

Summer 1 - Art – Esther Mahlangu/Wax Batik
Years Five and Six

By the end of this unit, you will have researched the life and art of Esther Mahlangu and be able to create a piece of wax batik fabric that is inspired by her work.



Esther Mahlangu

South Africa

culture

pigments

murals

exhibited

wax batik

resist

dye

vibrant

patterns

colours

design

Important information



Esther Mahlangu

Dr. Esther Mahlangu is a South African artist who was born on the 11th November 1935 in the Mpumalanga province. From a young age, she learned from her mother and grandmother how to paint and do beadwork in the traditional Ndebele style. This tradition was passed on to each generation “as part of their initiation rites,”. Before 1940, they used mostly natural pigments produced from charcoal, clay and red earth, which the women would travel for miles to find. Her work has brought the traditional wall paintings over onto canvas and various other objects, which had helped her artwork reach people worldwide. For eleven years, she worked at a museum for Ndebele culture called Botshabelo Historical Village. She states that her discovery was in 1986 by French researchers, and they invited her to France, and in 1989 she painted a house there “in front of thousands of spectators”. Later she went back to South Africa to paint murals and has exhibited all around the world.

Wax Batik

Batik is an art form created centuries ago in Indonesia to produce patterns on cloth. In the batik process, wax is brushed or dotted onto fabric before dyeing. The wax covered pieces of fabric resist the dye, leaving the original colour. This process can be repeated several times to produce a variety of patterns and elaborate designs.

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	Learning question	What you will learn	Learning Review
1	I can research the life of Esther Mahlangu Who is Esther Mahlangu?	You will learn about the life of Esther Mahlangu and the art she produces. You will know what media she uses and what types of art she produces.	
2	I can evaluate the art of Esther Mahlangu What do all of Esther Mahlangu's art have in common?	You will look at a selection of pieces of art by Esther Mahlangu. You will be able to comment on their key features and be able to state its features	
3	I can create some designs in the style of Esther Mahlangu Which is your favourite design and why?	Your upcoming task of creating a piece of fabric that uses the wax batik technique will be revealed. You will create some designs that are influenced by the art of Esther Mahlangu. It should use similar colours and have white areas that will be where the wax batik will be applied.	
4 (possibly over 2/3 shorter sessions)	I can use the wax batik method on a piece of fabric What is the wax batik technique of art?	You will lightly draw your design on your fabric and use the technique of wax batik to mark off your 'white parts'. Once dried, you will paint your fabric using dyes. Afterwards, you will remove the wax to reveal your pattern/art.	
5	I can evaluate my art What did I do well in my art? What could I improve upon?	In class, we will look at each other's art. We will be able to state which one is our favourite and explain why. After that, you will look at your own work and evaluate your composition by considering how well you used the wax and dye and any thoughts on how you could improve your work.	