

EDUCATION GUIDE

THE MANY HATS OF

RALPH ARNOLD

ART, IDENTITY & POLITICS

echoes

reframing collage



Ralph Arnold, *Who You/Yeah Baby* (detail)

MoCP Museum of Contemporary Photography

Columbia
COLLEGE CHICAGO

This guide serves as an educational supplement to the exhibitions *THE MANY HATS OF RALPH ARNOLD: ART, IDENTITY & POLITICS* and *ECHOES: REFRAMING COLLAGE* and contains information about the works on view, questions for looking and discussion, and suggested readings.

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The Many Hats of Ralph Arnold: Art, Identity & Politics and *Echoes: Reframing Collage* are part of Art Design Chicago, an exploration of Chicago's art and design legacy, an initiative of the Terra Foundation for American Art with presenting partner The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation. These exhibitions are funded by the Terra Foundation for American Art, The Joyce Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and the Chicago Community Trust.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Many Hats of Ralph Arnold: Art, Identity & Politics

Introduction	3
Key Themes	
• Socio-Political Movements and the Year 1968	4
• Arnold’s Multifaceted Identity and Intersectionality	8
• Mass Media	12
• Music	13
Extended Resources	15
Glossary of Terms and Historical References	15

Echoes: Reframing Collage

Introduction	17
Exhibition Highlights	18
Historical References	23

Illinois Learning Standards Addressed in this Guide

.....	24
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THE MANY HATS OF RALPH ARNOLD

ART, IDENTITY & POLITICS

INTRODUCTION

An artist and educator based in Chicago, Ralph Arnold (American, 1928–2006) worked in **collage**, painting, and text with a dedication to addressing issues of race, gender, and identity. Arnold drew upon his own multifaceted identity to fuel and inform his extraordinary creative output, holding an ambivalent positioning between **figuration** and **abstraction**—and occupying both spaces with his hybridized practice.

KEY THEME: SOCIO-POLITICAL MOVEMENTS AND THE YEAR 1968

Arnold drew inspiration from the **Vietnam War**, the **Civil Rights Movement** and the **Gay Liberation Movement**. The social and cultural ramifications surrounding these issues related to Arnold on a deeply personal level as a black American, **Korean War** veteran, and member of the LGBTQ community.

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT: *ABOVE THIS EARTH, GAMES, GAMES, 1968*



Ralph Arnold, *Above this Earth, Games, Games*, 1968, collection of The Pauls Foundation.

Here Arnold pairs images of a wounded soldier being carried off the battlefield with the text “above this slumbering earth / games, games, games,” to imply that football is both a metaphor for war and a public distraction from the deaths of soldiers and civilians in the **Vietnam War**. As a veteran, Arnold empathized with the troops thrust into the confusing social and political climate of the conflict, where the line was often blurred between savior and captor, ally and enemy, or noncombatant and guerrilla.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- Other than considering aspects of physical violence, what reasons could Arnold have for choosing football as a metaphor for war? What role does football hold in American culture, as well as in mainstream expectations of masculinity?
- In addition to collage, what colors and compositional choices does Arnold use? How do these seemingly **abstract** choices relate to the themes that are more **figuratively** depicted in the collage?

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT: *ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER, 1968*



Ralph Arnold, *One Thing Leads to Another*, 1968, collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.

In this piece, Arnold uses stenciled text to guide us through the composition. The words “LEFT OUT” are seen in the upper-left, surrounded by images of people experiencing poverty. In the upper-right, the phrase “PUT DOWN,” is matched with depictions of the Draft Board, the American Nazi party, and the police. The word “GENERATIONS” appears in the center-right, accompanying a black child confronted by a **Jim Crow** sign (“White Section Only”) and a famous image of Joe Bass Jr., a twelve-year-old black boy caught in police crossfire during the **Newark Revolts of July 1967**. The juxtaposition the three phrases and the accompanying imagery conveys a cause and effect relationship between systematic racism and poverty on future generations of Americans.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- Where does your eye go first when looking at this piece? What sequencing is Arnold providing in the composition to give his point of view on the current political climate?
- Is the political climate in America today similar or different? What makes you say that?
- Consider where Arnold has chosen to include text throughout the exhibition. Does the inclusion of text change the way you read or interpret the images? How or how not?
- What could Arnold be suggesting with his choices in color palette? What mood do you associate with these colors?



Sunshine Jubilee (Michael James and James Tracy) *Hot Town . . . Pigs in the Streets*, 1968, Poster, DePaul University Library Special Collections and Archives,



Ralph Arnold, *One Thing Leads to Another*, 1968 (detail), collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.

WHAT IS COLLAGE?

Collage is a visual art form comprised of elements assembled from any number of sources—from photographs to found imagery, such as magazines and newspapers—that has been cut and affixed to a surface to create a whole. In the year 1912, Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso started affixing scraps of wallpaper, labels and cloth to their paintings, and they eventually coined the term *collage*, which comes from the French verb *collager*, meaning “to glue.” The disjointed and roguish character of collage makes it an effective tool for politically and socially concerned artists like Arnold. Forcing construction by destruction, it suits messages of rebellion and enables artists to capitalize on the fact that the meaning of an image always depends on context. The image on the right is a detail of *One Thing Leads to Another* and illustrates Arnold’s use of magazine pages collaged onto canvas. He found much of his imagery for this piece in *Ebony* magazine’s August 1965 special issue “The White Problem in America” as well as from a poster used in political protests in 1968, seen on left.

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT: *UNFINISHED COLLAGE, 1968*



Ralph Arnold, *Unfinished Collage*, 1968, collection of the South Side Community Arts Center

Arnold's three-panel canvas piece, *Unfinished Collage*, was included in the groundbreaking 1968 exhibition *Violence! In Recent American Art* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. The piece dramatically suspends from the ceiling and presents images of the life, death, and burials of **John F. Kennedy**, **Robert F. Kennedy**, and **Martin Luther King Jr.**, after RFK and MLK were assassinated within months of one another in 1968. Arnold chooses to leave a fourth window in his triptych blank, forecasting additional, future violence and implicating the viewer as a witness to more atrocities yet to come.

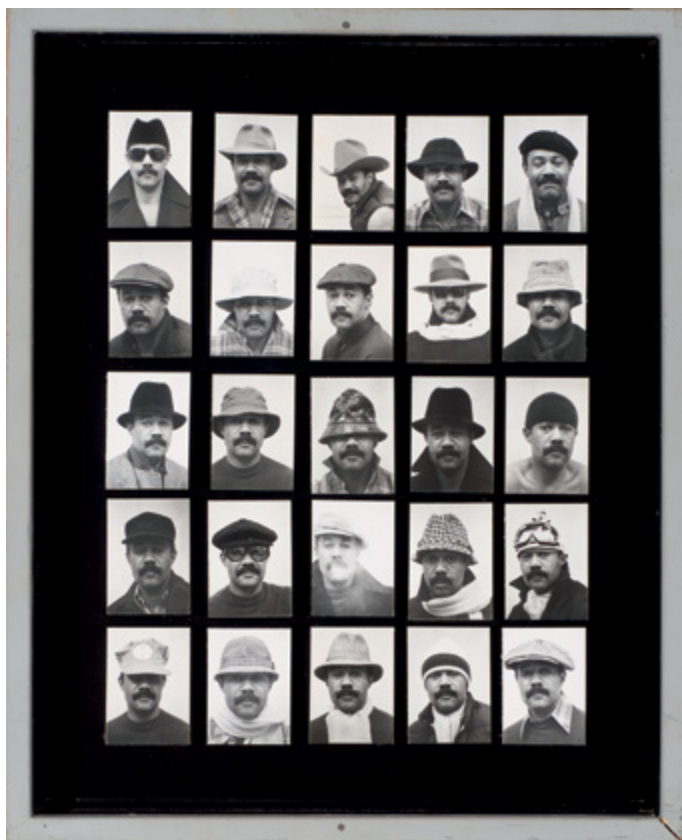
QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

Curator Greg Foster-Rice states: *Arnold's engagement with aesthetic, social, and political issues can now engage us, providing both precedent and provocation to address our current period, from the spectacle of the internet, to the clash between Black Lives Matter and resurgent white supremacy, to the strides and setbacks en route to marriage equality, to the massive political protests instigated by the 2016 presidential election—all of which have their origins in the mass media, **Civil Rights**, antiwar, and **Gay Liberation movements** of the 1960s and '70s that informed Arnold's life and work.*¹

- Considering the blank—or unfinished—panel in *Unfinished Collage*, what violence might we have filled in the 50 years since Arnold created this piece? What notable event since 1968 could we place in the blank panel? Have we made social progress as a nation?
- Describe how the object is displayed. How does the method of display affect how you experience and interpret what it is saying? What makes you say that?

¹The Many Hats of Ralph Arnold: Art, Identity & Politics exhibition publication, 2018

KEY THEME: ARNOLD'S MULTIFACETED IDENTITY



One art critic in reviewing my work said will the real Ralph Arnold stand up—well here I am—I don't do one object in 25 different colors. I do several objects in any way that I choose and treat them in any media I feel like doing . . . so the Real RA is complex in media, diverse in style, and multifaceted in subject matter. It's much harder, more exciting, and . . . everything hangs out.

—Ralph Arnold, handwritten statement, ca. 1980

Ralph Arnold, *The Many Hats of Ralph Arnold*, ca. 1975. Collection of Angela and George Jacobi, Milwaukee.

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT: *THE MANY HATS OF RALPH ARNOLD*, ca. 1975

The Many Hats of Ralph Arnold (ca. 1975), which inspired the title of this exhibition, is Arnold's most straightforwardly photographic work and shows the artist in a grid of portraits posing as an assortment of personas. The title is quite literal—as Arnold is wearing a different hat in each image, with each representing a different identity he is trying on. In every image he meets our gaze, establishing the viewer as his audience, and questioning signifiers of blackness, whiteness, and masculinity as performative projections rather than innate qualities of the self.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- Have students choose one image within the grid of self-portraits and compare it to another. Do the two images seem like the same person? How or how not?
- How would you describe Arnold's facial expression in each image? Are they consistent expressions or different in each frame? How does this consistency or lack of consistency challenge our understanding of portraiture at large?



Ralph Arnold, *Untitled Collage*, ca. 1968, collection of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis.

ARNOLD AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is a term coined by feminist scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989. It asks us to understand how the *combination* of social identities (like gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, religion, and more) shapes a person's life, rather than considering each of them separately. For example, the way a gay, Latina woman is seen by society may be different than the way a heterosexual, Latino man is seen by society.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- How was Arnold's identity intersectional? How does he show intersectional identities in his artworks like *The Many Hats of Ralph Arnold* or other pieces?
- Have students think of multiple components to their own identities and discuss ways they intersect. What parts of your identities and their intersections do you see represented in the artworks? Do you see these intersections represented in other popular media as well? Describe.

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT: *MALE BAG*, 1972



Ralph Arnold, *Male Bag*, 1972.
Collection of Indiana State University,
Cunningham Memorial Library

Many works in the exhibition are about Arnold's sexuality. The repeated bag motif seen in many works references an expression from the counterculture of the 1960s, "What's Your Bag?" The expression was another way of saying "what are you about?" or "what are you into?" In combining imagery ranging from football players to underwear models to Henry VIII, the artist humorously illustrates a spectrum of the male form, perhaps claiming them all as his "bag."

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- Compare the different types of men represented here. What story is the artist telling in combining these images?
- What are some of the visual motifs in this piece that are repeated in other pieces throughout the exhibition?



Robert Rauschenberg, *Flower Re-Run*, from the *Reels B and C* series, 1968; collection of the Minneapolis Museum of Art.

ARNOLD IN THE ART WORLD

Ralph Arnold was always engaged in the ideas and work of his contemporaries and he had many influences, including Romare Bearden, Robert Motherwell, Pablo Picasso, and Robert Rauschenberg, to name a few. After looking at the piece on above, also in the exhibition, and considering what you might already know of the other artists listed, can you see the influences of Arnold's peers on his work? How so or how not?

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s Arnold amassed an impressive record of solo exhibitions at commercial galleries and solo and group shows at university galleries and museums across the country. He taught for more than twenty-five years, primarily at Loyola University Chicago, and was a long-serving board member at both the historic South Side Community Art Center (SSCAC), and the Illinois Arts Council. With so much success, why might Arnold not be as well-known today as the other artists mentioned above? What barriers may he have experienced?

KEY THEME: MASS MEDIA

Moving into the 1970s, Arnold continues his fascination with the role of the mass media in shaping public opinion and begins a new series devoted to television. In the *T.V. Series*, he also returns to a long-held interest in **abstraction**, matching it with a formally rigorous aesthetic comprised of solid blocks of color and collaged imagery.

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT: THE *T.V. SERIES*, 1971



In his *T.V. Series*, Arnold hides the letters “T” and “V” and fills the letters with wavy lines. The blocks of color and blurred lines are in response to his fascination with the glitches that appeared in televisions of that time while out of focus. Arnold also places cultural signifiers to comment on the role of television in everyday life and consumerism.

Ralph Arnold, *Color TV*, 1971, collection of The Pauls Foundation.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- Have students search for the hidden “T” and “V” letters present in the painting as well as any branded products. Why might the artist choose to embed these attributes? What formal or conceptual purposes do they add to the piece?
- Consider the overall design of the works in the *T.V. Series*. What could the different compartments represent? Why might he have chosen to make these works with so many geometric lines?
- How has media changed since 1971? What form of mass media might Arnold make works about if he were still alive today?

KEY THEME: MUSIC

Ralph Arnold frequently paid homage to his favorite musicians. Collage lends itself well as a visual mirror to music, with the process of cutting and arranging not unlike the work of a composer. His appreciation for many musical genres—ranging from jazz, opera, blues, and R&B—is evident in his sculptural piece, *Black Music Box* (ca. 1980) and portfolio, *Black Music: Black and Proud* (ca. 1975). Here Arnold highlights some of the key musicians in the *Black Arts Movement* (1965–1975), in which artists worked with activists to ignite a sense of fellowship and pride as a spark for political change.



Ralph Arnold, *Black Music: Black and Proud*, ca. 1975.
Collection of The Pauls Foundation.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- Consider the materials and composition of the sculpture. What other objects does it remind you of? What would you compare it to?
- Have students try to identify the people pictured in *Black Music Box*. What were their contributions to music and American history? Are there any connections between the individuals besides their work as musicians?
- How can the process of making a collage be similar to the process of composing music?



Ralph Arnold, *Black Music Box*,
ca. 1980, collection of the South Side
Community Arts Center

- A.** Duke Ellington Orchestra
- B.** Charlie Parker
- C.** Dizzy Gillespie
- D.** Ornette Coleman
- E.** Bessie Smith

- F.** Nat King Cole
- G.** Jimi Hendrix
- H.** Billie Holiday
- I.** Nat King Cole
- J.** Louis Armstrong
- K.** Stevie Wonder

- L.** James Brown
- M.** Unknown Artist.
If you think you might know who this musician is, please email us at mocp@colum.edu with "Black Music Box ID" as the subject.

ARNOLD INSPIRED PLAYLIST

For music by artists featured in Arnold's artwork or whose work relates to similar issues, please visit our spotify playlists for *The Many Hats of Ralph Arnold*. Consider how the styles, lyrics, and themes of the songs relate to the work in this exhibition.

Greg Foster-Rice

Editor, *The Many Hats of Ralph Arnold: Art, Identity & Politics*, (Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College Chicago, 2018). This publication for the exhibition includes essays on all topics covered in this guide.

Aaron Cohen

Move On Up: Chicago Soul Music and Black Cultural Power, (Spring 2019, University of Chicago Press)

Timothy Stewart-Winter

Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016)

Rebecca Zorach

Art for People's Sake: Artists, Community, and Black Chicago 1965–75 (Duke University Press, 2019).

Rebecca Zorach and Melissa H. Baker

The Time Is Now!: Art Worlds of Chicago's South Side, 1960–1980. (Smart Museum of Art, 2018).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abstraction

An artistic expression that does not attempt to depict reality, but rather the artist's impression of a situation and ideas

Collage

A visual art piece comprised of elements assembled from any number of sources—from photographs to found imagery, such as magazines and newspapers—that has been cut and affixed to a surface to create a new whole.

Figuration

An artistic expression made to depict reality.

Black Power Movement

An African-American sociopolitical movement contemporaneous with the Civil Rights Movement, but philosophically divergent in that leadership in the former believed that black Americans should create social and political power for themselves, by force if necessary, rather than depend upon existing power structures to sustain them.

Civil Rights Movement

An American sociopolitical movement that ran from 1955 to 1968 (with roots in the late 1900s and battles that continue today) that sought to guarantee equal legal rights for African American citizens.

Democratic National Convention

Demonstrations of 1968: a turbulent political event in Chicago where new Democratic presidential candidates were to be announced, but instead the Convention dissolved into protests, rioting and infamous police brutality.

Gay Liberation Movement

A global social movement that ran from 1969 until around 1980, in which members of the LGBTQI+ community engaged in private and public protest against acute interpersonal and generalized societal shame regarding one's sexual orientation.

Jim Crow

A collective term used to describe state and local laws in the American south authored in the interest of maintaining racial segregation.

Martin Luther King Jr.

A Baptist preacher and vocal figurehead of the American Civil Rights Movement, Dr. King organized the historic March on Washington in 1963, during which he gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech to a crowd of a quarter-million attendees. Dr. King espoused a philosophy of peaceful protest, which served the Civil Rights Movement well after his assassination in 1968.

John F. Kennedy

The 35th president of the United States, JFK was assassinated on November 22nd, 1963 after serving during the height of Cold War tensions with the Soviet Union and during crucial years of the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S.

Robert F. Kennedy

The 64th US Attorney General, aspiring presidential candidate and brother of President John F. Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy (RFK) was a staunch supporter of Civil Rights until his assassination in 1968, reportedly for his support of the Israeli state.

Korean War

A regional conflict (with foreign support for both sides) between North and South Korea, in which the US actively participated from 1950 until 1953 but is still present today with the north/south division of the Korean Peninsula.

Newark revolts of July 1967

A week of riots that erupted along racial lines, set during a summer of intense racial tension and incited by white police brutality against Black taxi driver John Smith.

Vietnam War

A global conflict which lasted from November 1st, 1955 until April 30th, 1975 in present-day Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia wherein over 30 countries participated directly or in a supportive capacity.

echoes

reframing collage



Nathaniel Mary Quinn, *Ahhhhh*, 2017



Wardell Milan, *Early Spring. The Charming Evening*

INTRODUCTION

The artists in the accompanying exhibition *Echoes: Reframing Collage* focus on themes of pluralism and identity, the role of media in society, and issues relating to gender and race. Presenting the work of seven contemporary artists, *Echoes* examines the parallels between Ralph Arnold's work and theirs and thus deepens our understanding of Arnold's lasting contribution. The artists in *Echoes* use the structure of collage as a framework for layering popular histories and personal stories. Many of their works expand on cut-and-paste paper collage and apply the logic of collage to photographs. None of the artists work in digital collage. Materiality matters to them, as it did for Arnold. Their compositions are made in real time and space, even if they are abstracted at the end through the flattening effect of photography. Artists included:

Derrick Adams (American, b. 1970)
Krista Franklin (American, b. 1970)
Wardell Milan (American, b. 1978)
Ayanah Moor (American, b. 1973)

Nathaniel Mary Quinn (American, b. 1977)
Paul Mpagi Sepuya (American, b. 1982)
Xaviera Simmons (American, b. 1974)

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT: KRISTA FRANKLIN, *SHE TAUGHT US HOW TO FIGHT I AND II*, 2016 (DIPTYCH)



Chicago-based artist Krista Franklin affixes appropriated photographs onto spreads from Ebony magazines and swatches of sewing pattern paper. Her practice, like Arnold's, is heavily influenced by music. This diptych illustrates the lyrics of singer Jamila Woods's "Blk Girl Soldier," and appears in the background of the song's video. In the lyrics, Woods mentions six female "freedom fighters" who appear in Franklin's panels. The women include civil rights activists [Rosa Parks](#), [Ella Baker](#), [Audre Lorde](#), and [Angela Davis](#); abolitionist [Sojourner Truth](#); and Black Liberation Army member [Assata Shakur](#). Arnold featured black female singers in his work and, like the [Black Arts Movement](#), celebrated black artists in conjunction with Black activists. This restorative process of foregrounding black women in culture and history is mirrored in Franklin's work.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING



Ralph Arnold, Leontyne Price from *Black Music: Black and Proud*, ca. 1975

- Have students identify the historical figures presented in the collages. (See the "Historical References" on p. 23). Looking again at Arnold's work using the metaphor of football for war, consider the title of Woods's song, "Blk Girl Soldier." Do you think she is considering the word "soldier" literally or metaphorically? Why?
- Look closely at Franklin's collaged text and imagery. Why might she be choosing advertisements from hair products? What significance does hair have in African American culture?
- Compare and contrast Franklin's collages with Arnold's collages from his *Black Music: Black and Proud* portfolio. How are their subjects honored or presented similarly or differently? How does the process of collage remove or feature the individuals portrayed from the greater historical narrative?

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT: DERRICK ADAMS, *DON'T COME FOR ME UNLESS I SEND FOR YOU*, 2016–2017



Courtesy of Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago.

Derrick Adams focuses on archetypal Black figures from popular culture, especially in television and advertisements. The screen is significant to Adams as it continues a tradition of communicating to the masses via the contents within a frame, much like any other artworks. Yet, Adams chooses a mid-20th century era television as his “frame,” one with almost as much visual presence as the blocked colors within his screen. He says: “The TV frame is a relationship to history and the history of television. To me it’s the same as using a baroque frame.”² Like Arnold in his T.V. series from 1971, Adams is interested in the links between capitalism and politics. Both artists use vibrant color blocking to mirror the dynamism and allure of television, and its ability to manipulate the viewer and shape identity.

²Thackara, Tess. “Derrick Adams Is Reclaiming Black Identity from Hit TV Shows.” Artsy. June 08, 2016. Accessed August 23, 2018. <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-derrick-adams-is-reclaiming-black-identity-from-hit-tv-shows>.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING



Ralph Arnold, *Technical T.V.*, 1971

- Compare Adams’s works to Arnold’s TV Series. What similarities and differences do they share in overall composition, scale, and materials? How do these choices add to the story or point of view the artist is trying to depict?
- Consider the blocks of color Adams used in comparison to Arnold’s. Why might Adams choose to represent television with vintage features and to reference the blurred or distorted features of televisions from the 20th century?
- Adams is interested in the ways that television is used to advertise products, yet, unlike Arnold, he does not include literal product logos or imagery into his works. What elements of his composition suggest elements of advertisements or subliminal messaging?

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT: XAVIERA SIMMONS, *INDEX ONE, COMPOSITION THREE*, 2011



In Xavier Simmons's *Index, Composition* series (2011–present), a covered human figure lifts up her skirt, revealing an assortment of items underneath. Some of the objects are photographs—of an American Indian, fashion models, snapshots—and other items include African sculpture, hair, and patterned fabrics. The figure's face exists outside of the composition, privileging the objects and leaving us to connect the various ethno-cultural references. Like Arnold and Adams, Simmons makes works that suggest the performative, fragmented nature of identity.

Private collection.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- First consider how this photograph was made and have student identify where the human figure is within the composition. Would you consider this work to be portraiture? Why or why not?
- Compare these works to Arnold's only self-portrait titled, *The Many Hats of Ralph Arnold* (see p. 6). Do the objects presented function better or worse in conveying the identity of a subject if you were able to see their face? Which portrait gives you a more certain sense of the identity of the subject?
- Consider the artists titles. What role do they play in how you read and perceive these works? Why?
- Have students closely examine the objects Simmons has chosen to include. What does each add to the narrative of the work? Why might the artist have selected each object individually and collectively?

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT: PAUL MPAGI SEPUYA, *MIRROR STUDY (Q5A3505)*, 2016



Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Photography.

Paul Mpagi Sepuya works in his studio to cut, tear, and attach pigment prints to the surface of a mirror—leaving some of the gleaming metal visible—and points his camera in the direction of the mirror. Similar to works by Simmons, the paper elements suggest autobiography and carry historical references. In *Studio (OX5A0173)*, Sepuya affixes photographs of the myriad images and items pinned to the walls of a previous studio, including drawings by the queer artist and writer [Richard Bruce Nugent](#) from the [Harlem Renaissance](#), nude images of friends, and depictions of the male nude from art history. The camera's tendency to flatten produces confusion between what is reflected and what sits on the mirror's surface—an apt metaphor for the difficulty of discerning the authentic from the performed aspects of a person, and a theme that is prevalent in Arnold's work. Sepuya mines his personal archive as well as our collective cultural trove, exploring intimacy, gender, and sexuality. The formation of identity emerges as multifaceted, a process that can result in something superficial, or something entirely hidden from view.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- Both Xaviera Simmons and Paul Mpagi Sepuya are photographing individuals they have posed in a studio and do not have any actual collage technique in their works. Why might the curator have chosen to include these works in an exhibition about collage and in response to Ralph Arnold's work?

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT: AYANAH MOOR, *SOMEONE YOU KNOW*, 2018



Courtesy of the artist.

Ayanah Moor created two new works directly in response to the work of Ralph Arnold. In *Someone You Know*, the surface is completely abstract but has one representational element—an ad from *Ebony* magazine displayed like a small flag on a stick protruding from the painting's upper right-hand corner. According to Moor, what started as a figurative painting in cheerful colors slowly dissolved into complete abstraction. Black paint obscures the original figuration, until nothing representational is distinguishable, the paint acting almost as a screen blocking the content below. The ad features four multigenerational Black women all dressed in shades of crimson, and the copy invites women to sell Avon products. In the *Ebony* magazines of the 1970s, also a favorite source for Arnold, advertisements geared to the Black consumer were often designed to be reparative and aspirational. This messaging comes across in Moor's painting, and, like Franklin and Milan, she pays tribute to female empowerment. The work also hints at the possibilities of exchange between women, as well as to the art market's relative dismissal of female artists throughout history, particularly Black female artists, who are relatively invisible in the history of painting, especially abstract painting.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- Compare this piece to Arnold's works *Body Factory* (1964) and *Untitled (Men Puzzle)* (ca. 1980). How might Moor have been inspired by Arnold's use of 2d and 3d objects?
- Why might Moor choose to have the flag come off of the painting instead of collaging it in like Arnold has with his imagery of black women in his *Black Music: Black and Proud* portfolio?

Ebony magazine

Founded in Chicago in 1945 by John H. Johnson, this magazine is dedicated to featuring black celebrities, journalism, and ads marketed to African Americans.

Richard Bruce Nugent

(American, 1906–1987)

A writer, illustrator, and dancer during the [Harlem Renaissance](#), Nugent was also one of the only openly gay artists making work about his sexuality within this movement.

Freedom fighter

A person that joins violent struggle for their own liberation from a political power structure or fights violently to free others from oppression.

Ella Baker

(American, 1903–1986)

A champion of grassroots political organizing, Baker worked behind-the-scenes in advising some of the most well-known activists of the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement, among others.

Angela Davis

(American, b. 1944)

A leading countercultural activist who rose to prominence in the late 1960s due to her activity within the Communist Party USA, she was also an academic and an author allied with the Black Panther Party for a time.

Audre Lorde

(American, 1934–1992)

A poet, librarian, lesbian, and activist that developed the “Theory of Difference”, which posits that traditional social definitions tend to simplify the complexities of an individual’s identity.

Rosa Parks

(American, 1913–2005)

A seamstress arrested on December 1st, 1955 for her famous act of civil disobedience (refusing to move to the back of a bus so that a white passenger might take her seat), Parks was dubbed by the US Congress a “mother of the freedom movement” and remains today one of its most stalwart icons.

Assata Shakur

(American, b. 1947)

Briefly a member of the Black Panther party and more prominently a member of the [Black Liberation Army](#), Shakur fought violently against cultural and political oppression, was hunted by COINTELPRO for alleged participation in a slew of violent crimes, escaped to Cuba in 1984 and resides there today as an author, editor, and activist.

Sojourner Truth

(American, 1797–1883)

An abolitionist born into slavery, Isabella Baumfree was not alive to witness the way her most famous speech, “Ain’t I a Woman?” benefitted and inspired work in women’s rights movements going forward.

Black Liberation Army (BLA):

(1970–81)

A militant political organization (anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-sexist) composed of Black Panther members, the BLA committed crimes it saw as justified, ranging from jailbreaks to bombings to assassinations of police and notorious criminals.

Harlem Renaissance

Taking place in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City largely in the 1920s, the Harlem Renaissance was an artistic, intellectual, and social movement that produced some of the most prolific writers, musicians, and artists of the 20th century. Langston Hughes, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Josephine Baker, and James Van Der Zee—among countless others—were all part of the Harlem Renaissance community, which still influences cultural producers today.

Illinois Arts Learning Standards Addressed in This Guide

Visual Arts Standards

VA:Re7.2.K-12

Perceive and analyze artistic work. Visual imagery influences understanding of, and responses to, the world.

VA:Re8.K-12

Construct meaningful interpretations of artistic work. People gain insights into meanings of artworks by engaging in the process of art criticism.

VA:Re9.K-12

Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. People evaluate art based on various criteria

VA:Cn11.K-12

Relate artistic ideas and works with social, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding. People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art.