

# **Rethinking Teaching Collections Using the Smithsonian Learning Lab January 7, 2022**



**Presentation by:**

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# **Smithsonian Learning Lab Supports Visual Learning**

# Smithsonian Learning Lab Supports

## Visual Learning

- Research supports that **65 percent of people are visual learners**, meaning they need to see information in order to retain it.
- Visuals add a component to communication that written and verbal methods do not: speed. Studies have shown that the brain can process images and videos **60,000 times faster** than text, making image-based communication remarkably valuable.
- People retain **80 percent** of what they **see**, compared to **20 percent** of what they **read** and only **10 percent** of what they **hear**. This is especially true in our fast-paced digital culture, where multi-tasking is the norm and attention spans are short.
- **Source:** Bradford, W. C. (2004). Reaching the visual learner: teaching property through art. *The Law Teacher*, 11.

# **Smithsonian Learning Lab Overview**



# Smithsonian Learning Lab

- A **visual tool** to gather and display resources.
- The Smithsonian Learning Lab launched in **2015** and continues to evolve.
- Allows Smithsonian to **digitize** all of their **collections** as only **1%** of all collections are on exhibit at any given time.
- The Smithsonian Learning Lab is about [discovery](#), [creation](#), and [sharing](#).
- The Smithsonian Learning Lab highlights the need for **visual storytelling** to pass on our history and culture to future generations.

# Who Uses the Smithsonian Learning Lab?

- Librarians and Media Specialists
- Educators
- Curriculum Developers
- Museum Educators
- Students
- Parents
- Everyday People

# Educators

- **Free**, interactive platform
- Access to **millions of Smithsonian digital resources.**
- **Easy-to-use** tools to upload, download, adapt, create, and share.
- Use the Lab to teach **digital research skills** and encourage **digital citizenship** with built-in tools for creating and using proper citations.

# Why use the Smithsonian Learning Lab?

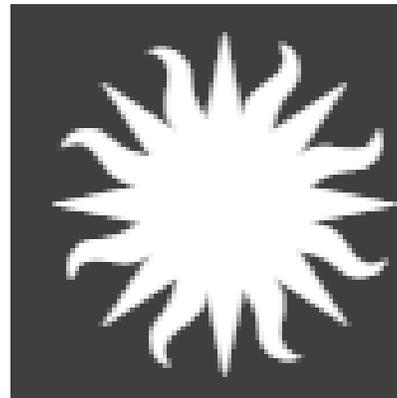
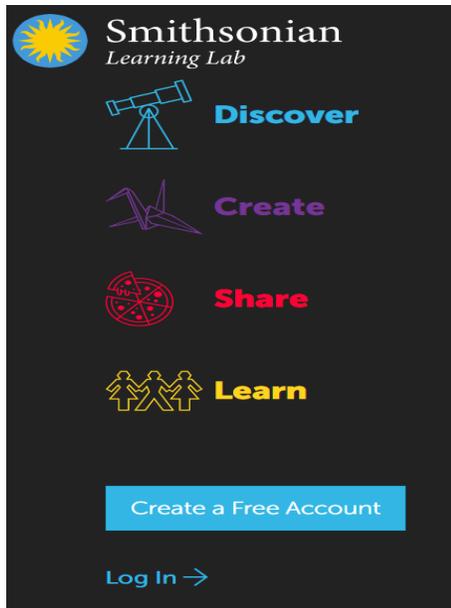
Guided by our desire to create authentic, meaningful, and personalized learning experiences, the Learning Lab blends trusted resources and contemporary media for learners of all ages to:

- **collaborate** with faculty, peers, and students
- **make discoveries** across disciplines
- **create** new ideas
- **share** their knowledge and creations with a global community of experts and peers
- **access** vast collections in history, science, art, and culture
- **build** lasting educational networks

# Getting Started

# Getting Started

- Go to <https://learninglab.si.edu/>
- Click on **Create a Free Account (Blue box)**.
- Importance of **Smithsonian Sun Symbol** (upper right corner).
- <https://learninglab.si.edu/help> (PDF How to Get Started Guide)
- YouTube Webinars on How To Get Started



# **Smithsonian Learning Lab – Exploring Resources**

# **Smithsonian Learning Lab – Exploring Resources**

- Browse Resources by Type – **Image, Audio, Video, Text, Learning Resource (Website)**
- Browse Model Collections on Different Topics – **Social Studies, Language Arts, Science, and Arts**
- Browse ready-to-use model collections by educational use – **Topical Collection, Teacher Collection, Student Activities**
- Browse ready-to-use model collections by learning strategy or theme – **Visible Thinking, Design Thinking, Historical Thinking, National History Day**

# **Smithsonian Learning Lab – Exploring Resources**

- Types of Resources that can be included in SLL collections – **Image (jpeg), Audio (mp3), Video (mp4), Text (doc), Excel (xls), PowerPoint (ppt), PDF, Learning Resource (Website), Quizzes**

# **My Experience**

# My Experience

- **Arts Integration and Cultural Competency Professional Support for New Jersey Educators grant** from the Smithsonian Center for Learning and Digital Access funded the collections that were built and the work that was done by all educators involved in the project.
- **2 Teams** were involved in working with **4 schools** in Paterson Public Schools.
- Asked to work with **Professors-In-Residence** (Darlene Rankin and Robin O'Brien) and **Arts Integration Specialist** (Triada Samaras) on Team 1.
- Attended **bi-weekly team meetings** via Zoom. Able to develop collections virtually with team members as well as independently working from a **team Google document**.

# Smithsonian Learning Lab – My Experience

- Built 2 **Thematic collections** around the themes of **social justice** and **identity**.
- Built 2 **Teaching collections** around the themes of **social justice** and **identity** that will be used in the teaching of arts integration lessons for elementary and middle school students.
- All **4 collections** highlight **Asian-American artists**, their artwork, and how they blend into **American culture**.
- Collections will be used in the **Paterson Public Schools – Don Bosco** and **School #21**.

# Smithsonian Learning Lab – My Experience

1. [Don Bosco - Identity - Thematic Collection](#)
2. [Don Bosco - Identity – Teaching Collection](#)
3. [School 21 - Social Justice - Thematic Collection](#)
4. [School 21 - Social Justice - Teaching Collection](#)

# Content Specialist

- Assemble thematic collections in the Smithsonian Learning Lab (SLL) to serve as a resource for lesson creation and students' art projects.
- Schools and themes:



**Mandalas: Social and Emotional Concentration**



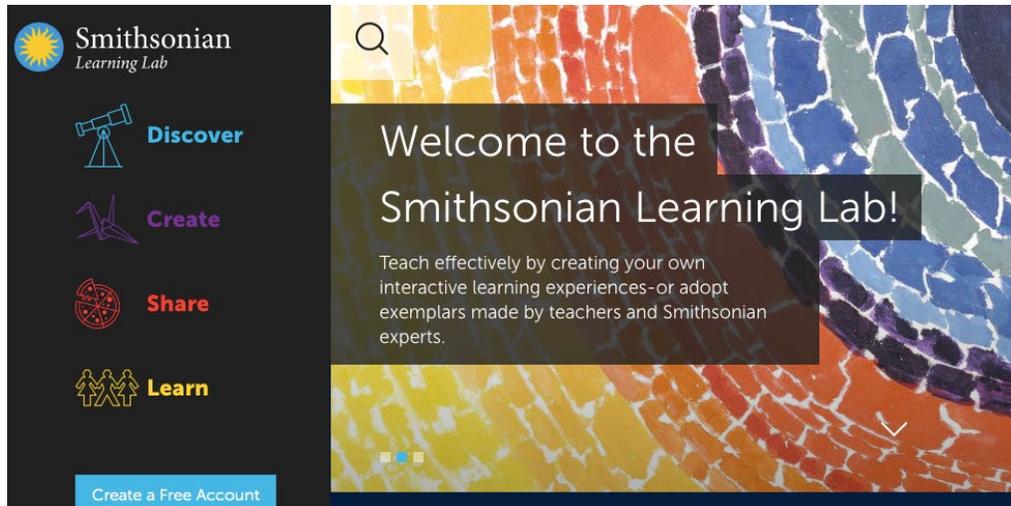
**Barrier and Walls**

# Considerations in Assembling Thematic Collections

- *Arts integration and Cultural Competency Professional Support for NJ educators*
- **Content representative of students' cultural, ethnic, religious and racial backgrounds.**
  - Families from Middle East (Iraq, Palestine, Syria, and Turkey).
  - Families from the Spanish Caribbean (Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico)
- **Intersectional/Hybrid identity of the students:**
  - Students negotiate identities to find true self as Dominican Americans, Iraqi Americans, Syrian Americans, etc.

# Sources of Images Included in Thematic Collections

- Smithsonian digitized collections
- Images/resources with attribution "CC BY"
- Images from my personal photo collection.



# Mandalas: Social & Emotional Concentration

**Create New Collection**

**Mandalas**

**Stained Glass**

**Asian American & Muslim Artists**

**Latinx Artists**

**Books on Muslim Culture & People**

**Religious Symbols**

**Architecture**

**Mandalas**

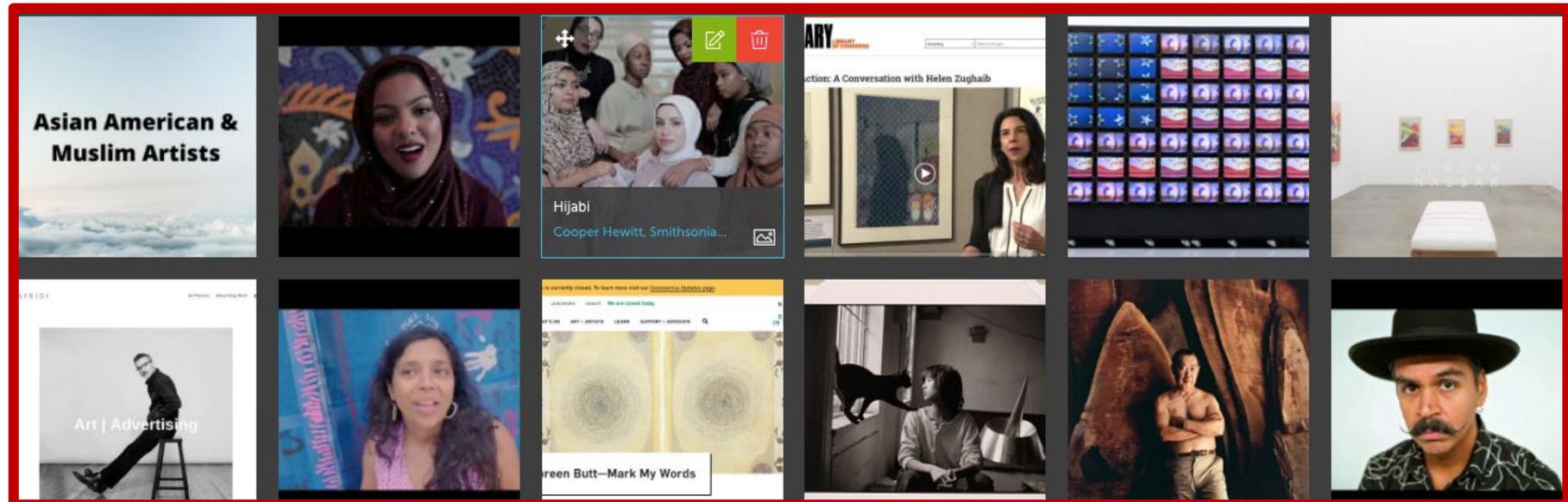
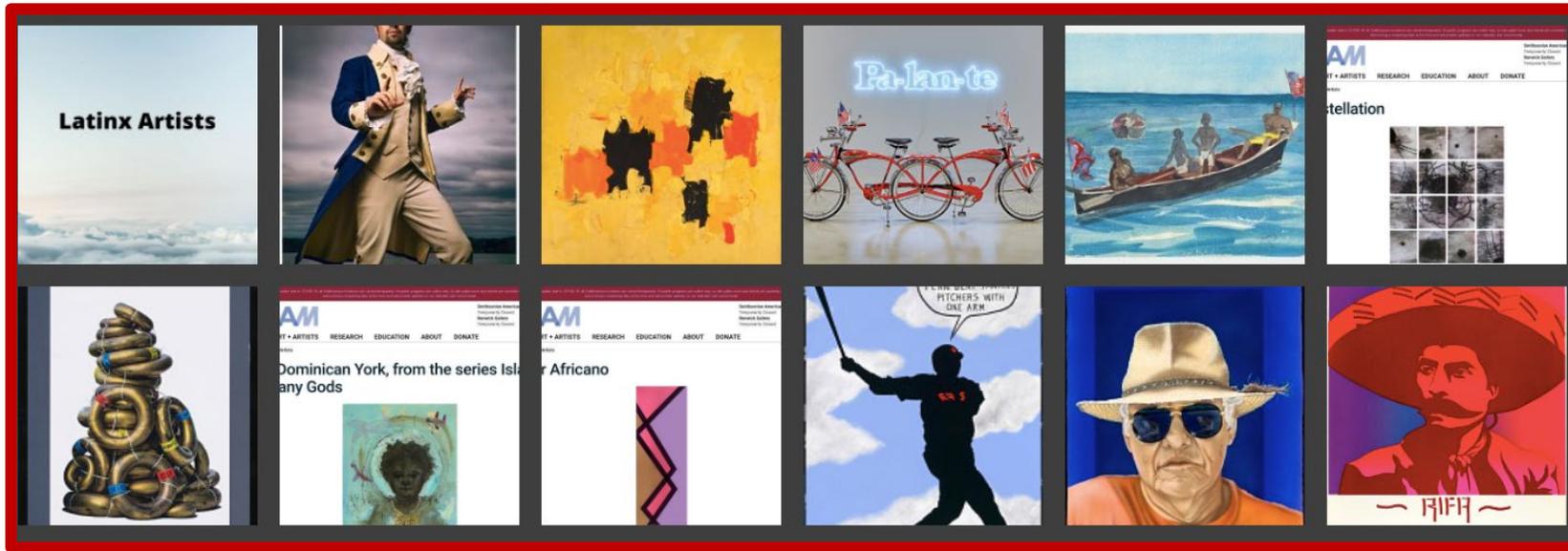
Different Mandalas

**American Quilts**

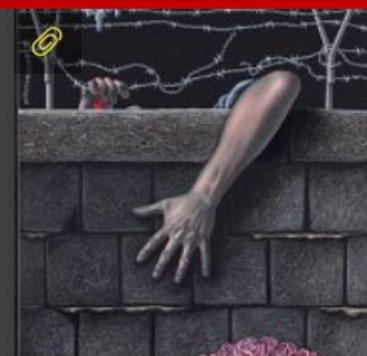
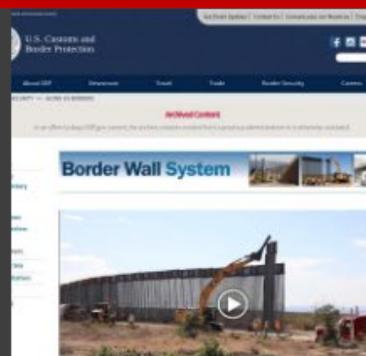
**Ceramics And Tiles**

**Mandalas**

# Mandalas (cont.)



# Barriers and Walls





## Castle of the Moors / Castelo dos Mouros. Sintra, Portugal

### DESCRIPTION

Built by the Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula (Moors) in the 8th and 9th centuries, the Castle of the Moors was an important strategic point during the *Reconquista* and was taken by Christian forces after the fall of Lisbon in 1147.

### TYPE

Image

### CREATOR

Mitsunori Denda

### CREATOR TYPE

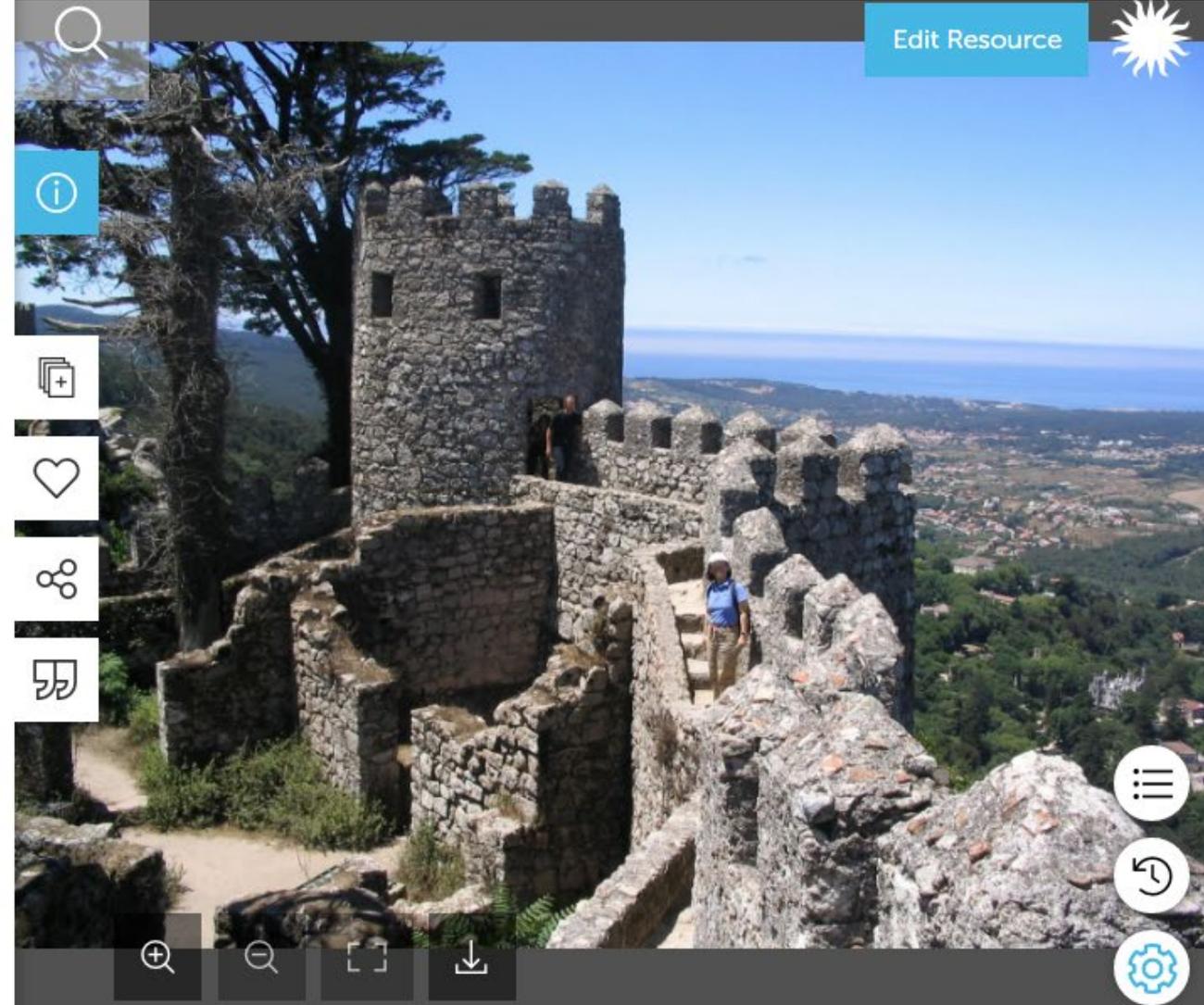
individual

### REFERENCED DATE

11/20/2020

### CONTRIBUTOR

[Kayo Denda](#)



# Project Assessment

- **Goal: Assess the usefulness of the SLL collections in classroom teaching**
- **Project Leader: Professor Heejung An, William Paterson University**
- **Observed 2 synchronous virtual class sessions:**
  - **Dr. Hani A. School (7<sup>th</sup> grade)**
  - **Don Bosco Technical Academy (8<sup>th</sup> grade)**
- **Length of the classroom session observed: 30 minutes**

# Online Observation Protocols

- **“Determine the students level of engagement when being taught with the SLL collection in an online environment.”**
  - **Student to student engagement**
  - **Teacher and student interaction**
  - **Social presence**
  - **Technology usage**

# Observing the Virtual Classroom Lessons



Dr. Hani A. School  
(7<sup>th</sup> grade)

Artist:  
Boris  
Artzybasheff

“Barriers & Walls - Do Walls Change How We Think?”

Don Bosco Tech. Academy  
(8<sup>th</sup> grade)



Artist:  
S. M. Sultan

“Cultural Identity”

# Student Art Projects

- **Dr. Hani**: students decorate cardboard blocs creating a virtual and physical “wall.” Each bloc includes visual elements from students’ own cultural backgrounds and inspirations from the SLL collection
- **Don Bosco**: Students create paintings inspired by the images of Bangladesh represented in the SLL collection

# Reflections

- **The transition to online teaching environment due to COVID-19 pandemic promoted innovative teaching**
- **Visual resources, such as SLL collections with culturally responsive components, serve as a powerful classroom tool**
- **Limitations of the use of Google Meet platform**
- **Need to develop pedagogical skills to facilitate discussions for student centered active learning in an online environment.**
- **Need for increased digital literacy education, including copyright and intellectual property issues**
- **Increase awareness of resources addressing cultural competency issues**



Picture drawn by a student after completing a lesson with the Smithsonian Learning Lab Collection at the Don Bosco Technical Academy, Paterson Public Schools, New Jersey

# Follow Up

- Feel free to **follow up** with us after today's presentation if you have any questions or wish to **collaborate** on a Smithsonian Learning Lab Collection.
- Email, Teams, Zoom:

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