

Canton  
Museum  
of Art



# TEACHER RESOURCE PACKET

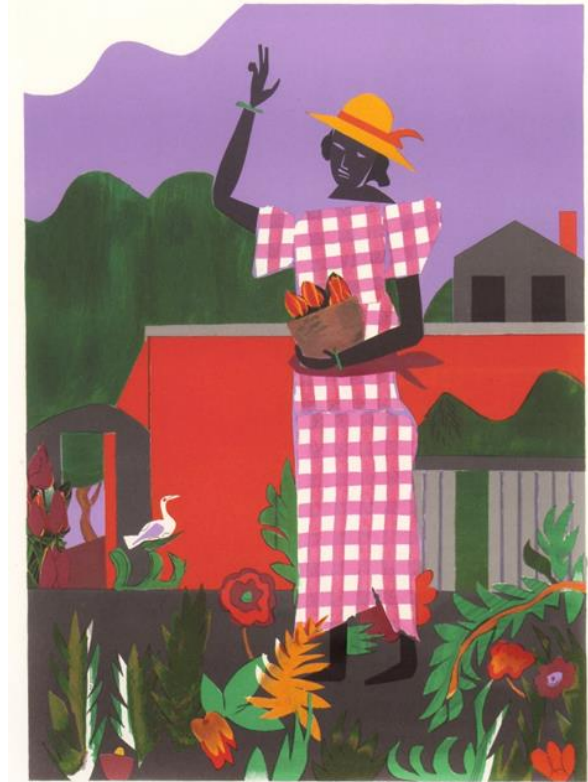
**Grade Level: 4th Grade**

*A lesson about Romare Bearden, the Harlem  
Renaissance, and the Great Migration.*

## **Bloom where you are transplanted:**

“Most artists take some place and like a flower they sink their roots. My roots are from North Carolina. I paint what people did when I was a little boy.”

- Romare Bearden



**“Girl In The Garden,” 1979, Romare Bearden**  
(American, 1911-1988). Lithograph, 29 x 21 in.

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the generous funding of the Ohio Arts Council and Arts in Stark.***



This document, companion artwork images, virtual tour of the exhibit: “*In Praise of Women*”, and many other resources are available through the Canton Museum of Art website at:

[www.cantonart.org/learn/museum-to-go](http://www.cantonart.org/learn/museum-to-go).

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## The Great Migration

Between 1910 and 1930 over 500,000 African Americans moved from the rural southern states in the U.S. to major towns and cities in the north. Thousands of African Americans who participated in the Great Migration settled in Cleveland, Youngstown, Toledo, Akron, and other Ohio cities. One reason so many African American southerners moved north was the demand for workers in many factories and mills. The draft of men into World War I and the halt of immigration from Europe led to a shortage of workers at a time of increased war production.



*The Migration of the Negro, Panel no. 1, 1940-1941, Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000)*

Another reason so many people left the south was to escape the violence and racial segregation brought about by the Jim Crow Laws. Jim Crow Laws were state and local laws that mandated separation of “whites” and “blacks” in all public facilities. This was based on the idea of “separate but equal” but in reality led to treatment of African Americans as second class citizens. With the influx of so many migrants into the crowded cities, there was competition for living space. Even though segregation was not legal in the north, there was still widespread racism and prejudice. Many people ended up creating their own communities within the major cities. By the 1920s, Harlem in New York City housed over 200,000 African Americans. The political activism and cultural wellspring that grew out of this community became known as the Harlem Renaissance. Romare Bearden was a significant figure in this movement.

## Romare Bearden

Romare Bearden was born in Mecklenburg County in North Carolina in 1914, but he was only a toddler when his parents moved in the great migration to Harlem in New York City. Both of his parents were college educated and many influential friends often visited their home, including Langston Hughes, WEB DuBois, and Duke Ellington, who influenced Romare's passion for jazz. He is credited with using improvisation in visual art much as musicians did in jazz.

Growing up, Romare spent a great deal of time with his paternal relatives in North Carolina and his maternal grandparents in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. Much of his artwork incorporates his childhood memories.

After he graduated from New York University with an education degree, Romare worked as a social worker and took art classes at night at the Art Students League. He also wrote articles on art and art history and worked for the betterment of his community by organizing exhibitions for young minority artists and forming an artist's group to address civil rights.

Romare is particularly know for his collages. Using magazine photographs, newspaper clippings, foil, wall paper, and fabric, he created both rural and urban scenes, along with depictions of traditional African American life.



Romare Bearden photo taken by Carl Van Vechten

### Some visual elements included in Bearden's work:

- Trains: a symbol of the Great Migration.
- Conjure Women: spiritual healers who are important in African American traditions.
- Shacks and gardens: common in the rural south and part of his childhood memories.
- Smoke stacks: visual components of his childhood memories of Pittsburgh.
- Jazz quartets: Romare grew up listening to jazz and his studio was above the Apollo Theater.

Sometimes I remember my grandfather's house

A garden with tiger lilies, my grandmother

Waving a white apron to passing trains

On that trestle across the clay road

- from "Sometimes," a poem by Bearden, published in Romare Bearden in *Black and White: Photomontage Projections*, 1964

### Vocabulary

**Improvise:** To compose and perform or deliver without previous preparation.

**Collage:** A technique of composing a work of art by pasting on a single surface various materials not normally associated with one another, as newspaper clippings, parts of photographs, theater tickets, and fragments of an envelope.

**Migration:** To move from one country or place to live or work in another.

**Renaissance:** Rebirth or revival, a new growth of activity or interest in something, especially art, literature, or music.



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**Grade Level:** Grade Level: 4th Grade (can be adapted to other grade levels)

**Overview:** Students will observe pieces of art from the CMA's Permanent Collection through a virtual tour available at: <https://www.cantonart.org/learn/museum-to-go>. Focusing on "Girl In The Garden," by Romare Bearden, students will learn about the Harlem Renaissance, and the Great Migration. They will be exposed to improvisation in both jazz and visual art, and will use this way of working to create their own works of art.

**Materials:** Self seal laminating sheets, pipe cleaners, color sharpie permanent markers, improvisational jazz music.

### **Content Standards:**

#### **Social Studies:**

- HISTORY STRAND-HERITAGE: 2. Primary and secondary sources can be used to create historical narratives.
- HISTORY STRAND-HERITAGE: 3. Various groups of people have lived in Ohio over time including prehistoric and historic American Indians, migrating settlers and immigrants. Interactions among these groups have resulted in both cooperation and conflict.
- GEOGRAPHY STRAND-HUMAN SYSTEMS: 13. The population of the United States has changed over time, becoming more diverse (e.g., racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious). Ohio's population has become increasingly reflective of the cultural diversity of the United States.

#### **Visual Arts:**

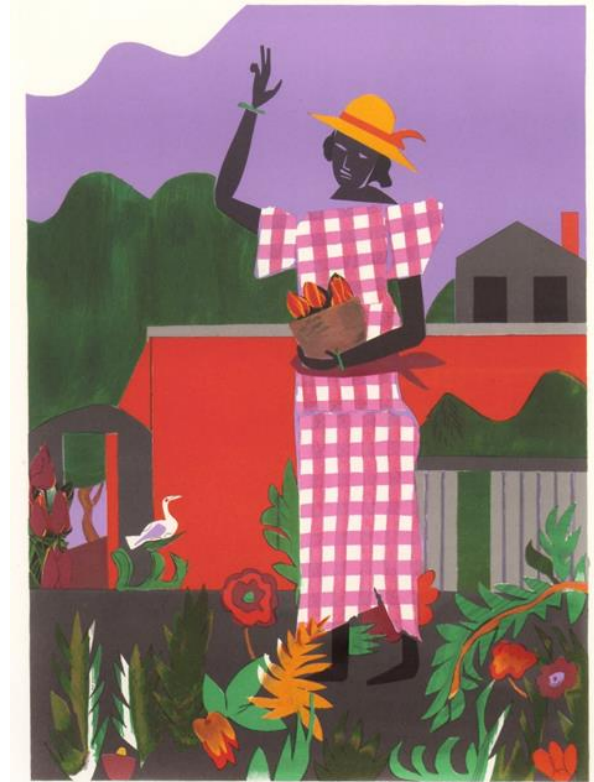
- 2PE. Notice and describe different visual effects resulting from art making techniques.
- 3PE. Compare and contrast art forms, techniques and functions and artistic styles from a variety of cultures and historical periods.
- 5PR. Combine the elements and principles of art and design to create visually effective compositions in original works of art.
- 2PR. Experiment with art materials by using them in unexpected and creative ways to express ideas and convey meaning.

**Background/Key Ideas:**

Students will learn about Romare Bearden and his pivotal role in the Harlem Renaissance. They will learn how the Great Migration created African American communities in many large cities which lead to a surge of cultural accomplishments in African American history. One of these accomplishments was the evolution of Jazz.

**Procedures:****Introduction:**

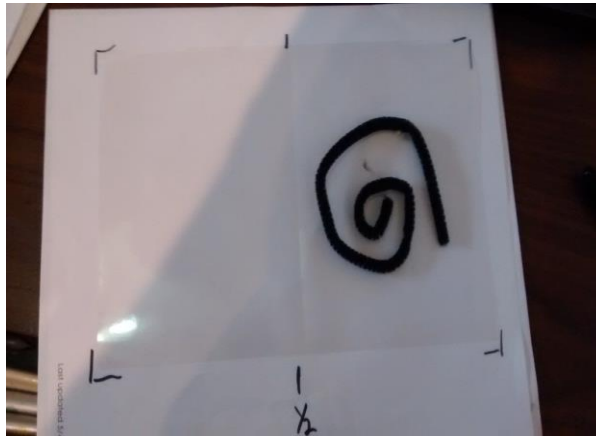
- Students will take a virtual tour of the Canton Museum of Art's Permanent Collection Exhibit *In Praise of Women* and focus on the print *Girl in the Garden* by Romare Bearden:
- Read the following quote from Romare Bearden:  
"Most artists take some place and like a flower sink their roots. My Roots are in North Carolina. I paint what people did when I was a little boy."
- Discuss with students how he created artwork about his life experiences and how the great migration and Harlem Renaissance affected Romare's life.
- Read Romare's quote: "You have to begin somewhere," he said, "so you put something down. Then you put something else with it, and then you see how that works, and maybe you try something else and so on, and the picture grows in that way. One thing leads to another, and you take the options as they come."
- Talk with students about how Romare works using improvisation and is inspired by Jazz music. Turn on Jazz music at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPfFhfSuUZ4&list=PL8F6B0753B2CCA128>



***"Girl In The Garden," 1979, Romare Bearden***  
(American, 1911-1988). Lithograph, 29 x 21 in.

**Activity:** Romare Bearden had many happy memories of the time he spent in his grandmother's garden. The *Girl In the Garden* is one of several of his artworks about a garden. The art project for this lesson capitalizes on this idea. Using the concept of improvisation, each student will create a unique flower to add to a garden of flowers produced by his or her classmates.

Step 1: Pipe cleaner is coiled and placed on  $\frac{1}{2}$  of laminate sheet.



Step 2: Second pipe clear is placed in circle around coiled piper cleaner.



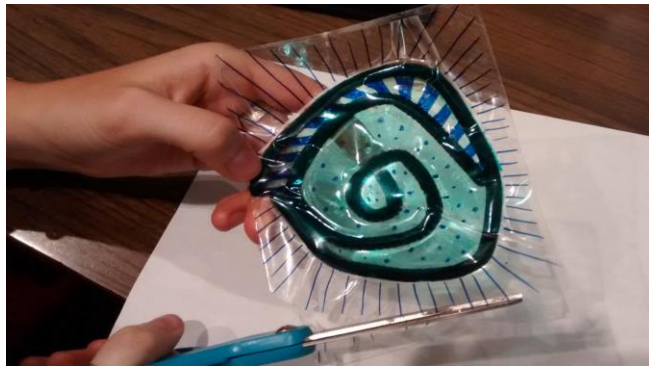
Step 3: The laminate is folded over so the sides align and air is worked out.



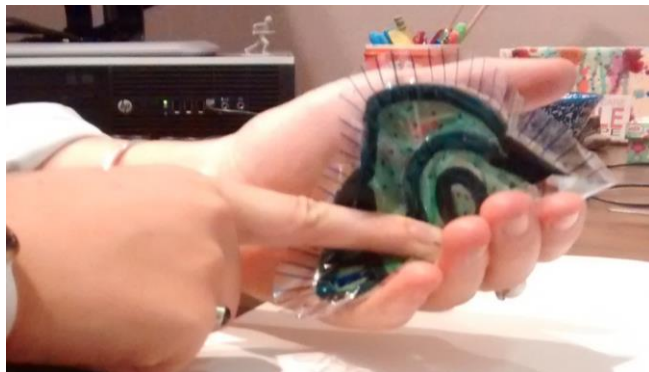
Step 4: Students will listen to improvisational jazz while they work in an improvisational manner to decorate their flowers.



Step 5: Cut corners to create oval/circle leaving a ¼ inch flap outside of the pipe cleaner.



Step 6: Form flat oval into convex flower shape.





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Step 8: Students attach a magnet to the back of the flower and place on magnetic surface.



**Closure and assessment:** Upon completion of the art project the teacher can ask each student to provide an exit ticket stating three or more things that they learned from the lesson. Use these exit tickets to determine if students learned the key concepts: the great migration, collage, improvisation, Harlem Renaissance, jazz, and Romare Bearden's unique contribution as an artist.

**Enrichment activities:** The teacher can show the students Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series which documented the Great Migration.



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### Resources

Brenner, C., Hinish, H., & Moore, B. (2003). *The Art of Romare Bearden: A Resource for Teachers*, 1-83. Retrieved May 30, 2017, from <https://www.nga.gov/content/dam/ngaweb/Education/learning-resources/teaching-packets/pdfs/bearden-tchpk.pdf>.

Chow, A. (2014). 14 Iconic Solos That Showcase Jazz Music's Incredible History. Retrieved April 28, 2017, from <https://mic.com/articles/90959/14-iconic-solos-that-showcase-jazz-music-s-incredible-history#.fBSTk0Hnu>

Romare Bearden's Mecklenburg County. (2016). Retrieved May 30, 2017, from <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1UMuGYkeFko6VUnouxJpVqjEI8cRUEBNEHD8j9vQtsM/embed?slide=id.i0https://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/education/teachers/teaching.../bearden.html>