

WE ALL HAVE A HAND IN BECOMING AN UPSTANDER: FIERCE UPSTANDER MAPS

Created By Linda Hoeptner Poling, Ph.D.
Kent State University

Grade Levels: K-3

Expected length: 1-2 class periods

Does being fierce mean we are violent? No! To be fierce can mean one is intense, passionate, fervent, forceful, and powerful, especially when it comes to being an UPSTANDER for what is right and just. That is what being fierce means to artist and activist Linda Stein. We see many instances of fierce upstanding in her art. In this lesson, our hands serve as symbols of our fierceness. Held up, with fingers spread wide, they can indicate to someone: “Stop!”. Raised above our heads, they can indicate agreement or disagreement; or that we take a stand in solidarity and community. We lend a supporting and helping hand to communities who need us. We comfort with our hands. We tell stories with our hands. Who has held your hand along the way to becoming who you are? Whose hand do you like to hold and bring you comfort? How do you think it makes them feel when you hold their hand? Our hands tell so much about us. They help us play, work, and express ourselves. They also can be used to provide help to others in need, or a comforting embrace along with a hug to a friend in distress. They are even the means of primary communication as in American Sign Language. The hand is a powerful symbol showing many layers of possible meanings.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Studio art: Students will create multi-media fierce upstander hand “maps”, focusing on a behavior they want to *stop, start, continue, or change*.

National Visual Art Standard: Connecting

Anchor Standard: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Enduring Understanding: Through art-making, people make meaning by investigating and developing awareness of perceptions, knowledge, and experiences.

Art history: Students will develop deeper empathy for the lives lost during the Holocaust through the work of Linda Stein and her series *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females*.

National Visual Art Standard: Responding

Anchor Standard: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

Enduring Understanding: People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art

Aesthetics: Students will identify how the art of Linda Stein’s *Displacement from Home: What to Leave, What to Take—Cabinets, Cupboards, Cases, and Closets* series expresses the sense of loss and displacement from home.

National Visual Art Standard: Responding

Anchor Standard: Perceive and analyze artistic work

Enduring Understanding: Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed through engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments.

ARTWORK:

The history of hatred is anything but neutral. In a safe, supportive, and appropriate manner, we must teach children to recognize hatred before it grows into atrocities. There are abundant resources for teaching children about the Holocaust. If we explain it in terms they can understand, empathy will grow. Learning for Justice (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/>) is one such source that is available to teachers who want to prepare children to grow into empathetic, civic-minded adults who evolve beyond tolerant adults, and instead, be *upstander* adults.

Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females series: Begun in 2013, Linda Stein dedicated and focused a series of works on women heroes during the Holocaust, researching each woman extensively for their role by reflecting on the questions: *What makes a hero?* And, *what defines bravery?* What resulted was a series of large wall collages she calls “tapestries” that she assembled. Each includes a pictorial representation of the women and their roles as heroes during the Holocaust, juxtaposed by direct quotes, and images from past and popular contemporary culture. Rich contrasting textures, patterns, and colors result from the use of fabrics, found items, images, and especially black leather—which is particularly compelling next to the comfort associated with the more “pleasant” patterned fabrics. Black leather has many associations—is it meant to be worn on a motorcycle, protecting the skin of the rider, for example? (Or is it something darker, more ominous in intent?), Are the patterned fabrics purely pleasant, indicating comfort and places of home? Are the fabrics meant to celebrate the feminine and comforts of home/domesticity? Side-by-side, they create tensions and narratives, coupled with the images that punctuate the surfaces, to tell stories that at once we know are about heroes during one of the darkest times in human history; however, they also continue to teach us more about what it means to be a hero, and even more, about what it means to be a fierce and brave upstander.

Focusing on *Anne Frank 839* and *Anne Frank 808* in the series is recommended for this age group. Anne Frank, full name Anneliese Marie Frank, and her family tried to flee the grips of Hitler’s hatred and genocidal reign. We know the story of Anne leaving Germany for Amsterdam, to go into hiding. In her diary, which spans 756 days, she wrote, “So there we were, Father, Mother and I, walking in the pouring rain, each of us with a school bag and a shopping bag filled to the brim with the most varied assortment of items” (as cited in *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females: Tapestries and Sculpture* by Linda Stein (2016). Edited by Linda Stein, Foreword by Gloria Steinem. Old City Publishing: Anne Frank, *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, Thursday, July 9, 1942). Yes, Anne wrote about the Nazi persecution and the Holocaust through the eyes of a teenager. So, too, are accounts of a child’s life that all young people can relate to, including love, quarrels with parents, and other universal childhood experiences. It is

important to humanize the heroes in the *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females* exhibition in this way so that children identify that victims of hostility to or prejudice against Jewish people (anti-Semitism) have real lives so that they can empathize more deeply in their journeys to becoming upstanding adults.

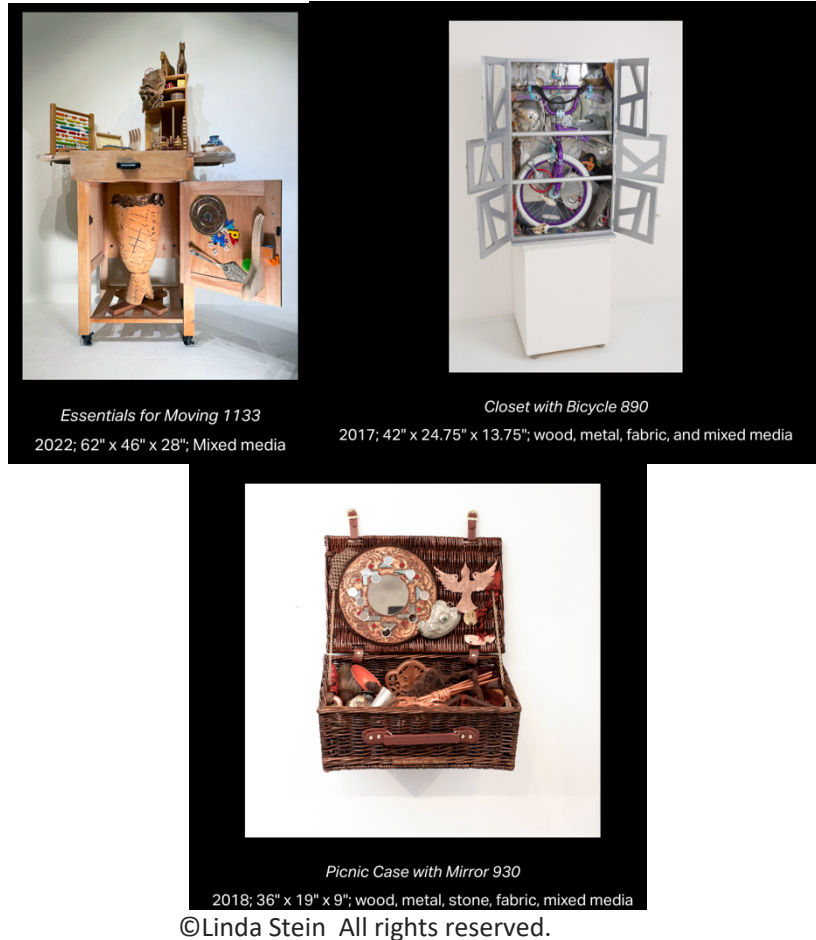


©Linda Stein All rights reserved.

©Linda Stein All rights reserved.

The Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females exhibition itself includes 11 tapestries, 20 *Spoon to Shell* box sculptures (representing sexual and physical abuse during the Holocaust), one large Protector Sculptor sculpture (symbolizing the “fierceness and strength of the brave upstander and rescuer” (Stein, 2016, p. 16), and two videos: one depicting the art and activism of Linda Stein; the other, an interview between Linda Stein and Raymond Learsy, whose mother was the 11th hero in the series.

We can only imagine what Anne had in her “school bag and a shopping bag” on the day she went into hiding. Ask students: if you could only take enough things to fill your school backpack and one brown paper shopping bag—what would you take? Linda Stein confronts this sense of loss and displacement in her series, *Displacement from Home: What to Leave, What to Take—Cabinets, Cupboards, Cases, and Closets* (2015). When people are forced to leave their home because of dangerous situations they cannot take most of their belongings. It is agonizing to not only leave your home, but to also lose the comfort of your possessions that brought a sense of home. Let’s look at some of the work in Linda Stein’s series. What are some objects you see?



REFLECT:

Now think about your own fierceness as a brave upstander. What does that look like? Really visualize it. What are you doing? Are you disagreeing when you overhear someone criticizing someone about their clothes? For their body type? Are you welcoming a new student into your friend circle when you witness others actively shunning them in the cafeteria? Are you giving a compliment to someone who is being teased for being “too smart,” and bullied for always having the right answers to the teacher’s questions? Are you the upstander for your classmate who is being teased for their disability, telling the bully that they are being hurtful and must stop? There are so many ways to be an upstander—the point is, that we all must be fierce and brave and do something. If everyone is an upstander for what is right, can you imagine what a better place the world would be, full of people who help others make better choices? Being a brave upstander takes courage; it takes the kind of fierceness we learned about in Linda Stein’s art. You can be an upstander every single day. Let’s dig in and really think about how to do that.

Actions to be/becoming an upstander in four ways:

We can **STOP-START-CONTINUE-CHANGE** our behavior.

Is there something you do that needs to STOP? Are *you* a bully? Can you apologize to whom you are being mean and apologize?

OR: Is there a behavior in your classmates that you witness that you want to STOP? How can you make it stop? Can you pull them aside when they are bullying someone on the playground and tell them to STOP? Can you tell a teacher, and ask for their help in dealing with the bully? I know that can be hard and be viewed as being a “tattle-tale”. Tell the teacher that you don’t want to be a “tattle-tale,” but an *upstander*. Imagine for a minute how much the person being bullied will appreciate your brave and fierce courage.

What will you START that you have never done before? Will you make friends with the student in your class who is shy and bullied because of their anxiety? Will you pick the student in class for your team in gym who rarely gets picked until the end because they aren’t “popular”? Will you start speaking out against hate of any kind for someone’s body type, disability, the way they dress, or who they love? What will you START doing to become a fierce and brave upstander in your daily life that you haven’t done yet? It can be hard—you can do it!

Maybe you already are the fierce and brave upstander in a way we have talked about! What brave thing do you do? CONTINUE doing it. Help others develop the same kind of courage you have.

Finally: What do you want to CHANGE? Think about something at school perhaps, or in your community. Is there something you feel is unjust and unfair that you want to help CHANGE? Sometimes, being a fierce and brave upstander means being the leader that helps CHANGE happen. Positive CHANGE usually happens because of the actions of one or a few that inspires others to join in. How can you inspire others through CHANGE that you want to make?

MATERIALS:

- Maps of students’ neighborhood, city, school district, etc. These can be secured through local agencies or downloaded and printed via Google maps if actual maps are not available.
- 9” X 12” white drawing paper
- 9” X 12” Cardstock pattern paper, cut into strips for top and bottom border; or all borders, if preferred
- Drawing materials of preference: thin and thick markers, colored pencils, oil pastels, crayons
- Glue stick or school glue

CREATE: Fierce Upstander Hand Maps

Using the [M.A.C.H.O. Foundation’s](https://www.themachofoundation.org/) (<https://www.themachofoundation.org/>) acronym to guide this studio project: “*My Actions Can Help Others*” (Box 1 AX:SP:10094:10005 Linda Stein Art Education Papers: *Neptune News*, Volume I, Issue 2).



Studio model example: Carly Sherman: *I want to CONTINUE the work of Greta Thunberg*

1. **Find maps** of your town, city, or school community from your chamber of commerce, printed from digital sources, etc. On the maps, pick a section you like. With thin marker or colored pencil, trace both hands to show that we all have a “hand” in being fierce upstanders together. Grab a partner to carefully trace your non-dominant hand—it can be hard if you try it yourself! Cut them out. Carefully cut out both hands. Place them how you want them positioned on 9” x 12” paper, map side up. Once you are happy with the way they look glue them down with either glue stick or school glue.

For children with motor disabilities: assign a peer to help with tracing, in a position most comfortable for the child (hand on the paper adhered to the wall? On their wheelchair table?). Use adaptive scissors to assist with cutting (e.g., hand-over-hand, hand-under-hand; loop and spring assist scissors).

2. **Create an upstander** scene or story around the hands through symbols of what you will STOP, START, CONTINUE, or CHANGE.

- *Who* are the people you are with while the upstander behavior is happening?
- *Where* will the upstander behavior take place?
- *What* actions do you need to show that the upstander behavior is happening?
- Make it bold—if you are using markers, do you want to use both thin (for detailed areas) and thicker markers (for bolder filled-in areas)?
- If you are outlining, do you want to color in the shapes to make them “pop”? Sometimes, all we want is a line drawing; other times, we want bold colors filling in our shapes. Linda Stein’s art is bold. It matches the bold upstander messages in her art. How will your art match your *bold and brave upstander message*?
- Do you have a lot of white space? What else can you add?
- Are you using crayons or oil pastels? Make sure you are pressing hard to create vibrant colors.
- Are you using colored pencils for detail? Make sure we can see the details, they’re important!

3. **Create the frame:** Linda Stein's *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females* tapestries all have a top and bottom framing border around them. The patterned fabric helps keep our eyes on the middle of the important stories (the brave upstander women heroes). Do you like patterns, stripes, colors in *Anne Frank 839* and *Anne Frank 808*? They really complement the tapestries, don't they? Pick bands of paper. Let the teacher know if you want to mix up colored paper, or if you want bands of patterned paper—or both. Let's pick patterned paper now that will really frame and enhance our fierce and brave upstander stories of ourselves—we are, after all, fierce upstander heroes now!

REFLECT:

Think-Pair-Share

Invite the classroom teacher, principal, guidance counselor, and anyone else you would like to come to the last 15 minutes of class for the final presentation of their work.

Direct students to grab a partner. Each person takes a turn explaining their work to their partner (try to limit them to 1-minute per share to be fair to everyone). Teacher: be a good timekeeper for fairness (adjust time as needed—do the younger students need less time? Older students need more time?)

At the end of think-pair: it is now time for the students to take turns sharing the fierce upstander maps their partners created, recounting what their partner said and created. Teacher: Be ready to jump in and help as needed with younger learners. It is probable the sharing will need to continue after class time, during the classroom teacher's time. Arrange for this to happen in advance with the classroom teacher so that the learning cycle is completed, and all children are able to share.

References:

1. *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females: Tapestries and Sculpture* by Linda Stein (2016). Edited by Linda Stein, Foreword by Gloria Steinem. Old City Publishing. Available for purchase or download at: <https://www.lindastein.com/books/>