Lesson Title: Can Girls Do That?
Grades: 3-5 [adaptable for grades K–2 and 6-12]
Time Required: Two 45-minute periods
Subjects: Visual Art, Social Justice

Lesson Overview: Students will brainstorm how boys and girls are represented in a variety of different artworks. They will discuss how certain characteristics are only used in pictures of a certain gender, and talk about how stereotypes are used in art. They will then use examples of people who break the stereotypes. Next, they will make their own portraits that prove that stereotypes are not always accurate.

Common Core Academic Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2</th>
<th>VA:Cr3.1.5a: Create artist statements using art vocabulary to describe personal choices in artmaking.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1</td>
<td>VA:Re.7.1.5a: Compare one's own interpretation of a work of art with the interpretation of others.</td>
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<td>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3</td>
<td>VA:Re.7.2.3a: Determine messages communicated by an image.</td>
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<td>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.6</td>
<td>VA:Re.7.2.5a: Identify and analyze cultural associations suggested by visual imagery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.7</td>
<td>VA:Re9.1.4a: Apply one set of criteria to evaluate more than one work of art.</td>
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<td>VA:Cn11.1.5a: Identify how art is used to inform or change beliefs, values, or behaviors of an individual or society.</td>
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Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Identify gender stereotypes in visual representations
- Understand that stereotypes can be harmful
- Create portraits that break down gender stereotypes

Materials

- Representations of men and women in works of art
- Projector and screen/ SMART board, or equivalent
- Large chart paper
- Post-it notes
- Paper frames
- Index cards
- Art supplies of your choice

Suggested Artworks:
Click on the links below to access these images through the Wadsworth’s Public Portal. Once on the portal, click on the image to view the object information. Click on the image again to download a jpeg version of the work. **NOTE: Works of art used in this lesson may not currently be on view at the museum.**

Gustav Klimt, *Two Girls with Oleander*, c. 1890–92
Nicolas Bernard Lépicié, *The Carpenter’s Shop*, c. 1780
Mather Brown, *Louis XVI Saying Farewell to his Family*, c. 1793
School of Jacques-Louis David, *The Lictors Bringing to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons*, late 18th century
Claude Lorrain, *Landscape with Saint George and the Dragon*, c. 1643
Seymour J. Guy, *A Knot in the Skein*, 1870
John Trumbull, *Lydia Sigourney*, 1838
Norman Rockwell, *The Young Lady with the Shiner*, 1953
Lesson Procedures:

1. Prepare a large sheet of chart paper with 3 columns: “Boys”, “Girls”, and a third column “Everyone Can!” Cover the “Everyone Can!” title so that it is hidden from view.

2. Tell students they will be looking at different images of boys and girls in art, and it will be their job to notice the different ways boys and girls are shown in these works of art.

3. Looking closely at 4–5 works of art featuring men and women in various roles, discuss with students the different ways boys and girls are represented. Through your discussions, generate attributes for the two columns: “Boys...” and “Girls...” The goal is to have students look critically at the way gender roles are represented in works of art. Push them to observe things beyond the superficial. Possible categories can include:
   - Clothing
   - Actions [what is the boy/girl doing?]
   - Emotions
   - Background/Settings
   - Personalities [i.e. brave, fast, smart, kind etc.]
   - Behavior

4. Ask students to look at the lists of things boys and girls can do that they have created. Do they think all these attributes are true of only boys and only girls? What about for every boy and every girl? Ask students if they can think of times when boys/girls have done things from the “opposite” columns. For instance: a time when a girl acted brave/a boy wore pink.

5. Ask students how it makes them feel to see boys and girls only doing certain things. Does it make them feel like they can’t do those things if they aren’t a boy/girl? Are there any things on the list they would like to do that is under the boy/girl column?

6. Based on your students’ level of understanding, consider introducing the concept of stereotypes. A stereotype is an overly simple picture or opinion of a person, group, or thing. Discuss some common stereotypes with your students [Note: you may want to have some examples ready in case your students have trouble generating examples].

7. Return to your “Girls” and “Boys” lists. Are there examples of stereotypes on these lists? Ask students what might be harmful/ unfair about stereotypes.

8. Tell students that art can also be a powerful weapon against stereotypes. Choose 1–3 works of art that feature(s) men/women represented with one or more character trait from the “opposite” gender column. Allow students to look closely at the work before discussing. Ask students what is different about the boy[s]/girl[s] in this work of art. Make sure students notice that the figure(s) exhibits a character trait[s] previously prescribed to the “opposite” gender.

9. Reveal the “Everyone Can!” title and move the sticky note[s] with the aforementioned character trait[s] to this column.
10. Tell students that they will be continuing the work of these artists by creating their own “Everyone Can!” exhibition.

11. Each student will create a portrait of someone that features at least one attribute from the “Girls” column and at least one attribute from the “Boys” column. You can choose to assign attributes or have students choose freely, just be sure that all the sticky notes are moved to the “Everyone Can!” column.

12. Provide paper and your choice of art supplies for the portrait activity. Each portrait must include a half or full length figure and a background/setting that best exemplifies their sticky-note attributes.

13. When students are finished with their portraits, hand out paper frames for students to “frame their work.”

14. Distribute index cards for their portrait labels. Ask students to include in their labels:
   - Title of the Artwork
   - Name of the Artist
   - A 1–2 sentence description of their “Everyone Can!” portrait that includes their sticky note attributes.

15. Display the portraits along with their labels as an exhibition of “Everyone Can!” Portraits.

Assessment: Examine another visual image (it can be a media image, artwork, advertisement, or other type of image) that displays traditional gender roles and ask students to discuss how the boys/girls are represented. Are students more critical of these representations? How would they change the image to break down stereotypes?
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Gustav Klimt, *Two Girls with Oleander* (c. 1890–92)

*The Painting*

*Two Girls with Oleander* is one of Klimt’s earlier works in which the background is representational, rather than flat and decorative like his later Art Nouveau style. In this painting, two young girls are picking spring flowers from a tree in front of a building with intricate architectural details. The two girls are portrayed in profile, with peaceful and delicate features. The style of this work differs from Klimt’s more mature works, and shows an academic style, with reference to the Renaissance in the right girl’s calm, fair face and embroidered bonnet and dress.

*The Artist*

The Austrian painter Gustav Klimt (1862–1918) was one of the founding members of the Vienna Secession movement, which aimed to create a new style of art outside of the historical traditions of the academy. Before he started the Secession movement, he was trained as a member of the Arts and Crafts School and often painted historical and architectural paintings. Most of Klimt’s work is considered “symbolist painting” due to his use of allegory, symbolism, and emblems, which often included Biblical or mythical images. He is most well-known for his highly detailed and decorative “golden phase” paintings, many of which include his most famous subject, Adele Bloch-Bauer I.

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *The Entry into Paris of the Dauphin, later Charles V* (1821)

*The Painting*

This painting is also sometimes called the *The Dauphin’s Entry into Paris in 1358* and symbolically represents a return to peace after a time of turmoil. After a long period of discord and peasant revolt brought on by those who wanted to replace the Dauphin (future Charles V) with Charles II, this scene shows the royal family’s peaceful return to Paris after fleeing danger. To create this work, Ingres studied the architecture, armor, and fashion of the 14th century, and aimed to recreate an authentic medieval city. This painting is part of larger trend of 19th-century genre painting, in which artists and patrons wanted to associate with the pageantry and heroic nature that they associated with medieval history. By setting this painting in the 14th century, it shows that these themes are timeless, and that contemporary royalty is part of a long lineage.

*The Artist*

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867) was a Neo-Classical painter who is most famous for his portraits. Although he was born and raised in France, he spent most of his career in Rome, working in an eclectic style, taking inspiration from history painting, and Italian and Flemish Renaissance styles. He studied for four years in the studio of Jacques-Louis David, who was one of Europe’s most popular painters of the time, and developed a specific style which was consistent throughout his entire career. Critics of the time thought
his work was outdated and strange, but he was able to support himself as a portrait painter and a draughtsman and remains one of the most famous artists of the 19th century.

Nicolas Bernard Lépicié, The Carpenter’s Shop (c. 1780)

The Painting

In this scene, we see the inside of a carpenter’s shop, where the carpenter is surrounded by members of his family. The carpenter’s wife sits by his side, calmly mending a piece of fabric. An older woman, presumably his mother or mother-in-law, looks over his young daughter’s shoulder as she reads. Surrounding these central figures are two younger children; a male figure who is hunched over, turned away from the viewer; and a sleeping dog. These figures are calm and peaceful, while the carpenter is seen in a moment of action, reaching his arm out as he thrusts his body away from his work desk. This scene shows the day-to-day goings-on of the carpenter’s shop and is an example of a working-class interior scene typical of the time.

The Artist

Nicolas Bernard Lépicié (1735–1784) was an 18th-century French painter who was classically trained through the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in Paris. He was later a professor who taught many of the next generation’s most celebrated artists. His work was influenced by the painter Chardin, who was a friend of his father’s, and includes portraits, historical scenes, and domestic interiors. His style is softly atmospheric and detail oriented, with an emphasis placed on real people and sentimental moments between the working class.

Mather Brown, Louis XVI Saying Farewell to his Family (c. 1793)

The Painting

This painting shows the emotional goodbye of Louis XVI’s family in front of the jail as he is about to be executed for treason. Louis sits in the center of the frame with his children; his wife, Marie Antoinette; his sister, Princess Elisabeth; and others throwing themselves onto him in a desperate act of prayer and sorrow. On the left, four soldiers stand to take Louis to his punishment. There have been many paintings of this scene by various artists. This work shows the King in an intimate and humanized moment with his emotional family.

The Artist

Mather Brown (1761–1831) was born in Boston and worked in London, where he became a fashionable portraitist in various provincial English towns. He studied with famous portraitists, and after his move to London, became the first American to enroll in the school of the Royal Academy in 1782. After graduating, he took major commissions from Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, and John Adams, before being named the official portraitist to the King’s sons, Duke of York and Duke of Clarence. However, after enjoying this fame, his popularity declined quickly and he spent his later years searching for patrons to support his art.
Jacques-Louis David, *The Lictors Bringing to Brutus the Bodies of his Sons* (late 18th century)

**The Painting**

*The Lictors Bringing to Brutus the Bodies of his Sons* depicts a moment from the history of ancient Rome. Brutus had participated in an uprising that vanquished the monarchy and established the Roman Republic in 509 BC. Even though he was a nephew of the king Tarquinius, Brutus, as a consul of the new republic, had to impose a sentence on his two sons, who were convicted of plotting to restore the monarchy. Brutus sentenced his own sons to death for their conspiracy. David is showing the extraordinary sacrifices that citizens must make to establish and maintain a republic.

**The Artist**

Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825) was part of an art movement called Neo-Classicism. Much like the Enlightenment thinkers, David used classical themes from Greek and Roman cultures to visually depict new philosophies of government and power. He was a popular artist during the French Revolution. He fell out of favor after the revolution ended and was imprisoned because of his political affiliations. After being released from prison, David, under Napoleon’s rule, became the court’s official painter.

Claude Lorrain, *Landscape with Saint George and the Dragon* (c. 1643)

**The Painting**

This painting shows a common scene from Christian tradition, which was popularized in the medieval era and the Crusades. It depicts the story of St. George, a third-century Roman soldier of Christian faith. In his travels, he discovered a city in which each year they had to make a human sacrifice to a dragon. St. George slayed the dragon and saved the daughter of the town’s ruler, Princess Cleodolinda, who was so thankful, that the town converted to Christianity. St. George was eventually martyred by beheading by the Romans, but this story represents St. George’s bravely slaying the dragon, and his service by converting thousands of pagans to Christianity. The painting was originally made for Cardinal Fausto Poli and was part of a two-paneled piece, half of which was given to a relative in London after the Cardinal’s death.

**The Artist**

Born in 1604 in Lorrain, France, Claude Gellée, called Claude Lorrain, (1604–1682) was mostly influenced by Northern European landscape artists. His style of paintings, which are known for being picturesque, atmospheric, and idealized, made him one of the most famous landscape artists in Europe in the 17th century. It is said that Claude added a few small figures from Biblical or mythological stories to transform his landscape paintings into the more prestigious genre of history painting, but his ultimate emphasis was on the landscape. In the span of his very successful career, Claude painted for the Pope and for many other international clients and has catalogued all of his works in a catalogue entitled *Liber Vertitatis*. 
Seymour Joseph Guy, A Knot in the Skein (1870)

The Painting

This piece is typical of Guy’s mid-career work, depicting a dramatically lit and naturalistic pair of children in a domestic upper-class interior. The young girl on the left wears a flowing, coral dress and looks down in meditative concentration as she tries to find the knot in her skein of yarn. A young boy, with his back turned away from the viewer, holds out the yard between his hands to assist her. The two children are emphasized through the lighting, though adult figures are visible in the background of the painting.

The Artist

Seymour Joseph Guy (1824–1910) was a painter in the Romantic style, who is best known for his domestic scenes and paintings of children. He was born in the suburbs of London, but moved to New York as a young man, where he worked for the majority of his career. Guy was elected a National Academician in 1865 and was one of the founding members of the American Water Color Society. In addition to combining portraiture and genre painting, Guy also drew influence from French Neo-Classical history painting, with particularly close attention paid to the details and lighting of his paintings. His meticulously painted works faded from popularity at the end of his life as trends in art shifted into Impressionism toward the end of the 19th century.

John Trumbull, Lydia Sigourney (1838)

The Painting

This portrait depicts Lydia Sigourney, a popular American poet in the early 19th century who was one of the first American women to establish a successful writing career. In this portrait, Mrs. Sigourney, as she was professionally known, is depicted sitting at a wooden desk with parchment and a writing quill, a common way for the painter to let the viewer know more about the subject’s interests or profession. Her writing focused on public themes like history, slavery, religion, and current events, and she often wrote about death and loss as a common human experience. Sigourney was a strong proponent of education for women and started a school for girls with the assistance of Daniel Wadsworth, the future founder of the Wadsworth Atheneum, and a family friend of painter John Trumbull.

The Artist

John Trumbull (1756–1843) is considered the first American history painter and is best known for his paintings of the Revolutionary War (1775–1783). Born in 1756 in Lebanon, Connecticut, he graduated from Harvard College in 1773 and served with the Connecticut First Regiment in the early months of the revolution. He moved to England in 1784 to study at the Royal Academy of Art and made some of his most important works about American history in the following decade. Trumbull was friends with some of the most important political leaders of this time, like Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, and these close relationships, combined with his knowledge of French painting techniques, gave him the ability to create his impressive works.
Picture Books that Challenge Traditional Gender Roles:

   When Nate discovers dance, he knows he’s found his passion, but his brother’s assertion that “boys don’t dance” causes him to have doubts.

   When the boys won’t let Lulu join their school-yard basketball team, she hosts a “Basket Ball” where girls from all over trade-in ball gowns for b-ball gear & show off their stuff.

   Oliver has to deal with classmates who harass him because he prefers activities like painting, reading, and dancing, instead of playing sports.

   Every night, Bailey dreams about dresses. But in the daytime, her parents tell her she shouldn’t be thinking about dresses because “You’re a boy!” Then Bailey meets someone who is inspired by her passion.

   King Wilfred teaches his daughter the same knightly skills he taught his sons. But when she turns 16, the King insists on a joust, the winner of which will win Violetta’s hand in marriage. Violetta has other plans.

   A young girl in Mexico wants to be like her papa and become a glassblower, but such things are traditionally only for boys.

   Each girl imagines herself a wild animal and dreams about what she can be.

   Dyson loves pink, dresses & his tiara. He also likes to climb trees. He’s a Princess Boy, and his family loves him exactly as he is.

   Princess Elizabeth rescues her prince, who has been nabbed by a dragon, only to discover she’s better off without him.

    William doesn’t want the train or basketball his dad gives him. He deeply wants a doll. No one understands— some even call him a sissy— until his grandmother steps in.
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres
French, 1780-1867
The Entry into Paris of the Dauphin, later Charles V, 1821
Oil on canvas
Gift of Paul Rosenberg and Company, 1959.35
John Trumbull
American, 1756–1843
Lydia Sigourney, 1838
Oil on canvas
Source unknown, 1863.7
Seymour Joseph Guy
American, born England, 1824–1910
A Knot in the Skein, 1870
Oil on panel
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1986.27
Gustav Klimt
Austrian, 1862–1918

_Two Girls with Oleander_,
c. 1890–92

Oil on canvas

The Douglas Tracy Smith and Dorothy Potter Smith Fund and The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1993.96