George Rodrigue: Blue Dogs and Cajuns

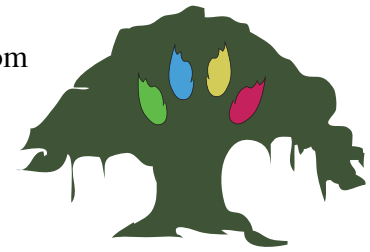
From the Collection of the New Orleans Museum of Art

Educator Guide

Produced by the George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts

Introduction

GEORGE RODRIGUE



FOUNDATION OF THE ARTS

Written in conjunction with *George Rodrigue: Blue Dogs and Cajuns* from the collection of the New Orleans Museum of Art, this educator guide provides background information, lesson plans and museum gallery activities for educators and parents visiting their local museum to see the work of Louisiana artist George Rodrigue. These resources also serve to highlight the mission and materials offered to educators through the George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts.

In 2009 George and Wendy Rodrigue formed the George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. In addition to providing financial assistance in the arts and other areas, GRFA will plan, develop, and implement a series of unique educational programs that are specially designed to enhance and expand art curriculums, despite continuing state and federal cutbacks.

Student success at any age depends on self-confidence, specifically the belief in one's own ability to accomplish any goal. Research proves that personal growth benefits from creative expression and that artistic accomplishment provides students the self-esteem needed for success in all areas of life.

However, due to budget shortfalls and misconceptions, schools find it increasingly difficult to incorporate art in education. George Rodrigue wants to reverse this trend. As a young boy he dreamed of being an artist, and as an adult he credits the support of his parents and teachers with helping him realize that dream. GRFA promotes art education through a variety of programs that provide educators with an inspiring visual arts integrated curriculum along with the tools they need, such as free art supplies, to incorporate the arts into their classrooms.

GRFA programs are open to all accredited schools in Louisiana, and online resources can benefit schools worldwide that are interested in integrating the arts and bringing the art of George Rodrigue into their classrooms. Arts integration is an inquiry-based approach to learning that links the arts with an existing academic curriculum and enhances the learning process by using the arts to build new connections between content and the different ways students learn.

Through GRFA and arts-integrated learning, George Rodrigue hopes to spark creativity in students with varying interests, especially those who might not otherwise be exposed to art education. In doing so, he fulfills his dream to give children the opportunities and skills that the arts provide which can be applied to any area of life, and by extension, boost personal self-confidence and life-long success.

GRFA programs include an annual scholarship art contest open to Louisiana high school juniors and seniors each spring, and George's Art Closet, which provides free art supplies to schools in Louisiana each fall. In addition, the GRFA interactive website offers resources which give educators the tools they need to embrace arts integration in their classrooms. To learn more about George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts and GRFA programs, please visit www.georgerodriguefoundation.org. Be sure to visit our Student Gallery to upload projects!

Biography

George Rodrigue (b. 1944) was born and raised in New Iberia, Louisiana, the heart of Cajun country. For more than forty years, his work has remained rooted in the familiar milieu of home. During the mid-1960s following four semesters at the University of Southwest Louisiana (now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette) Rodrigue attended the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles, where the graduate school's curriculum provided him a nuts-and-bolts foundation in drawing and painting. Outside of art school, L.A. was full of Pop and Abstract influences, and it was an exciting time for a young artist in America. However, much like today critical success depended on one's New York visibility. Nevertheless, Rodrigue returned to Louisiana. He would use its symbols not only to capture the essence of his personal world, but also to express his spiritual and cultural ideas as they pertained to Louisiana, to the South, and to America. Rodrigue decided that he would not be a Louisiana artist in New York City; instead he would return home with his new knowledge and give meaning to a new phrase: Cajun Artist.

Using the oak tree as his main subject in hundreds of paintings in the early 1970s, Rodrigue eventually expanded his subjects to include the Cajun people and traditions, as well as his interpretations of myths such as Jolie Blonde and Evangeline. He painted the Cajuns in white with little or no shadow, a light shining from within these transplanted people, giving them hope. They floated almost like ghosts and appeared locked in the landscape, often framed by the trunk of a tree or the outline of a bush. The roads and rivers became one dark path leading to the small light underneath the oaks.

The Blue Dog

It was one of these myths, the loup-garou, which inspired Rodrigue's most famous series, the Blue Dog. Painted for a book of Cajun ghost stories (Bayou, Inkwell, 1984), this werewolf-type dog was an already familiar legend for Rodrigue, who heard the story often as a boy. With no image for the loup-garou, the artist searched his files for a suitable shape. He found it in photos of his studio dog Tiffany who had died several years before. Rodrigue used her stance and manipulated her shape to meet his needs for the painting. Under a blue night sky he painted the image a pale grey-blue and gave it red eyes. He liked what he saw and added this image to his pictorial list of favorite Cajun legends, painting it in cemetery and bayou scenes intermittently over the next five or six years.

Over time Rodrigue changed the dog's eyes to yellow, creating a friendlier image, and soon realized that the Blue Dog could take him anywhere on the canvas --- even out of Cajun country. He explored his earlier Pop and Abstract interests in a more obvious way, breaking his canvas into strong shapes just as he always had with the oak trees and Cajuns, with the addition of bold blocks of color and a new signature-type shape in the mix. Gradually the dog became bluer and

the paintings more abstract, yet the canvases remained rooted in Rodrigue's Louisiana heritage and traditional training. Whereas with the Cajuns Rodrigue commented on the past, the Blue Dog allowed him to comment on today.

In 2000, Rodrigue broke from representation when he exploded into the eerily prophetic works Hurricanes. His art swirled into an abstract series of Louisiana storms, a hint of an oak tree or a pair of yellow eyes occasionally caught amidst the mass of color and brushstroke.
In 2005, Rodrigue premiered Bodies, reacting to the intense explosion of the Hurricanes with a sudden return to classical nudes, cemeteries, and oak trees. Using the computer, he re-masters the original painting with color and repetitive imagery, using archival inkjet technology and in some cases mounting the finished five-foot prints on steel. As with each series over the past forty years, Rodrigue developed a new mode of expression in a contemporary way, using Louisiana and its timeless symbols as a basis.

Museums continue to acknowledge Rodrigue's accomplishments, particularly following the release of the monograph The Art of George Rodrigue (Harry N. Abrams, New York, 2003). The Dixon Gallery and Gardens Museum in Memphis, Tennessee hosted a 40-year Rodrigue retrospective in July 2007, which then traveled to the New Orleans Museum of Art in the spring of 2008, where the museum received 60,000 visitors, an attendance record for a contemporary show or living artist. In 2009 the University of Louisiana's College of the Arts in Lafayette hosted Rodrigue exhibitions at the University Art Museum and the Acadiana Center for the Arts, in addition to awarding him an honorary doctorate. Governor Bobby Jindal furthered these honors when he declared Rodrigue the Artist Laureate for the State of Louisiana. In 1989 Rodrigue opened his own gallery on Royal Street in New Orleans' French Quarter, and in 1991 he followed with a gallery in Carmel, California. He opened in the Lafayette Oil Center in 2005, just down the street from his first gallery, established thirty years ago. Rodrigue and his wife Wendy live in New Orleans' historic Faubourg Marigny.

Rodrigue Studio, New Orleans 2010

George Rodrigue Timeline

1944
Born on March 13 in New Iberia, Louisiana, to George Rodrigue, a brick-layer, and Marie Rodrigue. Remains an only child.

1952
Begins to paint and sculpt during a four-month bout of polio.

1956-58
Studies privately with Mrs. Keen in New Iberia.

1959-61
Enrolls at Art Instruction School and an intensive Art Correspondence Course.

1962-64
Enters University of Southwest Louisiana in Lafayette as an Art Major.

1965-67
Attends Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles as a Graphic Arts Major.

1967
Returns to New Iberia when his father dies. Enlists in Louisiana National Guard. Marries Veronica Hidalgo.

1968
Art Director for an advertising agency in Lafayette, Louisiana.

1969
Leaves ad agency. Paints full-time. First exhibition at Arts Center for Southwest Louisiana in Lafayette. Governor John McKeithen commissions painting as Louisiana's gift to the Prime Minister of Quebec.

1970
Exhibition of 69 Rodrigue landscapes at the Old State Capitol Building, Baton Rouge, sponsored by the The Louisiana State Arts Commission.

1971
The Aioli Dinner, Rodrigue's first painting with people, displayed at the Iberia Parish Library. First public exhibition in New Orleans at Reilly Gallery.

1972
The Class, Rodrigue adapted this from the class photo (circa 1920) of his mother, Marie Courrege. As with his other paintings from photos, he moved the entire setting outside under the oaks, framing the class with the landscape.

1973
One-week exhibition in London through Munchick & Franks Fine Arts.

1974
Miss Fourth of July of Carencro, Louisiana included in touring "Watergate" exhibition of museums and galleries throughout Europe. Honorable mention with *The Class* in Le Salon des Artistes, Paris. Gold medal from the Academy of Literature, Arts, and Science of Rome.

1975
Jolie Blonde exhibited at Le Salon des Artistes, Paris. Produces first silkscreen. Son Andre born in Lafayette, Louisiana. Exhibition at Arvest Gallery, Boston, MA.

1976
Pellerin and Friends Sip Cajun Coffee chosen by Louisiana Governor Edwin Edwards as official gift to the President of France. Book *The Cajuns of George Rodrigue* published by Oxmoor House, Birmingham, Alabama.

1977
The Cajuns of George Rodrigue chosen as official US State Department gift for visiting foreign heads of state during Carter Administration.

1978
Exhibition at 226 Decatur Gallery in New Orleans.

1980
Exhibition at Galerie Antenia in Paris features *The Kingfish*. Rodrigue dubbed "The Louisiana Rousseau" by Le Figaro.

1981
Exhibition at Provincial Hotel, French Quarter, New Orleans. Book, *A Couple of Local Boys,* published by Claitor. Son Jacques born in Lafayette, Louisiana.

1983
Commissioned by Edwards' re-election committee to paint Governor Edwin Edwards.

1984
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Monument, a 12-foot-tall bronze sculpture, dedicated in Lafayette, Louisiana. *Bayou* (Inkwell), a book of forty ghost stories by Chris Segura, includes first Blue Dog painting (loup-garou).

1986
Commissioned by The Republican Party to paint President Ronald Reagan (Reagan later donated painting to Louisiana State University).

1988
Exhibition at Upstairs Gallery, Beverly Hills, California. Exhibition at Moscow Summit, including portraits of Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev. Commissioned by The Republican Party to paint Vice President George Bush and ten grandchildren (Painting hangs in Bush's private office.)

1989
The Rodrigue Gallery of New Orleans opens in French Quarter. Exhibition at Texas A & M Museum, College Station, Texas. Exhibition aboard Queen Elizabeth II transatlantic liner. Paints three Cajun Easter Eggs for annual White House Easter Egg Roll.

1991
Cajun food served by Chef Paul Prudhomme at Grand Opening of Galerie Blue Dog in Carmel, California.

1992
Painting demonstration at Paul Prudhomme Festival in Opelousas, Louisiana. At festival, meets Michel Roux of Carillon Importers, who commissions Absolut Louisiana for *USA Today*. Documentary, *Rodrigue: A Man and His Dog Dog,* filmed with Whoopi Goldberg.

1993
Museum Exhibition at McLean County Arts Center in Bloomington, Illinois.

1994
The book *Blue Dog (*Rodrigue, Freundlich) published by Viking Press. Exhibition at The Time is Always Now SOHO Gallery, NYC.

1995
Exhibition at the Pensacola Museum of Art, Pensacola, Florida. Commissioned by New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival to paint Louis Armstrong. The book, *George Rodrigue: A Cajun Artist* (Rodrigue, Bradshaw) published by Viking Press.

1996
Exhibition at Union Station, Washington D.C. Commissioned by New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival to paint Pete Fountain. Commissioned by Neiman Marcus to design catalogue cover for The Book (Butterflies are Free).

1997
Exhibition at the Gwinett County Arts Museum, Atlanta, Georgia. Commissioned by the Democratic Inaugural Committee to paint President-elect Bill Clinton and Vice-President-elect Al Gore. Marries Wendy Wolfe.

1998
Becomes sole owner of Rodrigue Studio in New Orleans (formerly The Rodrigue Gallery of New Orleans) and Rodrigue Studio in Carmel (formerly Galerie Blue Dog). Commissioned by

the New Orleans Jazz Club to create 50th anniversary poster. Commissioned by Neiman Marcus to design catalogue cover for The Book (Hawaiian Blues).

1999
Book, *Blue Dog Man* (Rodrigue, Brokaw), published by Stewart, Tabori & Chang, NYC. 45-city artist tour. Commissioned by Neiman Marcus to design catalogue cover for The Book (The Millennium). George Rodrigue Museum opens at Acadian Village, Lafayette, Louisiana. Neiman Marcus, Michigan Avenue, sponsors three fiberglass Rodrigue cows during the Chicago Cow Parade.

2000
Commissioned by Young & Rubicam to create paintings for advertisements promoting Xerox Color Inkjet Printers (9 months). *Book Blue Dog Christmas* (Rodrigue, McAninch) published by Stewart, Tabori & Chang. 25-city artist tour. *Painting Me, Myself, & I in Louisiana* fronts contemporary art wing at New Orleans Museum of Art. Commissioned by the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival to paint Al Hirt.

2001
Paints *God Bless America* in response to 9/11. Exhibition at Louisiana State Archives, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Book *Blue Dog Love* (Rodrigue, Rodrigue) published by Stewart, Tabori & Chang. Began painting in new studio in Carmel Valley, California.

2002
Exhibition at Opelousas Museum of Art, Opelousas, Louisiana. Exhibition at Uptown Park, Houston, Texas. Children's book *Why is Blue Dog Blue?* (Rodrigue) published by Stewart, Tabori & Chang. Receives *CHILD Magazine* Best Children's Book of the Year Award. Begins Hurricane series.

2003
Joins Advisory Board of the International Child Art Foundation. Paints *Honesty* to benefit ICAF. Commissioned by the Musical Arts Society of New Orleans to create poster for the 15th annual New Orleans International Piano Competition. Joins children from 100 countries and 50 states to create a peace mural on the National Mall in Washington D.C. during the International Child Art Festival. The *Art of George Rodrigue* (Danto, Lewis), a 40-year retrospective, published by Harry N. Abrams, NYC. 20-city artist/author tour. Honored as Outstanding Alum of the University of Louisiana, with baseball legend Ron Guidry.

2004
Paints official Louisiana Governor's portrait for the Inauguration of Governor Kathleen Blanco. Retrospective exhibition at Louisiana State Exhibit Museum in Shreveport, Louisiana. Retrospective exhibition at Pensacola Museum of Art in Pensacola, Florida. *The Art of George Rodrigue* wins a 2003 New York Book Show award for its jacket design. *They All Ask for You* chosen to represent New Orleans on the Smithsonian quilt commemorating the national tour of the musical OKLAHOMA. Inducted into the Louisiana "Order of Living Legends" by the Acadian Museum. Honored as Artist of the Year by the American Liver Foundation in Birmingham, Alabama. The *Aioli Dinner* and twelve paintings from the Rodrigue Xerox

campaign join the permanent collection of the New Orleans Museum of Art. Group Exhibition at the Acadiana Center for the Arts, Lafayette, LA, Spirit of Place: Art from Acadiana.

2005
Special three-day (April 5-7) Rodrigue exhibition in the Great Hall of the New Orleans Museum of Art. Unveils *Bodies* series with a 3-week installation at Rodrigue Studio, New Orleans (April 21 - May 15). Opens Rodrigue Studio, Lafayette, as a temporary gallery location following Hurricane Katrina. Creates *We Will Rise Again* to benefit the Red Cross in response to Hurricane Katrina and the flooding of New Orleans. Rodrigue visits Tokyo for an exhibition of new works at the Blue Dog Gallery, celebrating ten years in Minato-ku. Opens additional Rodrigue Studio location in Carmel, CA at the corner of 6th Avenue and Dolores Street.

2006
Develops a campaign for New Orleans levee protection, sending a print to every member of Congress: *To Stay Alive We Need Levee 5*. Rodrigue presents a check for $100,000 (raised from print sales for Katrina relief) to the New Orleans Museum of Art at its grand re-opening March 3; the Museum exhibits Rodrigue's painting *We Will Rise Again*, which he donates to their permanent collection. Creates the official artwork and poster for the 20th anniversary of the Tennessee Williams Literary Festival in New Orleans. Awarded the Southern Woman Magazine Spirit Award for contributions to the city of New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. Donates *Cut Through the Red Tape* image to the United Way for use in promoting their 2-1-1 dialing system, which seeks to eliminate the red tape of reaching human service agencies following disasters such as Hurricane Katrina. Receives the Humanitarian Award from the Southeast Louisiana Chapter of the Red Cross for money donated from sales of *We Will Rise Again*. Rodrigue's 10-foot, steel and aluminum 3-sided sculpture becomes a permanent part of the Besthoff Sculpture Garden at the New Orleans Museum of Art, joining Robert Indiana's *LOVE* and Claes Oldenberg's *SAFETY PIN* in the contemporary garden. Receives the Lifetime Achievement Arts Award from the State of Louisiana at the Governor's Arts Awards in Baton Rouge. Joins with the New Orleans Saints to promote his print *We Are Marching Again* benefiting the New Orleans Museum of Art.

2007
Presents a lecture series at the Phoenix Art Museum. Group Exhibition, Paws and Reflect: Art of Canines, to be shown at seven museums in Bolivar, MO; Parker, OH; Canton, OH; Neenah, WI; Shreveport, LA; Kerrville, TN, and Spartenburg, SC. Exhibition at the Old Courthouse Museum, Louisiana State Museum, Natchitoches, Louisiana, George Rodrigue: Beyond Blue Dog, featuring the *Saga of the Acadians*, portraits from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Flora Levy Lecture Series, and post-Katrina Blue Dog paintings from The Dream Series, June 8th - November 17th. Exhibition at the Dixon Gallery and Gardens Museum, Memphis TN, Blue Dog: The Art of George Rodrigue, featuring more than one hundred paintings and sculpture works spanning forty years, July 29th - October 14th. Joins Drew and Brittany Brees and the New Orleans Saints to raise funds for Blue Dog Relief and the Brees Dream Foundation with his portrait of Drew Brees. Donations from Blue Dog Relief surpass $1 million.

2008
Retrospective exhibition New Orleans Museum of Art, George Rodrigue's Louisiana: Forty Years of Cajuns, Blue Dogs, and Beyond Katrina. Publication of *George Rodrigue Prints* (Harry N. Abrams, New York), a catalogue raisonne. Release of 2006 vintage Amuse Bouche Wine, Napa Valley, featuring Rodrigue label artwork.

2009
Exhibition George Rodrigue: Images of Home on view Jan 17 - Sept 5, Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum, Lafayette, Louisiana. Exhibition George Rodrigue: Legends and Lives of Acadiana on view Mar 14 - Apr 26, Acadiana Center for the Arts, Lafayette, LA. Lafayette, LA celebrates Rodrigue's Acadiana, a city-wide tribute to George Rodrigue, including museum exhibitions, "George Rodrigue Day" (April 1st), and status as special honoree of the University of Louisiana's College of the Arts 'Festival of the Arts' (Mar 30-Apr 4). Receives the SPARKS Lifetime Achievement Award from the UL Lafayette College of the Arts. Exhibition Landscapes: New Works in Oil and Acrylic, Rodrigue Studio. Receives National Award for contributions to American Popular Culture from the Popular Culture and American Culture Associations during their National Conference. Receives an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette during their spring commencement. Inducted into the Junior Achievement of New Orleans Business Hall of Fame. 15-city Book Tour promoting *Are You Blue Dog's Friend?*. *Victory on Bayou St. John*, 14-foot portrait of Eisenhower and Higgins, unveiled at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans. Official artist of Chef Emeril Lagasse's 5th Annual Carnivale du Vin in Las Vegas, NV, raising funds for the Edible Schoolyard. Forms George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts to promote youth development through art in education.

2010

24-foot Blue Dog sculpture of steel, aluminum, and chrome installed on Veterans Blvd at Severn in Metairie, Louisiana, a suburb of New Orleans (images). New 40-foot installation at the Sheraton Hotel New Orleans. Nichols State University, Thibodaux, LA, hosts George Rodrigue: The Saga of the Acadians, a series of fifteen paintings from the Wendell Gauthier Family Collection. "Rodrigue's New Orleans" celebrates the grand opening of the new Rodrigue Gallery at 730 Royal Street with three days of events, including a Blue Dog Parade, a 'Party in Blue' at the Roosevelt Hotel's famous Blue Room, and a 1940s party at the National World War II Museum. Hosted first annual George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts Scholarship Awards Contest, Banquet, and Exhibition, with more than three hundred entries. Completes cover art for *Rascal: A Dog and His Boy,* by Ken Wells. "Blue Dog Days of Summer," paintings from the New Orleans Museum of Art, on view at the Slidell Cultural Center, Slidell, Louisiana. Group Exhibition, Woof! Art of the Dog, Museum of Arts and Sciences, Daytona Beach, Florida. Exhibition at the Ritz-Carlton, New Orleans, celebrating the hotel's 10th anniversary during the month of October.

Brief History of the Cajun People

The Cajun people trace their lineage back to France, and more specifically to migrations that occurred in the 17th and 18th centuries. Small exploratory and settlement groups left France for New France (present day Canada) in the years leading up to 1600. After the turn of the century in 1605, the first stable colony established itself at Port-Royal along the coast of present day Nova Scotia. They named the colony La Cadie, later to be called Acadia.

The exclusively male settlers were led by Pierre du Gast, Sieur de Monts. The colonists of Acadia were laboureurs, a peasant aristocracy who owned enough land to make a living using their own tools and animals. They were also known for their industriousness, which served them well in Acadia. These people had left France to escape the violent religious upheaval in their provinces, as well as epidemics and famine ravaging the nation at the time. They survived in the new land by befriending the local Micmac natives and supported themselves by trading fur, cutting timber, fishing, and hunting. The newly established colony was forced to be self-sufficient, since it received only sporadic support from France due to economic strain intensified by constant war with Great Britain.

Though the area was settled by the French, the British made vague claims to Acadia and other land along the Atlantic coast based on the explorations of John Cabot in 1497. This disagreement between the British and French crowns led to the colony changing hands seven times from 1620-1713. In 1620 King James I of Great Britain issued a Royal Decree which formally extended the British claims on the North American continent to include Canada. This decree emboldened the British American colonists to send Scottish settlers north to Acadia. The Scottish settlers named the island Nova Scotia, as it is known today. Regardless of the new Scottish settlers, Acadia and Canada were returned to French possession in 1632 by the Treaty of Saint-Germaine-en-Laye.

From this point, the colony blossomed under the leadership of Charles d'Aulnay and Isaac de Razilly, leading to the arrival of the first French families in 1636. The Acadians managed to flourish despite perpetual fighting on the European continent. Distinct customs soon evolved among the isolated Acadians. If a priest was unavailable, they would still hold mass, often letting the oldest member of the congregation lead the service. They constructed wooden homes that they sealed with moss and clay, and they also made their own wooden furniture. To prevent their homes and farmlands from constantly being swept away by disastrous floods, the Acadians built levees. For entertainment they raced horses, went fishing, sang old French songs, and told stories of hunting and pirates at parties. Since there were not many roads, they traveled mostly by

birch bark canoe. Enduring bonds were built amongst the Acadians as a result of their isolation, hardships, and marriages.

The British and French finally resolved the matter of Acadia in 1713 with the Treaty of Utrecht, which ceded Acadia to Great Britain. Even though they were still loyal to France, Queen Anne accorded them equal rights under the British regime. The French urged the Acadians to move to what remained of the French-owned land in the area, especially Cape Breton in Newfoundland, even though it did not have the resources to support the Acadian population. Meanwhile, the British encouraged them to stay in Acadia, because it was easier for the English to absorb the stable and prosperous Acadian community than to bring raw settlers from England. The British also feared the Acadians moving to and subsequently strengthening French colonies neighboring the nascent British colonies.

The Acadians decided to remain, and the British insisted they swear allegiance to Great Britain. Standing together, the Acadians refused, because they believed Acadia might return to French power again, they were afraid they would lose rights under British authorities, and they were allies with the Native Americans who were enemies with the British. Instead, they took an oath declaring that in the event of war they would not take up arms against Great Britain or France.

Despite the agreement, the British found it difficult to cope with the Acadians. The British considered the continued practice of Roman Catholicism by the Acadians as well as their trading of goods and intelligence with French Canadians and Indians as subversive behavior. Led by Colonial Governor Charles Lawrence, in 1755 the British authorities decided to drive the Acadians out of the country. The British seized their firearms, ammunition, and boats. Over twenty ships were arranged to deport the thousands of Acadians to various British colonies – Georgia, North Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and Boston. In the confusion of boarding the ships, many families were separated from one another. Believing they would be able to return to their homes, the Acadians left their most valuable possessions hidden in their homes, and so arrived in the British colonies in a state of poverty. Those Acadians who escaped deportation lived in the woods of Nova Scotia for almost four years. Led by Joseph Brossard (now Broussard), they eventually gave up their resistance due to eminent starvation. These Acadians soon settled in Louisiana, then a French colony, launching the beginning of the Acadian migration to the area. Those that had been forced to settle in the British colonies made their way south to Louisiana.

Even after the territory of Louisiana was ceded to Spain in 1762 by the Treaty of Fontainebleu, the Acadians continued to flock there; spurred by the letters they received from family members who were already settled. Spanish control changed little in Louisiana except to alter names to reflect a Spanish quality. The main areas of Acadian settlement were Bayou Teche, the Attakapas area, St. Martinville, Lafayette, Iberia, Vermilion, St. Mary, St. Landry, the Opelousas area, and Bayou Lafourche. These areas were ideal in creating the isolation the Acadians desired from government so they could preserve their culture and family ties. The Acadians became prosperous on the rich Louisiana soil; they raised livestock and grew sweet potatoes and sugarcane. A few even bought slaves.

As the Acadian population increased, the Spanish authorities gave them more and more land, provision, rations, and tools for building and farming. The last large influx of Cajuns came in 1785 from France. Acadians who had ended up back in France after the 1755 deportation had remained landless and poverty stricken. French authorities convinced King Charles III of Spain to pay the passage for the Acadians to Louisiana. This arrangement was agreeable for the Spanish since they needed sturdy family groups to populate the new territory. Neither French nor Spanish citizens wanted to move due to the horror stories they heard of the frontier populated mainly by vagabonds, beggars, and other nonviolent criminals from France. Eager to rejoin their families and make a living, the Acadians lined up to immigrate. With the influx of 1,500 Acadians, their settlements expanded until they spanned the entire Mississippi River Delta all the way to the Texas border.

Louisiana colonists altered the name Acadian to Cadian, which soon evolved into the accepted name of Cajun. In the social hierarchy, white French-Creoles perched higher than the Cajuns. Cajuns who aspired to move up the social ladder tried to mimic the lifestyle of the white French-Creoles, but most remained small-scale farmers. Poor white and mixed-race Creoles often assimilated themselves into the Cajun culture. Pleased with their resource-rich land and left on their own, the Cajuns remained apolitical. Despite an aversion to politics that many Cajuns fostered, distinctive individuals were often elected to government offices. Alexander Mouton, a Cajun, was Louisiana's first elected governor in 1843. The first notable participation in politics by a significant part of the Cajun community was in 1845, when they voted to ratify the state constitution establishing universal white male suffrage. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, few Cajuns volunteered for the Confederate Army. The general population was largely unaffected until the next year when the struggling Confederate Army conscripted Cajun men, and the government confiscated livestock and grain. Many conscripted Cajuns deserted and returned home, welcoming the Union forces when they arrived. Unfortunately, the Union's strategy was to destroy the South, leaving no resources for the Confederacy. This treatment by the government during and after the Civil War reinforced Cajuns innate wariness of government.

After the war, the educated elite turned their backs on the Cajuns. Even the newly freed slaves, reflecting the discrimination of their previous masters, viewed Cajuns with contempt. Ruined by the war, many Cajuns were forced to take jobs as lumberjacks, fisherman, and trappers. Unable to retain possession of their land, Cajuns often became tenants, living alongside black tenants.

These close quarters led to the blossoming of the modern Cajun music and cuisine known today. The Cajun culture and community absorbed African, Spanish, French-Creole, and Native American elements as well.

Educated Cajuns who made it into the urban arena assimilated into the merchant class. Contact between the general American population and the urban Cajuns brought to the government's attention the need to educate the illiterate, French-speaking Cajun community. Up until that time, Cajun education had been practical, with fathers teaching their sons farming and herding skills while the mothers taught daughters sewing, cooking, and other domestic chores. Children learned religion at church and history through the nightly stories told by their grandparents. When the Louisiana Compulsory Education Act of 1916 was passed it changed the subject of education for the Cajuns. The Act was soon followed in 1921 with a provision in the state constitution that all education was to be in English. Cajuns were chastised and publicly humiliated for speaking French at school. In December of 1923, circulation of the last French language newspaper, L'Abeille de la Nouvelle Orleans, was so low it was forced to stop publication. Learning English became even more of a necessity for the Cajun community with the advent of movies and radio programs that were broadcast only in English. Employment opportunities in Louisiana's growing oil industry run by Texan and Oklahomans required a basic understanding of English as well. Older Cajuns who once only spoke Cajun-French were now minimally bilingual, and their children were learning to speak only English.

The influx of American culture affected other aspects of Cajun life as well. The introduction of western and swing music in the 1930s and 1940s changed Cajun music and led to more songs being sung in English. New machines and electricity ended the need for the traditional communal harvest and butchery, so that they were nearly defunct by 1960. Televisions made traditional veillees (evening visits) come to a halt. These traditions had solidified group bonds and gave the community strength. Cajun children born between the onset of the Great Depression and the end of the Baby Boom were often given English names. These children were also encouraged to make the most of educational opportunities.

Newly educated Cajuns moved away from their rural homes to urban areas. There, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, theses urban Cajuns were still discriminated against by their neighbors

and colleagues. Instead of backing down, speaking English, and homogenizing into American culture, these Cajuns took the resentment they felt for being made to feel ashamed of their heritage and established the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL) in 1968. CODOFIL introduced French language programs to the schools. These programs were a huge step forward in promoting the language, but they were not perfect since most of the French teachers were brought in from Europe and spoke a very different type of French than the Cajuns. None the less, CODOFIL made great strides, especially under the former Cajun congressman Jimmie Domengeaux. CODOFIL brought a sense of pride to the Cajun community that had been absent for decades.

The Louisiana oil boom at the end of the 1970s meant that blue-collar workers, especially welders, pipe fitters, roustabouts, mud engineers, and drillers could make more money than a person with a high school diploma. Many teenage Cajuns left school to work, and as a result Louisiana had the nation's highest high school drop-out rate by 1980. These jobs brought an immediate economic boost to the Cajun community, but when the oil depression hit in 1985, they found themselves uneducated and unemployed. The following year, tens of thousands of Cajuns left Louisiana for job prospects in Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida. The majority of Cajuns remained in Louisiana as witnesses to the decline of CODOFIL and French language programs in the schools.

The grim outlook for Cajun culture is slowly changing. A bit of a renaissance has occurred, with CODOFIL attempting to resurrect the French language programs and the Cajun community holding fast to its Acadian roots. The Cajun community holds its own version of Mardi Gras that is vastly different than the televised festivities of New Orleans. People remain suspicious of government and are anticlerical, just as they were when they arrived in Canada during the 17th century. They still live in wooden homes with steeply pitched roofs to ward off the rain. Even though encroachment of American culture and life has brought roads to almost all rural areas, they often travel by boat, particularly the flat-bottomed pirogue. Children who once went to school by school boat now go by school bus. French is again taught in schools, though experts say not enough children are learning the language to ensure the future of Cajun-French. Many Cajuns still make a living trapping, fishing, and cutting lumber as their ancestors did, though it is now on a much larger mechanized scale. The advent of electricity and mechanization means that Cajuns have more free time.

To fill their time, men go hunting, fishing, and trapping, while women weave, quilt, and bake homemade bread. These things are no longer done out of need as they were in the past, but with the intent of preserving their culture. One traditional pastime that never lost its hold is gambling. Gambling takes up a large part of the men's leisure time, whether it is bourre, bingo, or betting on horses or fighting cocks. Cajuns young and old still enjoy dancing and regularly show up for a fais do-do. Family life has also remained relatively unchanged and still revolves around a closely knit, extended family. Newly married couples usually set up home near their parents, so they can make regular visits during the week. The Cajuns are still closely linked to their community.

Recently, people all over the United State have started taking an interest in Cajun culture. Conflicting ideas of Cajuns permeate the American conscious. On one hand, the Cajuns are seen

as backwards, ignorant, superstitious swamp dwellers living in squalor in a moss-draped, reptile-infested wilderness. On the other hand, the Cajuns are seen as simple people with solid virtue who consume large amounts of beer and boudin sausage, while inhabiting a timeless land of natural beauty. A more comprehensive understanding of Cajun culture is possible through contemporary Cajun artists, writers, and historians who have sought to share their heritage, folklore, and customs with the rest of the world. Modernization has allowed more people to learn and appreciate Cajun culture, but unfortunately modernization is also one of the biggest threats to the traditional Cajun way of life. Hopefully, the efforts of the Cajun community combined with the efforts of organizations such as CODOFIL to preserve their culture will be met by an enthusiastic audience in the future to insure the survival of one of Louisiana's richest cultures.

From Top to Bottom:
Pilgrims, The Church at Grand Pre, Leave Our Homes? Hell No!!, The Sailing of the Jonah, The First Cajuns, He-bert, Yes---A Bear, No, Return to Acadie from the Saga of the Acadians series, Oil on Canvas, 36x24 inches, 1985-89.

Musings of an Artist's Wife (www.wendyrodrigue.com)

For even more detailed background information on the life and art of George Rodrigue, along with fascinating insights into his daily life and current projects, visit www.wendyrodrigue.com. Wendy's blog covers all of George's most famous series of works as well as relates great stories of his childhood and path to becoming an artist that might just inspire your students to follow their own dreams. Of particular interest to educators:

How Baby George Became an Artist
http://www.wendyrodrigue.com/2009/10/how-baby-george-became-artist.html

Art School: Lafayette and Los Angeles 1962-1967
http://www.wendyrodrigue.com/2009/12/art-school-lafayette-and-los-angeles.html

Eagle Scout
http://www.wendyrodrigue.com/2010/06/eagle-scout.html

Blue Dog: In the Beginning
http://www.wendyrodrigue.com/2009/10/blue-dog-in-beginning.html

Blue Dog Today: An Interview with George Rodrigue
http://www.wendyrodrigue.com/2010/03/blue-dog-today-interview-with-george.html

The Art Contest
http://www.wendyrodrigue.com/2010/12/art-contest.html

The Art of George Rodrigue

Visit www.georgerodriguefoundation.org/education to download images of the art of George Rodrigue for classroom use. Click on Classroom Resources!

Landscapes

In the mid-1960s, George Rodrigue left New Iberia, Louisiana for the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles, California. The culture shock for a nineteen year old from Louisiana was considerable, but George thrived on the atmosphere of Abstraction and Pop Art and gained a formal training in the arts. Following graduation, when most artists were expected to go to New York to further their career, Rodrigue's refusal to follow that standard would change the course of his art. He decided to return to Louisiana and use its symbols to express his ideas of the world. "When I came back I wanted to create something that was truly different about Louisiana. And I started painting these oak trees. The light is underneath the tree and the tree is always cut off at the top. And it's just very heavy landscape that's very painterly. That's how I started painting with this one simple oak tree. And the oak trees were like the stable rock of the culture. People lived under the oak trees for protection." These oaks which permeate the Louisiana landscape appealed to George because of their distinctive shape, ability to filter and change light and mysterious qualities. The oaks were the most obvious visual symbol of Louisiana's unique landscapes and one that George Rodrigue would transform throughout his career and continue to paint even today.

Landscape with Cabin and Oak
1970
Oil on Canvas

In the early landscapes of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Rodrigue painted on location in Louisiana and from memory. One can see a consistent notable horizon line, with the land raised to occupy over half the canvas, with the chopped light of the sky discernible beneath the trees. Even the trees are often not apparent in their full bulk, but cut off at the top, leaving the mammoth trunks with only the lowest points of the moss-draped stylized branches visible, like cut-outs. The paint application in these early works is thick, and the colors dark. Rodrigue has not yet begun to experiment with the color and mediums that will characterize much of his later work, but his interest in abstraction can be felt through his use of negative space and brushstroke to enliven his compositions.

Cajun Horse Race
1968-69
Oil on Canvas

While focusing on the Louisiana oaks, Rodrigue began to incorporate figures into his landscapes. Foreshadowing his future Cajun scenes, this painting depicts young Cajun men engaging in an impromptu horse race. Two young men race for a bridge while another group awaits them on the other side. With this painting, Rodrigue begins to demonstrate his characteristic style of depicting people locked in the landscape and shining in white amid the gloom. The trees and bushes surround them, as they appear both dynamic and static. Each grouping of figures is carefully placed within the composition to complete the scene without disrupting nature, and while shown in action, one would find it difficult to imagine these people or horses actually moving through the composition. The immense tree trunk behind the horses provides a framing device and allows for the negative spaces made by the over-hanging branches and moss to be highlighted by the luminous sky behind and beneath them. The dark-colored river serves to draw the viewer's eye into and through the painting and balance the light colors in the background.

My Oak
1980
Oil on Canvas

It was on his return drive from art school in California in the 1960s that Rodrigue formed much of the basis of his artistic style. Driving across the open expanses of the American Southwest, he chose a symbol, the Louisiana oak tree, that would stay with him his entire career. He thought about the tree's significance to his people, the Cajuns. They lived their lives beneath that tree. Its branches shaded them from the hot summer sun; its mass protected them from storms, and its moss stuffed their chairs and filled their mattresses. The tree was a great comfort to the displaced Cajuns after the Grand Derangement, when the Acadians were expelled from Nova Scotia by the British Military in 1755. The Cajuns made a home for themselves in the swamps and countryside of southwest Louisiana, and it was the oak tree that came to symbolize their growing stability in a new land. By the 1980s, Rodrigue pushed the oak forward; increasing its graphic quality while his use of brushstroke and color became increasingly abstract.

Chicken on the Bayou
1986
Oil on Canvas

As Rodrigue progresses through his career, one can see characteristic elements emerge in his work and carry through his later series. This work continues his symbols of the Louisiana landscape with the traditional oak and river composing the scene. However, the oak tree has emerged as a graphic form, dividing the canvas into areas of light and dark. The top of the tree rises above the frame of the painting, and each space defined by the sky and branches functions, much as the bushes, river and chicken do, as abstract shapes. The larger-than-life chicken has been pushed to the front of the canvas, and just like Rodrigue's human figures, the bird is locked into the landscape by the tree trunk behind it. Standing on the dock, the chicken calls to mind later images of the Blue Dog, first done two years prior to this painting, and adds a whimsical element to the landscape. Like many of Rodrigue's paintings, the river or pathway functions as a compositional device but can be hard to decipher as one or the other, much like Louisiana's landscape is often a confusing maze of land and water. The inclusion of the dock in this painting indicates that Rodrigue intended this image to be of a river.

Oak Tree of a Dark Louisiana Day
2003
Acrylic on Canvas

With a change to acrylic paint, Rodrigue was able to take his Louisiana imagery to new heights and new colors. The fast-drying nature of acrylics allowed for more vibrant hues and led Rodrigue to experiment with bold compositions and increasing levels of abstraction. In this work, an oak tree takes center stage at the front of the canvas, and its distinctive shape looms mysteriously over the surrounding foliage. One can notice a startling shift in Rodrigue's imagery, as the oak tree is shown in its entirety, rather than being cropped at the top. The layers of blue add to the overall shadowy and ominous mood of the painting, and one can note the characteristic light emanating from beneath the tree. All surfaces of the paintings are enlivened by color and texture, and each branch of the tree and drooping moss is echoed in the swirling motion of the foreground and sky. With this image, Rodrigue transforms the oak, much as he does his Blue Dog, into a Pop Art-inspired iconic symbol.

Cajun Scenes

"I didn't miss Louisiana until I came back; (from school in Los Angeles) I realized how different it was, because now I had something to compare it to. And there was so much change to everything and things were going away. And I made a commitment then to start painting…this culture that was vanishing." George Rodrigue

While continuing his use of the oak tree as a main subject, Rodrigue eventually expanded his subjects to include the Cajun people and traditions of his childhood, as well as his interpretations of popular Cajun myths such as Jolie Blonde and Evangeline. Rodrigue painted the Cajuns in white with little or no shadow, a light shining from within the transplanted people; they glow with their culture. They float almost ghost-like and appear locked in the landscape, most often framed by the trunk of a tree or the outline of a bush. The roads and rivers, often indistinguishable from one another, become one dark path leading to the small light underneath the oaks. These two sources of light, the people and the light beneath the trees, serve to highlight the often shadowy landscape of Louisiana in which the scenes take place. They also represent the unique quality of light from below and within, rather than above, that drew Rodrigue to the Louisiana environment. The Cajun paintings of George Rodrigue solidified his title as Cajun Artist and depict many of the fascinating rituals and customs of the Cajun people.

Aioli Dinner
1971
Oil on Canvas

The *Aioli Dinner* was Rodrigue's first major painting with people. He designed the painting using combinations of photographs taken of the "Ancient Society of Creole Gourmet," a group that met once a month on the lawn of a different plantation home in and around New Iberia, Louisiana. Traditionally, only men sat at the table, each with their own bottle of wine. The women seen standing in the back row cooked the food, and the young men around the table served dinner. One of the older men made the aioli, a garlic-mayonnaise sauce. Rodrigue's grandfather, Jean Courrege, sits on the left near the head of the table, and his uncle Emile is the third boy standing from the left, peeking his head in between the others. All of the figures are portraits of people who lived in and around New Iberia, although Rodrigue compiled their portraits into one imaginary dinner. In fact, many of the people seated at the table were not friendly with one another! This painting is a superb example of Rodrigue's technique of compiling photographs of different people and places to produce his scene within the Louisiana oaks. Rodrigue chose the historic Darby House Plantation as the setting for his painting, because the house was still standing when he began the painting. The property has since been destroyed.

Jolie Blonde
1974
Oil on Canvas

A prisoner in Port Author wrote a song based on the Cajun legend "Jolie Blonde" in the 1920s. It tells the story of a pretty blonde woman who left her Cajun lover for another. Over the years, the song has developed into the Cajun anthem. Although Rodrigue used different models and mediums over the years in his exploration of this theme, *Jolie Blonde* was painted completely from his imagination. He awoke in the middle of the night haunted by this image, and he painted her with a loose, fast stroke that was atypical of his paintings up to this point, finishing at daybreak. Of all Rodrigue's Jolie Blonde paintings, this work remains his most famous. Placed in the foreground of a murky Louisiana landscape, the white of her dress and hat seem to project from the canvas while she gazes at the viewer.

Doc Moses, Cajun Traiteur
1974
Oil on Canvas

An important part of Cajun folk religion, the traiteur, is a faith healer who combines Catholic prayer and medicinal remedies to treat a variety of ailments, including earaches, toothaches, warts, tumors, angina, and bleeding. In the past, they substituted for trained physicians in remote rural areas of Acadiana. Most traiteurs consider their healing abilities a gift from God, and therefore refuse to accept payment in exchange for their services. The traiteur, or treater, inherits their healing ability from a family member upon their death. Rodrigue's aunt could heal sprains, and another town folk doctor was famous during Rodrigue's childhood for her ability to heal warts. She could heal one per day, even over the phone, if you described to her exactly where it was located on your body. However, she could not heal across water, so you had to cross the bayou to make your phone call. In this typical Rodrigue design, the figures are framed in the oak tree and floating like ghosts, while Doc Moses, known for treating earaches, works his magic on his young patient inside a circle of salt.

Jambalaya
1974
Oil on Canvas

The musicians in this classic Rodrigue Cajun scene are playing music for the fais do do, a poplar Cajun term for a dance. It is a Cajun phrase which literally means go to sleep. The whole family was brought to the dance and the babies would go to sleep. After a time, the term came to mean the name of the dance. Fais do do's are still popular in parts of southern Louisiana today.

Evangeline of Sorrow
1986
Oil on Canvas

Evangeline Bellefontaine was the fictional character of the 1847 epic poem, "Evangeline" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. According to legend, Evangeline and her lover Gabriel were separated on their wedding day during the expulsion of the Acadians from Nova Scotia in 1755. She searches for him, and eventually she finds him by chance while nursing in Philadelphia during the Civil War. Gabriel is one of the sick men she nurses, and he dies in her arms. The poem ends with the pair being buried together, side by side, after many years of desperate searching for one another. This work is one of several epic poems that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow composed in the 19th century. Different versions of this story have been published over the years. It is a legend preserved because of its romantic appeal, and it serves as a testimonial to the enduring spirit of the Acadian people. George Rodrigue followed in Longfellow's footsteps when he committed himself to preserving his Cajun heritage through his art, and this painting is one of many Evangeline subjects painted during Rodrigue's career. He says of the work, "Cajun culture never wrote anything down it was mouth-to-mouth description of what had happened. When I started painting the Cajuns, at the same time there was a revival of trying to save the Cajun culture, try to write things down and to speak to people that remembered what their grandparents told them. I was the first one to actually paint Evangeline. There was no depiction of Evangeline anywhere in Cajun culture. When I did that painting I realized I was the first one trying to interpret what the sorrow meant to her, and how the Cajun culture embraced that story." The full text of Longfellow's *Evangeline* can be found online at http://www.acadiana.org/longfellow.htm.

Paint Me Back Into Your Life
1989
Oil on Canvas

This painting, a portrait of Jacques Rodrigue, the artist's youngest son, has several unique qualities. With this work, George's portrait style is displayed, with Jacques placed in the foreground of the canvas and surrounded by a bold outline. He is framed by the traditional oak tree and holds a canvas in his hand. Rodrigue left the section of the canvas blank, and he asked his eight year old son to collaborate with him by painting his own oak tree in the space. Caught up in the spirit of the holidays, Jacques painted his oak tree with Christmas stockings hanging from his tree. Although the Blue Dog was first painted in 1984, this painting represents one of the few images where the artist has returned to paint the Blue Dog into one of his earlier Cajun scenes. The Blue Dog joins Jacques in gazing at the viewer and makes the image a portrait not only of Jacques, but of Rodrigue's most famous elements as well.

Indians, Cajuns and Cowboys
1988
Oil on Canvas

This large canvas, 48x86, pays tribute to three specific and yet distinct aspects of American culture that are all as rooted in their landscape as the Louisiana Cajuns. George anchors his composition with the oak tree, its limbs spreading like an eagle's wings to include the American West with its Native Americans and American cowboys. Even today, these three aspects of American culture fascinate Rodrigue.

Saga of the Acadians

The *Saga of the Acadians* includes fifteen works by George Rodrigue painted between 1985 and 1989. All of the canvases are 36 inches x 24 inches in oil. The paintings represent the hardships the Acadians endured in order to preserve their identity after they were exiled from Canada. One might look no further than these simple depictions of the Cajun plight: "families uprooted from their homes, traversing the seas at some peril, or a classroom where a youth is punished for using his native tongue, to comprehend a people's sorrow that called on no small fortitude to dissimulate." Ginger Danto, *The Art of George Rodrigue*

1. The Sailing of the Jonah
With this ship begins a journey in 1604 from Normandy, France to what is now Nova Scotia. Its launch signaled the beginning of an ethnic group destined to fascinate the world.

2. Pilgrims
Frenchmen were the first European settlers of the North American continent. Arriving just north of Plymouth Rock in 1632, they lived a family-oriented lifestyle in the harsh Nova Scotia wilderness.

3. The First Planting
These imaginative settlers, who now considered themselves Acadians, developed fertile farmland in their marsh-like territory. So successful were their efforts, many historians believe the Acadians were deported in order to make room for British settlers who coveted the productive grounds.

4. The Fight for an Empire
French soldiers board a ship just ahead of advancing British troops. Caught between two military giants, the Acadian settlers would soon have their tranquil lifestyle destroyed forever.

5. The Church at Grand Pre
This church was the first Catholic Church built in Nova Scotia. The British troops used it as a prison for the soon-to-be exiled Acadians.

6. Leave Our Homes? Hell No!!
The British used harsh tactics to subdue the "stubborn" settlers. Permanent guards were posted at each home, forcing its inhabitants to live for an extended period in the unsheltered wilderness.

7. A Final Look at Acadie
Forcibly driven from their homes and separated from those they loved, the stage was set for the odyssey to begin and Longfellow to later immortalize this epic journey with his poem, *Evangeline*.

8. Final Insult
Deported Acadians were forced to endure the harsh winter in open vessels on the North Atlantic. This controversial painting shows a soldier of the Crown offering a diseased blanket as cover for a child.

9. With No Country to Call Home
The pilgrims originally settled in Nova Scotia to satisfy the expansion needs of France. Following British victory, they were required to forsake the Catholic religion and swear allegiance to the British king. Refusing on both issues, they were deported to many lands, and often refused entry. Even in their native France, they were considered "no longer French."

10. The First Cajuns
After many years without a homeland, these steadfast Acadians reached their long sought "Land of the Oaks" in southwest Louisiana and became known as Cajuns.

11. The Last Novena for Gabriel
Evangeline, symbol of the forced separation of families, friends and those in love, offers one final prayer for her Gabriel.

12. Macque Choux
Native Indians assisted the Cajuns in understanding the indigenous ingredients available to them for cooking.

13. He-bert, Yes – A Bear, No
In 1912 Louisiana Governor Hall issued a special edict that French could no longer be spoken in school, which was followed by a 1916 Louisiana Board of Education law that also forbade spoken French in school.

14. Evangeline – A Silent Classic
The oak is revisited by Hollywood in its rendition of Longfellow's *Evangeline*, starring Dolores del Rio.

15. Return to Acadie
Dudley LeBlanc became the first Cajun to revisit his roots: the historic Church of Grand Pre in Nova Scotia. At the time, LeBlanc's Hadacol, a cure-all elixir, was second in America for advertising expenses behind Coca Cola.

For more information and history on the Saga of the Acadians series, visit Wendy Rodrigue's blog at http://www.wendyrodrigue.com/2010/03/saga-of-acadians.html.

The Blue Dog

George Rodrigue's famous Blue Dog was first painted for *Bayou*, a book of Cajun ghost stories, as a representation of the Cajun loup-garou. The loup-garou, a werewolf-type dog, was a familiar legend for Rodrigue, having heard the story often as a boy. Given the oral nature of Cajun histories, there was not one image of the loup-garou, and the artist searched his photographic files for a suitable shape to use as inspiration. He found it in photos of his studio dog, Tiffany, who had died four years earlier, and under a blue night sky he painted the image a pale grey-blue with red eyes. He liked the result and added this image to his pictorial list of favorite Cajun legends, painting it in cemeteries and bayou scenes intermittently over the next five to six years. Over time, Rodrigue changed the dog's eyes to yellow, creating a friendlier image, and today he reflects, "Over the years, the eyes of the Blue Dog have changed to---to something else. It's easier today to look into the eyes of the Blue Dog and see the soul of the dog or the soul of yourself." Rodrigue soon realized that he could take the Blue Dog anywhere on the canvas, even sometimes out of Cajun country. He explored his earlier Pop and abstract interests in a more obvious way with the Blue Dog, breaking his canvas into strong shapes just as he always had with the oak trees and Cajun scenes, with the addition of bold blocks of color and the shape of the dog. Gradually, the dog became bluer and the paintings more abstract, yet the canvases remained rooted in Rodrigue's Louisiana heritage and traditional training. With each Blue Dog, the viewer is asked the questions, Where am I? Why am I here? Who am I?, and each person must ultimately try to answer those questions for the Blue Dog and for him or herself.

Watchdog
1984
Oil on Canvas

Painted for the book *Bayou* (Segura, Inkwell Press, 1984), *Watch Dog* was one of forty Rodrigue paintings illustrating the Cajun ghost stories told within. This particular legend was about the *loup-garou*, a werewolf-type dog that lurked in cemeteries and sugar cane fields on dark nights. Rodrigue was familiar with the tale because: as a boy, his mother would tell him, "If you're not good today, the *loup-garou* will come get you tonight." The image itself was open to interpretation, and so Rodrigue searched his photo files, eventually settling on a picture of his studio dog, Tiffany, a terrier-spaniel mix who had died four years before. Rodrigue manipulated her shape and gave her red eyes, altering her appearance, and turning his former pet into a frightening creature. The legend said nothing about the *loup-garou* being blue, yet Rodrigue's artistic eye told him otherwise. He thought the dark night sky would cast a blue-grey shadow on the dog's fur. Unknown to Rodrigue at the time, he had painted his first Blue Dog, an image that, as it developed, would become the focus of his work for more than twenty years.

Dog in a Box
1990
Oil on Canvas

Following his first painting of the *loup-garou* in 1984 (*Watch Dog)*, Rodrigue painted a dozen or more 'Blue Dog' paintings over the next five years, while at the same time continuing to paint his traditional Cajun works. After opening his French Quarter gallery in 1989, he wanted to do something special for the Superbowl, played in New Orleans in 1990. He filled the window with *loup-garou* paintings, enjoying the shock of his friends, the artistic controversy surrounding his decision, and especially the startled reaction of the pedestrians on Royal Street. Rodrigue overheard people call his *loup-garou* paintings "The Blue Dog," and the image's concept altered in his mind. He changed the dog's eyes from red to a friendlier yellow and began thinking of it in broader terms. He painted the dog as though it were a Cajun person, human-size and as the subject of the painting, contradicting the common assumption that the dog is 'hidden' in some works. The Blue Dog is always the subject of the painting, out front and important, and without regard to a usual dog size or hue. Gradually Rodrigue realized that with the Blue Dog he could explore possibilities beyond the Cajun folk-life he had painted for years. In *Dog in a Box*, although the image retains many of its wolf-like qualities, Rodrigue removes the *loup-garou* from the haunted houses and cemeteries, in favor of a more playful cardboard box. The alternate title to the work, *Being Broke and Hungry Just Don't Suit Me*, shows his sense of humor when titling his work.

Papa Bear
1995
Acrylic on Canvas

With this canvas, one can note a drastic change in Rodrigue's treatment of the Blue Dog and more importantly, his surroundings. Due to health concerns over oil paints, Rodrigue was forced to switch his main medium from oil to acrylic. While at first worried about this change, Rodrigue has come to favor the medium for its ability to dry quickly, produce vibrant colors and allow him to push the boundaries of his visual language. One of the first paintings produced in acrylic, this work shows Rodrigue's initial attempts at exploring new methods. The Blue Dog morphs into the different characters of a bear, while the lushness of the Louisiana scene has been transformed into shapes of primary color. The bear image emerged as a result of a stuffed bear George had as a little boy, and he decided to put the Blue Dog in a bear costume. Visually, the scene has flattened, with the figure crowded into the foreground.

Now You See It, Now You Don't
2000
Acrylic on Canvas

Part of a series of paintings completed for a Xerox ad campaign, this painting was designed by George based on several tag words provided by the company. As part of the contract, George in turn would design the complete painting and ad, so that the campaign was much more about his art as a whole than the Blue Dog or even Xerox. The strong imagery of this series would lead to a shift to abstraction in 2001.

Happiness Blooms Around Me
2002
Acrylic on Canvas

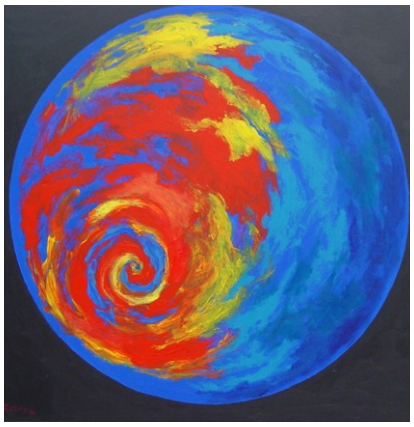
George Rodrigue never abandons a theme, continuing to paint today the same images he began with in the 1960s. Occasionally, elements are added to his repertoire and continue to reappear in a variety of ways. This painting not only demonstrates a looser, more expressive style of Blue Dog, but also includes several key Rodrigue elements. Flowers are often seen with the Blue Dog, acting as organic and interesting shapes in the composition. The background also includes a swirl motif that references the Hurricane series from this same time period.

Portrait of Pete Fountain
1996
Acrylic on Canvas

Following the tremendous success of the 1995 New Orleans Jazz Fest poster featuring Louis Armstrong, Rodrigue was asked to complete a second poster in 1996, featuring Mahalia Jackson. After spending many months completing the painting, he learned the estate required a fee for copyright permission which would not be paid by the festival. He had only two days, beginning on Christmas Eve, to complete a painting in time for printing. He insisted on honoring his good friend and world-famous musician, Pete Fountain. Although several changes were made to the original painting in the printing process, George maintains this portrait as his favorite of his Jazz Fest posters.

Hurricanes

At seven in the morning on September 26, 2002, George and Wendy Rodrigue stood at the living room window of their home in Lafayette, Louisiana, and witnessed Hurricane Lili blow through the area. The Rodrigues watched as their 150 year-old oak tree fell in the front yard. Two weeks later another hurricane, Isidore, came through Lafayette. Rodrigue had not experienced an actual hurricane for fifteen to twenty years, and the energy and power of the storm made a deep impression on the artist: "…it just really affected me in a way that I hadn't been affected. I had forgotten…what…these hurricanes do. I just really felt…this energy and…all of what happened to us during these hurricanes. So I decided that I'm going to paint hurricanes. I'm going to paint the feeling of a hurricane. I'm going to paint all the emotion…and do it in an abstract way…like, things are torn up and it's a little like…a radar screen. It's a little like a hurricane. It's a little like things getting beat up. And…it's very colorful. And I started painting these round images which I call Hurricanes."



In the days following Lili and Isidore, Rodrigue painted only hurricanes. The swirl, a signature motif throughout his work, took on a new literal significance and seemed to tell a story of its own. The swirl that once enlivened landscapes and occupied backgrounds grew to encompass the entire canvas as its sole subject. Just as hurricanes destroy much in their path, the Hurricane series removed the recognizable subjects from Rodrigue's work, leaving a round image filled with wild movement of color and paint. The colors of the works included bold primary, neon bright, pastel, dark and blended hues. Within the Hurricanes, one can find traces of what came before them, a river, the silhouette of an oak, a root, or a branch. The titles of the paintings follow the traditional naming of hurricanes, with each assigned a proper name moving through the alphabet. Rodrigue painted about seventy-five hurricane paintings, and he says, "each hurricane has a different personality."

The series has been described as eerily prophetic given the disastrous aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, just three years after it was created. George recently spoke of his paintings in light of these events, "I painted them just to get it out of my mind and just to forget about the hurricane. When Katrina happened I just had no interest to depict Katrina. I didn't paint for a long time after the hurricane. I didn't paint for like a year. I mean, so many other problems were going on at the same time…because of the hurricane. You know, it was a rough time for everyone."

(From Top to Bottom: Elivra, 2003*; Nannette, 2003*; Acrylic on Canvas)

Silkscreens

From his first experiences with art making, George Rodrigue has explored and challenged the media and methods before him. As a teenager, Rodrigue hand-painted images of monsters onto t-shirts that he successfully sold for ten dollars apiece for gas money. Rodrigue has always been interested in finding his own way of producing art, and his exposure to the silkscreens of Pop Art artist Andy Warhol in the mid-1960s while studying in Los Angeles led to an appreciation of print-making as an art form in and of itself. Much later, the methods would become inseparable from his work. Print-making offered an alternative to the more conventional media of drawing, painting and sculpture, and although George would continue to employ those traditional methods to great success, the possibilities of print-making fit perfectly with Rodrigue's expanding visual language.

Silkscreening is a modern technique that could be applied to a work in a wide variety of ways. With *Oaks on Bayou Teche* of 1970, Rodrigue explored the process for the first time, and although the style would change over the following thirty-five years, the early work foreshadowed later Blue Dog silkscreens, much in the same way that his direct exposure to and interest in Pop Art foreshadowed the repetitive imagery and style that would make him famous.

Following *Oaks on Bayou Teche*, twenty years passed before Rodrigue truly embraced silkscreening as an art form. His early paintings featured the graphic shapes of oak trees, ground and sky, as he interpreted the Louisiana landscape as prominent shapes pushed forward in the composition. These very shapes would, years later, lend his designs to the flat, bold, well-defined medium of silkscreen. By the mid-1970s, Rodrigue expanded his subject matter to include the Cajuns themselves, and he continued the hard-edged approach, trapping the white shapes in the black oaks. Even as his compositions became more complex, the different elements within them continued to fit together like a puzzle, with each shape fixed in its position, unable to move without destroying the strong overall design. To Rodrigue, this design was and still is the most challenging and important part of his art, even as it competes with the literal interpretations.

Following his success with his Cajun paintings and the Blue Dog in the late 1980s, Rodrigue began to consider printmaking, and specifically silkscreening, an art form on par with painting. His first Blue Dog silkscreen shows the dog by itself, strong, graphic and accompanied by writing, almost like an exercise from art school. This image was a

breath of fresh air from the Cajun paintings that had, unfortunately, become his albatross. For the next sixteen years, Rodrigue devoted himself to the Blue Dog series, which included both painting and a strong focus on silkscreen. Unlike his earlier Cajun festival posters, which feature reproductions of his paintings, these new prints excited him as an art form in and of themselves.

In his silkscreen, Rodrigue strove for simplicity, uniform color and the strong design that first appealed to him during his studies in the 1960s. The artist pursued one direction in print and another on canvas as he continued to explore complex forms on canvas, and he considered the two methods equal in terms of creative importance. From time to time, he would experiment with combining the two, painting on top of his prints and creating what he calls "mixed medias," a practice he continues today. Ironically, the more Rodrigue worked with the silkscreen process, the more his paintings resembled his prints, as opposed to the opposite, which is more typical. Silkscreening gave Rodrigue the courage to take the Blue Dog to new places and increasingly abstract levels on canvas.

By 2000, the bold image of the Blue Dog had a life of its own, and Rodrigue's interpretations were limitless, both on canvas and in print. He says of the works, "…looking back through seventeen years' worth of Blue Dog silkscreens, it is evident how my art has changed over time, but what's not so obvious---in a book at least---are the advances that have taken place in silkscreen technology. My early prints are thick and susceptible to damage, because I used poured paint, whereas my later ones, because I used ink are brighter in color and more durable.

Around this time, prints took new meaning with the establishment of Blue Dog Relief, and Rodrigue used the medium in a more political way to support the causes, organizations and communities he supported. However, the success of Blue Dog Relief was continually accompanied by his creative pursuits. The Bodies series reflects both a conscious return to the bayou and the classical nude, as well as an exploration of a new print-making technique. In the re-mastered digital prints, Rodrigue combined painting with the innovations in design and color available through computer technology to produce digital prints visibly altered form the original image. With access to the finest materials and printing technology, this process has opened new doors for Rodrigue in both painting and print-making. Over the course of thirty-five years of print-making, George Rodrigue has always approached his art with fresh eyes, treating the world to his ever-changing vision---one that is inspired by his own experiences with his paintbrush, by advances in printing techniques, and especially by the everyday occurrences in the world around him.

Excerpted from Introduction and Text by Wendy and George Rodrigue in *George Rodrigue Prints: A Catalogue Raisonne*, Harry N. Abrams, 2008.

(Previous Page: *Oaks on Bayou Teche*, 1970; *Spirit in the Trees*, 1990-93; Silkscreen) (From Top to Bottom: *Rollin; on the River,* 2004, Color Screen Print; *You Can't Drown the Blues*, 2006, Color Screen Print)

Lessons

About Face: A Study of the Portrait
Grades K-4

Objectives:

- Students will study the paintings of George Rodrigue.
- Students will learn about portraits and self-portraits and how to look at them.
- Students will create their own self-portrait.
- Students will write a description based on their self-portrait.
- Students will share their portrait with the class through an oral presentation.

Goals:

- For students to understand that portraits and self-portraits can tell the viewer many things about the subject.

Time Frame: 3-4 class periods

- 1 class period for lesson introduction and background information
- 1-2 class periods for creating self-portraits and writing descriptions (NOTE: If paint is used, drying time will need to be factored into the time frame.)
- 1 class period for class presentations.

Materials:

- Images of *In Your Face (above)*, *Hot Green (left)*, and supplemental images: *Loup-garou*, *Two Shoes*, *Blue Dog on the River*, *Rollin' on the River*, *My Yellow Chair*, *A Smarter Breed*, and *To Go Where No Man Has Gone Before* (*available at www.georgerodriguefoundation.org/education)*
- Biography of George Rodrigue and the Blue Dog
- Assorted portrait-making supplies. Suggestions include: white paper, crayons, colored markers, pencils, paint, paintbrushes, oil pastels, etc.
- Paper and pencils for writing portrait descriptions.

Procedure:

1. Show students *Loup-garou*. Ask students if they have ever seen this dog before. Ask them to tell you what they know about Blue Dog and to describe the image. This is a good time to introduce Blue Dog and George Rodrigue to the class.

2. Tell the students that Mr. Rodrigue has created many images of Blue Dog, and they don't all look the same. Show images of *In Your Face* and *Hot Green* side by side, and ask students to

compare and contrast them, using a graphic organizer to list their observations. Emphasize that these are both images of Blue Dog, but he has been shown in different ways.

3. These images of Blue Dog can both be described as portraits. A portrait is a picture of a person, usually showing the face. How many of you have ever had someone take your photograph? (You might suggest the school photographs the students have made for yearbooks, etc. if this is a practice at your school.) Did you know that is considered a portrait? Portraits can also be painted like these images of Blue Dog we have been looking at.

4. Using the supplemental images for this lesson, show the students that portraits can be more than just a picture of a person.

- Show *Two Shoes (right)*. Sometimes people like to include objects in their portrait. These objects usually tell us something about the person in the portrait. What objects do you see? From looking at this portrait, what do you think Blue Dog likes to do? If you were going to include objects in a portrait of yourself, what would they be?

- Show *Blue Dog on the River*. Sometimes people in portraits are shown outdoors. Where does it look like Blue Dog is? Is it daytime or nighttime? How do you know? For the older students: Why do you think Mr. Rodrigue used colors like red, pink, and purple? If you were going to have your portrait made outside, where would you want to be?
- Show *Rollin' on the River*. Here is another portrait where Blue Dog is outside. What do you see behind Blue Dog? Is it daytime or nighttime? How do you know? If you were going to have your portrait made outside, would you want it to be during the day or at night?
- Show *My Yellow Chair*. Sometimes people prefer to have their portraits made indoors. This portrait shows Blue Dog sitting indoors in a yellow chair. Why do you think Blue Dog wanted to be shown in this chair? Maybe it's Blue Dog's favorite place to watch TV or read a book. If you were going to have your portrait made indoors, do you have a favorite place where you would want to be shown? Can you describe that place?
- Show *A Smarter Breed*. Here is another portrait of Blue Dog indoors. Where is Blue Dog? How do you know?
- Show *To Go Where No Man Has Gone Before*. Where is Blue Dog in this portrait? How do you know? How do you think Blue Dog got there? Have you ever been to this place before? Sometimes people have their portraits made in places they have never been. Can you name a place you have never been that you would like to go? Would you like to have a portrait of yourself showing you in that place?

5. Say to the students: You have been thinking about how you would want a portrait of yourself to look. When someone creates a picture of himself or herself, it is called a self-portrait. I want you to create a self-portrait of yourself. Try to include as many details as you can (your hair

color and style, eye color, skin color, etc.) so the picture looks like you. You can show yourself with objects that tell something about you or you can show yourself in a specific place (real or imagined) like how we saw Blue Dog.

6. After the students have completed their self-portraits, tell them to write a short description of their picture. This should explain any details they have included such as objects, clothing and location. Grades K-2 should write one or two sentences, and grades 3-4 should write at least one paragraph.

7. Allow a time for sharing, where students can show and describe their self-portraits to their classmates. Another idea is to display all the self-portraits and have the students try to guess whose portrait is whose (make sure students have written their names on the back, not the front of their portraits).

Assessment:
Student grades will be based on the following elements: their ability to follow instructions, the spelling and grammar in their written product, their oral presentation, and the creativity of their self-portraits.

Additional Activities:

Write about Blue Dog. Have the students choose one of the Blue Dog paintings used in the lesson. Tell them to write a short description or story about Blue Dog based on what they see in the image.

Portrait Show and Tell. Have the students bring a portrait from home to share with the class. This can be a painting or a photograph – either of them or a family member. If they bring in an image of a family member, tell them to make sure they know something about the person in the portrait. They should try to get as many details from their parents/guardians about the portrait as possible (where it was made, the year it was made, who made it, etc.) During show and tell, encourage the students to make observations and ask questions about the portraits as a way to encourage class discussion.

Photographic Portraits. Provide an assortment of dress-up clothes and props for the students to select from. Allow each student to choose an outfit for their photographic portrait. Take a photograph of each child; print and display photos in the classroom.

Portrait Vocabulary Words

Background: The part of a picture or scene that appears to be farthest away from the viewer, usually nearest the horizon.

Double portrait: A portrait in which two subjects are represented.

Full-face/frontal portrait: The head-on view of a person or object.

Full-length portrait: The entire body of the subject is portrayed.

Group portrait: A portrait in which three or more subjects are represented.

Half-length portrait: A portrait representing only the upper half of the body.

Landscape: A painting, photograph or other work of art which depicts scenery such as mountains, valleys, trees, rivers, and forests.

Portrait: A work of art that represents a specific person, a group of people, or an animal. Portraits usually show what a person looks like as well as revealing something about the subject's personality. Portraits can be made of any sculptural material or in any two-dimensional medium.

Self-portrait: A portrait an artist make using himself or herself as its subject, typically drawn or painted from a reflection in a mirror.

Mixing It Up With Color
Grades K-1

Objectives:

- Students will study the paintings of George Rodrigue.
- Students will learn about primary and secondary colors.
- Student will use primary colors to create secondary colors.
- Students will record their observations of color mixing in sentence form.

Goals:

- For students to understand what primary colors are and that they can be mixed to create secondary colors.

Time Frame: 1-2 class periods

Materials:

- Images of *Frederic (right)*, *Elvira (left)*, and *Nannette (below)*

- Biography of George Rodrigue and Blue Dog
- One Color Worksheet per student. If you would like to use these more than once, it is a good idea to laminate them, making them easier to clean off any stuck-on Play Doh.
- Play Doh - 1 container each of red, yellow, and blue - approximately 6 ounces each for 1 class of 25 students.
- Pencils and paper for sentence writing

Procedure:

1. Show students the image of *Frederic*. Ask them to describe the image. What do they see? How does it make them feel? What is it about the image that makes them feel this way?

2. Introduce students to the artist, George Rodrigue. Explain that Mr. Rodrigue has used color and shape in this painting to represent a hurricane. Ask the students if they know what a hurricane is. Tell them to describe it. Ask the students what shapes they see. The spiral/circle represents the chaos/unpredictable nature of hurricanes as well as the movement and wind. Ask the students to identify the shape of the painting itself.

3. Show students the image of *Nannette*. Ask them to tell you what colors they see. Red, yellow, and blue are known as primary colors. Primary colors can be mixed together to create all the other colors, like purple, orange, and green. Colors like purple, orange, and green are known as secondary colors, because they are made by mixing two primary colors. Show students the image of *Elvira*. Ask them to identify which colors are primary and which are secondary.

4. Tell the students they are going to get to make secondary colors out of primary colors using Play Doh.

- Have the students sit at tables/desks, and pass out a Color Worksheet to each student.
- Give each student one piece of red, yellow, and blue Play Doh about the size of a pecan nut.
- Instruct them to divide each color into three equal pieces and set them on their desk.
- Tell the students to press one small piece of yellow Play Doh onto the Color Worksheet above the word 'yellow'. Repeat with red and blue.
- Tell the students to take one piece of yellow and one of blue and squeeze it together until it has completely turned green. Then press it above the word 'green' on the worksheet. Do not tell the children what is going to happen when they combine the 2 colors. Let them discover it.
- On a sheet of paper, have the students write a sentence recording the results of their color combinations. Ex: Yellow and blue make green.
- Complete the Color Worksheet by combining red with yellow to make orange and red with blue to make purple. Again have the students record the results in sentence form.

Assessment:
Student grades will be based on the following elements: their ability to listen, follow directions, and complete the color mixing activity, and the spelling and grammar in their written product.

Additional Activities:

Have the students mix paint together to create secondary colors. They can use their observation sentences for guidance to help them in creating colors. Once they have mixed their colors, the students can create a painting in the style of one of Rodrigue's hurricane paintings.

Red

Purple

Yellow

Orange

Blue

Green

Drawing With Emotion
Grades K-5

Objectives:

- Students will examine how artists can express emotion through the use of line, value and shape.
- Students will show awareness and understanding of non-objective art.
- Students will explore how lines and shapes can express emotions.

Goal:

- Students will communicate a variety of emotions using line, shape and value to create compositions.
-

Time Frame: 1-2 Class Periods

Materials:

- 12x18 inch White Drawing Paper
- Pencils (a variety of thickness and hardness levels)
- Markers (and any variety of tools to created line ie: sticks and ink, brushes and ink)
- Images of the art of George Rodrigue (download at www.georgerodriguefoundation.org/education), focusing on the Hurricane and Blue Dog series.

Procedure:

1. Discuss images of artwork. How do these works show emotion? Ask students what emotions they feel in viewing these works.

2. Brainstorm on different kinds of emotion and discuss them (happy, sad, mad, confused, lonely, overwhelmed, etc.

3. Discuss how line weight and types of line can convey an emotion.

4. Demonstrate a couple of ways to show emotions listed through use of line, shape and values.

5. Have students fold a 12x18 piece of white drawing paper into four sections.

6. Ask students to draw two "upbeat" emotions and two "downbeat" emotions in the four sections on the paper without using any recognizable objects. Students are only allowed to use line, shape and form (shading to show 3-D form). Show at least five different values for each emotion.

7. Critique work - How do these exercises show emotions? What emotions did they represent? How effective are they?

Assessment:
Did student recognize and interpret emotions in various works of art?
Did student effectively use line, shape and values to communicate emotion in their artwork?

Additional Activities:

For older students, ask them to research artists and movements that focus on expressing emotion through line, shape and value and write a short report detailing their findings. Have them create a work of art in the style of their chosen artist or movement.

Experiment with many different ways of making lines of various sizes, including with non-traditional methods and materials. Ideas include, but are not limited to, sidewalk chalk outside, paint-filled ketchup bottles on mural paper, dragging branches through sand/soil, or tracing the outlines of shadows. Discuss how each of these types of lines can convey a different emotion and what that might be.

(Left to Right: *Big Dog in a Small Town*, 2010, acrylic on canvas and *Mixed Media A4_10,* 2010, acrylic and silkscreen ink on heavy paper)

Minus the Blue Dog
Grades K-1

Objectives:

Students will be able to visualize subtraction.
Students will become more familiar with subtraction rules.
Students will learn the background of the Blue Dog.
Students will improve cutting skills.

Goals:

Students will be able to improve subtraction skills.

Time Frame: 1 Class Period

Materials:

Blue Dog Worksheet
Why is Blue Dog Blue? children's book (optional)
Scissors
Crayons or Colored Pencils

Procedure:

1. Make two copies of the Blue Dog Worksheet for each student.
2. Have students sit in their cleared desks, ready for instruction.
3. Discuss the background of the Blue Dog; consider reading *Why is Blue Dog Blue?*
4. Show images of Blue Dog paintings (download images at www.georgerodriguefoundation.org under Classroom Resources!) with various numbers of Blue Dogs and ask students to count the number of Blue Dogs, eyes, noses, ears, paws, colors, etc.
5. Pass out two copies of the Blue Dog Worksheet to each student.
6. Have students carefully cut out all twelve Blue Dogs and put to one side of their desk.
7. Have each student put ___ number of Blue Dogs in the middle of the desk.
8. Have them take away a number that is less than the first number you chose.
9. Use different numbers to give the students subtraction practice and have them count aloud how many Blue Dogs are remaining after each subtraction problem.
10. After about 10-12 subtraction problems, allow students to color the Blue Dogs any color they choose.

Assessment:

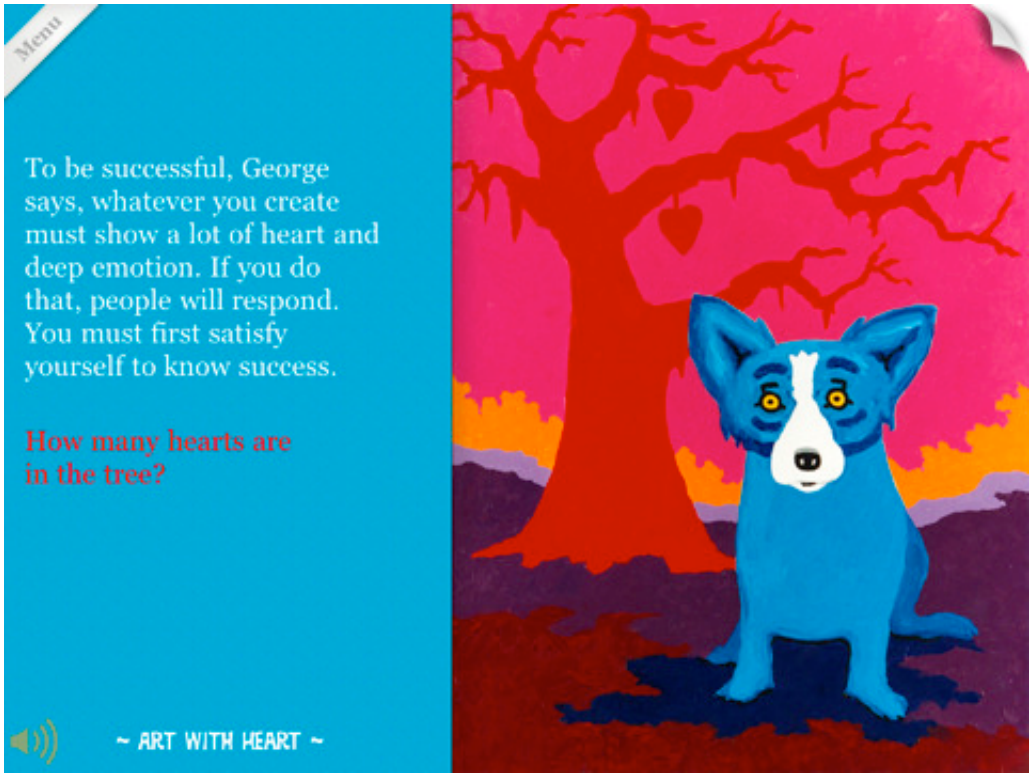
Review a few problems you used in your math subtraction lesson. See if they can do math mentally and on paper.

(Above: *Now You See It, Now You Don't*, 2000, acrylic on canvas)

Additional Activities:

Have students study the different backgrounds and settings for the Blue Dog and using their Blue Dog worksheet cut-outs, design a setting of their choice using markers, crayons, construction paper, watercolors, or tempera paint. Glue Blue Dog (one or more) into the landscape and do not forget to have them think of the perfect title!

Download the free Blue Dog Counts IPAD app HERE and divide students into groups to practice their counting skills with the Blue Dog.



Throw Me Something Mister…Rodrigue!
Grades 5-8

Objectives:

- Students will study the paintings of George Rodrigue.
- Students will learn about the history of Mardi Gras.
- Students will research Mardi Gras celebrations in the U.S. and France.
- Students will investigate the role of costuming in Mardi Gras celebrations and will design and make their own Mardi Gras costume.
- Students will present their research findings in both written and oral formats.
- Students will participate in a classroom Mardi Gras celebration.

Goals:

- For students to understand the history of Mardi Gras and gain a greater appreciation of its associated traditions and practices.

Time Frame: 4 -7 class periods

- 1 class period for lesson introduction and background information, giving instructions, and dividing the class into groups
- 1-2 class periods for student research
- 1-2 class periods for costume design
- 1-2 class periods for research presentations and class celebration

Materials:

- Images of *My Baby Made a Clown of Me (Big Top Dog)*, *Papa Bear*, and supplemental images: *Mardi Gras Dog*, *Party Animal*, *Mardi Gras Dogs*, *Winter*, *They All Ask For You*, and *Justice, Power, and Faith* (download at www.georgerodriguefoundation.org/education)
- Biography of George Rodrigue and The Blue Dog
- Student access to library resources and/or the internet for research
- Assorted costume-making supplies. Suggestions include: paper grocery bags or Kraft paper, colored felt, fabric scraps, paint, colored markers, sequins, beads, feathers, ribbon, glitter, glue, tape, scissors, etc.
- Mardi Gras items for a class celebration. Suggestions include: masks, beads, king cake, music, etc.

Procedure:

1. Using the paintings *My Baby Made a Clown of Me (Big Top Dog)(above)* and *Papa Bear (right)*, lead the class in a discussion of costumes by referencing what Blue Dog is wearing in each. Compare these paintings to one where Blue Dog is not dressed in order to emphasize that he is typically depicted without any clothing. Use this time to introduce George Rodrigue and the history of Blue Dog.

2. Ask students about their experiences dressing up in costumes. What did they dress up as? What was the occasion for dressing up? Remind the students that dressing up in costume is a major component of Mardi Gras celebrations, particularly in Louisiana.

3. Using the supplemental images for this lesson, show them the images of Blue Dog dressed for a Louisiana Mardi Gras celebration (they will likely be familiar with what Blue Dog is wearing). Lead the students in a general lesson on Mardi Gras history, covering basic topics such as how it originated and who traditionally celebrated it.

4. Mardi Gras is celebrated around the world, and the celebrations vary from place to place. Tell the students you want them to explore how Mardi Gras is celebrated in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama (particularly Mobile), and France.

5. Divide the class up into four groups and assign each group a location. Within the groups, each student will be responsible for researching one aspect of Mardi Gras in their location (i.e., costumes, parades, krewes, food, etc.) One member of the group should be responsible for providing a general history of the celebration in their location, while everyone else will provide specific details about the area's Mardi Gras traditions. Each student must write at least one paragraph on his/her topic.

6. Student reports will be presented orally to the rest of the class. Students will also design and make their own Mardi Gras costume to wear during a class celebration. The teacher should provide elements from a Louisiana Mardi Gras such as beads and king cake to aid in the celebration.

Assessment:
Student grades will be based on the following elements: their ability to work as part of a group, the quality of their research, the spelling and grammar in their written product, their oral presentation, and the creativity of their costume.

Additional Activities:

Instead of purchasing a king cake, have each student group find a recipe and make their own to share during the class celebration.

Have students design their own float for a Mardi Gras parade, including designs for costumes worn by the float's riders. They should create a detailed drawing and a written explanation for their design. This can be done either as a group or individually.

(From Left to Right: *Mardi Gras Mambo in New Orleans*, 2011, silkscreen; *Justice, Power and Faith*, 1994, silkscreen, *Party Animal,* 1995, silkscreen)

Rollin' with the Blue Dog
K-5

Objectives:

- Students will study the history of transportation and consider different methods used over time.
- Students will construct a timeline of objects and modes of transportation featured within Blue Dog artwork by George Rodrigue.
- Students will examine how different types of transportation suited different times and problems.
- Students will consider how transportation will change in the future.
- Students will brainstorm ideas to identify and solve a current transportation need within their community.

Goals:

- Students will analyze the progression of inventions in the area of transportation.
- Students will explain how people invent new ways to solve problems.
- Students will produce a report and sketch that considers an idea to solve a current transportation problem.

Time Frame: Two Class Periods

Materials:

- Images of the art of George Rodrigue either downloaded at www.georgerodriguefoundation.org or in books.
- Tape
- Pencil and Paper
- Research Resources such as a Library or Access to the Internet
-

Procedure:

1. Locate images of the Blue Dog featured with various modes of transportation such as *Wild Blue Yonder* (right).

2. Look at all the images compiled, and discuss how at one point in time people could only get from one place to another (on land) by using their feet.

3. As a class, place the images in the chronological order in which the mode of transportation was invented. (The wheel, horse and buggy, bicycle, train, automobile, airplane and the space shuttle, etc.)

4. After the items have been placed in chronological order, discuss what problem each invention addressed and how it was solved.

5. As a class, brainstorm inventions in the transportation category that were created to do work, i.e., tractors, helicopters, plows, backhoes, etc. Discuss how people are always inventing new ways to solve problems and accomplish work.

6. Divide the class into small groups. Ask students to think about a problem in the category of transportation within their community. This might include new ways to move people and/or new ways to move people in a more economical, environmentally friendly, or energy efficient manner. Explain to students that the goal is to think creatively about an existing problem. The thinking process is important NOT the feasibility of the idea.

7. Ask students to select one of the ideas. Have them each write a description and draw an illustration of the idea.

8. Provide time for students to share their ideas.

Assessment:

Create a class rubric with your students that will help them understand the effectiveness of their design process. Use the following questions as a guideline and go over it with the class.

- How effective was your brainstorming in generating ideas?
- Rate how effectively you analyzed the information you used to identify your problem.
- Rate the effectiveness of your solution.
  Rate how clearly you communicated the problem you wanted to solve.
- Rate how clearly you communicated your solution.
- Rate your effectiveness as problem solvers.

Additional Activities:

Have students research an inventor and give an oral presentation to the class.

Provide students with clay and/or found objects and ask them to create a three-dimensional model of their design sketch.

Visiting the Museum

Questions to Review with Your Students Prior to Your Visit

Why do museums ask visitors not to touch the objects?
To protect the artwork from damage so your children and grandchildren can enjoy them too. Art objects are more fragile than they appear. Objects can be damaged by the oil in our hands, by light exposure or by careless handling.

Why should we try to be quiet and listen in museums?
In general, we do not want to disturb other visitors or students visiting the museum. We also want to be able to hear what the docent guide and our fellow students have to say.

Why should we not run in museums?
By walking slowly we will not accidentally damage an object or disturb or hurt other visitors. We also will be able to see and study all of the wonderful art around us!

Questions for Helping Students Look at Art

What is the title of the artwork?
What would you have called this painting if you had created it?

Can you describe the objects or people that you see in the artwork?
Do objects or people fill up the space? Something else?

What type of shapes do you see?

What type of lines do you see?
Are they wavy, straight, thin, thick, broken, vertical or horizontal lines?

Can you name the colors that you see?

Are the colors bright, soft, dark or strong colors?

What kind of feelings do you feel when you look at this artwork?

What is the focal point? (The area of the painting that stands out the most.)
Why does it stand out? (Is it bigger, brighter or more colorful?)

What is happening in the artwork?
Does it remind you of other things?

Did you learn anything from this artwork?

Do you like this work of art? Why or why not?

Review of the Elements and Principles of Art

LINE is an element of art that refers to the continuous mark made on some surface by a moving point. It may be two dimensional, like a pencil mark on a paper or it may be three-dimensional (wire) or implied (the edge of a shape or form).

SHAPE is an enclosed space defined by other elements of art. Shapes may take on the appearance of two-dimensional/flat objects or three-dimensional forms. Shapes can be either geometric or organic and can be combined to create patterns.

COLOR is an element of art with three properties 1) Hue, the name of the color, e.g. red, yellow, etc. 2) Intensity or the purity and strength of the color such as brightness or dullness. 3) Value, or the lightness or darkness of the color. Colors may be mixed to make others colors.

TEXTURE refers to the surface quality or "feel" of an object, such as roughness, smoothness, or softness. Actual texture can be felt while simulated textures are implied by the way the artist depicts areas of the picture.

SPACE refers to the distance or area between, around, above or within things. Space is described as positive or negative, depending on whether an area is filled by or surrounded by a subject.

EMPHASIS in a composition refers to developing points of interest to pull the viewer's eye to important parts of the work.

BALANCE is a sense of stability in the body of work, often created by repeating shapes.

HARMONY is achieved in a work by using similar elements throughout the work, to produce an uncomplicated look.

VARIETY refers to the differences in a work.

MOVEMENT adds excitement to your work by showing action and directing the viewer’s eye throughout the picture plane.

PATTERN/RHYTHM is a type of movement in drawing and painting. It is seen in repeating of shapes and colors. Alternating lights and darks also give a sense of rhythm.

PROPORTION refers to the relationships of the size of objects in a body of work.

UNITY is seen in a painting or drawing when all the parts equal a whole

NAME_____

Gallery Activity: I Spy…

Write the title of the painting that matches the clue!

Six Eyes, Two Noses

_____

Famous Clarinet Player

_____

Ready for the Circus

_____

Abracadabra!

_____

Red Overhead

_____

Pink Blossoms

_____

Prepare for Take-off!

_____

Music in the Swamp

_____

Teepee, Pirogue and a Cactus

_____

Gallery Activity: Observation

Find the painting by the title and clues, sketch the image, and answer the question!

Stacked
George Rodrigue
2001
acrylic on canvas

Three Heads

Yellow Eyes

Fiery Background

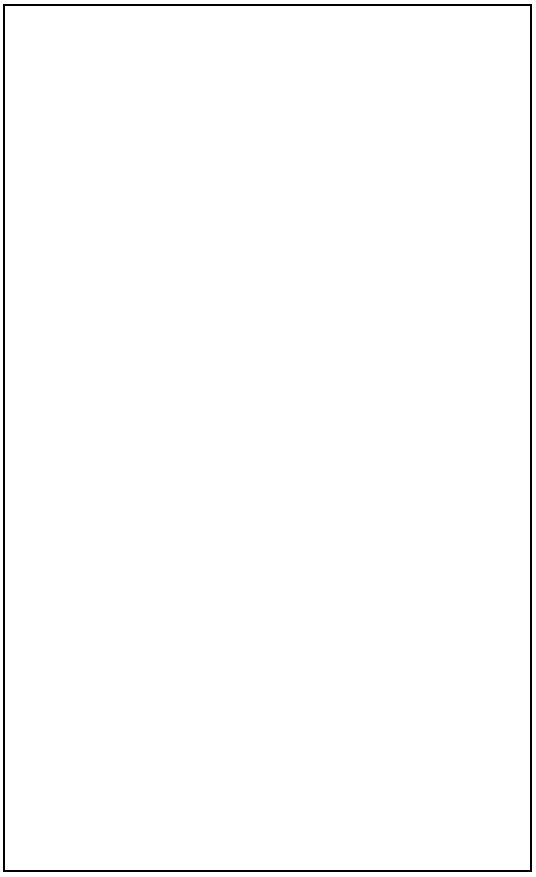
What shapes do you see in this painting?

_____

_____

_____

Bad Thoughts
George Rodrigue
2000
acrylic on linen



Red

Upside-Down

Three Colors

Why do you think one Blue Dog is upside-down?

_____

_____

_____

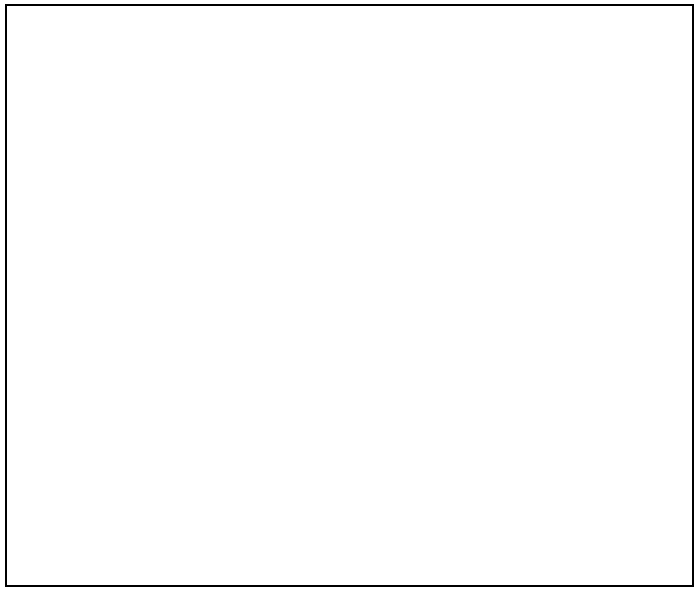
How does the red color affect the painting?

_____

_____

Elvira
George Rodrigue
2003
oil on canvas

Nannette
George Rodrigue
2003
oil on canvas



Primary Colors

Secondary Colors

Neon Colors

How do these paintings make you feel?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Why do you think Mr. Rodrigue chose to make them round?

_____

_____

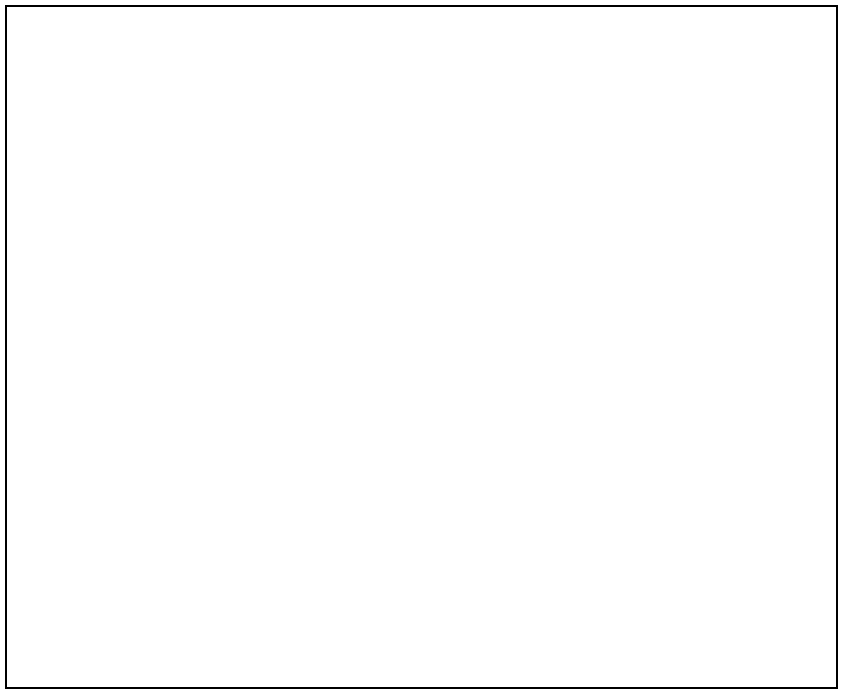
_____

Title: _____

Artist: George Rodrigue

Date: _____

Medium: _____



_____

_____

_____

Write about what you see.

_____

_____

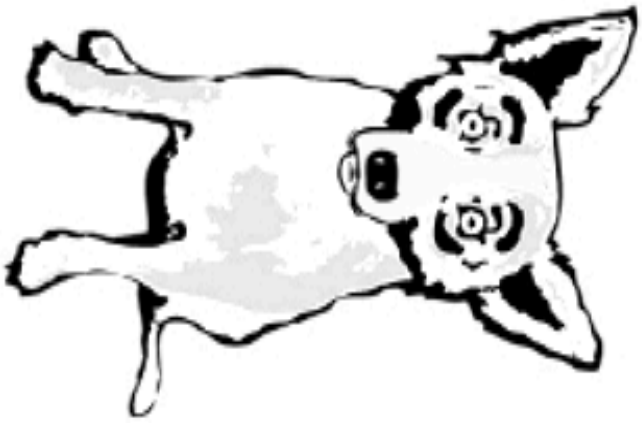
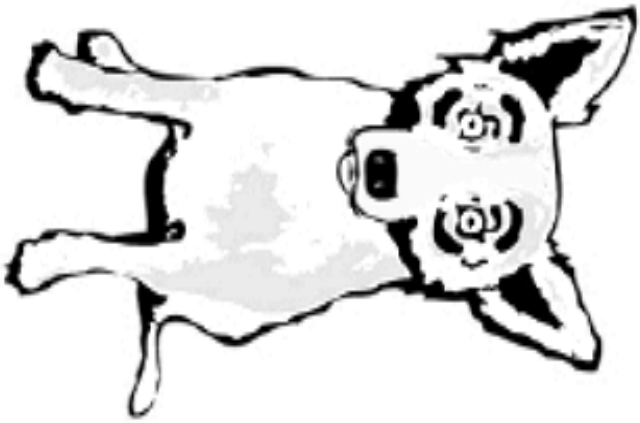
_____

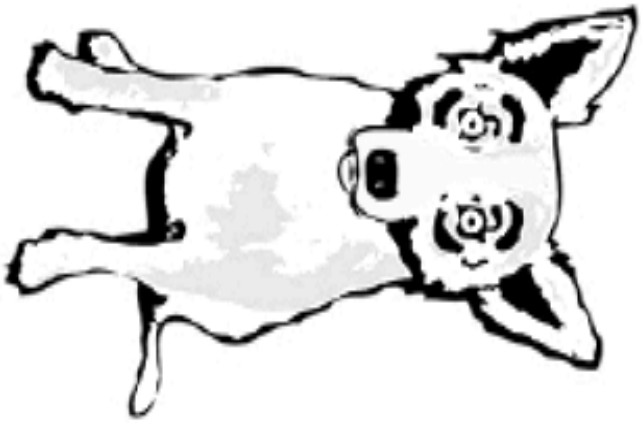
_____

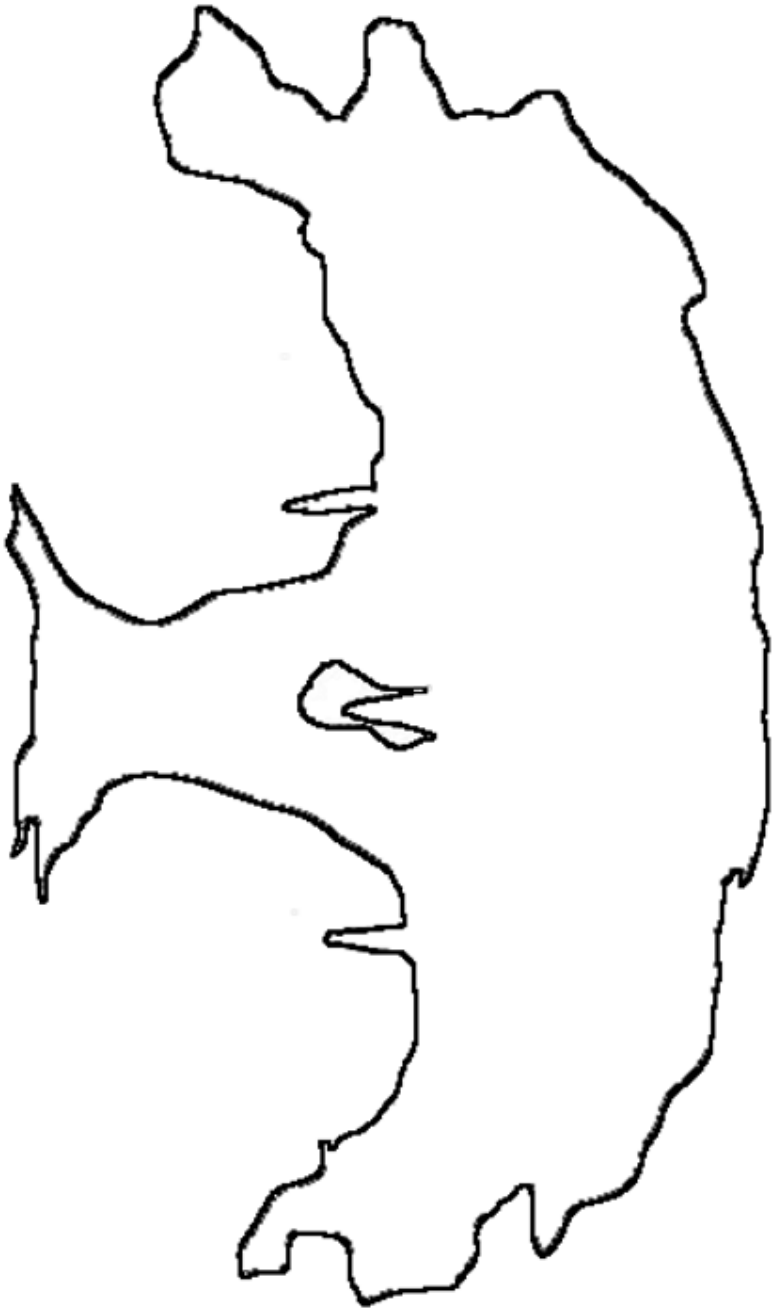
_____

Blue Dog Mask

- Cut along outer edge
- Cut small openings for eyes
- Decorate mask using any medium desired
- Attach string or elastic band to each black dot
- Wear and have fun!





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Additional Websites of Interest:

New Orleans Museum of Art: www.noma.org

George Rodrigue Studio: http://www.georgerodrigue.com/

George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts: www.georgerodriguefoundation.org

Musings of an Artist's Wife: www.wendyrodrigue.com