise,  
In counting all our tears and sighs?  
Nay, let them only see us, while  
We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries  
To thee from tortured souls arise.  
We sing, but oh the clay is vile  
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;  
But let the world dream otherwise,  
We wear the mask!

### **Vocabulary:**

grins: smiles widely

guile: trickery

myriad: countless, many

subtleties: ways that are indirect, not open or easily detected

tortured: hurt, tormented

vile: hateful

7. Invite students to volunteer to read the poem aloud dramatically. Mention that Faith Ringgold also does performance art, which is something like reading a poem aloud and with lots of feeling. Demonstrate this for your students!
8. Share some background information about the Poet: Paul Lawrence Dunbar, born in 1872 to former slaves, was the first African American poet in the United States to be very popular. The only African-American student in his high school class, he became class president and class poet. After graduation, however, he was rejected from newspaper jobs because of racism. Invite the students to find out more about Paul Lawrence Dunbar online, and share information and perhaps some of his other writings with the class. Ask the students to share what their understanding of racism is.
9. Ask students to consider these questions after studying the poem:
  - -What does the mask of the poem look like? Sketch it.
  - -What does this mask hide?
  - -From whom does the mask hide the wearer?
  - -Why do you think “we” wear the mask?
  - -Who do you think are the “we” of the poem?
  - -Does it help or hurt to wear the mask? Support your answer with lines or ideas from the poem.
  - -Did learning a little about Paul Lawrence Dunbar change your ideas about the poem? If so, in what way?
10. Explain the use of **meter**: Meter is a pattern of rhythm that repeats itself over and over in a line of writing. When an author uses a line of words that have a regular rhythm, the author is using meter. An example of the use of meter from Dunbar’s poem is “We wear the mask that grins and lies/It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes.” Can you find two other clear examples of the use of meter in “We Wear the Mask”?
11. Explain the use of **rhyming couplets**: *Rhyme* is the use of similar sounds in words or phrases that appear close to one another in a poem. Most rhymes occur on the final syllable of the last word on a line. A *rhyming couplet* is two lines of a poem that rhyme at the end of each line, e.g. *Twinkle, twinkle little star, How I wonder what you are*. Rhyme can be a way to enhance how a poem sounds, as it does in “We Wear the Mask.”
12. Finding the rhyme: Find the rhyming words in the poem “We Wear the Mask”; for example: lies and eyes. Label each set of rhyming words with a letter, starting with a, then b, then c, and so on. List the letter of the rhyme of each line. This is the rhyme scheme, or pattern of the poem. Did you notice the pattern before doing this exercise?
13. Discuss what effect these rhyming words have. Do they make the poem easier to remember? Do they mark sections of the poem to give it a clearer structure?

Rhyme Scheme for First Stanza of

“We Wear the Mask”

lies	a
eyes	a
guile	b
smile	b
subtleties	c

14. Compare and contrast the structure of the poem to the structure of Faith Ringgold’s two works Big Black and Man.

**Part III Art making, writing and performing**

15. Culminating activity:

- Review what you thought about and sketched when you first examined Faith Ringgold’s two mask paintings.
- Keeping in mind an emotion you wish to evoke visually, create your own grid pattern, color palette and composition, and make a mask. One choice of materials could be to use colored cellophane and sturdy card stock, creating a stained glass effect. There are many possibilities.
- Write a poem using rhyming couplets about a time you “wore this mask”.
- Write a poem using rhyming couplets to describe one of Faith Ringgold’s paintings.
- Present your poem and your mask as a performance to bring it alive!
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# **Selected Highlights from the Social Studies Resource Guide with Core Curriculum**

(The University of the State of New York, Regents of The University, <http://www.nysed.gov>)

## **Kindergarten - Content Understandings**

Myself and others

My physical self includes gender, ethnicity, and languages.

Each person is unique and important.

People are alike and different in many ways.

People use folktales, legends, music, and oral histories to teach values, ideas, and traditions.

My family and other families

My family and other families are alike and different.

Symbols of citizenship

Citizenship includes an awareness of the symbols of our nation.

Citizenship includes knowledge about and a respect for the flag of the United States of America.

## **Grade 1 - Content Understandings**

### **My family and other families**

Families and different kinds of families exist in all communities and societies though they may differ.

### **History of my family**

People of diverse racial, religious, national, and ethnic groups transmit their beliefs, customs, and traditions.

Folktales, biographies, oral histories, and legends relate family histories.

### **My community and local region**

Different events, people, problems, and ideas make up my community's history.

Folklore, myths, legends, and other cultural contributions have helped shape our community and local region.

### **Places in my community and local region**

Places can be located on maps and on a globe.

Maps and diagrams serve as representations of places, physical features, and objects.

## **Symbols of citizenship**

Citizenship includes knowledge about and respect for the flag of the United States of America, including an understanding about its display and use.

## **My community and region today**

My urban, suburban, or rural community can be located on a map.

Events, people, traditions, practices, and ideas make up my urban, suburban, or rural community.

## **Grade 2 - Content Understandings**

### **Rights, responsibilities, and roles of citizenship**

People living in rural, urban, and suburban communities may have conflicts over rules, rights, and responsibilities.

Citizens can participate in decision making, problem solving, and conflict resolution.

### **Cultures and civilizations**

People in world communities use legends, folktales, oral histories, biographies, autobiographies, and historical narratives to transmit values, ideas, beliefs, and traditions.

Historic events can be viewed through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.

### **Communities around the world**

People of similar and different cultural groups often live together in world communities.

World communities have social, political, economic, and cultural similarities and differences.

World communities change over time.

## **Grade 3 - Content Understandings**

### **Communities around the world**

People in world communities may have different interpretations and perspectives about important issues and historic events.

### **People making and changing rules and laws**

People in world communities form governments to develop rules and laws to govern community members.

People in world communities may have conflicts over rules, rights, and responsibilities.

### **Governments around the world**

Governments in world communities have the authority to make, carry out, and enforce laws and manage disputes among them.

Governments in world communities develop rules and laws.

Governments in world communities plan, organize, and make decisions.

## **Grade 4 - Content Understandings**

### **The new nation**

The roots of American culture, how it developed from many different traditions, and the ways many people from a variety of groups and backgrounds played a role in creating it

Those values, practices, and traditions that unite all Americans

### **Government**

The fundamental values of American democracy include an understanding of the following concepts: individual rights to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness; the public or common good; justice; equality of opportunity; diversity; truth; and patriotism.

The basic purposes of government in the United States are to protect the rights of individuals and to promote the common good.

The meaning of key terms and concepts related to government, including democracy, power, and citizenship

Citizenship includes an awareness of the holidays, celebrations, and symbols of our nation, including the flag of the United States of America, its proper display, and use.

## **Grade 5 - Content Understandings**

### **U.S. History/The Civil War**

- What were the political, social, and economic effects of the Civil War?

- What were the long-term economic, political, and social implications of Reconstruction?

### **U.S. History/WWII – Postwar Period**

Unprecedented prosperity

- Not all groups benefited equally
- High black unemployment
- Millions of poor

Foreign immigration and black migration resulted in a very diverse population and an increase in social tensions—the effects of human migrations on the nature and character of places and regions

Black migration to Northern cities

Growth of organizations to fight discrimination; e.g., NAACP

Growth of black art, music, and cultural identity; e.g., the Harlem Renaissance

Civil rights movement placed focus on equality and democracy.

Important executive and judicial decisions supported equal rights:

- Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) overturned legal basis of segregation
- Activists and leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. developed strategies to secure civil rights for

African Americans

- Women, Native American Indians, and others also sought greater equality political life of the United States.

Classroom project idea:

- Create a poster indicating the significant people and events in the struggle for equal rights of a particular minority group.

### **Grade 6 - The Eastern Hemisphere**

The grade 6 social studies program emphasizes the interdependence of all people, keying on the Eastern Hemisphere.

### **Grades 7-8 – Social Studies/ U.S. and New York State History**

Social studies content in grades 7 and 8 focuses on a chronologically organized study.

#### **One objective:**

To describe historic events through the eyes and experiences of those who were there

#### **The Civil War**

- What were the political, social, and economic effects of the Civil War?
- What were the long-term economic, political, and social implications of Reconstruction?
  - The Emancipation Proclamation
  - Civil Rights and the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment
  - Problems of economic and social reconstruction led to sharecropping as a substitute for slavery
  - Segregation held legal: Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)

#### **The Progressive Movement, 1900-1920, Efforts to Reform the New Society**

Fighting racial discrimination, e.g., the formation of the NAACP

#### **The Spirit of the Postwar Period**

Foreign immigration and black migration resulted in a very diverse population and an increase in social tensions— the effects of human migrations on the nature and character of places and regions

- Black migration to Northern cities
- Growth of organizations to fight discrimination; e.g., NAACP
- Growth of black art, music, and cultural identity; e.g., the Harlem Renaissance

#### **Postwar Society Characterized by Prosperity and Optimism**

Civil rights movement placed focus on equality and democracy

- Important executive and judicial decisions supported equal rights
- Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) overturned legal basis of segregation
- Activists and leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. developed strategies to secure civil rights for African Americans
- Women, Native American Indians, and others also sought greater equality

### **Self-confidence of early postwar years eroded by series of events**

Assassinations of major leaders: Kennedy, King

- What method did minority groups use in their attempts to gain equal rights?

Classroom project idea:

- Create a poster indicating the significant people and events in the struggle for equal rights of a particular minority group.

## **Secondary Level – U.S. History**

### **The Progressive Movement: Responses to the Challenges brought about by Industrialization and Urbanization**

The suffrage movement

The black movement and reform (Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois)

- Formation of NAACP (1912)
- Ida Wells (anti-lynching)
- Marcus Garvey

Formation of Anti-Defamation League (1913)

- What specific political, economic, and social problems in late-19th-century America led to the call for reform?

### **The World in Uncertain Times: 1950 – Present**

Civil rights

- Jackie Robinson breaks the color barrier
- Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 1954
- Beginnings of modern civil rights movement
  - Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott
  - Little Rock: school desegregation
  - Segregation in public transportation ruled unconstitutional
  - Sit-ins: nonviolent tactic
  - Civil Rights Act of 1957

## Diversity

### Immigration and migration

- How did Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson further the civil rights initiatives begun by Truman?

Students should understand that in spite of the victory of the forces of integration in the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka decision, there was much resistance to a broader application of the principle of integration. Students should study various specific events in the civil rights movement from 1955 to 1965.

### Decade of Change: 1960s

Students should understand that the 1960s witnessed protest movements of peoples of diverse backgrounds (African-Americans, women, Hispanic-Americans, Native American Indians).

#### Civil rights actions

- James Meredith at the University of Mississippi
- Public career of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Birmingham protest (“Letter from Birmingham Jail”)
- Assassination of Medgar Evers
- March on Washington

#### Continued demands for equality: civil rights movement

#### Black protest, pride, and power

- NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People): legal judicial leadership, Urban League
- SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee): sit-in movement among college students
- SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference): promote nonviolent resistance, sit-ins, boycotts
- CORE (Congress of Racial Equality): “Freedom Riders”
- Testing of segregation laws
- Others: Black Muslims; prominence of Malcolm X: advocating separation of races, separate state in the U.S.
- Civil unrest: Watts riot, 1965
- Assassination of Malcolm X (February 1965)

#### Legislative impact

- Civil Rights Act of 1964
- 24th Amendment (eliminating poll tax)
- Voting Rights Act, 1965
- Court decisions since 1948 upholding or modifying preferential treatment in employment; equal access to housing; travel and accommodations; voting rights; educational equity

- Fair Housing Act, 1968

Demands for equality: women/the modern women's movement

Kennedy Commission and the Civil Rights Act, 1963-1964

### **Turmoil at Home and Abroad, 1965-1972**

NOW (1966) to present

- Shifting roles and images
- Roe v. Wade, 1973
- Equality in the workplace: compensation, the glass ceiling

Rising consciousness of Hispanic-Americans

- "Brown power" movement

This material has been underwritten by the JPMorgan Chase Foundation.

# Selected Chronology of Faith Ringgold\*

1930

- Born Faith Willie Jones, October 8, Harlem Hospital, New York City, to Andrew Louis Jones Sr. and Willi Edell Posey Jones. Youngest of four: Ralph, who died before Faith was born, Andrew, and Barbara.
- Lives in Central Harlem, "the Valley," 222 West 146th Street.

1932

- First asthmatic attack. As she is frequently sick with asthma as a child, art becomes a major pastime.

1942

- Parents divorce. Even so, Andrew Jones Sr. remains constant presence in household.
- Family moves to Sugar Hill in Harlem, 363 Edgecombe Avenue between 150th and 155th streets.
- Mother changes name back to Willi Posey and takes first job, working in a parachute factory.

1943

- Ringgold's sister, Barbara, graduates from high school.

1948

- Graduates from Morris High School in the Bronx.
- Enters School of Education, City College of New York. Studies with Robert Gwathmey.

1950

- Marries Robert Earl Wallace (November 1), a classical and jazz pianist.
- Enters City College of New York to study art.
- Obtains first studio space for independent oil painting projects.
- Emcees her mother's first fashion show at a small club in Harlem.

1952

- Has two children: Michele Faith Wallace, January 4; Barbara Faith Wallace, December 15.

1954

- Permanent separation from Wallace. Divorce proceedings begin (granted an annulment in 1956). Moves with daughters to mother's house.
- Defended in divorce proceedings by Flo Kennedy, who later, in 1967, introduces Ringgold to the women's liberation movement.

1955

- Graduates from City College with B.S. in fine art.
- Begins teaching art in the New York City public schools, Harriet Beecher Stowe Junior High School, Manhattan P.S. 136 (through 1957).
- First hears of James Baldwin through his sister, Paula, a student of hers at J.H.S. 136.

1957

- Spends first of many summers painting in Provincetown, Massachusetts.
- Begins teaching at Manual Training High School (now John Jay High School) in Brooklyn (through 1960).

1959

- Completes M.A. in art at City College. Continues to study with Gwathmey and also with Yasuo Kuniyoshi.

- Moves to 665 Westchester Avenue in the Bronx.

1960

- Begins teaching at J.H.S. 113 in the Bronx (through 1964).

1961

- Travels to Europe with mother and daughters aboard SS Liberté. Tours museums in Paris, Nice, Florence, and Rome.
- Brother, Andrew, dies. Family returns home abruptly.
- Creates studio space in dining room of her home.

1962

- Marries longtime family friend Burdette (Birdie) Ringgold (May 19).

1963

- Spends summer at Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard. Develops first mature style, which she calls "super realism." Results in American People Series.
- Moves back to Harlem.

1964

- Begins search for New York gallery.
- Tries to join Spiral, founded in 1963. Receives only a polite letter from Romare Bearden acknowledging her work
- Tries to exhibit in first Black Arts Festival in Senegal.
- First published article about her work appears in New York Amsterdam News (May 16).
- Receives permanent teaching license. Begins teaching at Walton High School in the Bronx (through 1965).

1965

- Meets LeRoi Jones at his newly founded Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School in Harlem.
- Begins teaching at P.S. 100 in Harlem (through 1968).
- Students in her art class at P.S. 100 exhibit their work at Blumstein's Department Store. Exhibition receives New York Times review.

1966

- Participates in Art of the American Negro, sponsored by the Harlem Cultural Council at Kenwood Reter's furniture store (opened June 27), the first large survey of black art and first exhibition of black art in Harlem since the 1930s. First significant contact with black artists, including exhibition curator Romare Bearden and other participants such as Ernie Crichlow, Norman Lewis, Charles Alston, Hale Woodruff, Betty Blayton.
- Participates in traveling art exhibition organized by the Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School (August).
- Invited to joins Spectrum Gallery on 57th Street, Robert Newman, director.
- Robert Earl Wallace dies.

1967

- Her mother and daughters travel to Europe for summer; first time living alone.
- Using Spectrum Gallery as a studio, spends summer painting first mural-size works: American People Series #18: The Flag Is Bleeding, American People Series #19: U.S. Postage Stamp Commemorating the Advent of Black Power, and American People Series #20: Die. Shares painting space with Jeannine Petit, another Spectrum artist.
- First one-person show, American People, at Spectrum Gallery (December 19-January 6).
- American People Series #6: Mr. Charlie illustrated in Hale Woodruff, "Artists of the Sixties," in The Negro in Music and Art, ed. Lindsay Patterson, International Library of Negro Life and History series..

- Sells work for the first time: Art historian James Porter purchases *Bride of Martha's Vineyard* (1963), and Carol Bobkoff purchases *American People Series #15: Hide Little Children* (1966).
- Begins development of *Black Light Series* using palette of darkened colors, in pursuit of a more affirmative black aesthetic.

#### 1968

- Takes summer job teaching African art at Intermediate School 201 in Harlem.
- In the fall, begins teaching at Brandeis High School Annex in Manhattan (through 1973, at which time she retires from New York City public school system).
- Raises funds for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference by arranging for civil rights leader Fannie Lou Hamer to speak at one of her mother's fashion shows.
- Participates in benefit exhibition, *In Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*, at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) (October 31–November 3). Meets Jacob Lawrence, Henri Ghent, and Ed Taylor.
- Joins Art Workers' Coalition (AWC).
- Initiates public protest on November 17 at the Whitney Museum of American Art over exclusion of black artists from the exhibition *The 1930s: Painting and Sculpture in America*. Meets Lucy Lippard, Yvonne Rainier, and Lil Picard. The Studio Museum (established this year) hosts *Invisible Americans: Black Artists of the 30s* in response.
- Demonstrates with Tom Lloyd against MoMA to demand black artist wing for Martin Luther King Jr. (assassinated April 4). Efforts result in two blacks on the board of trustees of the museum and major exhibitions for Romare Bearden and Richard Hunt in 1971.
- Shirley Chisholm, the only living woman in Ringgold's 1972 *Feminist Series* and the inspiration for her 1972 *Political Landscape Series*, becomes the first black woman elected to Congress.

#### 1969

- Returns to development of *Black Light Series* using palette of colors (dry pigment) darkened with burnt umber.
- *American Spectrum* purchased by David Rockefeller for the Chase Manhattan Bank.
- Apollo 11 successfully lands on the moon, first lunar landing. Ringgold paints *Flag for the Moon: Die Nigger* in response.
- Begins series of political posters.
- Father dies.

#### 1970

- Second one-person show, *America Black*, featuring *Black Light Series*, at Spectrum Gallery (January 27–February 14).
- While still teaching full-time at Brandeis High School Annex, begins lecturing part-time at Pratt Institute, Bank Street Graduate School for Teachers, and Wagner College.
- Co-founds Women Students and Artists for Black Art Liberation (WSABAL) with daughter Michele. As its first act, WSABAL successfully persuades Robert Morris and Poppy Johnson of Art Strike to include more than 50 percent women, black artists, students, and political poster artists in the *Liberated Venice Biennale* exhibition, held at Museum (AWC headquarters) (opened July 22).
- Participates in Ad Hoc Women's Art Group demonstration at Whitney Museum Biennial Exhibition. Her recommendations result in inclusion of Betye Saar and Barbara Chase-Riboud in the Biennial, making them the first black women to exhibit at the Whitney.
- Arranges the *People's Flag Show* with Jean Toche and Jon Hendricks at Judson Memorial Church, Greenwich Village (November 11–14 but shut down November 13). The three artists, dubbed the "Judson 3," were arrested for flag desecration. Convicted the following May, Ringgold pays \$100 fine rather than serve thirty days in jail.
- Panel discussion at Museum (AWC headquarters) regarding issues prompted by the *People's Flag Show* and artists' arrest (November 30).

- Asked by the Committee to Defend the Panthers, a New York-based organization supporting the Black Panthers' legal defense fund, to produce a poster. Committee rejects the poster, All Power to the People.

1971

- Participates in "The Black Artist" (May 2) and "Women's Liberation and the Arts" (March 16) panel discussions, part of "ART 71: A Series of 8 Panel Discussions" at the Art Students League.
- Co-founds black women artists group Where We At with Kay Brown and Dindga McCannon to address exclusion of women artists from black artists organizations like Spiral.
- Curates exhibition Where We At, Black Women Artists, Acts of Art Gallery, New York (through July 30).
- First television appearance: Free Time, hosted by Julius Lester, WNET-TV, New York. Meets Louise Nevelson, Alice Neel, and Pat Mainardi.
- Wins Creative Arts Public Service (CAPS) grant to execute a mural for the Women's House of Detention on Rikers Island.
- Produces two posters for Angela Davis, in jail at the time having been charged as an accomplice to conspiracy, kidnapping, and homicide in the murder of Marin County judge Harold Haley.

1972

- For the Women's House (1971) installed in January at the Women's House of Detention on Riker's Island. Helps form Art Without Walls, which brings art to prison inmates.

\*Covering period through the installation of For the Women's House in 1972. For a more complete chronology, see the exhibition catalog for American People, Black Light: Faith Ringgold's Paintings of the 1960s, Neuberger Museum of Art, 2010

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# Civil Rights/Black Power Timeline

1954 Brown vs. Board of Education: U.S. Supreme Court bans segregation in public schools.

1955 (August 28) Murder of Emmett Till in Mississippi, funeral in Chicago

1955 (December 1) Bus boycott launched in Montgomery, Ala., after an African-American woman, Rosa Parks, is arrested December 1 for refusing to give up her seat to a white person.

1956 (December 21) After more than a year of boycotting the buses and a legal fight, the Montgomery buses desegregate.

1957 The Little Rock Nine desegregate Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas. 1,000 paratroopers are called by President Eisenhower to restore order and escort nine black students to school.

1960 The sit-in protest movement begins in February at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C. and spreads across the nation.

1961 Freedom rides begin from Washington, D.C: Groups of black and white people ride buses through the South to challenge segregation.

1963 Police arrest King and other ministers demonstrating in Birmingham, Ala., then turn fire hoses and police dogs on the marchers. April 1963, King writes "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

1963 Medgar Evers, NAACP leader, is murdered June 12 as he enters his home in Jackson, Miss.

1963 August, 250,000 people attend the March on Washington, D.C. urging support for pending civil-rights legislation. The event was highlighted by King's "I have a dream" speech. Bayard Rustin, March on Washington organizer

1963 Assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Nov. in Dallas, TX.

1963 Four girls killed Sept. 15 in bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala.

1964 Three civil-rights workers are murdered in Mississippi.

1964 (July 2) President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ending Jim Crow laws, racial segregation, discrimination against African Americans and women.

1965 (February 21) Malcolm X is murdered. Three men are convicted of his murder.

1965 (August 6) President Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The act, which King sought, authorized federal examiners to register qualified voters and suspended devices such as literacy tests that aimed to prevent African Americans from voting.

1965 August 11-16 Watts riots leave 34 dead in Los Angeles.

1965-1975 Vietnam War/Anti-Vietnam Movement

1966 Oct. Bobby Seale and Huey Newton found the Black Panther Party for Self Defense in Oakland, CA.

1968 April, The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., unleashing violence in more than 100 cities.

1968 June, U.S. Senator, Robert F. Kennedy Assassinated

1968 March, Eldridge Cleaver publishes Soul on Ice, which becomes a best-seller.

1968 (September) Newton found guilty of voluntary manslaughter of an Oakland police officer and is sentenced to 2 to 15 years; an appeals court reverses the conviction; two more trials end in mistrials.

1969 Panthers start free breakfast program for children. Other community programs follow.

1969 (September) Opening of Chicago Eight trial. Bobby Seale and seven others are accused of crossing state lines to incite rioting at 1968 Democratic convention.

1969 (December) A predawn raid by police leaves Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark dead in a Chicago apartment.

1970 Angela Davis arrested in New York City on false charges of kidnapping, murder, and conspiracy. She was acquitted after 16 months incarceration. Member of Communist Party, Black Panther Party, and SNCC.

1974 Aug, Newton is charged with murdering a prostitute and pistol-whipping a tailor and flees to Cuba, turning the Party over to Elaine Brown. He returns three years later, and is in and out of prison for that offense and for others over the next 15 years.

1976 (January) A Senate Intelligence Committee reveals the contents of an FBI report that shows that the FBI encouraged warfare between Black groups in California in late 1960's.

1989 (August) Huey Newton is killed in West Oakland.

NAACP National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

SCLC Southern Christian Leadership Conference

SNCC Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee

CORE Congress for Racial Equality

BPP Black Panther Party

Compiled by Karima Robinson, Assistant Professor of Drama Studies, Purchase College for the course Black American Drama from these websites: [www.africanaonline.com/timeline](http://www.africanaonline.com/timeline)

[www.iveknownrivers.org](http://www.iveknownrivers.org)

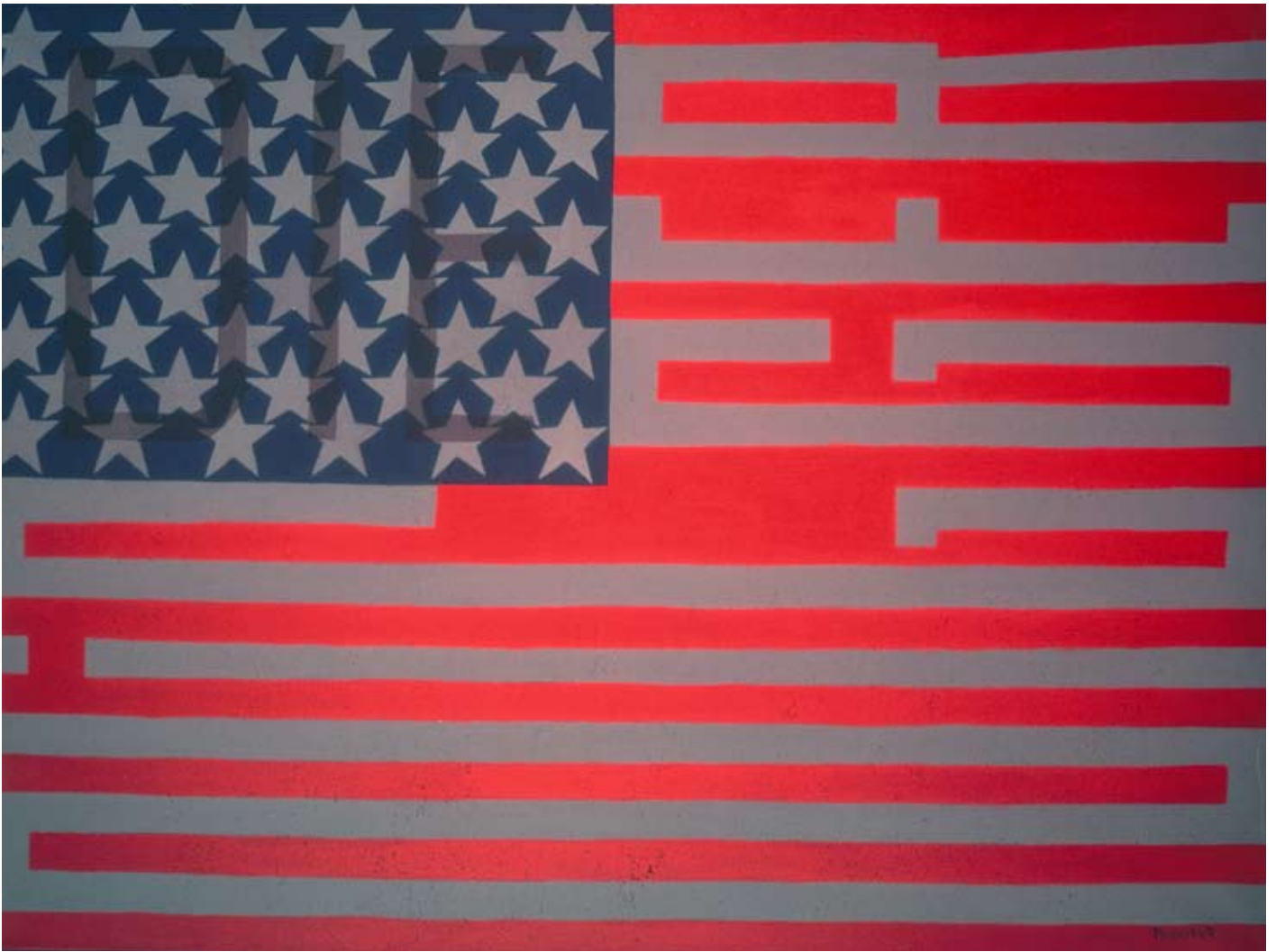
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*American People Series #18: The Flag is Bleeding, 1967*  
Oil on canvas, 72 x 96 inches  
Courtesy of Faith Ringgold and ACA Galleries, New York



*American People Series #8: The In Crowd, 1964*  
Oil on canvas, 48 x 26 inches  
Courtesy of Faith Ringgold and  
ACA Galleries, New York



*Black Light Series #10: Flag for the Moon: Die Nigger, 1969*  
Oil on canvas, 36 x 50 inches  
Courtesy of Faith Ringgold and ACA Galleries, New York