



Teacher/Viewing Guide

Arab American Stories- Episode 111

Rami Kashou

Fashion Designer

Grade Level: 9-12

Episode Overview:

A recent finalist on the hit television show *Project Runway*, internationally recognized clothing designer Rami Kashou has worked with famous clients such as Madonna, Fergie, Penelope Cruz, and Queen Rania of Jordan. He began sketching in secret as a young boy, nervous about how his Palestinian parents would react to his drawings of women's clothes. When Mr. Kashou was 13 his sketches were discovered by his brother, who shared them with his father. To his surprise, Kashou's father appreciated his sketches and his family encouraged him to pursue his passion. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Kashou began to design dresses and accessories for his mother's friends. His cottage industry soon expanded. As a young adult, however, he realized that he needed to develop a larger client base who could afford to buy his high-end styles. He decided that the perfect place to move was Los Angeles, California.

Mr. Kashou is very hard on himself, but thinks that this self-criticism is what drives him forward. He relishes the feeling of finishing a job that he did very well. His father was a great role model for him. He was a self-made man who insisted his children make fulfill their own potential. Mr. Kashou attributes his strong work ethic to this influence from his father. Mr. Kashou has made the most of the professional exposure he gained from *Project Runway*. When challenged by the store Papyrus to design dresses completely fabricated from their paper products, he exceeded expectations to the point that he now has a line of greeting cards in the store. Rami Kashou says he is living his dream, but that his dream is ever changing. As soon as he reaches one goal, he creates new ones in order to keep his drive and passion alive.

Previewing Questions:

1. How can you continue to challenge yourself after you have reached a goal?
2. Why are New York and Los Angeles popular cities for different types of artists?
3. What is a role model?
4. In what ways can self-criticism be negative? In what ways is it positive?

Vocabulary:

1. Silhouette: The outline or general shape of something.
2. Execution: The technique or style with which an artistic work is produced or carried out.
3. Papyrus: An ancient form of paper, made from the papyrus plant.
4. Fabrication: To make; create.
5. Exposure: Appearance in public or in the mass media.

Lesson Overview/Review:

After viewing the segment on Rami Kashou, students should be prepared to brainstorm about people who they consider goal-oriented or people who are achieving their dreams. This can be done as a group activity, having students or the teacher record ideas on a board, or in their own journals.

Journal Option: Have students take a moment to write about a goal they have which may seem unlikely, and have them explain their motivation for achieving it.

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Post Viewing Class Discussion: Conduct a short discussion to synthesize the information they gained from viewing the video segment. Some possible topics:

1. Why does Mr. Kashou say that there are more opportunities as fashion designer in America than in Palestine?
2. Were you surprised by the response of Mr. Kashou's parents to finding his sketches? Explain.
3. What does Mr. Kashou mean when he says that he is always achieving his dreams, even though those dreams change?
4. What are some characteristics of successful people? Who do you admire and view as a role model?

Activity: For this activity, students will create a video with an accompanying essay profiling a person they feel has reached their goals or exceeded expectations in some way. The subject may be a person within the school or the wider community. The project requirements are:

1. On camera profile – what the subject does, what motivates them, what they have achieved, interesting stories from their path.
2. Essay – Answer the question: Why are successful people successful? Use your subject and other research to support your opinion. Proper citations required.

Teachers should advise their students that part of their grade will be how well they exceed expectations. Videos should be creative, essays thorough. Videos should be presented in class. The whole class should then discuss them. The class should come up with profiles of successful people and motivating factors which could be applied to students' own lives.

Assessment Ideas: Students will be graded on:

1. Participation in class discussion.
2. Video.
3. Essay.
4. Final presentation.

Explore Online: Use the following resources to allow your students to further explore the topic and the Arab American community.

1. Arab Cultural Center: <http://arabculturalcenter.org/>
2. Arab American Museum: <http://arabamericanmuseum.org/>
3. Arab American Antidiscrimination Committee: <http://adc.org/>
4. Rami Kashou: <http://www.ramikashou.com/>

Interdisciplinary Options: Psychology; Sociology; Career Education, Art and Design

In this episode, students will identify characteristics of goal-oriented individuals and how they are motivated to succeed.

Common Core Alignment:

- RI7: Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.
- W1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.



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- W6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
- SL2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- SL4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- SL5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.