

Louisiana Sugar Cane Folk Art

Louisiana has a rich tradition of folk artists, some of whom have earned national and international acclaim, like Clemetine Hunter. Folk art, created by people who had little to no formal artistic training, who were self-taught and relied on their instincts to create art their own way, may not have met with “acceptable” artistic styles of the day. Other well-known Louisiana folk artists from the region include: Henry Watson and Alvin Batiste. Typically these artists focused on themes having to do with everyday life and in so doing have documented folk ways, activities and events in their time. All these artists have dedicated a number of their works to the subject of sugar cane, its planting, harvesting or processing.



Alvin Batiste--*Sugar Harvest*

Suggested Student Activities:

1. Analyze the above Alvin Batiste painting by writing a short paragraph discussing the elements that contribute to it being classified as folk art.
2. Conduct an internet image search to compare and contrast the works of at least two different Louisiana folk artists. Select a work from each artist. Tell why you prefer one to another.



Answer key:

1. Elements of the painting that help classify it as folk art include the following: simple strokes, vivid colors, composition and subject--one about ordinary life events.
2. Students could choose a similarly themed painting by Clementine Hunter (see below) to compare and contrast to Alvin Batiste's noting differences in the composition, color pallet and styling.

Clementine Hunter -*Sugar Cane Syrup Makin'*, 1979

