

## **Connecting: Who Is a Craft Luminary? Activity Guide**

### **Procedure: Pre Visit Activities**

Explain that you are going to visit an exhibit of works by Kentucky *craft luminaries*. Ask students what they think might be the definition of a luminary. Read the definition together.

**Luminary:** *A successful person who is an inspiration to others*

Ask students to brainstorm a list of luminaries in various fields and in your local community.

Ask what might make someone a luminary in the field of crafts. Read and discuss the *Craft Luminaries of Kentucky* essay together (see below). Note that this also addresses

Ask students why early settlers in Kentucky made crafts. Ask why people make crafts today.

Read the essay, *Minnie Adkins*, together (below the Kentucky Academic Standards for Visual Art). Ask why Minnie would be considered a craft luminary. Ask students to work in small groups to write a description of a craft luminary. Share and discuss the descriptions. Allow time for groups to revise their descriptions after the discussion. Save these descriptions.

### **Procedure: On-Site Activity**

**Preparation:** Divide students into teams and assign each team 3-4 artists whose work is included in the exhibit. Ask them to collect any information about the artists and their work that is included in signage or in the exhibit materials. If possible, allow students to bring phones or other devices to the exhibit for picture taking.

#### **Team Task:**

1. Locate the work of your assigned artists.
2. Read information on signage and/or in the exhibit catalog about the artist. Discuss with your team which facts explain why the artist is considered a craft luminary. Take notes and/or underline facts.
3. Look at the art. Is there anything in the artwork that supports or illustrates your idea about why this artist is considered a craft luminary? Take photos of the work (either the entire work or details that are important to your thesis).

## **Procedure: Post-Visit Activities**

1. Ask each group to select one artist that they researched at the exhibit. Ask them to do additional research and prepare a presentation explaining why that artist is a “craft luminary.” Sites that will have information include:

- [http://kchea.org/craft\\_luminary\\_exhibit/educators\\_guide](http://kchea.org/craft_luminary_exhibit/educators_guide) Scroll down for Artist Bios.
- [http://kchea.org/resources/craft\\_luminary\\_oral\\_histories](http://kchea.org/resources/craft_luminary_oral_histories) This list of oral history interviews that have been completed with crafts luminaries has very brief bios. High school students might consult the actual interviews. Audio and transcript versions are available.
- Many crafts luminaries who are currently creating and selling their craftwork are members of the Kentucky Craft Market Program of the Kentucky Arts Council. Information about them can be found here: <https://artistdirectory.ky.gov/Kentucky%20Crafted/Pages/default.aspx>

Before students begin work, lead them in creating criteria for the presentation and a scoring rubric appropriate for your class.

2. Invite one or more of the people that you identified as a *local luminary* to visit your classroom. Work with students to prepare interview questions that they can ask before the visitor comes. Have students write short bios based on the interview as an individual or small group assignment.

3. Work with your local arts council, tourism commission, or other appropriate group to identify local artists and craftspeople. Coordinate an art and craft show to present your local artists to your community. Remember that artists and craftspeople are self-employed professionals. Can you provide an honorarium and/or the opportunity for them to sell their arts and crafts?

Optionally, you could create web pages to showcase local artists and craftspeople.

If you decide on this activity, you might want to use some of the activities from the *Presenting Artwork in an Exhibit Activity Guide*.

4. Lead students in creating a craftwork rooted in local community traditions or in creating artwork that represents community traditions. Organize an exhibit of student work with artist statements and student bios. If you decide on this activity,

you might want to use some of the activities from the *Presenting Artwork in an Exhibit* Activity Guide and/or the *Inspiration and Creativity* Activity Guide.

### **Anchor Standards**

Visual Arts/**Connecting**

**#VA:Cn11.1 Connecting**

**Process Component:** Synthesize

**Anchor Standard:** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Visual Arts/**Connecting**

**#VA:Cn10.1**

**Process Component:** Interpret

**Anchor Standard:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

### **Grade-Specific Performance Expectations**

**#VA:Cn11.1 and #VA:Cn10.1**

#### **Connecting**

- **Grade 4**

**VA:Cn11.1.4**

Through observation, infer information about time, place, and culture in which a work of art was created.

**VA:Cn10.1.4**

Create works of art that reflect community cultural traditions.

- **Grade 5**

**VA:Cn11.1.5**

Identify how art is used to inform or change beliefs, values, or behaviors of an individual or society.

**VA:Cn10.1.5**

Apply formal and conceptual vocabularies of art and design to view surroundings in new ways through art-making.

- **Grade 6**

**VA:Cn11.1.6**

Analyze how art reflects changing times, traditions, resources, and cultural uses.

**VA:Cn10.1.6**

Generate a collection of ideas reflecting current interests and concerns that could be investigated in art-making.

- **Grade 7**

**VA:Cn11.1.7**

Analyze how response to art is influenced by understanding the time and place in which it was created, the available resources, and cultural uses.

**Grade 7**

**VA:Cn10.1.7**

Individually or collaboratively create visual documentation of places and times in which people gather to make and experience art or design in the community.

- **Grade 8**

**VA:Cn11.1.8**

Distinguish different ways art is used to represent, establish, reinforce, and reflect group identity.

**VA:Cn10.1.8**

Make art collaboratively to reflect on and reinforce positive aspects of group identity.

- **Grade Hs proficient**

**VA:Cn11.1.HSI**

Describe how knowledge of culture, traditions, and history may influence personal responses to art.

**VA:Cn10.1.HSI**

Document the process of developing ideas from early stages to fully elaborated ideas.

- **Grade Hs accomplished**

**VA:Cn11.1.HSII**

Compare uses of art in a variety of societal, cultural, and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary and local contexts.

**VA:Cn10.1.HSII**

Utilize inquiry methods of observation, research, and experimentation to explore unfamiliar subjects through art-making.

- **Grade Hs advanced**

**VA:Cn11.1.HSIII**

Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society.

**VA:Cn10.1.HSIII**

Synthesize knowledge of social, cultural, historical, and personal life with art-making approaches to create meaningful works of art or design.

## Minnie Adkins

*“I love doing my art. I would go on making it even if I couldn’t sell it. I started making art as toys when I was a child. I used to make pop guns, sling shots, bow and arrows and what have you.”*

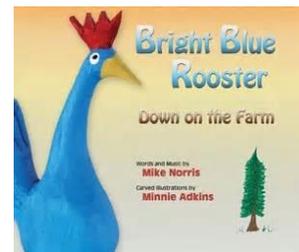


Minnie Adkins was born in 1934 in Elliott County, Kentucky. She learned to whittle as a child. She whittled her own toys. When she grew up, she whittled and carved animals and painted them as a hobby. She sold her carvings at outdoor markets for extra money. In 1980 a gallery in Morehead began selling her animals. People who collect folk art liked her work and began to buy it. Folk art is art that is made by someone who has learned how to create art from other people in their community. Minnie’s father taught her to use a pocket knife to whittle and carve. Minnie’s animals were very popular with folk art collectors.

Soon she had so many orders she needed help! Her husband, Garland, began working with her.

And they didn’t keep their good fortune to themselves! They started a craft show called *A Day in the Country*. They invited folk art collectors. They invited other folk artists in their community to bring the crafts that they made. The folk art collectors bought crafts from other folk artists in Elliott County.

Minnie said, *“I helped other people in my community get started as folk artists because that is what we are put here for.”* Sometimes Minnie collaborates with other folk artists in her community. She collaborated with Tess Little to make pottery pieces with Minnie’s famous rooster design. She worked with songwriter, Mike Norris. They wrote and illustrated picture books with photos of her carvings like *Bright Blue Rooster* (Acclaim Press, 2013).



*Minnie’s piece in the Craft Luminary exhibit is called “Circle of Friends.” What do you think it represents?*

## **Crafts Luminaries of Kentucky: Tradition, Innovation, Economic Development**

In Kentucky, the arts are part of everyday life. People in Kentucky make music and tell stories. They sew quilts and build boats. They raise gardens and cook meals with their own recipes. They take pride in things that are *handmade* and *homegrown*. This is part of our heritage.

The arts are also part of our economy. Early settlers made what they needed for their own household, work, and entertainment. They traded with their neighbors. People who were especially good at making a craft *specialized* in making that craft. They became weavers or woodworkers or basket makers. Traditions that started in the days of early settlement are still important in Kentucky today.

*Kentucky Craft History and Education Association* tells the story of Kentucky's craft history. The exhibit you will see has crafts made by some of Kentucky's finest craftsmen. They are called "craft luminaries." Craft luminaries are leaders in the crafts community.

In Kentucky, there has been support for the arts for a long time. In 1890, Berea College began helping the craftsmen of southeastern Kentucky. The College sold their crafts at their Homespun Fair. They also sold them at the Log House Gallery. Today the *Berea College Student Crafts Program* continues the crafts traditions. Students at the College learn to use traditional materials and processes. They create contemporary crafts.

The Kentucky Folklife Program started in the 1960s. It brought attention to the people who make traditional crafts. Traditional craftspeople follow traditions passed down through generations. Many add their own creative touch.

The Guild of Kentucky Artists and Craftsmen also started in the 1960s. Its goal was to help support people who make contemporary crafts. Contemporary craftspeople like to experiment with new techniques and new materials. The Guild began on two train cars that traveled across Kentucky. They put up exhibits and did demonstrations in the towns they visited. They taught craftspeople all across the state better ways to sell their crafts.

In 1981, First Lady Phyllis George created a Kentucky Craft Marketing Program. In 1982, the Kentucky Crafts Market opened. It is as an art and craft market supported by the state. Today over 200 artists sell their art and crafts at *Kentucky*

*Crafted: The Market.* In 2003 the Kentucky Artisan Center opened in Berea. The Artisan Center sells products made by hundreds of Kentucky artists.

All of these programs have made it possible for artists and craftsmen to earn a living in Kentucky. The artists whose work you see in this exhibit helped to shape these programs. This exhibit honors the work done by these “crafts luminaries.” It also showcases their extraordinary art.

### Vocabulary

Contemporary:	Of the present time
Innovation:	The introduction of something new
Luminary:	A successful person who is an inspiration to others
Showcase:	To exhibit in an attractive way
Specialize:	To limit one’s attention or energy to one business, subject, or study
Traditional:	Handed down from age to age without writing