

[View this email in your browser](#)**NEW
MUSEUM****KIDS
MENU**

MAPPING FAMILY

New Museum Kids Menu provides families with activities to learn about contemporary art and ideas at home.



The New Museum exhibition “**Art and Race Matters: The Career of Robert Colescott**” features over forty paintings from the sixty-year career of artist Robert Colescott (1925–2009). Using satire, a type of humor, and the language of painting, Colescott challenged stereotypes about race, gender, and beauty. To question stereotypes and disrupt art historic narratives, Colescott reimagined iconic, history paintings by including Black people as the central figures in the scenes.

Colescott also addressed concepts of identity and racial bias from a personal perspective through family narratives, including portraits of himself and family members. In *Go West* (1980), the artist depicts his parents in profile on either side of a **map** of the United States. Under the map are clouds containing

objects **symbolizing** each parent. The map also includes a tree with two adult birds tending a two baby birds in a nest—the large birds represent Colescott's parents, and the smaller birds in the nest represent Colescott and his brother.

Colescott created this painting to illustrate the story of his parents' **migration** from New Orleans to the Bay Area after World War I in 1919. The family made this move during the Great Migration (1910–1970), when millions of people of African descent moved from the American South to the North and West from 1910–1970 in search of greater opportunities.

Watch Colescott share some of the personal explorations in his paintings in this video.



Curators from the Portland Museum of Art discuss *Go West* in this video.



KEY WORDS

- **migration:** the movement of a large number of people or animals from one place to another, often in response to, or under stress because of a political conflict, economic, and/or social situation, or climate changes
- **symbol:** a visual representation of an idea, similar to a logo or icon
- **map:** a visual representation of one or more geographic locations, often containing symbols to represent landforms and regions, and/or names of neighborhoods, cities, counties, or streets
- **portrait:** a representation through drawing, painting, photography, or sculpture of one or more people

START WITH ART: ROBERT COLESCOTT

- What objects do you see in the clouds beneath the portraits of Colescott's parents? What do you think these objects symbolize?
- What objects, landforms, words, and/or images do you notice within the map?
- What story can you tell about Colescott's family based on the symbols and images in this artwork?
- What stories or information can you tell about the United States in 1919 from the symbols and drawings on the map?

Colescott used **portraits**, **symbols**, and a **map** of the United States to tell the story of his parents' **migration** from the South to the West in 1919.

MAKE ART

Let's create a **map** of a place where you or a family member lives. To begin, where were you or your family members born? Where have you or they moved? What memories or stories can you share about your past or current home? Why did you or they move? Use the information you gather from the answers to some of these questions to create an imaginary map or a map based on an existing place. The map can illustrate your story of a journey (including multiple places), or a move you or a family member have taken or might take in the future. You can use **symbols** and one or more **portraits** to tell the story of the places or journeys and why they are important.

Materials

- Access to printed maps and/or the internet to research maps of the place, journey, or migration you wish to represent
- Paper
- Drawing and/or painting media (pencils, colored pencils, markers, oil pastels, watercolor, tempera, or acrylic paint—your choice!)
- Optional: scissors and glue if you decide to incorporate collage
- Optional: a photograph or portrait of the family member whose migration story you're sharing, if you intend to include their image
- Optional: memories or stories from the person whose migration or place you're mapping

Making

1. Start by identifying the place, migration, or map you'd like to create, and the person affiliated with it.
2. Look at printed maps or find ones online for reference. If you're imagining a place or journey, you can use examples of maps to help decide what types of information to include.
3. If your map represents a person you care about, look for photographs of that person to use to make their portrait.
4. You can also add symbols representing the person, like the way Colecott put objects representing his parents in the pink clouds. The symbols can include drawings of things they like to do or eat, for example.

5. Start by outlining the overall shape of your map, and then add lines to delineate regions, counties, cities, towns, streets, or landmarks.
6. Decide if you want to add names of landmarks, land masses, cities, towns, or streets, or if you want to add symbols instead. If you're adding symbols, draw objects in the appropriate places, or find images online to print, cut, and glue onto the map.
7. If you have a printed map of the place you would like to represent, rather than drawing a map, you can begin by deciding where to add your own symbols. After drawing them on paper or printing them, cut them out and glue them in the appropriate spots.
8. If your map represents a family member or loved one, you can add symbols for that person, words representing their memories, or a portrait. You can also include a self-portrait. Consider where to place the portrait on the map, or if it should be under, above, or next to the map.

Reflection

- Show your map to the family member you're depicting, or a friend or family member who knows the person. Do they recognize the place? What story can they tell from the map?
- If you represented an imaginary place or journey, how did you decide on the overall shape of your map? How did researching maps inform these decisions?
- How does your map or journey share information about your identity?
- How could a map you make in the future provide clues about your own or a loved one's identity?

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Image: *GO WEST*, 1980. Acrylic on Canvas, 71 3/4 x 83 7/8 in (182.2 x 213 cm). Courtesy of The Robert H. Colescott Separate Property Trust and Blum & Poe, Los Angeles/New York/Tokyo. © 2022 The Robert H. Colescott Separate Property Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Joshua White

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