



Tree House

HAMPTON UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

This issue of *Tree House* is dedicated to the artist, Elizabeth Catlett (APRIL 15, 1915–APRIL 2, 2012). Through the activities and lessons that take place in our *Tree House*, we will celebrate our own identity as we take look back on the remarkable life of this artist.

Art for Liberation and Life — The Work of Elizabeth Catlett

A segment of this special exhibition, on view at the Hampton University Museum, represents only a fraction of the work that Catlett produced. One of the most influential artists of the 20th century, Catlett is acclaimed for both her technical brilliance and the emotional impact of her work.

"Art should come from and be for the people."

—Elizabeth Catlett

Catlett featured with her artwork, *Sharecropper*, 1945 (reprinted in 1970), Linocut, A/P 5, 9" x 9"; Gift of the Artist.



Tree House Newsletter

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Membership and Community
Programs

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Tree House is a children's membership program that was developed to expand Friends of the Museum and enhance family visits. Geared toward children between the ages of 4 and 14, *Tree House* is rooted with a strong educational component that emphasizes the Museum's collection through workshops, specialized programming, events and the *Tree House* Newsletter. Our symbol, a tree engulfed in pattern, is based on the historical legacy associated with the Emancipation Oak that is located on the Hampton University campus. Like under the peaceful, out stretched branches where the first classes were taught, our mission is to "stimulate the mind by nourishing the heart with creative hands."

The Hampton University Museum

is located in the newly restored Huntington Building (the former library) on the grounds of the historic Hampton University campus. From Interstate 64, take exit 267/ Hampton University and follow the signs to the museum.

Museum Hours

MUSEUM HAMPTON UNIVERSITY
Monday–Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday
12 noon to 4 p.m.
Closed on Sundays
and major holidays.
Admission is free.
Call 757.727.5308
for more information.

The Builders — Art Vocabulary & Art History

Printmaker — a person who creates artwork by pressing a design onto a surface using a block or other objects coated with ink.

Sculpture — art created by carving, casting or the placement of objects to create a three-dimensional form.

Collection — a group of objects or art work that is meant to be seen or studied together.

Symbol — something that stands for or represents something else (for example, a line representing a thread of life).

Gesso — white substance used to help make an area suitable for painting.

Elizabeth Catlett (1915–2012)

Born in Washington, D.C., Elizabeth Catlett is still internationally known as an acclaimed sculptor and **printmaker**. Granddaughter of former slaves, Catlett was proud of her African American heritage which can be seen in her compassionate and heroic art images of ordinary people. After being refused admission into Carnegie Institute of Technology because of racial discrimination, Catlett enrolled and completed her studies at Howard University. The first person to earn her M.F.A. from the University of Iowa, Catlett later was the head of the art department at Dillard University in New Orleans and even taught for a short period at Hampton University. In 1945, Catlett received the Julius Rosenwald Foundation award which allowed her to travel to Mexico where she later resided for the remainder of her life.

Through her experiences in the United States and Mexico, Catlett expressed the themes of injustice, womanhood, the bond of mother and child and reflections of the life struggles with artistic brilliance. Her work, in both printmaking and sculpture, identified the concerns of Mexicans and African Americans. She expressed that "my art speaks for both my peoples."

Creativity Corner

Art & Lesson Created by Crystal Johnson

DOWN BY THE RIVER — Sculptural Garden

Objectives

1. Produce a work of art that demonstrates experimental application and uses the elements and principles of design.
2. Understand that art can be a vehicle for telling stories and recounting history through the use of symbols.
3. Employ the use of art and museum vocabulary in the analyzing works of art.
4. Use critical thinking skills and appropriate vocabulary to evaluate works of art.

You will need

- Smooth river stones
- Paint brush
- Super tacky glue
- Gesso
- Stamp (design of your choice)
- Embellishments of your choice (optional)
- acrylic paint
- Ink Pad (Mixed Media Ink)
- Pencil
- Spray varnish

Create It

1. You will first prepare the stones to be painted by applying **gesso** onto only the areas that you will be painting and allow these areas to dry.
2. Using your pencil, draw the pattern that will act as your background design.
3. To ensure that your stones have unity, when placed together in your sculptural garden, incorporate a design element or **symbol**, like a bold line or a tree, that runs over each stone.
4. Using your paint brush and the color paints of your choice, carefully apply the paint to the stones.
5. Work slowly and do not paint the entire stone. Instead, let the natural color of the stone show through.
6. Once your background is completed, allow time for each stone to dry completely.
7. Take your stamp and coat it thoroughly with the ink.
8. Pressing firmly against the stone, add your final printed pattern on your artwork.
9. Once you are pleased the design on each stone and you are sure that all of the painted surfaces are dry, add any other embellishments of your choice, like eyes, rhinestones or stickers. Complete your rock by adding two coats of clear varnish spray to protect your work.
10. Place your stone with the other stones in your **collection** on a large paper surface in a clean space before moving them outdoors.
11. Arrange the stones, evaluating, reflecting and reconsidering the placement of the stones in your **sculpture** to create your own unique sculptural garden.



Send us images of your finished pieces to crystalc.johnson@hamptonu.edu. Be sure to include your name, age, where you are from and a description of how you believe your composition turned out using your new **Art Vocabulary Terms**.

Selected works will be posted on the Museum's website and Facebook page.