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virtual
learning

VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Workshop:

Collage Basics

Explore the medium of collage while learning paper tearing and composition techniques. You will also be introduced to artists Mickalene Thomas, Deborah Roberts, Hannah Höch, and Jaune Quick-To-See Smith.

Teaching Artist:
Jonathan Stein

Workshop duration: 25 - 45 minutes



Transcript

Hello, my name is Jonathan Stein, and I'm a teaching artist for Snow City Arts. I use he, him and his pronouns.

To begin, let's gather our materials: You'll need a pencil, a glue stick, some colored markers, some colored construction paper. And, if you have one, a magazine.

The first thing we're going to try is **tearing** paper. Tearing paper is very useful when making a collage. So choose one piece of colored construction paper, and we'll get started.

To help us tear the paper, we'll fold it first. **Folding** is moving something over onto itself so that one part of it covers another. Folding our construction paper, we'll make a straight line in the paper, which will help us tear it.

Fold the paper so the two corners of one side meet the two corners of the opposite side. Once you see them meet up, hold that area down with one hand. Now on the opposite side of where the corners have met, there will be a bend in the paper. It might look kind of rounded. With your other hand, push down first in the center of the paper and move your hand out towards the bend and over to flatten it down.

Push down and move your fingers up and down along that rounded edge a few times, flattening the entire edge. This technique of bending and flattening paper is called **scoring**. Bending and scoring are useful when tearing straight lines in a paper.

Now, let's tear the paper along the line we have created. To do this, we will hold and pinch the paper with our hands close together, and the fold or scoreline just in between them. Place your thumbs on the front side of the paper and your fingers on the backside of the paper.

Keep pinching and gently pull your hands apart, one from the other. Use the tension created between the pinch points to guide your tear. The paper should tear along the line as you pull your hands apart slowly. Don't worry if the line isn't perfect. It does take some practice. The way we pinched and tore the paper with our thumbs held closely together on one side of the paper, and with our fingers on the other, is always a useful technique for tearing paper, even when you don't score the paper first.

Transcript Continued

Let's try tearing the paper again without scoring. What happens? The line is probably a little less straight, especially depending on if you pull harder with one hand or the other, but with a little practice, you can begin to control the direction of your tear.

Now, find your pencils and markers. Let's draw some patterns or images or lines onto the pieces of construction paper this time before you tear them. This can make the construction paper even more colorful and bold. You can take your time and draw carefully, or you can just draw randomly.

What could you draw? Perhaps lines or dots or dashes? A few squiggles? Circles? Circles it is.

Once you have finished drawing on the construction paper, you'll be able to use the steps we've learned to tear them down into smaller pieces. Pause the video and draw on some of your construction papers. I'm drawing circles here, but you can draw whatever you like.

Tear that down, using the techniques we've learned. These smaller pieces of construction paper you're making are the building blocks of your future collage. You'll be able to draw and tear more later as well.

Are you a messy person or a clean person? As an artist, it really helps to keep your studio organized. And in this case, our studio is our tabletop with all of our collage materials on it. I'd like to take a moment and encourage you to separate your collage papers into different piles. So if you want to pause, and tear some more and draw some more and find some more images and magazines, please do that and then organize your papers.

Another type of images for collage can be found in a magazine. If one is available to you, find a a magazine. Take some time to look through it for pictures that you can tear out and add to your collage papers. Keep in mind that you don't need to use the whole picture. If you find a picture and you like just parts of it, you can just tear out the parts you like.

In the picture I have, there is a bus with a person on top of it. I just want to use the bus, so I'm going to tear the parts out, using the techniques that we've learned, and then I'll add that to my collage papers.

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Collage is a word translated from the French language, and it means “to glue.” Let’s practice gluing.

We will use a couple pieces of collage paper that we have torn. Here’s our glue stick— first, check to make sure that a little bit of glue is sticking out the top, that’s what we want. If it’s not, twist the bottom and more will come out.

So, I’ve chosen one piece for the bottom, and then two pieces to go on top. I encourage you to think about your composition and how you would like the pieces to fit together when you’re going to glue them. You can move things around, try some different ideas out.

Does that fit best there? Or do I want to try them in a different place? This is the whole thing we’re going to play with a little bit when we make our collage: composition and choices.

All right, I’m gonna go with that placement. So, to make this image happen, I’m going to turn the top piece of my collage paper over, rub some glue on it, and then put it back where I found it.

I’ll now take the other pieces, turn them over, rub some glue on them, and put them back where I would like them to go. I’m moving mine a little bit to the right— that’s it. That’s the last thing I’m going to show you today before we make our collage.

So, let’s make a collage. I propose that we make a head shape, and then add some facial features onto that head shape. A head is a simple shape, an idea that we can all recognize and is a good place to start. To start, find a large piece of construction paper any color you like and fold it in half long ways. So, using the techniques we’ve learned, crease the paper.

We’re going to make an oval shape or something like an oval shape. We’re going to start tearing one end and slightly turn the paper as we tear. So keep moving your fingers and your thumbs and your hand, and then tear in a semi-circle. So we’re gonna guide our tear towards the folded edge on the other end. And once we get there, we are going to unfold it and we should have a unique shape that can be our head shape.

Transcript Continued

Let's review what we've learned:

We've learned about **scoring** paper, **tearing** paper, and **drawing** on paper before we tear it out.

Finding images and tearing those out of magazines, organizing our images and thinking about how to begin to compose and arrange images before we glue them down.

I'd like to show you some images by other artists, making collages, and this might help you think about yours when you begin.

The first image I want to show you is an art movement known as **Cubism**. Cubism tried to show multiple ways of seeing something, not just one perspective or one angle. This image by **Pablo Picasso** from 1912 is called "Still Life with Chair Caning." The chair is the thing that's in the middle bottom of the picture and around the outside. This gets credit as the first collage in art history.

I just mentioned art history, and art history has a bit of a problem. It almost always has been written by men. So when you ever look at anything with art history, ask yourself the question: who wrote this history, and who is it serving? With that in mind, I'm going to show you some more images by some great artists who do collage.

Here's an image by **Hannah Höch**. It's called "Flight" from 1931. She has two faces featured here in her collage. Can you guess what they were made with?

This image is by **Deborah Roberts**, it's called "As I Am" and is from 2017. Look at the choices she makes for the child's face. Those are really interesting choices. She's really trying some experiments and I encourage you to do that too.

This next image by **Jaune Quick-To-See Smith**, called "Target" from 1992. Very different, but I want to point out the repetition that she uses, and how that plays into her collage, and I want to encourage you to think about maybe repeating an image more than once.

And the final image I want to show you is by **Mickalene Thomas** called "Untitled #14" from 2015. I think this most relates to the kind of collage we're

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about to make: smaller pieces of paper, put together to form a face. Take a look at this one. See if you can get any good ideas. All right, I think we're ready.

And now I'm going to set you free to make your own collage. There are so many cool things to decide. Will your face have ears, or have whiskers along with a beard? Or will it have two eyes or four or eight eyes? Will it have no hair? Lots of hair? Purple hair?

You get to experiment and compose and play. I encourage you to try things out to make interesting choices and to try to surprise yourself with your choices. I'm going to make my own right now, so you can make yours. Let's check back with each other in a little while to see what we've done.

[Pause the video here to create your collage.]

Okay, we're back. I finished my collage. Did you finish yours? Can you show me? Can you hold it up?

Wow! That is awesome. Did you surprise yourself?

I'll put mine on the screen right now so you can see mine.

Great. I want to thank you so much for joining me.

If you are interested in receiving school credit

for the work you have completed in this workshop, or if you would like to have your work **displayed in a Snow City Arts exhibition space or virtual gallery:**

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