

MULTIPLICITY

Blackness in Contemporary American Collage

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Resources

Books

Snippets: A Story About Paper Shapes, by Diane Alber (author and illustrator)

I Like Myself!, by Karen Beaumont (author) and David Catrow (illustrator)

Hold Them Close: A Love Letter to Black Children, by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow (author) and Patrick Dougher (illustrator)

The Best Part of Me: Children Talk About their Bodies in Pictures and Words, by Wendy Ewald (author)

My Hands Sing the Blues: Romare Bearden's Childhood Journey, by Jeanne Walker Harvey (author) and Elizabeth Zunon (illustrator)

Black Artists Shaping the World, by Sharna Jackson (author) with contributions by Dr. Zoé Whitley

Thank You, Omu! and *¡Gracias, Omu!* (Spanish edition), by Oge Mora (author and illustrator)

The Story of Juneteenth, by Dorena Williamson (author) and Markia Jenai (illustrator)

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#TheFrist #FristMultiplicity



Howardena Pindell. *Untitled #5*, 2013. Mixed media on paper collage; 12 x 16 1/2 in. Courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery. © Howardena Pindell

Artist Howardena Pindell makes many different kinds of artwork. Sometimes she sews together strips of canvas to create large, tapestry-like compositions; other times, she makes smaller collages like the one here, using a hole punch to form the tiny pieces of colored paper that make up the artwork.

“One aspect of Pindell’s art that I find fascinating is her variations of color schemes and shapes. Although she typically uses circles, they’re constructed in very different ways. Her artwork is like a reflection—the longer you look at her abstract work, the more it reminds you of a memory.”

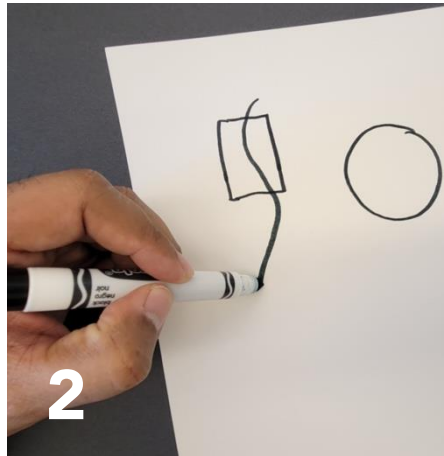
—Micahla Anderson, student, Fisk University

Questions

- Look closely and describe what you see in *Untitled #5*.
- What colors and shapes do you see? Do any of them repeat?
- What does this artwork remind you of?



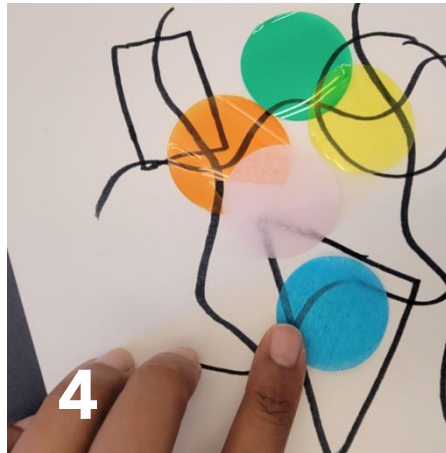
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Pre-K–2nd Grade Color and Shape Collage

Objective

Participants will make line, shape, and pattern drawings and use colorful shapes to create a collage.

Materials

Washable black markers
White tagboard (9 x 12 in.)
Glue sticks
Pre-cut tissue paper shapes
Pre-cut cellophane shapes

Steps

1. Begin by looking at Howardena Pindell's *Untitled #5*. Ask participants to make general observations about the work.
2. Give each participant a sheet of white tagboard and a black marker. Have them draw lines, shapes, and patterns on their tagboards. Younger participants may need some help.
3. After completing their drawings, give each participant some assorted tissue paper and cellophane shapes. Demonstrate how overlapping differently colored shapes will change their color. Overlapping a red shape and a blue shape will make purple, for example.
4. Have participants arrange their shapes on their tagboards, overlapping the shapes and covering their drawings.
5. Have participants use glue sticks to glue their shapes down. The drawings will still be visible, and the overlapping shapes will result in colorful works of art.
6. After completing their collages, encourage participants to share their work with the group.



Jamea Richmond-Edwards. *Holy Wars*, 2022. Acrylic and mixed media on canvas; 96 x 144 in. Bill and Christy Gautreaux Collection, Kansas City, MO. Courtesy of the artist and Kravets Wehby Gallery. © Jamea Richmond-Edwards

Jamea Richmond-Edwards was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, where she currently lives and works. An art educator for more than thirteen years, Richmond-Edwards often uses materials found in the classroom. Her works begin with acrylic paint; she then adds paper, rhinestones, glitter, and other found materials.

In a large-scale 2022 mixed-media painting, Richmond-Edwards depicts herself confidently riding a white unicorn, declaring the power of imagination.

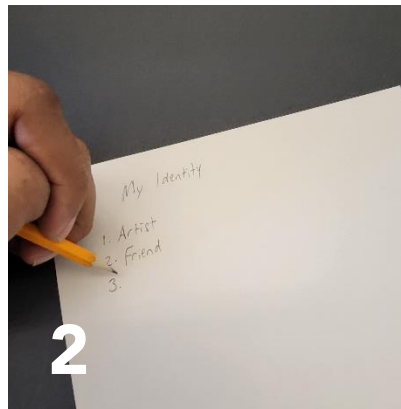
Watch Jamea Richmond-Edwards talk about her artistic process at FristArtMuseum.org/Multiplicity.

Questions

- What do you think the artist is trying to convey in *Holy Wars*?
- The artist included a self-portrait in the center of this collage. What do you think the artist wants us to know about her?



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3rd–5th Grade Identity Collage

Objective

Participants will create collages that highlight personal identity and experiences.

Materials

- Pencils
- Paper
- White tagboard (9 x 12 in.)
- Markers
- Photographs
- Paper collage materials (magazines, postcards, paper scraps, etc.)
- Fabric
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

Steps

1. Begin by looking closely at *Holy Wars* by Jamea Richmond-Edwards. Think about how the artist portrays herself and her surroundings.
2. Have participants reflect on personal identity and experiences. Have them think about and write down personality traits, habits, cultural identity, interests, likes, dislikes, hobbies, relationships, and other details that make them who they are.
3. Give the group time to identify objects and images that represent personal identity, then gather collage elements like papers, fabric, and magazine cuttings. They may also incorporate their own drawings, photographs, and other materials.
4. Have participants plan the arrangement or composition of their collages on their tagboard. Take some time to experiment. If you'd like, you can use colored or patterned paper to create a background and build your collage from there.
5. Once all the pieces of the collage are arranged, participants may begin attaching them to the tagboard with glue. They may also use colored pencils, markers, or paint to add detail to their collage.
6. After completing their collages, encourage participants to share their work with the group and discuss their artistic choices.



Jamea Richmond-Edwards. Archetype of a 5 Star, 2018.
Acrylic, spray paint, glitter, ink, and cut paper on
canvas. Rubell Museum

Jamea Richmond-Edwards was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, where she currently lives and works. An art educator for more than thirteen years, Richmond-Edwards often uses materials found in the classroom. Her works begin with acrylic paint, then she adds paper, rhinestones, glitter, and other found materials including fabric.

Richmond-Edwards is influenced by the 1990s hip-hop fashion she saw growing up in Detroit. Much of her work points to the role that Black women play in consuming fashion, even though they historically have been absent from advertising campaigns and fashion shows. Archetype of a 5 Star is inspired by the vibrantly dressed young women she encountered in the Black neighborhood of her youth. The title is taken from a hip-hop song by Yo Gotti featuring Gucci Mane, Trina, and Nicki Minaj.

“Working in that mixed media framework . . . that's just part of like hip-hop culture, this concept of sampling . . . using source materials, found objects . . . I began to understand myself as a part of this expansive vernacular of art making within the Black community.”

—Jamea Richmond-Edwards

Watch Jamea Richmond-Edwards talk about her artistic process at FristArtMuseum.org/Multiplicity.

Questions

- How would you describe the central figure in this collage?
- The artist talks about mixed media and bringing together different parts to make something new. How does this creative approach change how we see a work of art?
- What might this collage tell you about the artist's experiences and interests?



Derek Fordjour. *Airborne Double*, 2022. Acrylic, charcoal, cardboard, oil pastel, and foil on newspaper mounted on canvas. Frances Fine Art Collection, courtesy of the artist and Petzel Gallery, New York

Derek Fordjour was born in Memphis, Tennessee, to parents of Ghanaian heritage. He now lives in New York City but keeps close ties to his hometown. Fordjour uses materials like newspaper, cardboard, and foil in his work because they are inexpensive and easily accessible. He begins his works by layering layering cardboard and newspaper on canvas—he uses the *Financial Times* because of its unique hue. After painting, he then tears and carves at the surface, resulting in its rich and distinctive appearance.

An alum of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, Fordjour expresses the vitality of the experience at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), as well as the draw of competition, pageantry, and spectacle in his multilayered works spotlighting drum majors and other marching band members.

Watch Derek Fordjour talk about his artistic process at FristArtMuseum.org/Multiplicity.

Questions

- Look closely at the texture and detail of *Airborne Double*. What stands out to you? Why?
- This collage shows members of a marching band. Imagine the environment around them. What is the mood? What would you hear, see, and smell?
- How are the two band members alike? Different?

6th Grade–Adult Mixed-Media Identity Collage

Objective

Participants will use a variety of media to create rich, layered collages that highlight personal identity and experiences.

Materials

Pencils	Paper collage materials (magazines, postcards, paper scraps, etc.)
Paper	Scissors
Tempera paints	Mylar
Paintbrushes	Fabric
Cups	Stencils
Paper palettes	Various objects
White tagboard (9 x 12 in.)	Glue sticks
Markers	Hot glue
Photographs	

Steps

1. Look at *Airborne Double* by Derek Fordjor and *Archtype of a 5 Star* by Jamea Richmond-Edwards and discuss as a group. What kinds of media, colors, and textures do you observe in these works? How do the artists use different media to reflect their identities?
2. Have participants begin by reflecting on personal identity and experiences. Have them think about and write down personality traits, habits, cultural identity, interests, likes, dislikes, hobbies, relationships, and other details that make them who they are.
3. Have participants choose a variety of materials that help them convey their identities through their collages.
4. Have participants begin their collages by applying paint, arranging paper with desired colors and patterns, drawing a design, or otherwise creating the ground on their pieces of white tagboard. Using wet media may require drying time.
5. Participants may continue building their collages with magazine cuttings, patterns, text, small objects, and freehand or stencil drawings relevant to their personal identity. They may also include photographs or drawings of themselves.
6. After they complete their collages, encourage participants to share their work with the group and discuss their artistic choices.

