

# ELMHURST ART MUSEUM

ART, EDUCATION & ARCHITECTURE

## Activist Art Kit



There is Black Housing in the Future: Equitable Public Housing as Memorial, Alisha Wormsley and Ayanah Moor, 2020

The Museum's Mies van der Rohe McCormick House currently features an exhibition titled *There is Black Housing in the Future: Equitable Public Housing as Memorial* by artists Alisha Wormsley and Ayanah Moor. This installation was created as a means of activism and education to support mothers fighting for the future of Black housing.

The exhibition references national, community, and grassroots organizations—like Moms 4 Housing—that advocate for affordable, dignified housing for all. *There is Black Housing in the Future* is inspired by Afro-Futurist artists and writers who affirm the visibility and well-being of Black communities across notions of space and time.

Activism consists of efforts to promote, influence, impede, or intervene in social, political, economic, or environmental causes to change society to a perceived greater good. Some ways that artists and activists have used pictures and words are posters, murals, stickers, protest signs, yard signs, t-shirts, neon signs, projections, billboards, and even sky-writing.

This Activist Art Kit will guide you through several projects that help you communicate messages of activism in your own communities. An instructional video is also available to guide these activities and can be found on the **Museum From Home** page on our website. Using everyday household items, the artists will guide participants in the production of message-based posters, yard signs, and even kites to help share your voice.

This installation is in conjunction with and inspired by, the museum's upcoming March 2021 exhibit *In Focus: The Chicago Freedom Movement and the Fight for Fair Housing*.



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In the activity you will:

- Create your own yard sign
- Design stickers
- Consider what makes a powerful message
- Build and design a kite to help tell your message
- Learn about activism through art-making



You will need:

Included

- Kite kit
- Yard sign and stakes
- 4 circular stickers
- 4 rectangular stickers
- 1 letter stencil

Not Included

- Markers/pens
- Pencil
- Paint
- Scissors
- Glue



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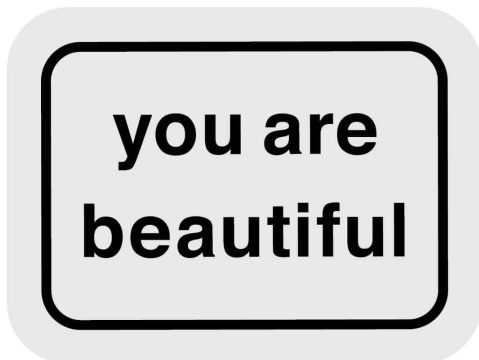
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## CREATING YOUR MESSAGE

Before you get started, first decide on a message you want to share with others. This message should be much more than a catchy phrase, although that is often part of it! Here are some tips for coming up your own message of activism:

- Think about what's important to you and/or for others
  - Why is it important to get this message out there?
  - What is it that you are wanting people to stop and think about?
- What actions or behaviors are you asking from your community?
  - Do you want people to **do** something, or **stop** doing something?
  - Is this a call to action?
  - Is this message meant to bring awareness to something?
  - Sometimes it is helpful to anticipate how people might respond to your message. Since we all have different perspectives and opinions, there will likely be a variety of reactions to your message
    - What are the consequences or possible outcomes of these?
- Word choice and tone is also super key
  - Depending on the subject matter, it may be most appropriate to utilize humor, provocative language, recognizable terms, relatability, or even familiar imagery,
    - Are you challenging an idea, proposing a solution, or asking your audience to act?
- In many ways, even some memes can be considered forms of activism (as long as there is action to follow)!

It is important to remember that you can't have "ACTIVISM" without "ACT". Designing a meme or a snazzy sign can be part of it, but there needs to be action of some sort to follow. Once your message is out there, what is it that you want people to do about it?



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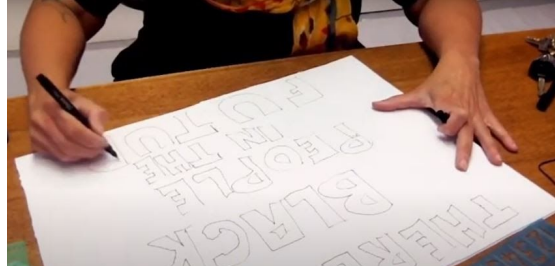
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## INSTRUCTIONS

### Activity 1: Yard Sign

Using a marker, write out your message on your yard sign

- Bubble or block letters work great for this!
- Keep in mind that if you plan on displaying this sign outdoors, you may want to choose materials that can withstand rain and snow
- Permanent markers and/or acrylic paint are great materials for this!
  - Make sure that whatever it is that you are writing that your m



Once your design is complete and dry, carefully insert the metal stakes into the bottom of the corrugated plastic

Place your yard sign in the yard or garden and share your message with the world!



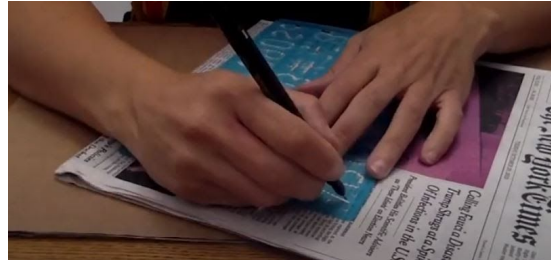
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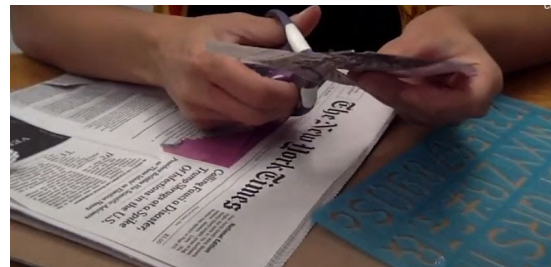
### Activity 2: Stickers

Using your stencil and a pencil, trace out the letters that make up your message

- This can be done either directly onto your sticker, or on other paper that you will use to collage onto your sticker



If you choose to trace on a different piece of paper, carefully cut out each letter once they are traced.

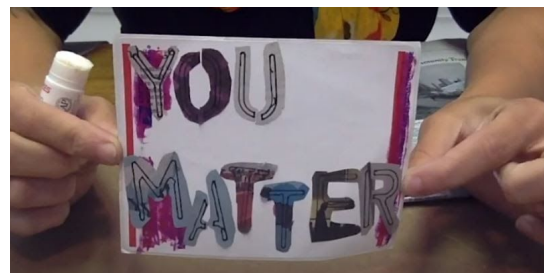


Once cut out, arrange your letters on your sticker to create your composition and your message



Once you're happy with your design, use a glue stick to adhere your letters to your sticker.

- If you like, enhance your design with color, patterns, or other imagery



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### Activity 3: Kite

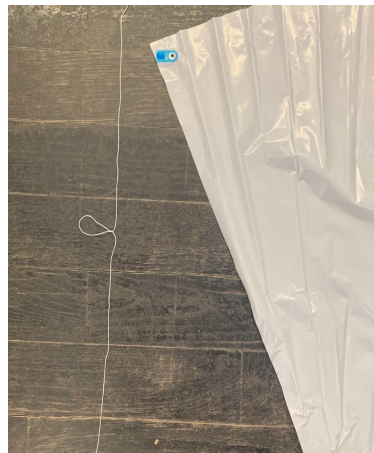
Lay out your flag on your work surface so that the manufacturer text is facing down.

- Design your message that you want to be seen from the sky
  - To do this, use permanent marker, collage, or paint
  - If you picked up an art kit from the museum, the kite will be plastic. Be sure to allow enough time to dry, as not all materials will stick to the kite.
  - The surface you design should be the same side the center rod goes



Lay out the loose piece of string

- Tie a loop about  $\frac{1}{3}$  down the string

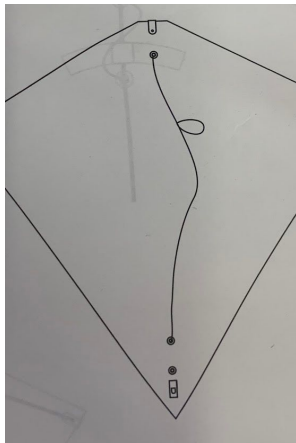


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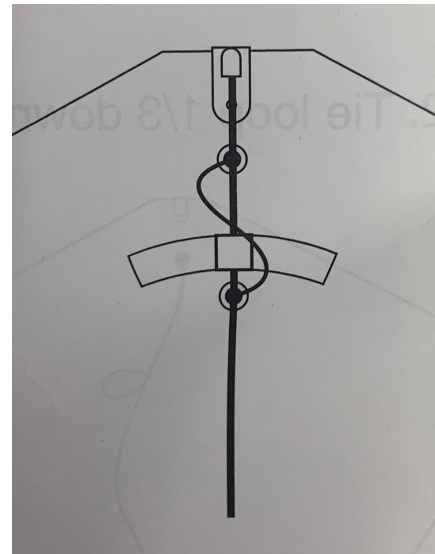
Weave your loose string in and back out of the two grommets on both the top and the bottom of the kite.

- The string will run down the midline of the kite on the same side where your message is.
- Make sure that the loop that you tied is closer towards the top of the kite.



Place the plastic connector on the long rod.

- Position the long rod in the blue holders (parallel to the string you just tied)
  - When doing this, feed the rod through the knotted holes that you created when tying the string to the top and bottom of the kite.
  - Make sure that the plastic connector is between the grommets



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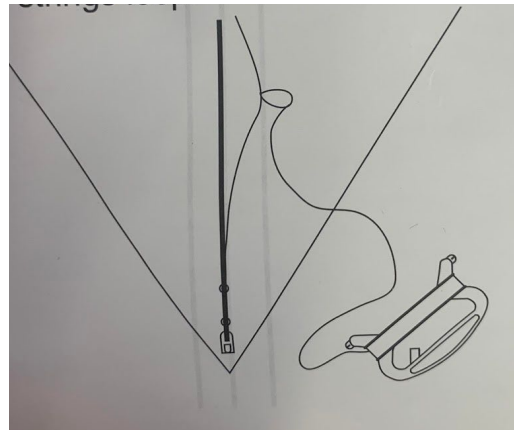
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Connect the two smaller rods to the middle connector and the blue connectors at either corners of the kite.

- Doing this should cause the kits to concave
  - This means that the center rod will bend slightly to create a curve that will allow wind to lift the kite.



Tie the loose end of the string handle to the loop.



Tie on the tails to the kits if you'd like, and you're ready to fly!

Share your message with the world!





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This exhibition is part of the Shaping the Past program in partnership with the Goethe-Institut, Monument Lab, and the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (Federal Agency for Civic Education).

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