

Collage – Romare Bearden & Collage Making (6-8) – Two Lessons

Lesson 1

Overview:

Students will view the collages of Romare Bearden from the exhibition *Southern Accent: Seeking the American South in Contemporary Art*. Students will learn historical and biographical information about the artist. Students will learn the definition of collage as it pertains to visual art and will create a cut paper collage in the style of Romare Bearden.



Romare Bearden, *Watching the Good Trains Go By*, 1964. Collage on paper; 13.75 x 16.875 inches (34.9 x 42.9 cm). Collection of the Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio. Museum purchase, Derby Fund, from the Philip J. and Suzanne Schiller Collection of American Social Commentary Art 1930–1970; 2005.012.008. © Romare Bearden Foundation / Licensed by VAGA, New York, New York.

Note: Ask students to bring in old magazines and newspapers in advance of this lesson.

Activity:

Begin by projecting the image *Watching the Good Trains Go By* by Romare Bearden. Lead students in a short visual discussion of the artwork:

- What's going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

Encourage students to identify the materials used in this work of art.

Next, introduce historical and biographical information about Romare Bearden. He was originally from North Carolina. As a child, his family moved to Harlem, New York. He traveled every summer to stay with relatives in North Carolina. He loved music. His art often includes trains and musicians. Additional information and resources can be found at <http://www.beardenfoundation.org/>

Then, have students research Romare Bearden's life and write short reports about specific periods of his life (for example, early years in North Carolina, the move to New York, etc.).

Lesson Two

Activity:

First, introduce or review the meaning of *collage*. Display *Profile / Part I, The Twenties: Mecklenburg County, Sunset Unlimited* by Romare Bearden and *Strange Fruit* by Ebony G. Patterson, another artist featured in the exhibition *Southern Accent*. Explain that Bearden considered his art to be part of the Civil Rights Movement. Patterson uses her art to support the Black Lives Matter movement. Ask the students to identify the details that define the work as a collage. Compare and contrast Patterson's work with Bearden's.

Finally, distribute the magazines and newspapers and other art materials (glue, scissors, construction paper, etc.). Have students begin to create collages in the style of Romare Bearden that may illustrate the periods of Bearden's life that they researched. The finished reports and collages may be exhibited together.