



[art21.org/luchitahurtado](https://art21.org/luchitahurtado)



# Luchita Hurtado

## ABOUT

### Born

1920 (Maiquetía, Venezuela)

### Education

Attended: Art Students League

### Lived and Worked

Santa Monica, California

### About the Artist

Working in painting, drawing, and prints, Hurtado has experimented with many different styles over the course of her 80-year career, yet maintained a unique, independent practice that explores the relationship between the human body and the natural world.

Hurtado's work often references her own body and objects in her immediate surroundings, while also depicting more universal forms: human bodies dancing, colorful abstractions, blue skies with floating feathers, and mothers giving birth. These paintings and drawings engage the artist's interest in environmental activism and feminism.

## TEACHING CONNECTIONS

### Media and Materials

drawing  
painting

### Key Words and Ideas

autobiography  
en plein air  
environment  
feminism  
motherhood  
portraiture

### Related Artists

Janine Antoni  
Firelei Báez  
Louise Bourgeois  
Rackstraw Downes  
Song Dong  
Ann Hamilton  
Loie Hollowell  
Graciela Iturbide  
Sally Mann  
Rose B. Simpson  
Kiki Smith  
Nancy Spero  
Salman Toor

“I am who I am because I’m  
doing what I want to do, not what  
I’m told to do.” —Luchita Hurtado

**How to Use This Guide**

Art21 encourages active engagement when teaching with our films. The questions and activities below are recommendations for incorporating Art21 films featuring Luchita Hurtado into your classroom. Each class will likely require different adaptations for best results.

**NOTE:** Please view all films before sharing them with your students.

**Before Viewing**

Establish key ideas, in anticipation of viewing the film(s):

- ① How can artists use ‘the body’ — whether as a source of inspiration, as a subject, as an artistic tool in itself, etc.? How might the five senses be incorporated into an artwork?
- ② In what ways might an artist’s life change if they decide to become a parent?
- ③ Luchita Hurtado enjoyed a multi-decade career, in which aspects of her life and work changed greatly. Think about how the passage of time can change an artistic practice over the span of 30, 40, or even 50 years. What might influence these changes?

**While Viewing**

Support active viewing, and pause the film to clarify particular ideas:

- ① Why was Hurtado drawn to depicting the body in her work?
- ② What did Hurtado say about being a parent? How did she balance being an artist and parent?
- ③ How did Hurtado’s life as an artist and relationship to her artistic practice begin, change, and adapt to her life circumstances?

**After Viewing**

Follow-up on key ideas and synthesize information learned from the film(s):

- ① How were Hurtado’s environmental views connected to her use of the body in art?
- ② How was parenthood a source of inspiration for Hurtado?
- ③ What did it feel like to witness Hurtado’s life as a nonagenarian? Did her story change your view of aging? How is Hurtado a model for living?

**Related Activities**

Engaging in creative activities after watching Art21 films can reinforce learning and stimulate ideas. Art21 encourages educators to adapt these activities to their classrooms.

- ✓ Hurtado discusses her love of sensory experiences. Choose one of the five senses that will be used to influence a work of art, performance, or poem. For example, how can our sense of smell, or sounds, influence and be incorporated into the creation of a work? Consider materials and sensory experiences found and felt outside of the classroom.
- ✓ After viewing Hurtado paint en plein air, take a trip to a local park for inspiration. Students can create work in that moment or find sources of inspiration, like Hurtado picked up pine cones and stones, to create a work at a later time.