

Wearable Identities

Lesson Plan

Suggested for 2nd–7th grades



Derrick Adams (born 1970) is a multidisciplinary artist. His work focuses on the connections between the symbols, colors, and textures of African-American daily life and popular culture. Through fragmentation of structure and surface he explores how people project their image into the world.

Derrick Adams
The Journey, 2017

The “Mood Board” series is a body of work based on artist Derrick Adams’s research on the influential African-American fashion designer Patrick Kelly (1954–1990) whose archive is housed at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. *The Journey* (2017) and other works in this series of abstract collages are responses to Kelly’s legacy that incorporate the designer’s vintage clothing patterns, iconic fabrics, colors, and shapes.

This lesson provides an opportunity to discuss fashion and its social context, abstraction, and sources of inspiration, and to reflect on personal choices and interests. During the art-making process students will be invited to create a wearable piece of art that reveals something about their own narratives and identities.

Objective

Students will investigate fashion and art compositions using abstraction. They will create a wearable piece of art that explores aspects of their identities and interests.

Essential Question

How might you create a wearable piece of art that reveals something about yourself?

Vocabulary

Composition

The arrangement of elements in an artwork.

Collage

Artistic technique that consists of combining and attaching diverse materials such as paper, fabric, and found objects to a surface.

Inspiration

Incentive that stimulates and encourages you to do something creative.

Mood Board

An arrangement of images, materials, and text that is intended to project a particular style or concept of a project.

Materials

Fabric base

(e.g. t-shirts, tote bags, socks, bandanas, hats, etc.)

Fabric scraps

(assorted colors, textures, and patterns)

Fabric markers

Ribbon

Buttons

Beads

Needle and thread

Tacky guns

[Patrick Kelly Exhibition Guide](#)

Preparation

1. Display *The Journey* by Derrick Adams and some of Patrick Kelly's designs in the classroom.
2. Introduce vocabulary and discuss the meaning of collage, inspiration, and composition.
3. Share Patrick Kelly's "Love List" and invite students to create their own list of things they love.
4. Set up fabric, markers, buttons, ribbon, and materials to provide students with different options.

Methods

1. Through visual inquiry discuss possible connections between Adams's and Kelly's work. Reflect on Adams's choices regarding color, shapes, and composition. How might Kelly's work have inspired Adams?
2. Share essential question with students.
3. Have students pick some concepts from their "love list" to use as inspiration for their wearable pieces.
4. Invite students to explore the materials provided and reflect on different ways in which those materials could be used to express their ideas visually.
5. Encourage students to consider their choices carefully. Explain that the materials, colors, shapes, and composition they pick will add meaning to their creations.
6. Once they have chosen their materials and process, have them create their wearable piece of art.

Reflection

1. Organize a fashion show or display artwork in the classroom.
2. Invite students to share and discuss their choices and what motivated them.
3. Discuss how the meaning of a wearable artwork might change depending on the context (e.g. social-historical moment, displayed in a museum versus worn by someone on the street).



Derrick Adams
The Journey, 2017
Clothing patterns, acrylic, and fabric on paper
51 x 72 in.
The Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum purchase with funds provided by
the Acquisition Committee; and a gift from The Lumpkin-Boccuzzi Family,
in fond memory of Jack Tilton
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