MIXED-MEDIA IMAGINARY PLACES

Emma Amos was an important Black painter and printmaker best known for her colorful mixed-media paintings. Mixed media is a term used to describe works of art made from many different art materials. “Giza, Emma, Larry” combines an image of the artist’s friend and student Giza, a piece of African kente cloth, a photo-transfer of Amos and her brother and paint. What do you notice about this work of art?

Amos often mixed pictures of people in motion with colorfully painted backgrounds. Sometimes the people in these works of art appear to fall through space. In this work, the figures float in a sea of blues. Amos explained, “a photograph can tell you that you were standing on the beach with your mother and brother in 1947. Painting gives the artist a chance to manipulate the background, charge up the colors, add texture...it’s manipulating memory.” How does the painted background in this work change the stories of the people pictured?

In this activity, you’ll create an imaginary place by combining a collaged image of a person with a painted or drawn background.

For this activity you will need:

- Paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Paint and other media
- Magazines and photos

To make your mixed-media imaginary place:

1. Look through magazines or photographs to find a picture of a person doing something fun or interesting. They might be jumping, dancing, swimming or laughing. Carefully cut out a few figures.

2. Glue the person or people onto your paper. Try putting them in surprising positions on the page!

3. Create the background. What colors will you add? Do you want your place to be somewhere totally made up, like a magical land, or somewhere unexpected, like on top of a very tall mountain?

4. Add other media, like strips of paper or paint layered over crayons. How do these additions make new stories for the people in your art?