

# ART MASTERPIECE: The Sunflower Quilting Bee at Arles, (France) 1991 by Faith Ringgold



**Pronounced:** Faith RING-gold

**Keywords:** Color, quilting, repetition, shape

**Color:** an element of art. The hue, value and intensity of an object. The primary colors are red, blue and yellow: every color except white can be created from various blending of these three colors.

**Quilting:** Sewing small pieces of cloth into patterns, called blocks, that are then sewn together to make a finished quilt top.

**Repetition:** a design that has parts that are used over and over again in a pleasing way.

**Shape:** an element of art. The outline, edge or flat surface of a form as a circle or a square.

**Grade:** 2nd Grade

**Project:** Class Sunflower Quilt

**Powerpoint:** KGA website

**Video:** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=l\\_JVAaZYunk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_JVAaZYunk) (0:58 min)

**Website:** [www.faithringgold.com](http://www.faithringgold.com)

## Meet the Artist (5 min):

- Faith Ringgold was born in Harlem, N.Y. in 1930. She grew up during the time of the Great Depression. As a child she had asthma so she didn't go to school until 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.
- Her mother taught her at home and took her to museums. She gave her paper and crayons to draw. Since her mother was a fashion designer, she also taught Faith how to sew, giving her bits of cloth, needle and thread to make little things.

- She received her Master's of Art degree in 1959, but while in school, she had a professor who didn't like her drawings and told her that he didn't think that she would be an artist. (So believe in yourself!)
- Faith Ringgold began her artistic career more than 35 years ago as a painter. Today, she is best known for her painted story quilts - art that combines painting, quilted fabric and storytelling. When she started out, there weren't many galleries that would even show the work of black women.
- She has since exhibited all over the world and has her work in many permanent museum collections, mostly in New York City. She has also written and illustrated over a dozen children's books. She has received more than 75 awards for painting and writing.
- Faith is married with two children, three grandchildren and is a professor of art at the University of California, San Diego.

### Discussion (10 min):

- **Important Lesson:** What is a quilt? Quilting is an art form. African-American women are credited with the beginning of quilt-making in America. Making quilts was part of their duties as slaves and they made them for the plantation owner's family. Quilts were part of Faith Ringgold's family tradition.
- What kinds of things do you see in this painting?
- Does this painting tell a story?
- Who is in the painting? (African women in Arles, France displaying their quilt with the famous Van Gogh standing in the background. )
- Where is Arles? (Southern France)
- How would you describe the lines, the shapes, the colors? Is there repetition?
- Do you like it?
- What would you title this artwork?
- Does it make you want to learn how to quilt?
- What is worth remembering about this painting?

**Project:** Class Sunflower Quilt.

### Project Materials:

Sunflower or a picture of one  
 8"x8" tag board (or card stock), 1 per student  
 8"x8" squares of fabric in country patterns  
 6"x6" white construction paper (cut down the 12"x18" sheets)  
 Markers  
 Stapler and staples  
 White glue, (6-8 bottles)  
 3" pieces of yarn, 4 pieces per student  
 Parent Letters, 1 per student

**Advance Preparation:**

Cut tag board, fabric, construction paper and yarn  
Copy Parent Letters on copier, 1 per student, then cut apart

**Process (30-40 min):**

- Show the students examples of sunflowers or place the image on the doc camera. Ask the teacher to help.
- Set up one table for stapling the yarn.
- Hand out the 6"x6" square of paper (smaller one), and markers.
- Instruct the students to design a large sunflower on their paper - make it BIG!
- Next, hand out the 8"x8" square of tag board, fabric and glue.
- Instruct the students to first glue the fabric to the largest paper, then glue their sunflower design on top of the fabric.
- Have them sign their name to the Parent Letter, then glue to the backside of the square.
- When they are done, have them come up a few at a time to your table, and staple the yarn **FOR THEM - TO THE BACKSIDE OF EACH CORNER.**
- Tie all the squares together to make a class quilt for display on their wall!

**Clean Up:**

Make sure all glue bottles are closed tightly and that all unused supplies are saved for other classes.