



BkM Art Hangouts
Process

Goals

In Art Hangouts, learners will:

- Look closely at a work from the collection
- Explore new artistic processes through close looking, conversation, and art-making
- Reflect on their own art-making processes

In this lesson, learners will:

- Observe Mark Bradford's *Jheri Now, Curl Later*
- Discover and practice unconventional techniques for collaging with found papers
- Consider how the materials an artist chooses can both inform their process and the meaning in their artwork

Materials

- Stiff base paper (e.g., cardstock, watercolor paper, or cardboard)
- Found collage materials (e.g., magazines, advertisements, newspapers, product labels, or packaging)
- Glue
- Scissors
- Tools for distressing (e.g., sandpaper, nail files, water)

BkM Art Hangouts are adapted from a series of virtual classes that took place in spring 2021. These thirty-minute lesson plans are designed for teachers and caregivers to engage learners with works from our collection and to explore hands-on, artistic processes. Lessons are created for ages 9–14, but can be adapted for any age group. In each lesson, participants will look closely at a work of art, consider how an artist finds inspiration, and create their own artworks inspired by these approaches. Art Hangouts are open ended, and students are invited to continue working on their projects even after the lesson ends.

Mark Bradford

American, born 1961

Mark Bradford, a Los Angeles–based artist, works primarily in abstract painting and mixed-media collage, incorporating everyday detritus such as fragments of newsprint, flyers, or materials from hair salons. Though largely abstract, his art nonetheless explores the ramifications of class, race, and gender. In recent work, his forms seem to suggest maps or aerial views, in line with investigations of race riots, real-estate redlining, and gentrification. In *Jheri Now, Curl Later*, Bradford incorporates the materials of his other job as a hairstylist into his paintings. Blending the tools of the African American beauty trade with the more traditional medium of paint on canvas, Bradford crafts works that comment on both aesthetic and cultural phenomena. Pairing a “high art” medium with objects from daily life enables the artist to create subtle works that demonstrate his passionate interest in issues of race, class, gender, and art-world politics.



Mark Bradford (American, born 1961). *Jheri Now, Curl Later*, 2001. Mixed media on canvas, 72 × 84 in. (182.9 × 213.4 cm). Brooklyn Museum; Gift of the Contemporary Art Council and purchased with funds given by Dr. and Mrs. Philip J. Kozinn, 2001.85. © Mark Bradford. (Photo: Brooklyn Museum)

● Part 1: Look!

Invite students to look closely at Bradford's [*Jheri Now, Curl Later*](#).

- What do you notice about the work?
- Bradford uses found papers in this artwork. Can you guess what they might originally have been used for?

Share that Mark Bradford uses layered endpapers here, usually used for creating a “perm” hairstyle. Bradford worked at his mother’s beauty shop in Los Angeles, making these materials significant to his artistic practice in a number of ways. He says, “The beauty shop is particular to Black America. It’s an older Black America, non-integrated, servicing the local Black community. When you think of press and curl, you think of the beauty shop . . . My mother could take a head of hair and make magic . . . It was art for her. It was sculpture.”

Source: phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2018/june/19/did-you-spot-mark-bradford-at-the-beauty-shop/

- Can you describe the way Bradford uses endpapers in this artwork?

Take a moment to notice all the layers. We see bits of text, a peachy-pink color, and then many translucent shapes that appear to have burnt edges.

Bradford layers and often destroys papers to reveal what’s underneath. He uses techniques like tearing or cutting, spraying with water, and sanding to create this effect.

- Can you find places where the material seems to have been altered or destroyed?
- Why might artists want to destroy elements in their work?

The work’s title, *Jheri Now, Curl Later*, is a play on words for a popular Black hairstyle of the 1980s known as the Jheri Curl. Using ordinary endpapers and other found papers, Bradford creates an abstract piece. In some ways, he is following the style of the [Abstract Expressionist](#) painting of the mid-twentieth century, characterized by spontaneity and mark-making. But Bradford also subverts the tradition with his use of found papers. He considers such artworks to be paintings.

- Do you think Bradford’s work is a painting? Why or why not?
- How are these artworks like paintings? Why might Bradford consider these works paintings?

● Part 2: Explore!

Mark Bradford made his paintings by layering and altering pieces of found paper. By adding and taking away layers, he builds painterly compositions out of everyday things, like wrappers, old billboard posters, and signs. How will you create a layered collage out of found papers?

Step 1: Find your papers. Raid your recycling bin! Look for paper materials that others might throw away and peel the labels off items in your cupboard. Magazines and newspapers are great, too. Any type of paper can be used here.

Step 2: Layer your papers. Glue your papers onto your base. How will you use color? How will you use these materials to create texture and pattern?

Step 3: Destroy. Rip away all or part of the layers as you go. Tearing will reveal what's underneath. You might rip or crumple your paper before you add it! Use tools like sandpaper, nail files, or even water to change the texture of your paper.

Step 4: Repeat. Layer and destroy, and add and take away until your composition feels complete.

Project in Progress ↓



● Part 3: Reflect!

What materials did you choose? How did the materials guide your art-making process? What do the materials you've chosen say about you?

How did you know your artwork was finished?

Do you consider your project to be a painting? Why or why not?

A Finished Project! ↓



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