

## FAMILY ART ACTIVITY – Art from Personal Histories

**María Berrío** (b. 1982) was born and raised in Bogotá, Colombia, and spent much of her childhood living on her family's mountainside farm where she developed a unique and lasting connection to nature. At eighteen Berrío relocated to New York City. Her artwork pictured below, titled *Syzygy*, is in the permanent collection of the Nasher Museum of Art. "A lot of my work is autobiographical...it could be about me, or my time in the world and how I am feeling or what I am imagining," she says.



**María Berrío, *Syzygy*, 2017**

Collage with Japanese paper and watercolor on canvas, 80 x 96 inches (203.2 x 243.8 cm).  
Collection of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. Gift of Nancy A. Nasher (J.D.'79, P'18, P'22) and David J. Haemisegger (P'18, P'22). 2018.7.1 © María Berrío

### Activity:

**María Berrío** uses many different techniques and materials in her artwork, including painting, drawing, and collaging of paper and fabrics. She has stated that her finished works are often autobiographical, or inspired by events and circumstances in her personal history.

Think of an event from your - or your family's - history. This could be something that happened a long time ago or earlier this month. Using whatever art making materials you have available, create a work of art that tells the viewer about this event. If possible, use family photos as a reference. You might also look through illustrated children's books you have at home for inspiration.

Share a photo of your finished artwork online and tag #nashermuseum!

## Biography:

**María Berrío** (b. 1982) was born and raised in Bogotá, Colombia, and spent much of her childhood living on her family's mountainside farm where she developed a unique and lasting connection to nature. At eighteen Berrío relocated to New York and received her BFA at Parsons School of Design in 2004, followed by her MFA at the School of Visual Arts in 2007. Berrío's work resides in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC; Pérez Art Museum, Miami, FL; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ; Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice, New York, NY; among others.

Berrío has recently been included in institutional exhibitions at the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC (2018); Weatherspoon Museum of Art at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC (2017); and El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY (2015).

Berrío has also been the recipient of several awards, residencies, and fellowships, including 2018 NYFA Fellowship in Painting, Brooklyn, NY (2018); United States Artists Award nominee, USA (2017); Smack Mellon Studio Program, Brooklyn, NY (2017); Sharpe Walentas Studio Program, Brooklyn, NY (2016); Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, New York, NY (2014); Chachama New York City, New York, NY (2013); Colectivo Puebla, Puebla, Mexico (2012).



Photo by Brad Ogbonna. Courtesy the artist and Kohn Gallery.

## Label Text:

María Berrío creates complex collages from paper handmade in Asia and Latin America. Drawing from South American mythology and folklore, her large-scale images reflect on displacement, global migration and intercultural connectivity through visions of kaleidoscopic color and otherworldly existence. In **Syzygy**, Berrío addresses migration by depicting the prelude to a journey. She shows a moment of preparation in which three people help transform a fourth into a human-bird hybrid for her flight to freedom. In astronomy, the term “syzygy” refers to the alignment of three celestial bodies, usually in reference to the Earth, sun, and moon. In this case, it refers to the three standing figures, aligned in the process of creating the hybrid immigrant. Berrío more loosely uses the metaphor to reference things being joined together, in this case a human and bird, or the natural and the spiritual. Her complex works that visualize human experiences and the interconnectedness of all things, from the Southern U.S. to East Asia.