Objective
In this collaborative lesson plan, we encourage you to reach out to friends and loved ones to create a collective quilt using the alternative photographic process, cyanotype. Discovering the beauty of Prussian blue through exposing found and significant domestic objects to sunlight in your living spaces, we will work simultaneously to reveal art's potential to heal (therapy), inspire (creativity), and empower (civic engagement). Add additional layers through collage and watercolor to bring each participants' unique voice into the final collaborative piece.

Essential Question
How can blues evoke emotions, colors, and sounds that connect us to our histories and our present?

Materials
- Presensitized photographic cyanotype (fabric sheet)
- Watercolor kit w/ brush
- Two disposable aluminum baking trays
- Translucent and opaque household items (glass/plants/feathers)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Timer
- Hydrogen peroxide (optional)
- Coffee, paprika, curry powder (optional)
- Additional patterned fabric or magazine cutouts (optional)
- Crayons/highlighters/markers (optional)

Ivan Forde (b. 1990, Georgetown, Guyana) lives and works in Harlem, New York.

Inspired by artist Ivan Forde’s recent public commission with neuroscientists at the Zuckerman Institute, shades of blues unpacks the power, influence, and relationship to the color blue in three forms: feeling, the blues as a connection to mental health; seeing, the blues as the hue is activated within the visual arts; and hearing, the Blues as a musical genre. In unpacking its parts by addressing its impact and weight—we can begin the process of healing and becoming whole again.

Ivan Forde
Three Rivers, 2018
Key Words

Found object
A natural or human-made object, or fragment of an object, that is found or purchased.

Cyanotype
A photographic printing process activated by sunlight that produces a cyan-blue print. Engineers used the process well into the twentieth century as a low-cost and straightforward process to produce copies of drawings, referred to as blueprints.

Photogram
A photographic image made without a camera by placing objects directly onto the surface of a light-sensitive material such as photographic paper and then exposing it to light.

Collage
A technique and genre, primarily used in the visual arts, and in music that refers to art created from an assemblage of different forms, thus creating a new whole.

Opaque
When an object allows no light to pass through, it is opaque: such as a handprint, rocks, jewelry, plants, or paper.

Translucent
When an object allows some light to pass through, it is translucent; such as feathers, seaglass, plastics, rice, or silk.

Preparation
1. Note your mood—select three words to describe how you feel before you begin

2. Listen to the BLUE playlist. What song gives you the best sense of blue?

3. As you listen, scroll through the curated selection of works from the Studio Museum’s permanent collection. Notice the different ways that the idea of “blue” is invoked. Find one work where the connection is not obvious—what stepping stones can you create to get from the artwork back to blue? Then do the reverse.

4. Meditate on Ivan Forde’s Three Rivers. What do you absorb by looking quickly at the image? How does your perception of the image change as you look more closely?

5. Take a moment to familiarize yourself with the Epic of Gilgamesh, an epic poem from ancient Mesopotamia that weaves together legends and cuneiform poems. Then, read Yasi Alipour’s Brooklyn Rail article to consider how Forde brings in references to ancient figurative art. Do you see contemporary political connotations implied by his invocation of the myth?

6. Reflect on the concept of making an image and then weaving multiple images together. What other practices or activities do this type of work? What associations come to mind when you think about the motions of both acts? Try putting these associations into conversation with the political connotations you thought of earlier.

Methods
1. Set up your activity station on a flat surface. (dining table or work desk)

2. Using scissors cut out four wavy or angle-shaped lines from plain paper to create a frame that goes around the edges of your collage.

3. Gather objects/materials you will use to place onto your cyanotype print.

4. Remove the presensitized cyanotype from the package and place it in a dry tray.

5. For the first exposure: place one opaque, one translucent, and one three dimensional-object onto the light-sensitive surface, then carefully bring them over to a sunlit window. Expose the objects to sunlight to see how light renders them differently. In direct sun, wait five minutes, and in indirect or overcast sun wait twelve minutes.

6. After the exposure, carefully remove objects from the sensitized surface. Leaving the exposed paper in the tray, fill with cold water. Allow the cyanotype to develop for five minutes, rinse yellow emulsion out completely and allow it to dry. Paint watercolor onto the highlighted sections. Once fully dry, add crayon or glue cutouts to your design.

7. Repeat these steps to make more intentional decisions to your contribution to the collective quilt.
Reflection
1. When finished, rest your work against a wall or on an empty table and take in the overall work from a few steps away. What impression does it make on you when you look from afar? What do you start to notice as you move closer?

2. Ask yourself: How did it feel to make this work? If you could choose a song that invokes your feelings during this process, which song would it be? What song embodies the finished work?

3. Select three words to describe how you feel after completing the project. Do they mirror the words you chose earlier, or are they different? What became amplified, and what quieted down?