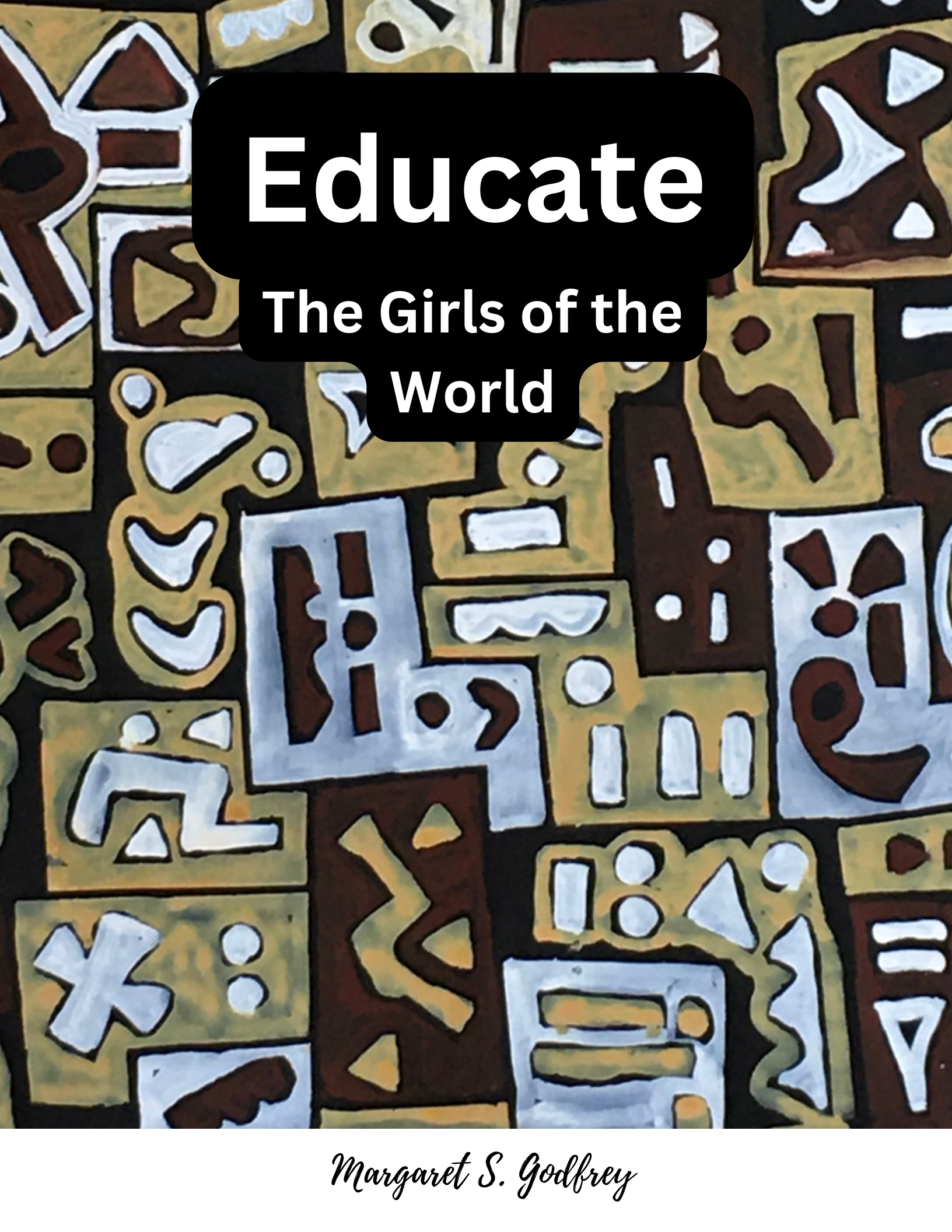


The background of the entire page is a dense, abstract pattern of geometric shapes. These shapes, including triangles, squares, and irregular polygons, are rendered in a palette of earthy brown, mustard yellow, and off-white. The shapes are layered and overlapping, creating a complex, textured visual field.

Educate

The Girls of the
World

Margaret S. Godfrey

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Margaret S. Godfrey

Educate the Girls of the World

A body of work

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View more of Margaret's work at margaretgodfreyart.com

Margaret Godfrey had researched this topic for a year before she started to paint the first painting in the series of "Educate the Girls of the World".

She researched the fabric in each country.

She researched how to express the knowledge in what kind of symbol.

She learned to how to post each girl's posture, in what kind of backgrounds.

Margaret is a very dedicated professional artist, full of wisdom, and full of energy.

In each series she learns to use symbols and postures to imply personality and spirituality.

I have known Margaret Godfrey over 15 years. She is my friend and the best workshop student.

Katherine Chang Liu



"Nanjing I"

Mixed Media on Canvas

Katherine Chang Liu

The dictionary definition of mentor truly defines what Katherine Chang Liu has been to me. During the nearly 20 years I have worked with Katherine, she has guided me into the conceptual and symbolic artist I have become. She does not demonstrate her own way of creating art, but rather sees and suggests potential ways for an artist to travel on her own path.

With her encouragement, I have created a number of series. Each one has been driven by my own need to express, explore and deal with issues close to my heart.



Educate the Girls of the World

Education! Girls and women throughout the world often have fewer opportunities than boys to become educated. This issue has inspired the paintings in this series. Around the globe (including the United States) girls are reaching for an education. Education will lead to equality, empowerment, employment and self-confidence.

The series captures only a small number of the countries, cultures and diverse communities that have low rates of schooling among the female population. As a symbolic painter, I have chosen a framework to talk about this topic. Each painting has fabric, pattern, or art which represents the location. Another element used in this body of work denotes the place itself with architecture, landscape, or cultural symbols. The hands call to mind children in a classroom, ready to learn. All the arms are reaching for the infinity symbol, representing knowledge. Educate the Girls of the World is a series of hope.



"Educate the Girls of the World" Mixed Media on Paper 21x29

This was the first painting of the "Educate the Girls of the World" series. These paintings were inspired by an article I read in 2017. The BBC listed ten countries where girls have the hardest time becoming educated. My idea was to have many hands reaching toward knowledge, not limited to English letters and symbols. I looked at fabrics from the 10 listed countries and chose 5 appealing patterns. From that beginning came many more paintings.



"Teach Me-Afghanistan" Mixed Media on Paper 15x21

Teach Me-Afghanistan originally had only a child flying toward a book over the Registan Desert. Young Afghan girls' clothing is quite colorful, so I used collage material for the dress and scarf.

In December 2022 the Taliban placed restrictions on girls attending school. Hearing that news I took the painting out my flat file storage and painted attacking black clouds.



"Teach Me-South Sudan" Mixed Media on Paper 21x29

The landscape of much of Africa, including South Sudan, is notable for the acacia trees on relatively flat ground. The fabrics are very colorful with interesting patterns. I created my own pattern using masking tape and intricate painting.

South Sudan became a sovereign independent state in 2011 and continues to face internal disputes. They suffer one of the worst food crises in the world.



"Teach Me-Mali" Mixed Media on Paper 29x21

At the top of "Teach Me-Mali" you will see an artistic interpretation of a Malian library. The ancient libraries of Timbuktu were among the cultural treasures of the world, housing tens of thousands of manuscripts from numerous cultures. Mali had the first university in the world. Ironically the country is now one of the places most difficult for girls to get an education.

Mali mud cloth is a cloth made using a dyeing technique going back 1000 years. To this day the use of fermented mud continues to create these interesting patterns. I imagined my own mud cloth pattern for this piece.



"Teach Me-Rural America" Mixed Media on Paper 21x29

For this painting, I harkened back to stories I heard from my grandmother, great aunt and mother about making clothes using flour sacks. Those stories came from rural America and times of poverty. Women would choose the most attractive bags of flour, knowing they would become clothing once they were emptied. I enjoyed searching the internet for prints (and there were many) used for those sacks.

Girls from rural areas are at a disadvantage compared with girls from towns so far as schooling is concerned. This is true in the United States as well as countries around the world.



"Teach Me-Guinea" Mixed Media on Paper 21x14

Guinea has a long history of creating natural indigo dyed cloth. The southeast corner of Guinea has a mountainous nature reserve, home of native plants and animals, implied in the upper portion of this painting. The infinity symbol sits on a Guinean djembe drum. In spite of it's mineral wealth, Guinea is one of the poorest countries in Western Africa.



"Teach Me-Tibet" Mixed Media on Paper 21x29

For this painting, representing Tibet, I found many objects recognizable to Westerners. In architecture, there are many unique temples, but I chose to use the Potala Palace, once home to generations of Dalai Lamas. I used prayer flags on which to place symbols of education. The fabric's print was created by making a dharma wheel stamp. Pencil drawing, collage, original stamps along with paint were used in the piece.

Tibetan children speak Tibetan, however the schools are controlled by the Chinese, so language is a big stumbling block for gaining an education.



"Teach Me-Indigenous America" Watercolor on Paper 21x29

It took me several attempts to create the infinity symbol as a jet contrail above the Native American styled pattern below. Something I learned early on in this series is that fabrics are copyrighted. So as I worked on these pieces of art, I had to create my own version of patterns made by people around the world.

There is a long history of poor public education provided for indigenous children.



"Teach Me-Somalia" Watercolor on Paper 29x21

Somalia is a country of consistent food shortages. Under a series of transitional governments, there continues to be social and gender inequality. Starvation was the cause of death for 43,000 people in 2022. As in many poverty stricken countries, education for girls is not the highest concern of the government. The drought on the savanna and semidesert landscape is a continuous situation. Because of Somalia's geographic position on the horn of Africa on the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea, it is well known for piracy.

This painting conveys the dry landscape along with a stripe of leopard pattern, Somalia's national animal. I created a unique stamp to make the distinctive and one of a kind patterned fabric.



This painting features a collage of braided hair made with painted tissue paper. Also collaged is the infinity symbol as well as the implied string it hangs from.

Niger is a landlocked country in the Sahel Region of Africa. Much of its population is nomadic, and less than half of the population is literate. With seven countries bordering Niger, it is under constant attacks from its neighbors.

"Teach Me-Niger" Mixed Media on Paper 30x12



"Teach Me-Burkina Faso" Mixed Media on Paper 21x29

Burkina Faso is a small landlocked country in western Africa. Tiébélé is a remarkable village, where every house is a piece of art. The women hand paint each mud home with their own patterns. I tried to capture that in this painting.

Another noteworthy association with Burkina Faso is the award winning architect Diébédo Francis Kéré. He is the first ever African and Black winner of the Pritzker Architecture Prize. He was born in a village with no school. At age 7 his parents sent him to another town where he started the education which eventually took him to Germany where he studied architecture.



"Teach Me-Street Kid" Mixed Media on Paper 14x21

Totally imagined, this painting features a teenager with everything she owns, including things of no use to her, in a grocery cart. Having worked with some unhoused youth, I know that life on the street includes joining a group of others in similar dire straits for protection. Fear and hunger are part of her daily life.

Her infinity sign sits on a street sign; if only she could reach it.



"Teach Me-Liberia" Watercolor on Paper 21x14

When I began investigating fabrics from Liberia, I was struck by how Euro-American they looked. As I learned more about the history of Liberia, I found one possible answer to the familiarity of the patterns. Freed slaves were sent from the U.S to Liberia in the early 19th century. These settlers formed the first republic in Africa. Because of Liberia's location on the west coast of the continent, trade with Europe began as far back as the 15th Century. These facts led me to believe that the fabric patterns were greatly influenced by the West.

Although English is the official language, 24 other languages are spoken in Liberia.



"Teach Me-Central African Republic" Watercolor on Paper 21x14

Central African Republic is one of the poorest and most fragile of countries in the world. After World War II, Central African Republic, along with other French colonized countries of Africa, gained independence. Since then, there have been cycles of violence, one civil war after another.

When looking at photos of women in C.A.R. I was impressed by the hot pinks and oranges in their clothing which directed the colors of this piece. The girl's hand is reaching for the infinity symbol placed on the shape of the country and the lines through the orange are symbolic of elephant skin, their national animal.



"Teach Me-Ethiopia" Watercolor on Paper 29x21

Ethiopia sits in the Horn of Africa. Archeology finds date back 3 million years. The Gheralta Mountains in the far north of the country have nearly 80 rock-hewed cave churches which date back 1000 years. As I investigated more about Ethiopia, I was drawn to the beauty and the history of the mountains and they became the top feature of this piece of art.

Eighty percent of Ethiopians live in rural areas. This country one of the 10 countries where children have the fewest educational opportunities.



"Teach Me-Unhoused America" Mixed Media on Paper 21x29

In preparing for this painting, my granddaughter and I traveled around Eugene looking for graffiti and campsites. She knew where to look and I took many pictures. We then talked to a variety of homeless folks. As a harmless looking twenty-year-old, my granddaughter introduced me as an artist which opened the way to countless conversations. So many teens are leaving unbelievably bad situations to live in tents.

I end my images with this one. These are the unhoused children living under our noses. We would like look away and ignore them. They haunt me and break my heart.

About the Artist

Margaret Godfrey is a conceptual artist. Each painting has a story/event/idea behind it. Often one painting leads to a second, then a third and soon an entire series connects back to that first piece.



She frequently does research on topics while painting to insure authenticity. Her paintings have an abundance of symbols, which help tell the underlying story of a series. Patterns and decorative designs flow through her body of work, connecting underlying messages.

Her pictures contain both representational and abstract styles. She is known as a pattern painter using watercolor, acrylic, ink, and collage in her creative works on paper.

Living in the beautiful McKenzie Valley in Oregon and traveling throughout the U.S and abroad, she finds an abundance of inspiration for creating art. Margaret shares her enthusiasm for art through teaching workshops and active membership in art associations.

Margaret is an award-winning member of the Watercolor Society of Oregon, the Western Federation of Watercolor Societies, the Northwest Watercolor Society, Hawaii Watercolor Society and others. Her works have been in juried shows around the United States. Margaret's art can be found on the cover of books and she has illustrated a children's book. Her paintings hang in private and public collections in the U.S., Honduras, Canada and Japan.



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