



Fabrice Monteiro, [Untitled #7 from The Prophecy](#), 2014, color inkjet print, J. David and Lara Seefried Horsfall Endowment Fund purchase, 2020.10

Fabrice Monteiro, *Untitled #7* from *The Prophecy*

Key Idea

Many environmental issues are felt globally and often have a greater impact on communities of color and low income as the result of environmental racism.

Key Term

Environmental racism: any policy, practice or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages individuals, groups or communities based on race.

Objectives

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Closely examine *Untitled #7* from *The Prophecy* by Fabrice Monteiro
2. Define environmental racism
3. Work individually and in groups on a learning activity

Lesson

1. Choose a close-looking prompt (from the introduction page) to encourage students to examine the artwork.
2. Next, provide the class with some background information using the “About the Artist” and “About the Artwork” sections below.
3. Define environmental racism for the class.
4. Ask discussion questions to tie in the artwork to the theme of sustainability.
5. Follow up the art discussion with a learning activity from the "Connect Ideas" section below.

LEARN

About the Artist

Fabrice Monteiro is a photographer who grew up in Benin and is now based in Dakar, Senegal. After spending 20 years away from Africa, Monteiro returned and was shocked by the environmental problems he found in Senegal. In order to highlight these issues, Monteiro created a series of photographs called *The Prophecy*. Each photograph addresses a particular environmental issue and contains a *djinn* or supernatural spirit in a custom costume that is meant to warn people that their actions can negatively impact their environment. The photographs were originally intended to be a part of a children’s book.

About the Artwork

Untitled #7 shows a djinn kneeling in a flooded house in Senegal. Every year houses experience flooding due to the lack of resources needed to plan, build, and maintain drainage systems in impoverished neighborhoods. The water is often polluted and can cause serious health and safety issues. For the man lying down in the background, living in a house with standing water is a reality of everyday life. Due to a long history of exploitation, parts of Africa have experienced environmental racism where the poorest populations are the most impacted by environmental issues like climate change, pollution, overfishing, and mining. Monteiro told *The Guardian*, “When I started the project, I found out what Senegal’s biggest environmental challenges were and chose nine topics that seemed the most visual.”

DISCUSS

1. What three words would you use to describe the photograph? Why did you choose those words?
2. How does this photograph make you feel on first glance? What do you see that makes you feel this way?
3. The djinn in the photograph is giving a warning. What do you think is their warning? What do you see that makes you say that?
4. How does *Untitled #7* relate to sustainability? What do you see that makes you say that?

CONNECT IDEAS

Write It!

Viewpoints—To build upon observations and link ideas, ask students to select a viewpoint—or perspective—from which to view the artwork, such as one of the individuals or objects depicted in the image or the artist. Then ask them to write a letter from this person or thing’s perspective describing the artwork to someone seeing it for the first time. The letter should address details that the individual or object might care about, believe in, or wonder about.

Chart It!

Inequality—To build understanding of environmental justice, ask students to investigate the Environmental Protection Agency’s Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool: <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>. Ask students to examine a city and find three examples of environmental inequality. Next, ask groups of students to brainstorm a list of possible solutions to address these problems. Connect this activity to Madison using the video and article listed in the “Go Further” section below.

GO FURTHER

Videos

Short explanation of [environmental racism](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dREtXUij6_c), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dREtXUij6_c
Video showing Fabrice Monteiro’s [process](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaiBgIUnkAY), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaiBgIUnkAY>
Video about environmental racism in Madison, WI produced by UW–Madison students in 2014: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4Hu9F7NjZg>

Book

The Flood by Jackie French

Teaching Resources and Lesson Plans

Learning for Justice, "Analyzing Environmental Justice", <https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/analyzing-environmental-justice>

Teaching about environmental racism in Madison, WI: Maria Powell "Madison's long history of racist planning and development," The Cap Times, (October 8, 2020), https://madison.com/ct/opinion/column/maria-powell-madisons-long-history-of-racist-planning-and-development/article_a14c4123-d634-5046-a05d-180d68d57b2a.html

STANDARDS

Art and Design:

3-5 A.A.R.8.i: Interpret: Use details, subject matter, and context to interpret an artwork’s mood or meaning.

Environmental Literacy and Sustainability:

3-5 ELS.EN6.B.i Analyze the role of civic and personal ideals in enhancing natural and cultural systems. Analyze the short and long-term impact of personal choices on the environment and sustainable communities.