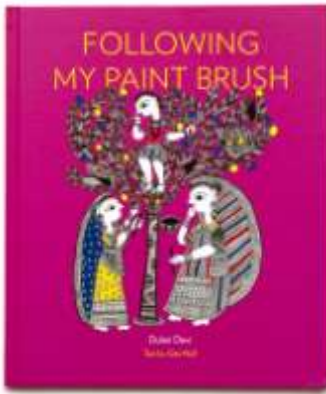




SOUTH ASIA BOOK AWARD
for Children's and Young Adult Literature

Teaching resources and lesson/activity ideas for
Following My Paint Brush
by *Dulari Devi*



"Following My Paint Brush is the story of Dulari Devi, a domestic helper who went on to become an artist in the Mithila style of folk painting from Bihar, eastern India. Dulari is from a community of fisherfolk, used to a life of hard and relentless labor. How she discovered creativity while working as a cleaning woman in an artist's house is a moving story. She learned by doing and very soon came to adapt artistic rules and conventions to her own expressive needs. *Following My Paint Brush* narrates Dulari's momentous journey, from a worker who knew no rest to an artist who is willing to go where her imagination leads her."

Description from the book's back cover

Mithila painting

Mithila painting is a distinctive style of art (also known as Madhubani art) that originated in the eastern Indian state of Bihar. Wikipedia has a good overview of the style here ...

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhubani_art

There are many online galleries and slideshows featuring this style (just google the terms Mithila or Madhubani and see). Here are links to a few with high resolution images ...

<http://www.coolantarctica.com/feze/Novica/Art-Gallery---Paintings---Madhubani.php>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13050055>

Dulari Devi



Dulari Devi, the book's author and artist, is from the state of Bihar in eastern India.

- Have your students locate India on a world map (and also the state of Bihar if you have a map or atlas of India's political geography).

The subjects of Dulari Devi's paintings are things and activities that surrounded her and took place daily in the village where she grew up.

- Have your students identify the things (people, objects, plants and animals) and activities (planting, fishing, dishwashing, etc.) Dulari Devi depicts in the book.

- Discuss with your students the ways in which these things/activities are similar or different from the things they see and do every day.

- Ask them what types of things/activities they would draw if they were asked to make paintings depicting their own daily lives.

Art project

Introduce your class to the Hindi words for the colors Dulari Devi uses in her paintings.

Then have your students try their hand at painting (or drawing with crayons, colored pens or pencils) in the Mithila style. They can begin in class by making some of the simpler images in the book (like a single fish or a cup or a water pot). Once they become more comfortable in the style, they could recreate one of their favorite scenes from the book.

A good homework art project would be for the students to do like Dulari Devi and depict something or some activity that they are familiar with. That is, something they see or do every day. It could be anything - a person, a pet, the family car, even their toothbrush or television. Or it could be a scene of them eating breakfast, playing a game with their friends or doing chores.

काला	<i>kaalaa</i>	Black
लाल	<i>laal</i>	Red
सफ़ेद	<i>safed</i>	White
पीला	<i>peelaa</i>	Yellow
नीला	<i>neelaa</i>	Blue
हरा	<i>haraa</i>	Green
नारंगी	<i>naarangee</i>	Orange

For another art option, the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco has an online activity (complete with downloadable materials) called "Creating a Mithila-style painting"

<http://education.asianart.org/explore-resources/lesson-or-activity/creating-mithila-style-painting-activity>

Learn about cricket!

About one-third of the way through the book *Dulari Devi* depicts a group of children playing a ball game. See if any of your students recognize this game. It's called cricket! Here is a video of kids in India playing it on the street ...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koJ_suUV8Tw

Doesn't it look like fun? Your students can learn more about the game in this video entitled *Introducing Cricket To Children In The United States*.

< Part 1 > <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUb5gM-M3wo>

< Part 2 > <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCKACb0vpS8>

Other resources

The Office of Resources for International and Area Studies at UC-Berkeley has an online Mithila lesson plan that, while designed for secondary school students, contains much useful material. <http://orias.berkeley.edu/Mithila/overviewMithila.htm#contents>

The Center for South Asia at UW-Madison has two documentary films to compliment using *Following my Paint Brush* by Dulari Devi in your classroom.

[Munni \('little Girl'\): Childhood and Art in Mithila](#) (DVD, 30 minutes, 1981)

[Mithila Painters: Five Village Artists from Madhubani, India](#) (DVD, 40 minutes, 1994).
There is free [film guide](#) for Mithila Painters.

These films can be sold to K-12 schools for a reduced rate, contact:
rweiss@southasia.wisc.edu