



MIXED MEDIA MEMORIES

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

Note for Caregivers

Please note that caregivers of young children should preview the background information provided for this work and the history of anti-Black violence that informs it. We recommend considering how to discuss truths about racial violence and injustice with age-appropriate language that is sensitive and responsive to children's knowledge and experiences. Below are some examples for discussing the historic context informing *Untitled* with young children.

This activity focuses on *Untitled* (2020), a large-scale, abstract, mixed-media painting by artist Mark Bradford (b. 1961, Los Angeles, CA), included in "**Grief and Grievance: Art and Mourning in America**." This painting is part of a series based on maps related to a violent historic event that affected African Americans living in Southeast Central Los Angeles, California, in 1965, during the civil rights era. The civil rights era was a period when African Americans and their allies tried to end racial segregation and discrimination, most often through peaceful protests. What do you know about the civil rights movement?

While many civil rights protests were peaceful, uprisings that express anger and dissatisfaction can involve destruction to property, injuries, and sometimes deaths. The uprising in Watts and nearby African-American neighborhoods started after a white California Highway Patrol Officer named Lee W. Minikus arrested an African-American man named Marquette Frye. Following the six-day conflict, California Governor Pat Brown commissioned a report led by Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director John McCone as an attempt to find the motivations behind the uprising, and discovered complaints of long-term unemployment, poverty, and under-resourced schools. Despite these discoveries, little change was made to improve living or working conditions for residents.

How do you feel hearing this story about the ongoing, unanswered needs of

these African-American communities? What are ways you communicate when you're frustrated by being unheard, treated unfairly, or when you're fearful for your community? How does this history relate to what you have seen or heard about current events? What are some ways you and your family can express yourselves and feel heard?

To commemorate the rebellion and recognize the unmet needs of the African-American community, Bradford began *Untitled* by painting color-coded "hotspots" on **a large, printed map** of Watts from the McCone Report. After applying additional thick layers of paint, Bradford cut away and pulled off the dots, revealing what he described as an "urban jungle" underneath. The resulting abstract, mixed-media painting expresses the painful events experienced by African-American community members without showing data, people, or events.

"...After the 1965 Watts Riot, the governor commissioned what we call the McCone Report to figure out what happened. Part of the report was a map with dots—green dots for burned out buildings, blue dots for looted stores, red dots for death... Hotspots on the landscape that tried to flatten that pain into data so that it could be understood. The map was... the first layer of paper on the painting... Halfway through making the work ... I decided that I wasn't going to use the hotspots anymore. When I pulled all the hotspots off, there were things left... when I remove the kind of grids and the architecture, it almost felt more botanical. It felt like the urban grid gave way to almost... an urban jungle... The land took back the city. Half temple, half nature reclaiming it, half civilization. The shapes were laying on top more, instead of me trying to erase everything on the surface..."

— Mark Bradford, **Cerberus**

To learn more about Bradford's **mixed-media** paintings and **collages commemorating** urban landscapes and events, watch this video or **listen** to an interview with him.



Mark Bradford speaks about his artistic process.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

- **commemorate:** to remember and show respect for a person or event through gestures, events, or structures built in their honor
- **collage:** a type of art that involves cutting pieces of paper or other materials and gluing them onto a surface; or treating other materials, including paint, in a way that involves layering, adding, cutting, and/or removing
- **mixed media:** art made using multiple processes and materials (examples include combining collage with painting and/or drawing, or combining printmaking with drawing or painting)
- **abstract:** art that uses colors, shapes, materials, and textures to convey ideas and meaning, but doesn't represent an identifiable person, place, or thing
- **map:** a diagram representing an area of land or sea, often including roads, mountains, buildings, and other details. Maps are often tied to memory, history, and special events, and can convey emotional content as well as physical, political, and geographic information.

START WITH THE ART: MARK BRADFORD, UNTITLED, 2020



- What shapes and colors do you notice in *Untitled*?
- What do you see that might relate to a rebellion? Are there aspects that remind you of other events or environments?
- Bradford began this series by painting on top of a large, printed map of Watts, Los Angeles. Do you see anything that resembles a map?
- *Untitled* is twelve feet high and nearly sixteen feet wide. How do you think it would feel to stand in front of this painting?
- What mood or feelings do you experience looking at this painting? How do the colors, textures, shapes, and large scale contribute to these feelings?
- How can Bradford's **abstract, mixed-media** painting inspire us to create our own mixed-media artwork **commemorating** an important place, event, or experience?

LOOK AROUND

- Think of an experience, vacation, place, or event you would like to commemorate. Do you have any maps or printed mementos from this place or event?
What do you remember about the place or event? Can you remember who was there, what you and others wore, what kind of food you might have eaten, or what sounds or music you might have heard?
Do you have photographs from the place or event? If you don't have printed photos, can you find ones online?

MAKE ART

Let's create an abstract, mixed-media painting or collage commemorating a place, experience, or event.

MATERIALS

- Printed materials, like pamphlets, photographs, or maps that you are allowed to cut or alter, or printed copies of these materials
- Access to the internet to find photographs of the place you visited or an event you attended
- Paint and/or drawing materials (examples include crayons, markers, oil pastels, colored pencils)
- Paintbrushes
- Paper
- Optional: scissors; glue; a printer to print digital maps, emails, and/or photographs

MAKING

1. Once you've identified a place, experience, or event to commemorate, find printed materials. These might include pamphlets, an invitation, maps, or photographs.
2. Study the materials you find to help you remember details of what you saw, ate, wore, heard, etc.
3. Once you identify or remember sounds, tastes, feelings, and smells, begin assigning these colors, similar to the hotspots in Bradford's painting.
4. Check with an adult to make sure you can draw or paint over your printed materials, or ask for help printing a copy.
5. If you can paint or draw directly on your printed materials, apply your color codes to reference meals, things you saw, people you interacted with, and the activities or types of interactions you had.
6. Slowly build up the surface with paint, markers, crayons, or other materials, until you have multiple layers.
7. Once the surface becomes thick, consider cutting away some of the areas, or cutting and pasting additional printed materials on specific spots.

REFLECTION

- Looking at your final artwork, do you notice any clues that identify the place or event you were depicting?
- Does your final piece resemble a map?
- How did you decide which colors to use for sounds, smells, interactions with people, and other sense memories?
- Consider showing your artwork to a friend or family member who also attended the event or visited the place with you. Without revealing the place or event, ask them if the artwork reminds them of anything. Did they identify the feelings, senses, and emotions you were expressing related to the place or experience? When you tell them what place and event you were thinking about, do they remember it in the same way?

Did someone forward this email to you? If you would like to receive these art activities directly, sign up [here](#).



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MUSEUM

IMAGES: "Grief and Grievance: Art and Mourning in America," 2021. Exhibition view: New Museum, New York. Photo: Dario Lasagni (featuring Untitled, 2020 by Mark Bradford)

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