



MELISSA JOSEPH is a New York based artist. She was raised in an Indian/American household in rural Pennsylvania and she worked as a textile designer and K-12 art educator for 13 years before attaining an MFA in 2018. She uses her own family photo archive along with craft and found materials to consider themes of memory and family history.

Her work is in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum, ICA Miami, and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and has been shown at various museums and galleries. Joseph has been featured in Vogue, Artsy, WNYC, Hyperallergic, Artnet, New American Paintings, Le Monde, CNN, and Architectural Digest and has participated in residencies including Dieu Donn e, Fountainhead, the Archie Bray Foundation for Ceramic Arts, the Museum of Arts and Design and upcoming at Greenwich House Pottery in 2024.

Let's view more of her work on her [Website](#).

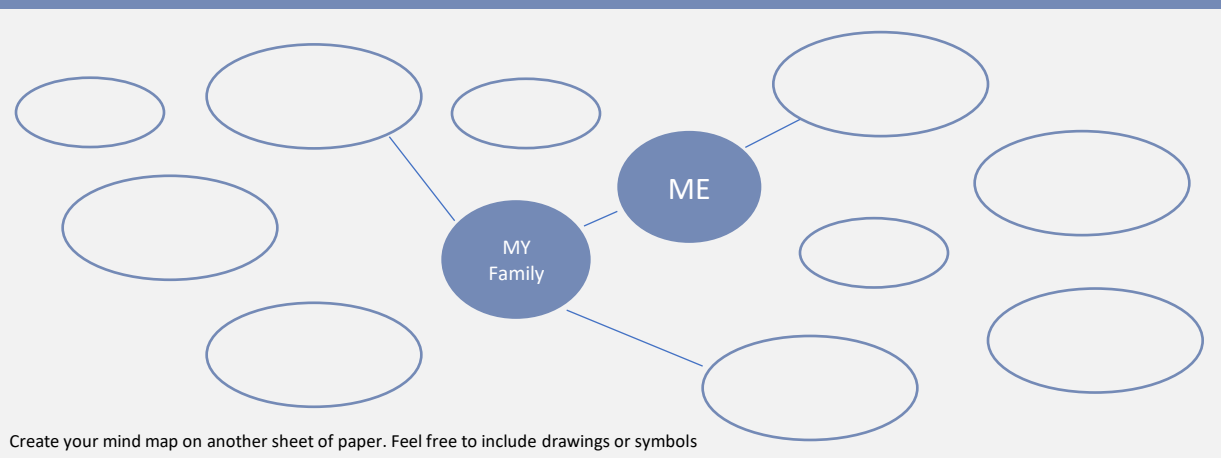
Reflect +Discuss: What do you like about Melissa Joseph's work?
What books, stories, or movies does her work remind you of?

Today We Will:

- 1 **Explore visual forms of storytelling.** We will think about the different ways we can tell stories about ourselves and our families.
- 2 **Experiment with fiber materials.** Our goal is to find a way to express ourselves by making unique marks without feeling pressured to draw anything in particular.

In [Melissa Joseph's amazing artwork at Rockefeller Center](#), you'll see everyday moments captured in soft, fluffy wool. You might spot a lady carefully painting henna on someone's hand, or kids in pajamas wearing superhero masks while relaxing with a sleepy baby. There's even a scene of three women hanging out in a bedroom, one of them with her hair up in pink curlers! Melissa got inspired by her own family photos, showing her parents, brothers, and sisters, as well as lots of other relatives. Melissa was born in a town called St. Mary's in Pennsylvania. Her mom is from Pittsburgh and has Irish roots, while her dad is from Kerala, India. Melissa says her art is all about showing what it's like to be part of a family with different backgrounds and cultures.

Let's Brainstorm: Use a mind map like the one below to keep track of what makes you and your family special. What are some people, places, and things that are interesting and important to you and your family? What memories or stories do you like sharing with others?



Let's Recap: Take a look at your mind map and reflect on the following questions:

☆What details from your mind map do you want to share with others? Why?

☆What memory or story do you imagine you could make an artwork about? Why?

Symbolism: A symbol is like a simple picture or sign that stands for something else. It's a way of showing or representing things without using words. For example, a heart can be a symbol for love, and a smiley face can be a symbol for happiness. Symbols help us understand and communicate without always needing to talk.

Let's draw out some symbols that are important to you. Remember that symbols are simple images or designs. They are easy to read and can be identified by other people.

☆Why did you pick these symbols? What are ways that you can combine these symbols to tell a story?

The Power of Color: Colors are powerful at communicating emotions and can also be used as symbols. Think about the following colors and what they might mean:

RED

BLUE

YELLOW

GREEN

ORANGE

PURPLE

TEAL

☆What is one color you want to use while creating your artwork? What emotions are related to it? What else can it symbolize?

NOW IT'S TIME TO MAKE SOMETHING!

LET'S PICK FROM THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:

When picking your project and the materials you work with, try and follow your instincts and your intuition. What things, processes, shapes, and colors are you drawn to. Think about why.

OPTION 1 EXPLORE WOOL FELTING



You will need basic felting materials (felting needle, wool fibers, and a foam base)

← [This kit](#) (or one similar) is a great place to start. Ask your parents if these materials are appropriate for you to handle.



INSTRUCTIONS

← [This Wiki How](#) has in depth instructions about the felting process. You can also follow the simplified instructions below.

- 1- Gather your felting materials. You may want to start with a pre-cut felt shape.
- 2- Place the chunk of wool felt on top of the foam.
- 3- The felt chunk should be larger than the final shape you want to make.
- 4- Use the felting needle to poke the wool into place. Poke the wool repeatedly until it sticks securely to the shape.
- 5- Repeat steps 3 and 4 until your design is finished.

To start, try making abstract designs that capture a feeling or emotion. Once you get the hang of it you can explore more complicated designs or details.



You may want to make several pieces and combine them together into a mobile.

← [This Wiki How](#) has in depth instructions for several mobile construction methods.

OPTION 2 MAKE A COLLAGE WITH SMALL PIECES OF TORN PAPER

You will need some basic materials including: various colors of scrap paper, school glue, a piece of cardboard or thick paper as your base, and a pencil if you want to pre-draw your design



INSTRUCTIONS

← [This short video](#) from the National Portrait Gallery has in-depth instructions you may want to follow. You can also follow the simplified instructions below.

- 1- Gather your pieces of scrap paper. Make sure you have paper with different colors or shades. You can use colored craft paper, magazines, old mail, receipts, etc.
- 2- Tear up your sheets of scrap paper into small pieces.
- 3- Begin placing your torn scraps on your base, using glue to secure it. Make sure to not use too much glue. You may want to use a small paintbrush to evenly distribute the glue on the base
- 4- Continue the process until you have a cohesive design. Remember to think about the whole paper, including the background.

You can making abstract designs that capture a feeling or emotion or create symbols that tell a story.

OPTION 3 TELL YOUR STORY USING A REPURPOSED OBJECT

You will need some basic materials. The materials and object you use are up to you.

- 1- Ask your parents to help you find an object (or several) around the house you can repurpose. This can be a vase, old figurine, or even an old cereal box.
- 2- Have your parents help you find materials that will be able to leave permanent marks on the object. This can be art materials like paint, permanent markers, colored pencils, or pastels. You can also try making marks with tape, gluing pieces of paper, or scraping into the surface with a tool.

INSTRUCTIONS

There is no right or wrong way to make art from repurposed objects. Follow your instincts.

- You can paint or draw on the object, combine objects together, or you can break the objects up into pieces or parts and reassemble... the goal is to experiment!
- Here's another idea: collect things that are special to you, like toys or souvenirs, and put them together in a way that looks nice. Then, just take a picture of them! You're sort of borrowing these things to make a cool picture, and when you're finished, you can put them back where they belong, just like they were before.

While making your work, think about what the objects mean or what they can symbolize. Try to create something that tells a story about you or your family.

Extension **Tone** is how the maker feels about a subject or topic

Mood is the way the viewer is supposed to feel

For Example: A painting might show a brother and sister that are mad at each other or fighting over a toy (tone), the artist might paint it in a way that is comical, and you as the viewer might find the situation familiar and maybe even laugh a little (mood).

Why is it important to think about Tone and Mood?

Reflection ☆What are some of the feelings and thoughts you had while you were making your design?

☆What do you want others to feel and think about when they see your design?

☆Do these feelings and thoughts have to be the same?

GLOSSARY **Abstract** is like when you paint a picture that doesn't look like a person or a house, but it still makes you feel something special. It's all about using colors, shapes, and lines to create feelings and ideas instead of showing things exactly as they are.

Cohesive means things stick together nicely or work well together as a team.

Intuition is like a feeling inside you that helps you make decisions or know what's right, even if you can't explain why.

Instinct is when you naturally want to do something, think a certain way, or feel a certain feeling, without be taught.

Metaphor is a way of saying something by comparing it to something else, even though they're not really the same. It's like saying "the world is a stage," which means life is like a big play, even though we know the world isn't actually a stage. Metaphors help us understand things in a fun and imaginative way!

Representational means something looks like real life. When a drawing or a painting is representational, it looks like a person, an animal, or something else you can recognize easily.

A Repurposed object is something that gets a new job or use after it's been used for something else. It's like when you turn an old jar into a pencil holder or use an empty cardboard box as a pretend spaceship. Instead of throwing things away, you give them a new purpose and make them useful again in a different way!

PARENT/EDUCATOR DOCUMENT

Intended grade level: K-6

<p>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore visual forms of storytelling. We will think about the different ways we can tell stories about ourselves and our families. • Experiment with fiber materials. Our goal is to find a way to express ourselves by making unique marks without feeling pressured to draw anything in particular. 																
<p>OUTCOMES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will have a better understanding of visual storytelling and will be able to identify how colors and symbols communicate meaning. • Students will create a work of art and be able to explain its meaning, particularly what the artwork makes them feel and what others might be led to feel. 																
<p>COMMON CORE STANDARDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with various materials and tools to explore personal interests in a work of art or design. • Make art or design with various materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity. • Interpret art by identifying the mood suggested by a work of art and describing relevant subject matter and characteristics of form. • Create works of art about events in home, school, or community life. 																
<p>ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S)</p>	<p>WHAT IS MY STORY AND HOW DO I WANT TO TELL IT?</p>																
<p>TIMELINE</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>10 minutes</td> <td>Introduction to the artist</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3-5 minutes</td> <td>Discuss today's goal, learning objectives, and essential questions</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10-15 minutes</td> <td>Brainstorming Task</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7-10 minutes</td> <td>Discuss symbolism and color</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5-7 minutes</td> <td>Review the making options</td> </tr> <tr> <td>45+ minutes</td> <td>Making time</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10-15 minutes</td> <td>Extension and reflection</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 minutes</td> <td>Have students share what they made</td> </tr> </table> <p>TOTAL ESTIMATED TIME 90+ MINUTES</p>	10 minutes	Introduction to the artist	3-5 minutes	Discuss today's goal, learning objectives, and essential questions	10-15 minutes	Brainstorming Task	7-10 minutes	Discuss symbolism and color	5-7 minutes	Review the making options	45+ minutes	Making time	10-15 minutes	Extension and reflection	5 minutes	Have students share what they made
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LESSON PLAN CREATED BY
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 THE NEW SCHOOL



*art
production
fund*