Reflecting Your Community
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Ages 4+, young children will need help from an adult.

Artists often create work that considers what it means to be a part of a community and how their communities are represented within art and the art world. In this guide, you will look at the work of Lorraine O'Grady, an African American artist creating work that celebrates her community.

It will take about 20 minutes to complete this activity.

**Project Set Up**
1) Find a large and flat surface, such as a table or the floor, where you can do this project. Cover the surface with a tablecloth or newspapers.
2) Gather all your materials.

**Project Materials**
- Large sheet of cardboard. To find a flat sheet of cardboard you can cut out the side of a cardboard box.
- Crayons, markers, colored pencils, or any other writing material
- Collage materials (optional)
  - Scissors
  - Magazines or newspapers
  - Glue
  - String
"I think art’s first goal is to remind us that we are human, whatever that is. I suppose the politics in my art could be to remind us that we are all human."

- Lorraine O’Grady

Lorraine O’Grady’s work combines performance, photography, and installation, which is a type of art that is usually created for a specific place and transforms the space in some way. O’Grady’s work often explores how a person’s identity is shaped by their culture. Over the course of her career, she has raised questions about who art depicts and who gets to decide what is considered art.

Talk it out:

- Who do you see represented in the art in your home, at school, and in museums?
- Who do you think decides what is considered art? Who should decide?
Connect with Art at the Walker


*Art Is…* is a series of photographs taken at the African American Day Parade in Harlem, New York in September 1983. There are 39 images in this series. Take a look at a selection of these photographs (more details can be found on the last page).

**Talk it out:**

- What do you notice about these images?
- What do they have in common? How are they different?

The artist created a large parade float featuring a huge golden antique-style picture frame that framed everything the float passed as if it were a work of art. O’Grady hired a group of dancers to follow the float carrying smaller gold frames. The dancers held the frames in front of parade-goers, who instantly became art with the addition of the frame.

O’Grady was inspired to create this work by a comment she received from a friend, “avant-garde art doesn’t have anything to do with Black people.” O’Grady thought about this comment and responded by creating a work that physically places Black people and Black culture within a frame, thereby making them art.
### Project Instructions

**Now it’s your turn to create your own artwork inspired by the work of Lorraine O’Grady!**

1. Find a large sheet of cardboard.

2. On the edges of the rectangle, draw the edges of a picture frame. You can make this as fancy or as plain as you like.

3. Inside your frame, draw a neat rectangle.

4. With the help of an adult, pierce the cardboard and start cutting along the lines of your inner rectangle. When you remove the center of the cardboard, you will have made your own picture frame!

5. You might like to decorate the frame by coloring it in or gluing images or other found objects on to it.

6. Now hold your frame up to people and objects in your home. Whatever you ‘frame’ is art!
Conversations with Friends and Family

Consider what art means to you. Respond to the following questions by writing, drawing, or collaging on a piece of paper.

- Who creates art?
- What and who have you seen represented in art?
- Why do people make art?
- When do people make art?
- Where do people make art?
- How do people make art?

For younger kids, flip through magazines and newspapers together and ask them to point out images of art. Cut out the images and glue them onto the paper. Discuss why they picked the images they did.

Now, ask these questions of family, friends, and neighbors. Record their responses on your paper.

- Do you notice similarities and differences between the responses you recorded?

Connect similar answers by drawing lines between images on your paper.
Lorraine O’Grady focused on representing Black people, families, and her community in her work. Spend some time thinking about the communities you are a part of. Create a list of 3-5 communities that you belong to.

- Where have you seen representations of these communities? On TV? In magazines? On Instagram? In artwork?

Use your frame and a camera, smart phone, or other device to take photographs that represent the communities you are a part of. If a camera is unavailable, use markers, paints, or other art materials to create an artwork celebrating your community.

Share your artwork with us by using @walkerartcenter and #walkerartcenter, or email a photo of artwork to freefirstsaturday@walkerart.org. Check out #walkerartcenter to see what other families are making!
Lorraine O’Grady, Art Is … (Details), 1983/2009, T.B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 2012; Courtesy Walker Art Center