



Clementine Hunter, *Panorama of Baptism on Cane River*, 1945



OGDEN MUSEUM
OF SOUTHERN ART

CLEMENTINE HUNTER

Educator Resource Packet

About the Artist

Clementine Hunter was born in 1886 (or 1887) on Hidden Hill Plantation in Northwestern Louisiana. The granddaughter of a slave, Hunter received minimal education before moving at the age of 14 to Melrose Plantation, where she would remain for the rest of her life. Founded by a former slave in the 18th Century, Melrose became a small artist colony under owner Cammie Garrit Henry in the early to mid-twentieth century. Hunter worked picking cotton and pecans before moving into domestic service on Melrose. Married twice (her first husband died unexpectedly in 1914), Hunter raised five children. Her life revolved around work, family and church. In 1939, the artist had her first calling to paint — on a linen window shade. Artists and writers staying at the plantation encouraged her painting. Before she died at the age of 101, Clementine Hunter completed 4-5,000 works. In addition to paintings, she created quilts and dolls. Clementine Hunter has become one of the most important African American artists in history. Her life spanned over 100 years literally encompassing the changes of the 20th century segregation, world wars, economic depression, the Civil Rights Movement, and more.

About the Artwork

Clementine Hunter referred to her works as “memory paintings” because they depict scenes of everyday life around the plantation and her church. She was particularly interested in spiritual themes based on activities at St. Augustine Catholic Church on Cane River. Her works indicated African influences in the use of bold color, pattern, stylized imagery, and stacked perspective.

Sample Classroom Activity

Compare and Contrast Country Life Grades 3-5 (Social Studies, Art Criticism)

Compare and Contrast: Clementine Hunter, *Panorama of Baptism at Cane River*, 1945 (see cover page), and Theora Hamblett, *Makin’ Sorghum*, 1964 (see below).

Discussion:

Divide students into small groups. Ask groups to respond to the two works of art on the placemats. Using a Venn diagram or plain piece of paper, invite groups to chart responses about each work of art under the headings **alike** and **different**. Post the charts to discuss as a class.

Writing:

Subject Matter: These two women artists have depicted everyday life in their own way. Ask students to respond to the following questions: What story are they telling about their lives in Louisiana and Mississippi? They each observed an everyday scene. What were they? Why do you think these activities were important to the artists?



Theora Hamblett, *Makin’ Sorghum*, 1964

Art Activity: Memory Paintings

Can be adapted for all ages (45 minute sessions)

Materials: Cardstock, rulers, pencils, washable colored markers, fine tip permanent markers (optional)

- 1) Create a 2" border around your paper (this width can vary but must be wide enough to write in).
- 2) Think about a favorite memory or significant event. This could be something that happened very recently or a long time ago.
- 3) Remember as much as possible about where the memory took place. Using a pencil, begin drawing all that can be remembered of the setting. Try to re-create the place of this memory.
- 4) Draw all the people who were present (including the artist) during this memory. Think about what everyone was doing and draw them engaged in those specific tasks.
- 5) Use colored markers to color in the picture. Think about what weather and time of day the memory occurred and use colors that reflect that environment and mood.
- 6) Using pencil, write out a description of the story in the border around the painting. Go over your writing with a fine tip permanent marker.
- 7) Share paintings and read stories aloud with the class.



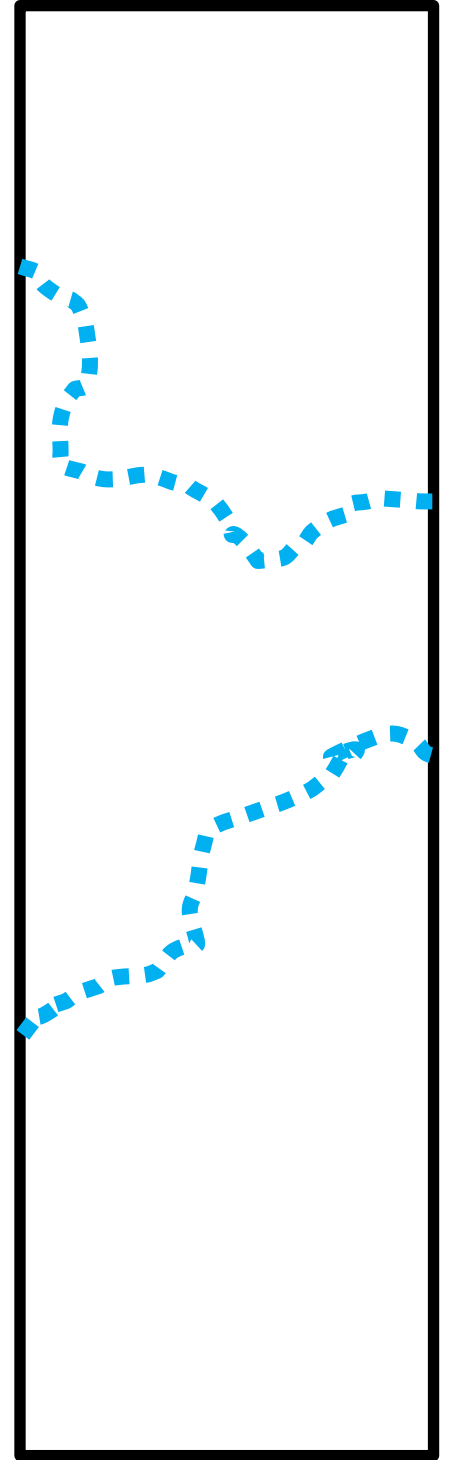
Clementine Hunter, *Secret Garden, Melrose Plantation* , 1955
Collection of Richard Gasperi and James Resko

Art Activity: Day in the Life Bookmark Can be adapted for all ages (45 minute sessions) Clementine Hunter painted scenes she saw in her everyday life working on Melrose Plantation. Her work honors and preserves important parts of American History.

Materials: Cardstock, rulers, pencils, washable colored markers, crayons, colored pencils, fine tip permanent markers

- 1) Look at the painting *Flowing River* by Clementine Hunter (right) and notice the different daily activities that are shown in this painting.
- 2) Cut out or copy the blank template provided (far right). This will be your canvas.
- 3) Using the blue dotted lines as a time divider, draw at least three different activities that are memories from daily life in your community. Include natural surroundings (ie: trees, grass, skies) as well as your city scape (streets, buildings, lights). Include family, friends and community members doing activities that are a big part of your daily life.
- 4) Use colored pencils, crayons and markers to add color and texture to your piece. Fill in the river with blue to make a flowing river throughout your piece.

Option: Cut out the copy of *Flowing River* and glue to the back of your work to make a two-sided bookmark.



Clementine Hunter
Flowing River
c. 1950