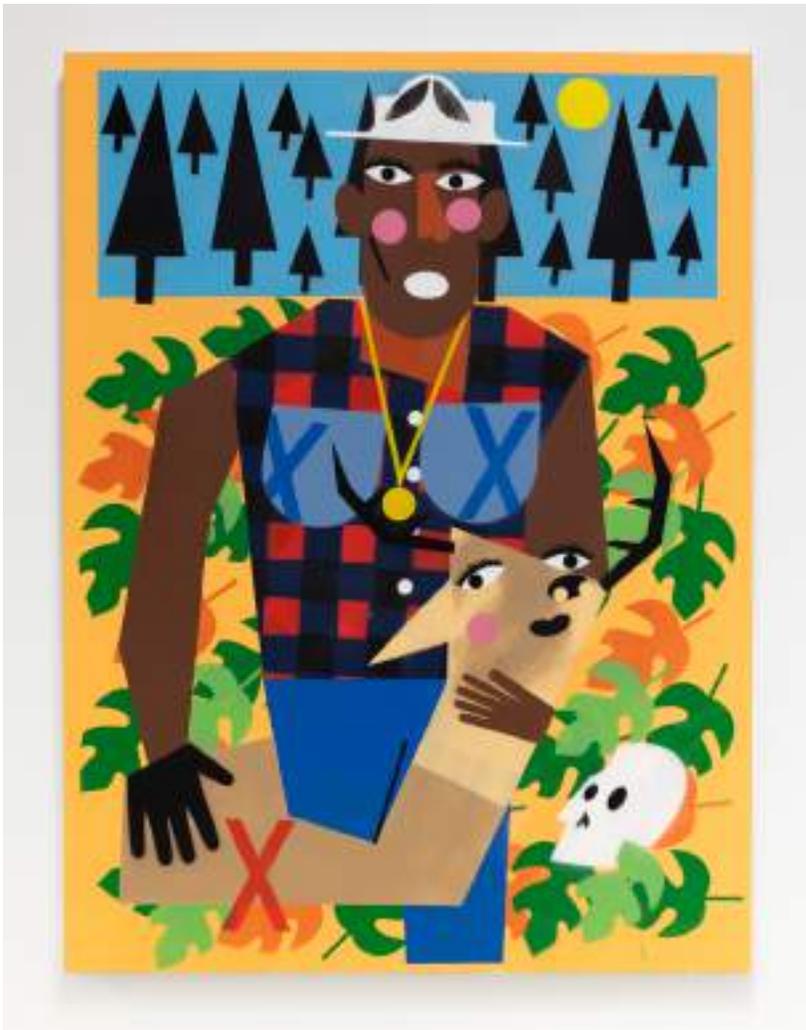


# Studio Saturdays: Paper Collage

Rollins  
Museum  
of Art

## *Helen with the Drip* by Nina Chanel Abney



Nina Chanel Abney

*Helen with the Drip*

2020

Acrylic and spray-paint on canvas

48 x 36 in.

The Alford Collection of Contemporary Art at Rollins College, Gift of Barbara '68 and Theodore '68 Alford. Image Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

## LIST OF MATERIALS

- 1 Sheet of White Paper
- 1 Sheet of Black Paper
- 6 Half Sheets of Colored Paper
- Pencil
- Scissor
- Glue

Nina Chanel Abney is an American contemporary artist who works in paint and collage. A contemporary artist is an artist who is alive and making art right now. Today's piece, Helen with the Drip, is part of a series Abney began during the COVID-19 pandemic. Seeking an escape from the busy city, she began visiting the countryside of New York where she rode her bike along nature trails. These trips inspired her to create a series of paintings set in a utopia. A "utopia" is an imagined place where everything is perfect, like a paradise. Abney's utopia is a place where she can hide from people and any judgments they have about who she is, what she does, and how she lives. In this space she can farm, play, and enjoy life away from the rules of others.

Abney's style in her paintings is inspired by collage, an artistic practice where a person cuts up many pieces of paper with different colors or different images on them, then puts the pieces together to make a new image. She uses stencils along with acrylic paint and spray paint to achieve this cut-out effect. In this painting, Abney uses her collage-inspired technique to create a portrait of a person named Helen holding a deer in a leaf-scattered field in front of a forest. Abney often repeats symbols or numbers in her works; in this piece, the "X" symbol is repeated on the body of the deer and on Helen's shirt. Helen, the floor of leaves, the background of trees and the blue sky all seem to lay on the same flat surface together, with no true foreground and background. The background is made up of parts that are "far away" in the space of an artwork, like the trees that are small and distant. The foreground is made up of parts that are larger and "closer" to you the viewer, like Helen and the deer. Abney's paintings show how you can create a larger space with only simple shapes and a few colors.

**For today's project, we will be making paper stencil collages inspired by the free space in Nina Chanel Abney's painting. Think about things you enjoy doing but that you are not comfortable doing in front of other people. For example, maybe you love to sing but don't think you can do so as well as others or maybe you like to play hockey or acting in school plays but your friends don't, so you avoid doing it to fit in. Use construction paper to cut out shapes and create a scene of you having fun doing what an activity you love a space where you are free to be yourself!**

## THINK LIKE AN ARTIST

- 1) What images make you feel most connected to the countries where you and your ancestors were born?
- 2) How will you use these symbols or flags to create a design pattern? Soundsuit dance?

# INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sketch out your scene on the white paper. As you draw, think of Abney's blocky style and use simple shapes that will be easy to cut out. You will use this sketch as a reference to create your artwork.
2. Decide what color each part of the sketch will be and then redraw the shapes onto the corresponding paper. You may want to work on one color at a time. Make sure as you're drawing to leave enough space so that you're able to fit everything.
3. Check off each section of the sketch as you draw them to keep track of your progress.
4. Once you have finished drawing all of your parts, use scissors to cut out each shape and keep them together. Compare and adjust the pieces to each other as you cut them out. You may need to redo some of your shapes, so make sure to keep your leftover paper.
5. Arrange the cut-out shapes on a plain sheet of background paper to recreate your original sketch.
6. Once all pieces are cut out and arranged on paper, glue them into place.