

July 25, 2020

Museum Studios Activity Kit: Flags and Fireworks

This month, take a look at art about America and the different ways artists have recreated the American flag in their artworks. Then, get creative and make your own fireworks collage.



Jasper Johns, *Flags*, 1973, screenprint in color on JP Green paper, ed. 49/65,
Gift of Hilde Babin in Honor of William S. Youngman, Jr.

LOOK

Jasper Johns recreated the American flag many times over many years. He began painting the flag in 1954 and was still depicting it in this print from 1973.

How can you tell that this is the American flag? What are the key features of the flag?

Look closely. Has the artist done anything to make the American flag look a little different than it usually does? The two flags in this image have some differences. What are some of the differences?

REFLECT

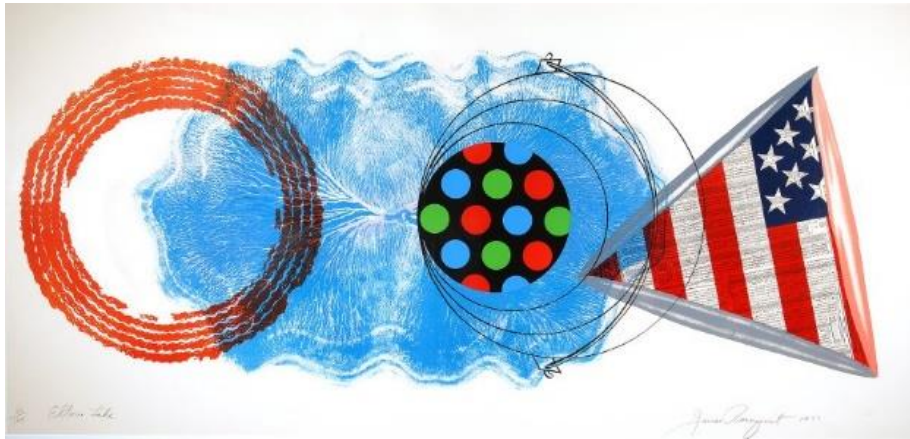
Where can you find an American flag? Is a museum one of those places?

By repeating the flag, Johns encourages us to think about the different meanings the flag can have. Jasper Johns said, “I became interested in contemplating objects I had never before taken a really good look at.” What does the American flag mean to you? Ask your family and friends this question. Did you come up with different answers?

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James Rosenquist, *Elbow Lake*, 1977, Lithograph on paper, 30/100
Gift of Estelle and Martin Karlin

LOOK

James Rosenquist took images from magazines, photographs, and billboards, and incorporated them into his artworks.

Do you see anything familiar in this print? There are 4 main parts to this image, what are they?

REFLECT

The tire treads, lake, bucket and flag are open to interpretation. They may have personal meaning to the artist: the tire treads could refer to a car accident Rosenquist was in with his family, and the lake and bucket might refer to trips to the lake when he lived in Minnesota in his youth. Or, they might be more generic in meaning: the flag could refer to the centenary of the founding of America or the end of the Vietnam War.

James Rosenquist said, “I feel lucky that I’ve been able to make a living from painting any idea that comes into my head.” Do you have memories connected to certain objects? Pick 4 things that are important to you, from home, from trips, etc. What are they? Tell a story about these objects to another person and explain why you picked them.

MAKE

The American flag is often connected to the 4th of July and celebrations of America with fireworks in the summer. Using the art supplies included, make your own colorful fireworks image. Use the fork to stamp a starburst design, get creative with the paintbrush or find some other tools at home to design your own fireworks display!