

**Mini Art Lesson:**

*Untitled II (Portrait)* by May Wilson

Today's lesson is inspired by **May Wilson**, who left rural Maryland and a decades-long marriage to become an artist in New York City at the age of 71. Wilson typically embellished and bedazzled found objects that had a relationship to her early life, such as nineteenth-century portraits of women and old-fashioned buttoned-up boots. Through her highly decorated collages, she addressed issues of sexism, ageism, and the cult of beauty. Follow along as we share step-by-step instructions to create your own collages with kids ages 2-6 and kids 7 and up.



**FOR AGES 2-6:  
LET'S PLAY**

May Wilson often changed the narrative of a work by adding elements of collage to an otherwise complete work of art. In this lesson, we'll alter our own images using fun art materials from home.

**Step 1:** Look at Wilson's artwork and talk about it with your child. What do you think the artist added to this artwork?

**Step 2:** Now, choose a photo! Perhaps one of yourself or one from a magazine. Pick an image that you feel comfortable permanently altering. (A)

**Step 3:** Discuss any household items your child would like to use in their collage. Parents can write this, or they can encourage phonetic spelling and pictures as a form of writing. Now, choose a theme you'd like to explore through your artwork! Here, using sequins and paint, our friend chose to explore a party theme. (B)

A



B



FOR AGES 2-6:  
LET'S PLAY (cont.)

**Step 4:** Alter your original image using the materials you've gathered. (C)

**Step 5:** Have your child explain the changes they made and why they made them. How does your new artwork make you feel? (D)

C



D



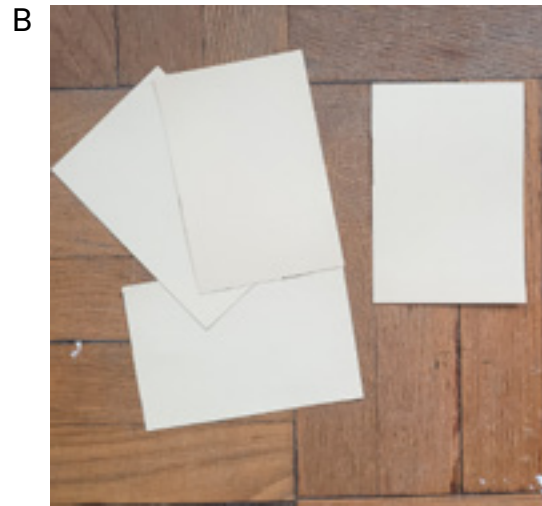
FOR AGES 7+:  
LET'S CREATE

May Wilson's work is an example of *femmage*, a combination of the words "feminist" and "collage," which spoke to women's ability to transform functional objects into artworks with hidden meanings. For this project, let's think about how we can transform images by cutting and pasting.

**Step 1:** First, gather your materials. You'll need cardstock, magazines, markers, a glue stick, and scissors. (A)

**Step 2:** Cut your sturdy cardstock into 4-by-6-inch pieces. (B)

**Step 3:** Next, grab a magazine and cut out pictures to use in your collage. (C)



FOR AGES 7+:  
LET'S CREATE (cont.)

**Step 4:** Here are some techniques to try:

Replace one object with another, like human heads with animal heads. (D)

Find creative ways to fill space. (E)

Mash up two or more images into one. (F)

Use a marker to draw or write on your collage. (G)

**Step 5:** May Wilson kept in touch with fellow artists by mailing them collages. This was an easy and inexpensive way to get her art out into the world. Add a message and a stamp and send your finished collage to a friend.

FOR AGES 7+:  
LET'S CREATE  
BONUS!

Try adding pictures of yourself into your collage.

D



E



F



G



From top: May Wilson (American, 1905-1986). *Untitled II (Portrait)*, 1966-67. Albumen photograph with glitter, round mirrors, and red paint. Brooklyn Museum; Emily Winthrop Miles Fund, 2007.11.2. © Estate of May Wilson; For ages 2-6 (Tamar MacKay and Sarah Dinkelacker, Brooklyn Museum); For ages 7+: (Photos: Noé Gaytán, Brooklyn Museum)