

Art Making: Zines for a Cause

Target grade range: 3-5

DPCS Curricular Unit: Art & Advocacy

DPCS Curricular Arc: Transformation/Bridging

DPCS Curricular Theme: Creating art that connects to individuals and communities for the purpose of inspiring social change.

Final Project: Create a work of art that advocates for a cause that they believe to be worthy of public attention.

Vocabulary (primary source: <https://learnersdictionary.com/>)

- **Background:** The part of a scene or picture that is farthest from the viewer.
- **Collage:** An artwork made by attaching pieces of different materials to a flat surface, or the process of attaching pieces of different materials to a flat surface.
- **Complementary Colors:** Two colors opposite each other on the [color wheel](#).
- **Emphasis:** Special attention or importance given to a particular element of an artwork.
- **Font:** A set of letters, numbers, and punctuation marks that are all one size and style.
- **Foreground:** The part of a scene or picture that is nearest to and in front of the viewer.
- **Found Objects:** Objects repurposed and used in artwork. These objects can be three-dimensional or two-dimensional (like photographs or text from a magazine).
- **Juxtaposition:** The placement of different things together in order to create an interesting effect or to show how they are the same or different.
- **Rubbing:** An image of a surface that is made by placing paper over it and rubbing the paper with a pencil, crayon, etc.
- **Spread:** A set of pages, usually two, viewed together, like when a book is open.
- **Texture:** The way that something feels when you touch it (actual texture) or the way something looks like it might feel (visual texture).
- **Zine:** A homemade magazine that can be inexpensively reproduced (often using a copy machine) and distributed.

Inspiration

[Jen White-Johnson](#), a Washington, D.C., area artist, activist, and educator, combines text and image in her artworks to highlight neurodiversity, amplify the narratives of Black disabled children,

acknowledge the work of parental caregiving, and address social and racial justice. She dedicated her photo zine *Knox Rox* to her Autistic son. See images of this zine below.

Materials/Tools

- Video: Book Making with the National Museum of Women in the Arts: Zines for a Cause (12:17)
 - Link to video on PlayPosit:
https://api.playposit.com/player_v2/?type=share&bulb_id=944120
 - Link to video on YouTube (includes closed captioning): <https://youtu.be/W-xzOlxeunE>
 - If you have trouble accessing this video, email education@nmwa.org for assistance
- Sketchbook
- Single blank sheet of paper (8 1/2 x 11 inch copy paper works well, though you can use almost any paper you find around your home)
- Pencil
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Scissors
- Zine template (see below) (optional)
- Autodesk Sketchbook (or another design program) (optional)
- Magazines, newspapers, etc. for collaging (optional)
- Glue (optional)
- Copier/scanner (optional)
- Digital camera/smartphone (optional)

Art-Making Activity

1. Select a cause that is important to you—it could be social justice, #BlackLivesMatter, girl power, equal rights, freedom of speech, protecting the environment, recycling, being kind to animals, helping others—you name it!
2. Watch the Book Making with the National Museum of Women in the Arts: Zines for a Cause video (12:17) featuring Jen White-Johnson to learn how:
 - a. She amplifies Black voices in her zines, specifically the story of American civil rights, women's rights, and voting rights activist [Fannie Lou Hamer](#) (1917–1977).
 - b. To make a simple one-page zine format. If you are only interested in watching the segment that shows the step-by-step zine making instructions, watch from 4:20–10:07.
 - c. To use collage in your zine to add layers and textures.
3. In your sketchbook, write down the elements you would like to include in your zine. Think about how the artists we discussed in this unit used a combination of images and words to express their ideas. Look closely at the provided pages from White-Johnson's photo zine *Knox Rox* for inspiration.

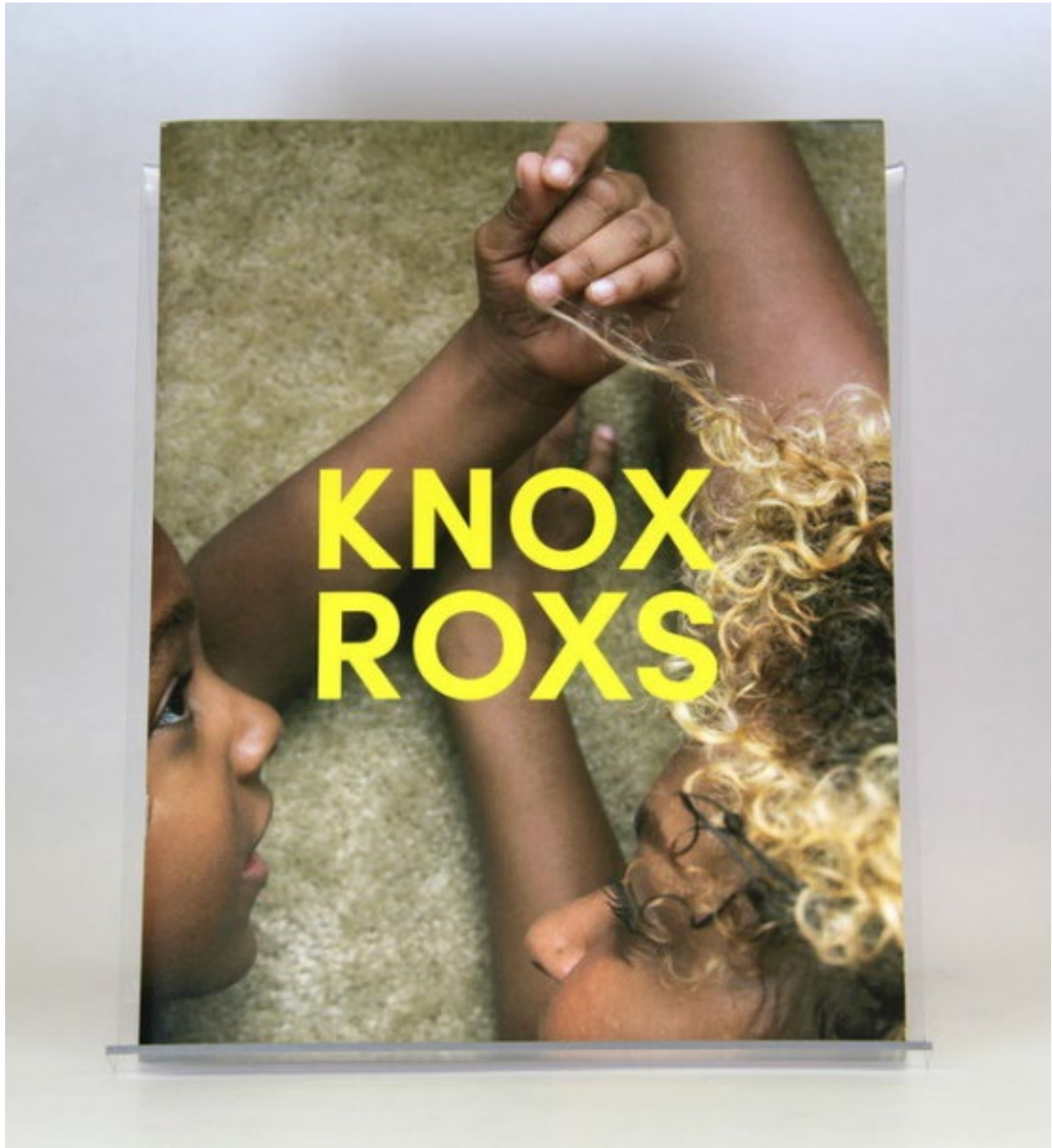
- a. What words and/or phrases will help tell others about your cause?
 - b. What images will help to tell the story of your cause? Will you use found images, draw your own, or use a combination to create interesting juxtapositions?
 - c. What techniques (collage, painting, drawing) and materials (photos from magazines; letters, words, or phrases cut out of newspapers; other found objects; crayons; paint) would you like to use?
 - d. How will you create a sense of texture in your zine? Will you make a rubbing to create actual texture, or layer paper like White-Johnson demonstrated in the video to create visual texture?
 - e. How will you emphasize the most important parts of your zine? Will you use a **bright color**? A **bold**, *italicized*, or underlined font? Letters in ALL CAPS? A **large** image or word?
4. Create your zine. If you have a printer, you can print out the included template. Fold the solid lines first, and then cut the thicker, dotted line. If you don't have a printer, you can use a plain sheet of paper. Watch the video again for step-by-step instructions.
 - a. If you have access to a digital design or drawing program, like Autodesk Sketchbook, you can create a digital zine on your computer instead.
 5. Decorate your zine. Remember to create a cover page that tells readers about your cause. Don't forget to sign your work of art! Refold your completed zine so that it takes the form of a small magazine.
 6. When you finish your zine, think about how you might publish it to share your cause with others.
 - a. If you have a copier:
 - i. Flatten and make copies of your zine,
 - ii. Fold, cut, and refold it as instructed, and
 - iii. Give (or mail) it to friends and family.
 - b. If you have a scanner:
 - i. Flatten and scan your zine,
 - ii. Save it as a PDF, and
 - iii. Email it to friends and family, with instructions to print and refold, if they have access to a printer.
 - c. If you have a digital camera or smartphone:
 - i. Take a picture of each page of your zine in the order that they appear and
 - ii. Email or text your friends and family the photos.

Resources

- 1971 *Essence* magazine interview with Fannie Lou Hamer, "[Fannie Lou Hamer Speaks Out](#)"
- Selected images from White-Johnson's photo zine *Knox Rox* (see below)
- Zine template (see below)
- Text and images provided by White-Johnson (see below)

Selected images from White-Johnson's photo zine *Knox Rox*

Knox Rox cover shows layering of all caps, bold, bright yellow title on top of photograph.



Selected spread from *Knox Rox* shows complementary colors (blue and orange), visual texture (dots in the background), and bright, bold words in the foreground.



Jennifer White-Johnson with Kevin T. Johnson, *Knox Roxs*, 2018; Artist's book; Published by Homie House Press; Courtesy of the artist; Photo by Emily Shaw, Betty Boyd Dettre Library & Research Center, National Museum of Women in the Arts