



Gallery Inquiry & Activity

Janiva
Ellis

ICA
MIAMI



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Janiva Ellis (b. 1987, Oakland, California) received a BFA from California College of the Arts, Oakland, in 2012. Ellis's work comprises bright and playful imagery that examines our early exposure to media using caricatures and bold facial expressions. This relationship between the figure and the caricature is a comment on black community's experiences in the media.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will engage and explore how artist, Janiva Ellis uses caricatures to comment on black identity in today's media, and the beginnings of cartoon animation.



Janiva Ellis. Image: Cultured Magazine

VOCABULARY TERMS

SURREALISM

Surrealism is a cultural movement that started in 1917, best known for its visual artworks and writings and the juxtaposition of uncommon imagery.

CARICATURE

Make or give a comically or an exaggerated representation of (someone or something).

SKETCH

A rough or unfinished drawing or painting, often made to assist in making a more finished picture.

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

A form of nonverbal communication.

STOP MOTION PICTURE ANIMATION

Stop Motion Animation is a technique used in animation to bring static objects to life on screen. This is done by moving the object in increments while filming a frame per increment. When all the frames are played in sequence it shows movement.

ACTIVITY

CARTOON SELFIES

Age Range: 6-12

Activity Time: 20-30 minutes

Who are your favorite cartoon characters? Do these characters expose you to new identities, narrative themes, or give you a more in-depth look into how you view yourself and others?

Ellis uses caricatures (Cartoon characters) to comment on our introduction to media and how this shapes our own identity and the identity of others, specifically in this case of racial identity.

ACTIVITY MATERIALS

Markers/Crayons/Pencils/Paints



Paint Brush



Paper

INSTRUCTIONS

CARTOON SELFIES

Prompt: Draw yourself and your family members (pets included) as cartoon characters using Janiva's painting as a reference. Focus on her use of colors, facial expressions, and characters. Ask yourself the questions below to draw what you envision:

- What area of the painting are your eyes more attracted and drawn to? Why?
- Do you think the colors in the painting have meaning or a purpose?
- Create characters using these bright colors, do the colors you choose have meaning or represent something?
- Does the meaning of a color relate to a specific family member or yourself? If yes, why?
- What facial expressions or facial features have you highlighted in the depiction of yourself and family members?
- What is the facial expression saying to you?

ACTIVITY/FLIPPING TOONS

Age Range: 6-12 / Activity Time: 30-60 minutes

Ellis uses cartoon characters in many of her paintings like in the painting above. Before computers and computer animation cartoons were created through stop motion picture animation. This was a very delicate and a very time-consuming process. With this next activity you will dive into the very beginnings of how cartoon animations were created before today's technology.

ACTIVITY MATERIALS

Post it notes (Preferred If available, post it notes are already adhered together.)

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Index cards (Preferred if available, thickness allows for a better flip.)

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Scissors

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Tape

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Binder clips

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Pencil/Color Pencils

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Light Source- Window, Phone screen, Light box

INSTRUCTIONS/FLIPPING TOONS (PARENTAL SUPPORT NEEDED)

- If you do not have post it notes, cut your available paper into 3-inch height and 4-inch long pieces.
- You will need approximately 20 pieces of the same size.
- On each piece of your pre-cut paper, number the corners of each one up to number 20. This will allow for you keep the drawing you create in order.
- On page 1 begin your simple character drawing, keeping in mind this drawing will be repeated many times.
- Place page 2 on top of page 1 so to see through to the drawing below, draw the same image but in a slightly different position in the direction you want the character to move.
- Continue this pattern by placing page 1 to the side. Use page 2 at the bottom, placing page 3 on top, again drawing the character in a slightly different position in the direction you want the character to move.
- Repeat these steps until you reach the last page of your flip book.
- Once the drawing portion is complete, re-organize your paper in order from 1-20.
- Use a binder clip or tape to bind one of the 3-inch edges, preferably the left side.
- Hold the binder clip or taped edge in one hand using your free hand to flip the pages. Watch how your character comes alive!