



**Artist Name: Betty LaDuke**



**Biography:**

Betty LaDuke’s artistic journey has taken her from the Bronx to Oregon with many past and continued explorations into third world countries. She was born to parents who had emigrated from villages in Ukraine and Poland. Her artistic path started when she was nine-years-old at the Worker’s Children’s Camp where she was first introduced to African American art and Mexican mural painting.

After attending Denver University and the Cleveland Institute of Art, she traveled to Mexico in 1953 to study at the Instituto Allende. There, she explored expressionism, cubism and pre-Columbian Aztec and Mayan art. She also had personal encounters with Mexican muralists: Diego Rivera, David Alfredo Siquieros and Rufino Tamayo. She left the Instituto Allende after a year but continued to work in Mexico for another two years. During that time she painted murals in Otomi Indian villages for an organization sponsored by the United Nations and the Mexican government.

She returned to New York in 1956, but she soon felt out of place because of the focus on abstract expressionism in the art scene. She traveled with Vincent LaDuke to his family home on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota before settling in Los Angeles. During the following six years, she finished an undergraduate degree from the Los Angeles State College, taught art in a junior high school and finished a master’s degree in printmaking at the Otis Art Institute. In 1964 the LaDuke’s separated, and she moved to Ashland, Oregon to accept a position at Southern Oregon State College.

She soon established roots in Ashland and married Peter Westigard in 1965. A sabbatical to India in the early 70s was the beginning of her yearly explorations around the world. Her paintings have been influenced by her journeys throughout Asia, Latin America, Africa and most recently Vietnam and Cambodia. With vivid colors and patterns, her artwork celebrates the identity, beliefs and culture of people around the world. She has been especially interested in women and their contributions to society. Although rooted in scenes that she has witnessed in her travels, the paintings and prints often have a mythological or dream-like quality and are filled with both universal and specific cultural symbols.

## Online Curriculum:

- [Biomes of the World](#) (pdf download)

Students work in cooperative groups to identify the unique characteristics of plant and animal life in each biome region of the world. Each group creates an interactive lesson which teaches other students about their biome region. When students are introduced to the artist, they map her travels in relation to the regions studied and then identify images in her paintings which reflect their findings. Finally, students create artwork in the style of the artist which contains images of animals and plants found in the biome studied.

- [Making Healthy Choices for Life](#) (pdf download)

When introduced to the artist, students identify the conscious choices that she made to affect positive changes in her life. Students then explore the decision making process and utilize it to practice making healthy choices that result in positive life changes.

- [Symbolism and Women's Roles in the Caste System of India](#) (pdf download)

Initially, students view and discuss the artist's photographs and paintings and the sketches that later were formed into paintings. The importance of using a sketchbook is discussed and students are assigned to create work in their own sketchbook throughout the lessons. Utilizing quotes and paintings by the artist, along with other research, students learn about women's roles and the caste system of India's past and present. Students' background should include an introduction of India before beginning this lesson.

- [Diversity and Unity](#) (pdf download)—Level: Grades 7–10

Betty LaDuke actively engages in education and travel and has done so throughout her life. This lesson plan talks about the idea of "home", with the hope of learning that it may mean something different for each of us. Ideas are explored through the creation of an accordion book. Secondly, this lesson plan explores the idea of communication, specifically the role of West African drumming as compared to the use of the telephone. Education, travel, and communication help us expand our horizons to better understand ideas of diversity and unity.

- [Women's Art, Women's Lives](#) (pdf download)—Level: Grades 8–11

Women have held various roles throughout history, depending on time and place. This lesson plan considers women's roles in various countries, their daily activities and their relationship between those activities, as well as their art and the stories that tell their life and work.

- [Global Perspectives, Local Communities](#) (pdf download)—Level: Grades 7–10

Indigenous communities have historically made art forms out of everyday objects. The first part of this lesson plan encourages students to look at specific cultures and the objects they create and to distill the most important images into their own sketchbooks. The second part of this lesson plan promotes looking at various organizations helping those indigenous cultures and how we can interact with them.

**Video Documentaries:**

- [Betty LaDuke](#)

**Collections:**

Betty LaDuke, An Artists Journey

<http://www.bettyladuke.com>

Women Artists of the American West

<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/WAAW/LaDuke/>

Porcupine Literary Arts Magazine

<http://www.porcupineliteraryarts.com/BettyLaDuke.html>

Posters

<http://www.123posters.com/art/bettyladuke.htm>

Eye on Eritrea

<http://www.littlemag.com/vox/laduke.html>

Rogue Gallery

<http://www.roguegallery.org/exhibitions.htm>