

DELLA WELLS: SYMBOLISM COLLAGE



Della Wells, *Freedom's Garden*, 2021 (detail)

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Students will analyze *Freedom's Garden* by Della Wells. They will then create symbolic collages to share their visions of hope for the future.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Examine and discuss symbolism within *Freedom's Garden* by Della Wells
- Identify what symbols may represent values or ideas that are personally significant
- Incorporate symbolism within an original collage to represent a vision of hope for the future

MATERIALS LIST

- Image of *Freedom's Garden* by Della Wells (digital or printed)
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Paper background
- Collage materials such as magazines, newspapers, drawings, and found objects



Learn more about
Della Wells's
Freedom's Garden

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SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is it important to hear different stories?
- How can imagery convey intangible emotions, actions, thoughts or meaning?
- If you were to create a collage to evoke hope for the future what would it say? What symbols could you include to enhance its meaning?

ACTIVITY STEPS

1. Begin by showing students an image of *Freedom's Garden* by Della Wells. Ask students to discuss what they believe is happening in the artwork and what they see to support these interpretations. Ask students if they see any imagery repeated throughout the artwork.
2. Next, define symbolism. Wells includes dense symbolism within her collages. For example, the towering foreground figures represent the generations of women leading the way in protest. Butterflies represent transformation of the United States as well as individuals' souls. Flowers stand for the blooming of freedom. Watermelons signify stereotypes. The flying girl embodies the desire to fly over adversity. The small, old-fashioned figures in the background are ancestors who paved the way for today's activists.
3. Students will now create their own collages which will incorporate symbolism. Have students begin by brainstorming messages of hope for the future. This may be completed through a variety of methods such as preparatory sketches, small group discussions, or writing exercises.
4. Students will search for symbolic imagery to enhance the message within their collage. Students may also add drawings, found objects, or words to enhance their message.
5. Students will combine symbolic imagery to develop a narrative of hope for the future.

REFLECT AND CONNECT

- How is symbolism incorporated into your collage? How does this enhance your message?
- What similarities do you see between your work and *Freedom's Garden*?
- Imagine your collage is on display at an art museum. Consider how museum visitors would be influenced while viewing your art.



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