

Creating a Collage

Inspired by Romare Bearden's *Three Men*

Key Concepts

- Materials and process
- Portraiture
- Choices artists make

Materials

- 9" x 12" piece of construction paper in any color
- Assorted paper: solid colors and patterns/prints (you can use wrapping paper, newspaper, etc.)
- Images of facial features, people, hands, etc, from magazines and newspapers, or draw and cut your own
- Glue
- Scissors
- Optional: Colored markers, pencils, or crayons

Introduction

- What is the first thing you notice about this work?
- What else do you notice after looking at it for a while?
- Describe the lines, shapes, and colors that you see. For example, "I see a thin, curving line."
- In making this work, what materials and tools do you think the artist used? What problems might he have faced along the way?
- Think of a title for this work that is based on what you have noticed so far (colors, lines, shapes, textures, materials). Then look at the actual title. On what do you think that title was based? Which title do you prefer? Why?

Instructions

1. Decide what you want to depict. Think about people, places, and stories from your own life. Will you make a collage that represents yourself, people you know, or someone you admire? What space or place will you show? Indoors or outside? What other objects and items will you include?



2. Select or create shapes out of paper to represent different elements of your image. You can search for objects, faces, and body parts (eyes, mouths, hands, and feet) in magazines and newspapers. You can also cut your own out of different paper.
3. Experiment with different arrangements of your shapes.
4. When you are satisfied with your arrangement, glue your collage pieces in place.

Relevant Information

Romare Bearden made art using many different materials, but he was perhaps most famous for his collages—pictures made of bits of paper, fabric, or other material stuck or glued to a surface.

Bearden was inspired by the world around him. He often represented memories and moments of his childhood with his family and friends in his artworks. His favorite subjects included African-American life and traditions, stories from religion, history, literature, and mythology, and blues singers and jazz musicians. In addition to working as a visual artist, Bearden was also a jazz musician and a poet.

Discussion

- What is the subject of your collage? Why did you choose to show that person or those people, that place, or those objects?
- What colors did you use in your collage? Why did you choose the colors you did?
- What shapes did you use in your collage? How did you decide what shapes to include?
- How did you decide where to put your different collage elements?