

Art and Activism: Black Lives Matter

Dear Caregiver or Educator,

Thank you for visiting the Autry Museum of the American West's Education webpage. We are delighted to bring the museum to you through digital tours, fun activities, videos, webinars, and standards-based lessons like **Art and Activism: Black Lives Matter**. We invite you to use **Art and Activism: Black Lives Matter** and other Autry Education materials for learning in the classroom or at home.

Art and Activism: Black Lives Matter was inspired by an Autry Classroom Curators (ACC) project. ACC is a project-based learning program created by the Autry's Education department. Through this program, the Autry's Education department has partnered with elementary, middle, high school teachers, and college professors to provide students with learning experiences that are inquiry-based, connect to the American West, and incorporate 21st century skills (e.g. collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking). Every ACC partnership is unique to the needs of each individual partner.

Art and Activism: Black Lives Matter is based on an ACC project that the Autry's Education department collaborated on with Victoria Munguia, a teacher from Highland Park High School, during the spring semester of 2021. Ms. Munguia shared her inspiration for this project in her own words as follows:

I was inspired to teach a Black history unit focused on the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement following the national and global protests that resulted from the murder of George Floyd in May of 2020. I noticed that supporters of the BLM Movement were receiving negative attention in the media despite the growing amount of support I would see around my community through the use of window, yard, and car signs indicating solidarity with the Movement. The conversations that we were having in our virtual classroom revealed a sense of confusion and frustration on behalf of the students. I wanted to help them understand why the term "Black lives matter" is used by allies of the BLM Movement as opposed to "all lives matter." We then spent the semester examining Black history in the United States and used the Autry Museum's support to create a digital collection of stories telling about the lives that were taken too soon. My goal for this research project is to bring attention to the issues that persons of color are facing in our country and help students be advocates and use their voices to facilitate conversations that create change.

The Autry's Education department provided support to Ms. Munguia and her students by facilitating several workshops including an **Art and Activism: Black Lives Matter** workshop. During this workshop, students analyzed two paintings created by LA-based artist Imani Parker. The Autry's Education department then decided to offer the **Art and Activism: Black Lives Matter** workshop as a standards-based lesson for high school students. We encourage you to share this lesson with your students. For the most recent educational resources, please check out the Autry Museum's Education webpage at TheAutry.org/Education.

Sincerely,

Sarah S. Wilson
Director of Education

P.S. If you would like to contact LA-based artist Imani Parker, please email her directly at imaniparker803@gmail.com.

Art and Activism: Black Lives Matter

INTRODUCTION – The Autry Museum of the American West is a museum located in Griffith Park in Los Angeles, California. The Autry Museum tells stories about the diverse peoples of the American West through education, exhibitions, public programs, and initiatives like the *Collecting Community History Initiative* (CCHI). CCHI started in April 2020 because history is being made now. Through CCHI, the Autry Museum collects stories and objects from moments in history that are important to different communities in the American West.

The African American community has been, and continues to be, an important part of the American West. Throughout history, the African American community has faced **racial discrimination** caused by various **campaigns** of racial terror and white supremacy (e.g. **enslavement**, **Jim Crow laws**, **War on Drugs**, **mass incarceration**, etc.). White supremacy is the belief that white people are superior to those of all other races, especially the Black race, and should therefore dominate society. Additionally, a leading cause of deaths for young Black men in the United States is through encounters with law enforcement. Videos and accounts of Black Americans’ deaths have dominated national news headlines and social media.



This image shows a person holding a sign with the sentence “The key to the future is knowledge of your past.” What do you think this sentence means? Write your answer in the space provided or on a separate document.

Glossary

Campaigns: a series of activities meant to produce a particular result

Discrimination: the practice of unfairly treating a person or group differently from other people or groups of people

Enslavement: a person who is owned by another person and is forced to work without pay or rights; slavery

Jim Crow laws: laws issued by states and cities to segregate Black people from white people and to limit African Americans’ rights resulting in a different form of forced domination by white Americans over African Americans

Mass incarceration: the high number of people being imprisoned, which disproportionately affects people of color

Racial: relating to/based on any one of the groups that humans are often divided into based on physical traits or ancestry

War on Drugs: arresting and imprisoning people for illegal drug use, which disproportionately affects people of color

Art and Activism: Black Lives Matter

PART 1 – In 2013, the Black Lives Matter Movement was started by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi after George Zimmerman was found not guilty of killing 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. Alicia, Patrisse, and Opal started #BlackLivesMatter as an online community to fight racism against Black people. This online community eventually became a global organization. In 2020, the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery (25), Breonna Taylor (26), and Tony McDade (38) continued to cause great pain. Racial issues reached a high point when a video of the death of George Floyd (46) by law enforcement went viral in May 2020, ultimately leading to national protests, uprisings, and more people joining the Black Lives Matter Movement.



As a response to and in **solidarity** with the Movement for Black Lives across the world, CCHI seeks to assist in collecting, cataloging, and preserving this critical moment in civil rights history in the American West. The images of people protesting, to the left and in the INTRODUCTION, were submitted to CCHI. Rob Liggins took both images during Black Lives Matter protests in the Los Angeles area in 2020.

Taking part in protests, creating initiatives such as CCHI, and participating in movements for racial **justice** are some of the different ways that people can take action to help create change in their community. What are some other ways that people can take action to help create change in their community? Write your answer in the space provided or on a separate document.

Glossary

Justice: fair treatment

Racism: discrimination or hatred based on race

Solidarity: a feeling of unity between people who have the same interests, goals, etc.

Viral: spreading very quickly to many people especially through the Internet

Art and Activism: Black Lives Matter

PART 2 - Creating art is another way that people can take action to help create change in their community. Artists have been creating art as a form of activism throughout history. The colors, images, materials, shapes, and words that artists use in their art can raise awareness about the issues affecting individuals, communities, and movements. In this activity, you will analyze two pieces of artwork from CCHI that incorporate activism. Then you will answer questions about each piece of artwork by making hypotheses. Finally, you will prove or disprove your hypotheses by reading object labels and artist's quotes. An object label gives detailed information about the artwork while an artist's quote describes the artwork in the artist's own words.

Take a moment to analyze a painting that incorporates activism by looking closely at Artwork #1 below.



Artwork #1

Glossary

Activism: a practice that emphasizes direct action especially in support of or against one side of an issue

Analyze: to study or look closely at

Hypotheses: educated guesses

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PART 3 – After looking closely at Artwork #1 from **PART 2**, describe what you see by answering the questions in the chart below. Write your answers in the space provided or on a separate document.

ART ANALYSIS QUESTIONS	MY DESCRIPTIONS
What colors do you see in the artwork?	
What images (people, places, or things, etc.) do you see in the artwork?	
What shapes do you see in the artwork?	
What words do you see in the artwork?	
What do your eyes focus on in the artwork? Why?	
What else do you notice about the artwork?	
What questions do you have about the artwork?	

Art and Activism: Black Lives Matter

PART 4 – Art tells stories. What do you think Artwork #1 from **PART 2** is about? Make a hypothesis about what story you think the artist is trying to tell others through this artwork. Write your hypothesis in the space below or on a separate document.

PART 5 – Artists create art for a reason. Why do you think the artist made Artwork #1 from **PART 2**? Make a hypothesis about why you think the artist created this artwork. Write your hypothesis in the space below or on a separate document.

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PART 6 – Prove or disprove your hypotheses by reading the object label and the artist’s quote about Artwork #1 from **PART 2**. This object label provides detailed information about the artwork while the artist’s quote describes the artwork in the artist’s own words.

	<u>Object Label</u>
Artwork’s title	<i>No Justice, No Peace</i>
Date artwork was created	2020
Artist’s name	Imani Parker
Artwork’s medium	Acrylic paint on canvas

Artist’s Quote

“My *No Justice, No Peace* is a tribute to the life of Breonna Taylor, whose killers have still not been brought to justice. This piece was exhausting to create, being a Black woman myself. [However] I aimed to [use this piece to] raise more awareness to her case.”

— Imani Parker (LA-based artist)

PART 7 – Now that you have learned more about the story that the artist is telling through Artwork #1 by reading the object label and the artist’s quote in **PART 6**, answer the questions about the object label and the artist’s quote in the chart below. Write your answers in the space provided or on a separate document.

OBJECT LABEL / ARTIST’S QUOTE QUESTIONS	MY ANSWERS
Who is the artist?	
What is the title of the artwork?	
What year was the artwork created?	
What is the artwork’s medium?	
What story is the artist telling others through this artwork? What is this artwork about?	
Why did the artist create this artwork?	

Glossary

Medium: the materials used to create artwork; the various types of artistic expression

Tribute: something that you say, give, or do to show respect or affection for someone

Art and Activism: Black Lives Matter

PART 8 - Take a moment to analyze another painting that incorporates activism by looking closely at Artwork #2 below.



Artwork #2

Art and Activism: Black Lives Matter

PART 9 – After looking closely at Artwork #2 from **PART 8**, describe what you see by answering the questions in the chart below. Write your answers in the space provided or on a separate document.

ART ANALYSIS QUESTIONS	MY DESCRIPTIONS
What colors do you see in the artwork?	
What images (people, places, or things, etc.) do you see in the artwork?	
What shapes do you see in the artwork?	
What words do you see in the artwork?	
What do your eyes focus on in the artwork? Why?	
What else do you notice about the artwork?	
What questions do you have about the artwork?	

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PART 10 – Art tells stories. What do you think Artwork #2 from **PART 8** is about? Make a hypothesis about what story you think the artist is trying to tell others through this artwork. Write your hypothesis in the space below or on a separate document.

PART 11 – Artists create art for a reason. Why do you think the artist made Artwork #2 from **PART 8**? Make a hypothesis about why you think the artist created this artwork. Write your hypothesis in the space below or on a separate document.

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PART 12 – Prove or disprove your hypotheses by reading the object label and the artist’s quote about Artwork #2 from **PART 8**. This object label provides detailed information about the artwork while the artist’s quote describes the artwork in the artist’s own words.

	<u>Object Label</u>
Artwork’s title	<i>Enough</i>
Date artwork was created	2020
Artist’s name	Imani Parker
Artwork’s medium	Acrylic paint on canvas

Artist’s Quote

“This piece was brought to life in the wake of George Floyd’s death. It was designed to take observers of the piece outside of their own worldview and into the worldview of the young black adolescent who has just seen another name added to the list. His large tear-filled eyes are a contrast to the idea that black boys can’t show emotion. A time that is meant to be about fun and dumb mistakes is now filled with fear, **apprehension**, and **lament**. The first names of those murdered by the police system are placed around him to highlight the personal nature of these people who could easily be his family and friends. The split red and blue background serves as symbolism for the police system and hints at the pull of gang violence which is another heavy target on his skin. This piece shows a young boy who has simply had enough.”

— Imani Parker (LA-based artist)

PART 13 – Now that you have learned more about the story that the artist is telling through Artwork #2 by reading the object label and the artist’s quote in **PART 12**, answer the questions about the object label and the artist’s quote in the chart below. Write your answers in the space provided or on a separate document.

OBJECT LABEL / ARTIST’S QUOTE QUESTIONS	MY ANSWERS
Who is the artist?	
What is the title of the artwork?	
What year was the artwork created?	
What is the artwork’s medium?	
What story is the artist telling others through this artwork? What is this artwork about?	
Why did the artist create this artwork?	

Glossary

Adolescent: someone who is between childhood and adulthood; a teenager

Apprehension: fear that something bad or unpleasant is going to happen; a feeling of being worried about the future

Lament: a crying out in great sorrow

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PART 14 – Artwork such as Artwork #1 and Artwork #2 can raise awareness about the issues affecting individuals, communities, movements, and a whole lot more. Take action to help create change in one of your communities by creating an artwork that raises awareness about the issues affecting your community. Plan your artwork before creating it by answering the questions in the chart below. Write detailed answers in the space provided or on a separate document.

ARTWORK PLAN QUESTIONS	ANSWER EXAMPLES	MY ARTWORK PLAN ANSWERS
Which one of your communities do you want to raise awareness about through artwork?	Ethnic community Family community Neighborhood community Racial community Religious community School community Sports community Other community	
What type of artwork will you create?	Painting Other artwork	
What materials will you use to create your artwork?	Paint Paintbrushes Paper Other materials	
What story will your artwork tell about your community? What will your artwork be about?	Issues affecting your community Other story	
What colors will you include in your artwork?	Black Blue Brown Green Orange Red Yellow White Other colors	
What images will you include in your artwork?	People Places Things Other images	
What shapes will you include in your artwork?	Circles Rectangles Squares Triangles Other shapes	
What words will you include in your artwork?	Names of people Slogans Other words	

Glossary

Ethnic: a group of people who have the same customs, religion, origin, etc.

Slogans: words or phrases, like No Justice, No Peace, that are easy to remember and are used by groups or businesses to attract attention

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PART 15 – Create your artwork using your plan from **PART 14**.

PART 16 – After you create your artwork, write an object label that gives detailed information about your artwork using the **Object Label Format** below. Then write an artist’s quote describing the artwork in your own words. Write your object label underneath **My Object Label** and your artist’s quote underneath **My Artist’s Quote** in the space below or on a separate document.

Object Label Format

My artwork’s title

Date my artwork was created

My name

My artwork’s medium

My Object Label

My Artist’s Quote

PART 17 – Share your artwork, object label, and artist’s quote with a classmate, family member, friend, teacher, or someone else.

Extension Activity

PART A - An artist's statement describes in the artist's own words why and/or how the artist makes an artwork, multiple pieces of artwork, or all of their artwork. Imani Parker is a LA-based artist. She created *No Justice, No Peace* in **PART 2** and *Enough* in **PART 8**. Learn more about Imani Parker by looking at her image and reading her artist's statement underneath the image.



Artist's Statement

I'm a Los Angeles native who fell in love with art at an early age; subsequently, I have always been a creative in some aspect. As an artist my first goal is always to inspire. My work highlights black beauty, black pain, and black resilience. I wholeheartedly believe that art is the universal language, and through my art I am able to reach and inspire people who may have otherwise never known the story behind my work. Over the last year, many of my pieces were dedicated to the Black Lives Matter Movement that we all watched unfold during **unprecedented** times. I used my art as a **vessel** for the internal struggle we all felt while watching and participating in protests and demonstrations around the world. It is my hope that my art gives **visualization** for that struggle while encouraging self-reflection and healthy dialogue that will push us further towards progress with our communities.

-Imani Parker (June 2021)

Glossary

Native: a person who is born in a specific place

Resilience: the result of recovering from something challenging

Unprecedented: hasn't happened before

Vessel: something that contains or holds something else

Visualization: when a person pictures something in their mind

Extension Activity

PART B - After reading Imani Parker's artist's statement in **PART A**, answer the questions about her artist's statement in the chart below. Write your answers in the space provided or on a separate document.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT QUESTIONS	MY ANSWERS
Why does Imani Parker create her art?	
What does Imani Parker's work highlight?	
What has Imani Parker dedicated many of her pieces to?	
What is Imani Parker's hope for her art?	
What else did you learn about Imani Parker and/or her art?	

PART C - Imani Parker is passionate about creating art. What are you passionate about? Are you passionate about art, a **cause**, a hobby, a place, reading, school, sports, writing, or something else? Choose something that you are passionate about. Then write a paragraph about your passion. Plan your paragraph before writing it by answering the questions in the chart below. Write detailed answers in the space provided or on a separate document.

PARAGRAPH PLAN QUESTIONS	MY PARAGRAPH PLAN ANSWERS
What are you passionate about?	
Why are you passionate about this?	
How long have you had this passion?	
What do you want people to know about your passion?	
What else would you like people to know about you and/or your passion?	

Glossary

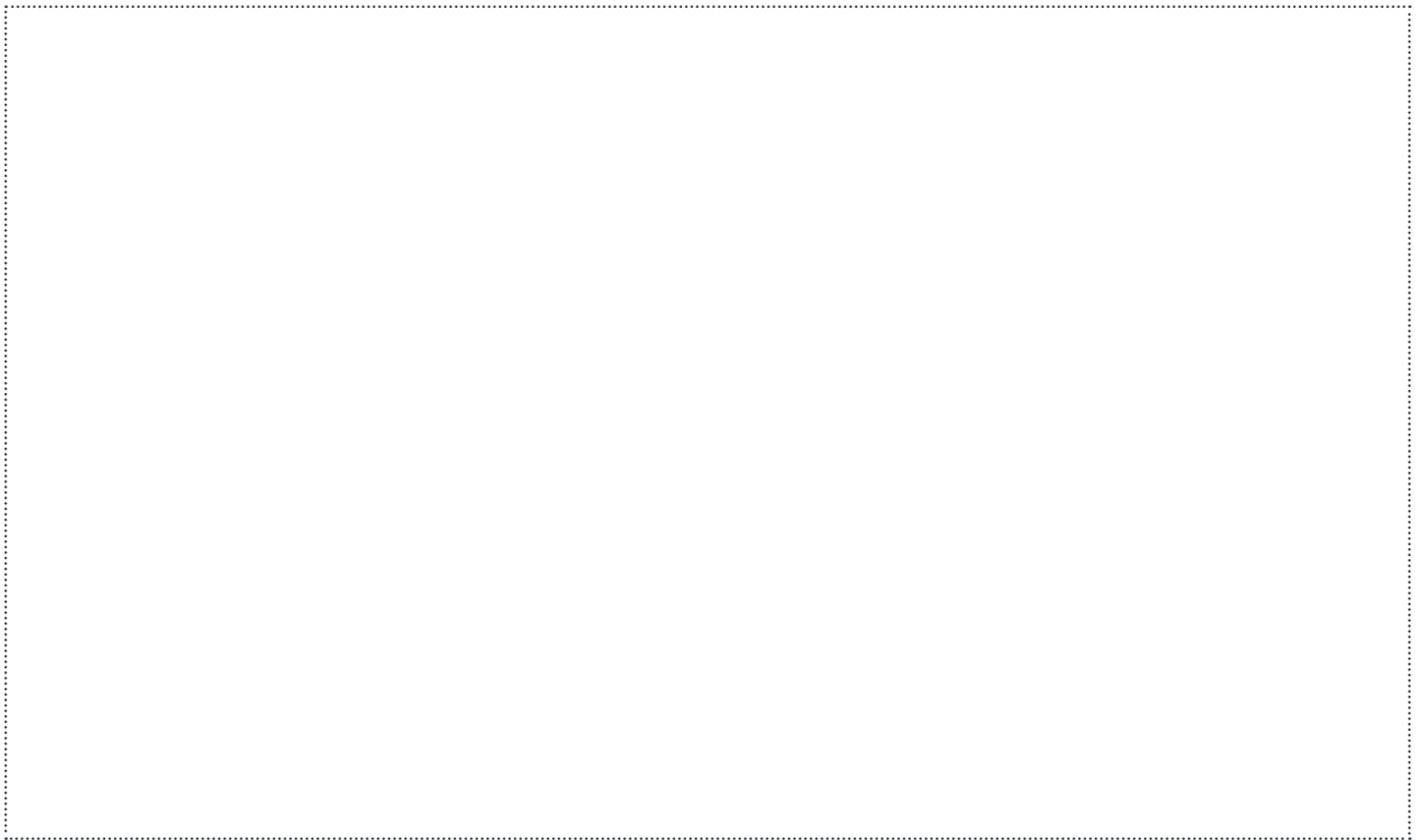
Cause: something (such as an organization, belief, idea, or goal) that people or a group support or fight for

Extension Activity

PART D - Using your plan from PART C, write a paragraph about your passion. Write your paragraph in the space below or on a separate document.

PART E - Include a drawing of you in the My Drawing box below or on a separate document.

My Drawing



PART F - Share your paragraph and drawing with a classmate, family member, friend, teacher, or someone else.

Resources

Statement of Solidarity

The Autry's mission is to tell the diverse stories of the American West, and to connect the past with the present to inspire a shared future. We support a community where all feel welcome, safe, and protected. Black Lives Matter, and we stand in solidarity with those protesting toward that end.

Images

Images from the Los Angeles Black Lives Matter protests following the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and Ahmaud Arbery. Images taken by Rob Liggins in Hollywood, CA, Compton, CA, and Downtown Los Angeles, CA in May/June 2020.

Imani Parker, *Enough*, 2020, acrylic paint on canvas.

Imani Parker, *No Justice, No Peace*, 2020, acrylic paint on canvas.

Untitled, photo by Clyde Bates Jr., October 17, 2017.

Text

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Do you want to see the artist’s quote, artwork, drawing, object label, and paragraph that you created on our Instagram or Twitter?

Ask an adult to send a photograph of the artwork and drawing you created along with your name, age, artist’s quote, object label, and paragraph to outreach@theautry.org for a chance to be featured on our social media! Accepting work from artists of all ages. Must be 18-years or older to submit.