

# Artist Thread In Focus

James  
“Yaya” Hough

Carnegie  
Museum of Art

# US Carceral System

# Introduction

---

James “Yaya” Hough served 27 years of life without parole—often more accurately referred to as death by incarceration—in Pennsylvania state prisons. Much of his artwork, created during that time and since his release in 2019, interrogates the carceral system in the United States. This module invites you to do the same.

“The current criminal injustice system is corrupt, ultra-politicized, ultra-punitive, racist, classist, etc. The current system is surrounded in mystery because it cannot operate in sunlight. The current system consumes people and money—50,000+ people and over two billion dollars annually. It knows no solutions except to grow larger. A modern slavery.” —James “Yaya” Hough

- While the United States represents about 4.2% of the world’s population, it houses around 20% of the world’s prisoners.
- The US has the highest rate of incarceration of any nation in the world.
- Black Americans in the US are incarcerated at nearly 5 times the rate of whites, and Latinx people are 1.3 times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Latinx whites.
- Racial disparities in sentencing are found in almost every crime category. Children as young as 13, almost all Black, are sentenced to life imprisonment for non-homicide offenses. Black defendants are 22 times more likely to receive the death penalty for crimes whose victims are white, rather than Black.
- In the early 1970s, our prisons held fewer than 300,000 people; since then, that number has grown to more than 2.2 million, with 4.5 million more on probation or parole.
- The growth began when politicians from both parties used fear and thinly veiled racial rhetoric to push increasingly punitive policies. Former President Richard Nixon started this trend, declaring a “war on drugs” and justifying it with speeches about being “tough on crime.” But the prison population truly exploded during President Ronald Reagan’s administration, and later through laws like Bill Clinton’s 1994 Crime Bill, which gave states money to perpetuate policies that bred bloated prisons.
- Because of mandatory sentencing and “three strikes” laws, some people get sentenced to life without parole for non-violent crimes like stealing a bicycle or for simple possession of marijuana. Studies estimate that between 4–6% of people incarcerated in US prisons are actually innocent.
- 45% of Americans have had an immediate family member incarcerated in jail or prison, including 42% of whites, 48% of the Latinx community, and 63% of Blacks.
- Incarceration leads to negative health, emotional, and financial consequences for family and community members as well as the incarcerated. Parental incarceration is associated with harmful effects on childhood cognitive, mental, and behavioral health, and an increase in food insecurity and homelessness. For women, family member incarceration has been associated with increased risk of obesity, heart attack or stroke, and fair or poor self-reported health. With 96,000 people behind bars, Pennsylvania has the highest incarceration rate in the Northeast.
- Pennsylvania has the second highest rate of incarceration in the country, when factoring in people who are on probation or parole.
- Pennsylvania prisons hold over 5000 people who have been sentenced to death by incarceration.
- In Pennsylvania, almost 75% of people serving life sentences are Black or Latinx.
- The US spends \$81 billion a year on mass incarceration.
- The actual cost on state and federal governments and impacted families is roughly \$182 billion.
- Prisons rely on the labor of incarcerated people for food service, laundry, and other operations, and they pay incarcerated workers extremely low wages.

# Terms

---

**Criminal Legal System** The system that includes lawyers, politicians, policing, courts, and corrections, often referred to as the “criminal justice system.” According to the Vera Institute of Justice, more and more people and organizations are using the term “criminal legal system,” because these systems do not deliver justice, nor have they ever.

**Incarceration** Confinement in jail or prison.

**Life Without Parole** A sentence confining someone to prison for their entire life, without the possibility of release before they complete that sentence. This is aptly referred to by James “Yaya” Hough and others as Death by Incarceration, and Pope Francis has called it “the hidden death penalty.” Life without parole was deemed unconstitutional for juveniles (people under the age of 18) in 2012, leading to the release of Hough.

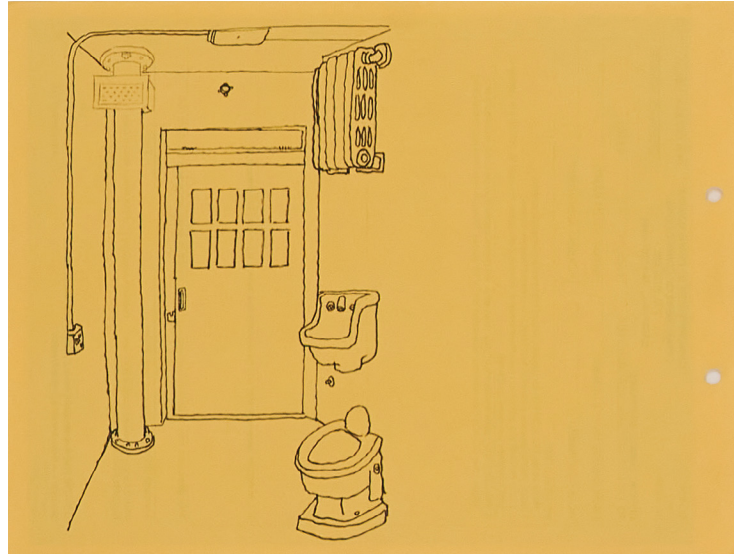
**Mass Incarceration** Shorthand for the fact that the US incarcerates more people than any nation in the world, with a disproportionate prison rate of Blacks, Latinx, Native Americans, immigrants, and others with outsider status.

**Prison Industrial Complex** A reference to the way government and industry look to policing, incarceration, and surveillance as solutions to socioeconomic and sociopolitical problems. It also describes how police departments, court systems, probation offices, transportation companies, food service providers, and many others benefit from maintaining incarceration.

**Thirteenth Amendment** The amendment to the US Constitution, ratified in 1865, that states: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.” The clause pertaining to the exception of punishment has been used to justify the incarceration of the descendants of slavery as well as others who face prejudice within the system.

# Connect

“When I would filter the American experience and all these things that I was experiencing through prisons and what-not, that picture represents stripping bare what my life and others who are like me, their lives represent to the system, which is just this system that’s designed to literally convert you into some form of capital or cash or currency.” —James “Yaya” Hough



James “Yaya” Hough, *Untitled*, 2008–2016, Carnegie Museum of Art, A.W. Mellon Acquisition Endowment Fund, 2021.16.6, 2021.16.3

- What do you see in these drawings?
- What do you think they might be about?
- What questions do you have about them?
- What comes to mind when you think of incarceration?
- This is a large and potentially sensitive question. Feel free to brainstorm individually or in small groups, out loud or on paper, before discussing as a class. Allow yourself to associate freely: you might think of anything from concepts (e.g., mass incarceration), to images (e.g., colors and textures), to feelings and physical sensations (e.g., fear and anger). It might help to make a constellation of words or make a sketch or series of sketches.
- Who is involved in the US carceral system? For example: guards, police, judges?
- Mass incarceration affects everyone, whether they have been incarcerated themselves, know someone who has been incarcerated, or live in a society that incarcerates disproportionate numbers of Black, Brown, and Indigenous citizens. In what ways might incarceration affect you personally?
- In what ways has culture (the news, TV, movies, music, etc.) shaped your ideas or feelings about incarceration?
- Why might the United States have the highest rate of incarceration of any country in the world?
- Is incarceration an effective form of punishment? Why or why not?
- How might incarceration intersect with race? With the economy? With power? With gender?
- What questions do you have about carceral systems? These could range from “what does a typical day in prison look like?” to “how are prisons funded?”

# The Color of Mass Incarceration

## Create #1

Create a visual representation of mass incarceration using the information outlined in Bryan Stevenson's article (below), as well as the facts (above).

---

### Goals for this Create

- To understand the relationship between mass incarceration and slavery, including the 13th Amendment
- To understand how mass incarceration disproportionately affects certain populations
- To learn how to represent data in creative ways

---

### Materials

Pencils, colored pencils or markers, paper or posterboard

**Optional** Copies of Bryan Stevenson's article

---

### Read

- Bryan Stevenson's article for the 1619 Project in groups or individually.



**Optional** As you read or listen to the article, sketch words or images that stand out to you. Feel free to underline, doodle, or draw directly on the printout of the article itself or on a blank piece of paper.

---

### Connect

- What surprises you about the article?
- What questions do you have about it?
- What do you notice in Spencer Lowell's photograph that accompanies the article?

---

### Create

- 1 Create a drawing or poster based on or drawing inspired by information in Stevenson's article, as well as information listed in the Introduction.**

**Option 1** Your drawing or poster might include realistic-looking people and things, such as Hough's above.

**Option 2** Your drawing or poster might be more abstract, using colors, numbers, or shapes to represent who is or isn't incarcerated and at what rate.

## Mass Incarceration and the Media

## Create #2

James “Yaya” Hough’s depictions of the US carceral system are different from those we are used to seeing in the media and help critique the way the US carceral system is usually portrayed. This activity invites you to take an image of the US carceral system from TV, the internet, or elsewhere, and reimagine it using collage.

### Goals for this Create

- To explore the presence of the US carceral system in mass media—including TV, movies, and the internet
- To understand how media affects our perceptions of reality
- To learn about and make a collage

### Materials

Anything that might be used in a collage, especially printed media images of police, prisons, courts, etc., as well as scissors, glue, paper, and pens.

### Terms

**Collage** An artistic composition made of various materials (such as paper, cloth, or wood) glued on a surface.

**Mass Media Communication** (such as newspapers, radio, or television) that is designed to reach a majority of people.

“When things become more visible, they become more threatening.” —James “Yaya” Hough

### Look

- 1 Look at one of James “Yaya” Hough’s collages.

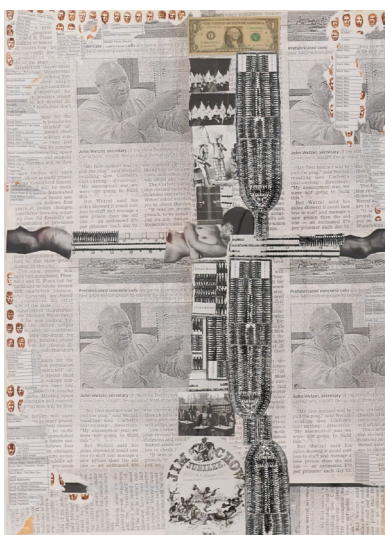
- What do you see happening in this image?
- Why might Hough have chosen to use this combination of images and text?
- What questions do you have about the image?

### Connect

- In what ways does the US carceral system show up in mass media—including TV shows and advertisements? Along with representations of prisons themselves, think about other people or things related to the system of mass incarceration—from police and judges to police cars and surveillance cameras.
- How has the media shaped your perception of the US carceral system?

### Create

- Choose an image, text, or combination of images and text that relate to the US carceral system in some way. You could find these online or recreate one from memory. (A few examples are below.)
- Using collage, make a new image, text, or combination of images and text from the original source(s), that comments on or critiques the US carceral system in some way.
- You may also include hand-drawn elements, as Hough does.
- You might include lyrics from songs.



James “Yaya” Hough, *crooked CROSS* (left) and *SUGAR* (right), 2008–2016, Carnegie Museum of Art, Courtesy of the artist and JTT

# The US Carceral System and the Surreal

# Create #3

Make a line drawing that depicts a system in your life as surreal.

## Goals for this Create

- To explore the effects of local, national, and international systems on our lives
- To ask what might be rational or irrational about these systems
- To learn about Surrealism
- To practice drawing

## Materials

Paper, pencil, ball-point pen

“To try to represent [the prison system] with rationality would be irrational in and of itself. It requires a certain level of visual irrationality.” —James “Yaya” Hough

## Terms

**Line Drawing** A drawing done using only narrow lines, the variation of which, in width and density, produce such effects as tone and shading.

**Surrealism** A 20th-century art movement that celebrated the irrational, the poetic, and the dreamlike, in reaction to the “rationalism” that led to World War I. It celebrated the unconscious, as opposed to the conscious, mind. Notable Surrealists include René Magritte, Salvador Dalí, and André Breton. Since the advent of Surrealism, the word “surreal” has been used to describe situations that seem dreamlike or irrational.

**System** A collection of elements that interact or influence each other to produce certain outcomes or serve certain purposes. Systems include those in the natural world (the solar system, earth ecosystems), transportation systems (cars, bikes, buses, pedestrians, roads), institutional systems that provide public services (school systems, healthcare systems, legal systems), and the systems involved in our daily routines (food preparation, household chores).

## Look

### 1 Look at this drawing by James “Yaya” Hough.

- What do you think is happening here?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What questions do you have?
- Why might Hough have chosen to depict the US carceral system in this way?

## Connect: Surrealism

- Why might an artist use elements of Surrealism to depict real-life atrocities?
- Why might Hough use elements of Surrealism to depict the US carceral system?

## Connect: Systems

Our lives are embedded in an array of systems. Incarceration is one system. Other systems include religion, education, healthcare, and transportation. What are some of the specific systems in your life?

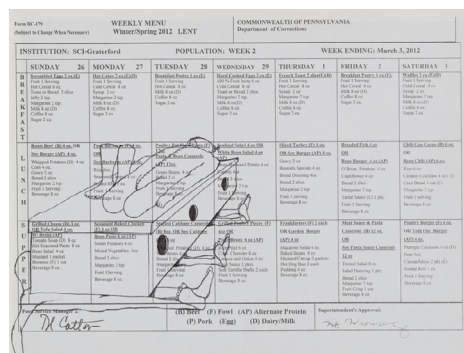
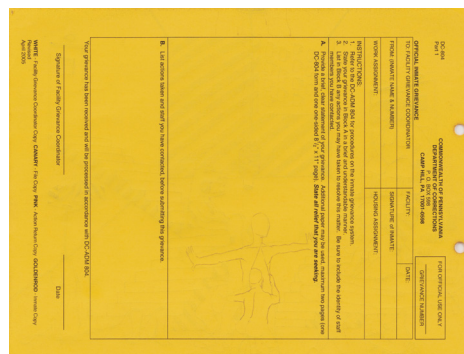
- Choose one of these systems to think about in depth. It might be the transportation system you use to take to school or work, the system that supplies your food, or the grading system at school.

## Ask

- Who might benefit from this system?
- Who might the system harm?
- What works about the system?
- What is broken about it?

## Create

- Using a pencil or ball-point pen, begin to sketch a scene that represents the system from a surreal perspective.
- Feel free to add elements of fantasy or dreams.
- Make a final drawing in ball-point pen.
- You might want to draw on an “official” document—for example a report card, a cafeteria menu, or a bus map the way Hough does in the image below.



James “Yaya” Hough, *Untitled*, 2008–2016, Carnegie Museum of Art, A.W. Mellon Acquisition Endowment Fund, 2021.16.7, 2021.16.2



# The US Carceral System and Poetry

# Create #4

Write a poem from your own perspective about the carceral system, as someone directly or indirectly impacted by that system.

## Goals for this Create

- To explore how mass incarceration affects us each personally
- To resist stereotypes by reading poetry (and, optional, other firsthand accounts) from the perspective of incarcerated people or their family members
- To learn about elements of poetry
- To ask how poetry might hold space for complex feelings and ideas

## Materials

Pen, paper, word processor

“I have been demeaned, oppressed, stigmatized, and any other stereotypical description you can think of while incarcerated.” —James “Yaya” Hough

“The popular perception is that art is apart. I insist it is a part of. Something not in dispute is that people in prison are apart from. If you can accept—whatever level of discipline and punishment you adhere to momentarily set aside—that the ultimate goal should be to reunite the separated with the larger human enterprise, it might behoove us to see prisoners, among others, as they elect to be seen, in their larger selves. If we go there, if not with our bodies then at least our minds, we are more likely to register the implications.” —CD Wright

## Terms

**Form** The structure of a poem, including its line lengths, line breaks, meter, stanza lengths, and rhyme scheme.

**Freewriting** A writing exercise in which a person writes quickly and continuously, with a free association of ideas, especially as a means of initiating a more focused composition.

**Line Breaks** The space between one line and the next, in a poem.

**Prose Poem** A poem that lacks the line breaks traditionally associated with poetry.

**Rhyme** The correspondence of sounds in words or lines of poetry.

**Stanza** A grouping of lines that forms the main unit in a poem. Also, an Italian word for room, chamber, or apartment.

## Look

Read one (or all) of the following poems. Try not to worry about whether the poem makes “sense” or whether or not you can “understand” it. Instead, let the sounds and images wash over you, and note feelings or questions that arise as you read.

- “A Postmodern Two-Step”, Reginald Dwayne Betts (from the perspective of someone in prison)
- “Downhill Triolets”, Natalie Diaz (from the perspective of a family member of someone in prison)
- “Stripe for Stripe”, CD Wright (from the perspective of someone visiting prisons; this poem is long so feel free to excerpt just the end, where Wright begins using line breaks, beginning “I am going to prison”)

## Connect

- What images from the poem stand out to you?
- What feelings might the speaker in the poem be experiencing?
- Where might you see yourself in the poem?
- What might make this a poem as opposed to a different kind of writing?
- Why might the author have chosen to write in poetry rather than another form?
- How do some of the elements of the poem (form, line breaks, etc.) contribute to its meaning?
- How does the title contribute to its meaning?
- What questions do you have about the poem?

## Create

Write your own poem that reflects your experiences with or feelings about incarceration.

- Begin with a freewrite. What sensations come to mind when you think of incarceration? What feelings, colors, tastes, or smells?
- As you organize your poem into a form, think about how the shape of the poem, including the length of lines and stanzas, affects its meaning.
- Feel free to use one of the above poems as a jumping-off point. For example, you might start your poem with the line “Some people say prison is \_\_\_\_\_”, after Reginald Dwayne Betts. After naming what “some people say prison is,” you might go on to describe what prison is to you.
- Don’t forget to title your poem.

## Reflect

- What feelings came up for you as you were writing your poem?
- What was rewarding or challenging about writing it?

# Transformative Justice

# Introduction

---

Both directly and indirectly, through his work, James “Yaya” Hough engages in acts of transformative justice. This module invites you to reimagine justice through a transformative lens.

“...Young people possess inordinate capacity for positive change, regardless of their background. To me, when someone breaks the law, they have to be corrected socially in the most humane, effective way. However, the finality (of incarceration)—taking people and essentially throwing them away—forecloses on every human, democratic, and liberal notion that we possess as a society.” —James “Yaya” Hough

“Pennsylvania prisons hold over 5000 people with death by incarceration sentences. Successfully defeating these sentences will require as much a profound cultural shift in the public’s orientation toward incarceration and punishment as it will legislative changes.” —Lifelines: Voices Against the Other Death Penalty

# Terms

---

**Prison Abolition** A political vision with the goal of eliminating imprisonment, policing, and surveillance and creating lasting alternatives to punishment and imprisonment.

**Reentry** The transition from prison back into the community. As stated by the Vera Institute of Justice, “More than 600,000 people return to their communities each year after serving time in state and federal prisons, as do nearly 9 million people from the nation’s jails. Another more than 2.5 million people complete parole or probation. A conviction history carries negative consequences for people reentering their communities and reuniting with their families, often in the form of barriers to pivotal aspects of establishing successful lives, including getting jobs, securing stable housing, and going to school.”

**Restorative Justice** An alternative to traditional means of rehabilitation and punishment which brings together returning citizens and community members, focusing on conversation and understanding as the first steps on the path to healing. It allows the party who was harmed to say what restitution can be given to make up for the harm done, rather than going through courts and prisons. In contrast to the

present system, restorative justice offers real accountability for harmful acts, and values the voices of those harmed.

**Transformative Justice** A political framework that views individual harmful acts and conflicts as opportunities for individual and societal transformation. It asks, “How can we respond to violence in ways that not only address the current incident of violence, but also help to transform the conditions that allowed for it to happen?” Transformative justice is very much a reimagining of our whole social system and not just the criminal justice system.

# Connect

---

- Some people refer to the US carceral system as the “criminal justice system,” but we know the system does not represent justice for most people. What do you think of when you hear the word justice?
- What is the relationship between justice and power?
- What would justice look like in an ideal world?
- What is the relationship between art and justice?
- Who deserves justice?
- Who decides what justice is?
- What would justice look like without prisons?

# Justice through Activism

# Create #1

Organize action about something you would like to see changed at school or in your community.

---

## Terms

**Activism** A practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue. Political activism seeks to bring about political or social change.

**Civic Engagement** Working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference.

**Civil Disobedience** A public, non-violent, and conscientious breach of law undertaken with the aim of bringing about a change in laws or government policies.

**Protest** A public expression of objection, disapproval, or dissent towards an idea or action, typically a political one. Also called a demonstration.

**Resistance** A form of collective civil disobedience appealing to human rights, often locally and communally based.

---

## Connect

- What do you think of when you hear the word activism?
- Have you ever engaged in community or school activism?
- What might activism look like, feel like, or sound like?
- Is activism effective?
- What is the relationship between art and activism?

---

## Create

Think of an issue in your school or community that you would like to create activism around.

Think of an action. It might be one of the following, or one of your own:

- Write a letter to your school or community paper
- Make a poster to display in public
- Call a government official
- Encourage people to vote! Remember that politicians help control—and too often benefit from—the US carceral system
- Write a letter or letters to someone in the carceral system
- Write a protest song

---

## Ask

- What materials do you need?
- How will you make your action happen?
- Who will be involved?
- Perform your action or write a plan for carrying it out.

---

## Reflect

Either in small groups or individually, in writing, ask:

- What did it feel like to participate in this way? Was it scary? Exciting? Both?
- What felt positive about the experience?
- What might you do differently next time?
- What might you do next?

# Public Art

# Introduction

---

James “Yaya” Hough’s public art practice includes mural-making and a residency at the office of the Philadelphia District Attorney, among other projects. This module invites you to explore what it means to make art for public spaces.

## Terms

---

**Art Collective** A group of artists working together to achieve a common objective.

**Art Market** The physical or figurative venue in which art is bought and sold. At its most basic, an art market requires a work of art, which might be drawn from a very wide range of collectible objects from a seller; and a buyer, who may participate directly in negotiations or be represented by agents.

**Commission** The act of requesting the creation of a piece, often on behalf of another. Artwork may be commissioned by private individuals, by the government, or businesses.

**Commodity** A product that can be bought and sold.

**Gentrification** A process in which an under-resourced neighborhood experiences an influx of middle-class or wealthy people who renovate and rebuild

homes and businesses, which often results in an increase in property values and the displacement of earlier residents.

**Graffiti** Images and text painted onto buildings and other public structures, often with spray paint.

**Monument** A structure that is built to honor a special person or event.

**Mural** A painting applied to and made integral with the surface of a wall or ceiling.

**Site-Specific Art** Art designed specifically for a particular location and that has an interrelationship with the location.

**Street Art** Art created in public locations—including buildings, streets, trains, and other publicly-viewed surfaces. Many instances come in the form of guerrilla art, which is intended to make a statement about the society that the artist lives within.



# Connect

---



James “Yaya” Hough, *A Gift to the Hill District*, 2021–2022, Courtesy of the artist and Carnegie Museum of Art; photo: Sean Eaton

- What does the term “public art” mean to you?
- Can you think of examples of public art—in general or, more specifically, where you live?
- Does public art have to be large, or can it be small? What about permanent vs. temporary?
- What is the difference between public and private art?
- Who is public art for?
- What can public art communicate?
- Where can public art be located?
- Do you need permission to make public art?
- Is there a relationship between public art and gentrification?

# A Public Art Project

# Create #1

Plan a work of public art and, if possible, create it!

Working individually or in teams, imagine you are an artist or art collective planning to make a work of public art at your school or in your community.

## Materials

---

Paper, pens, pencils, collage materials, scissors, glue, plus anything else you may need to make your project.

## Brainstorm

---

- What is the work?
- Where will it be placed or take place and why? (Be creative! Locations might include: a public park or an abandoned parking lot, a tiny corner of a classroom or stairwell, or even a “phone conversation.”)
- Will the work be “official” or something you make without permission?
- Who is the audience for your work and how will you invite them to engage with it?

- Who will be involved in making the work? (Public or school “officials,” neighbors, friends, etc.?)
- What form will you work in? (Dance, sound, sculpture, food, etc.?)
- What materials will you need? (Fabric, paper, found objects, etc.?)
- What will the scale be?
- Will the work be permanent or temporary?
- Will it cost anything to make and if so, what is the budget? Draw a sketch of your work, and/or create a “mood board” using collage, to help sort through your ideas.

## Optional

---

- Write an “official proposal” for your work incorporating the above elements.
- Present or submit your proposal to a “panel” (made up of students or teachers) who will select one or more winning proposals. Make the work!

# Collaborative Mural

# Create #2

Working in a team, create a mural (on a wall, canvas, or other surface).

“The beauty wasn’t necessarily in the mural. The beauty was in the engagement of us working together and learning something new.” —James “Yaya” Hough

Working in a team (for example as a full class or in smaller groups), discuss:

- Where would you like to make or place your mural? At first, dream big! If you could make a mural anywhere (on a billboard, across school lockers, on school bleachers, etc.), where would it be?
- If you plan to make an actual mural, now choose where that one will be.
- What would you like the mural to show or be about? It might include people or places related to where you are making it, or words or quotes related to those people or places. Or it might be more abstract.
- Decide how and where you will construct the mural. You might

paint the mural onto a wall, a large canvas or piece of paper, or smaller pieces of paper or canvas that you then link together.

- As individuals or in a group, begin to sketch ideas for the mural, paying attention to various design elements
- Background and foreground—what do you want to draw attention to?
- Colors—what colors best represent your image or concept?
- If the mural will incorporate text, what size will the text be?
- Choose a final design for the mural (this could be one favorite design chosen from many, or a combination of designs— e.g., one by every student).
- Create the mural using one of the methods outlined in step 2.

## Materials

---

For sketching: scratch paper, pencils, colored pencils.

For final product: (depends on mural method chosen below.)

# Hill District

# Introduction

---

James “Yaya” Hough was born in Pittsburgh’s Hill District, a neighborhood that flourished as a center of jazz and Black culture from the early 1800s through the 1950s until, following a period of “redevelopment” after WWII, it faced a steep economic decline. Today, public interest groups are working to make the area thrive as it once did. For one of his contributions to the 58th Carnegie International, Hough is making a mural in the Hill District, in collaboration with residents.



Charles “Teenie” Harris, *Crawford Grill No. 1 with fence being erected for demolition*, 1956, Carnegie Museum of Art, Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.6743

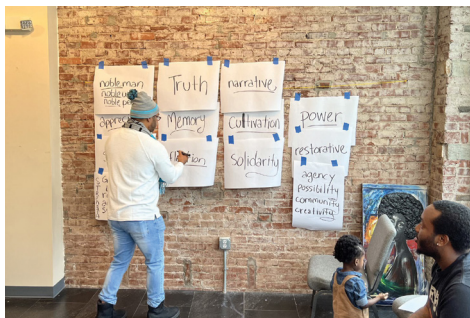


Image of Hill District mural workshop with James “Yaya” Hough, October 2021; photo: Jordan Bohannon



Ming Smith, *Hill District* (from the *August Wilson series*), Pittsburgh, PA, ca. 1993, Carnegie Museum of Art, Margaret M. Vance Fund, 2017.19.2

# Terms

---

**Demographic** Relating to human populations and the information collected about them, such as their size, growth, ages, and education.

**Gentrification** A process in which an under-resourced neighborhood experiences an influx of middle-class or wealthy people who renovate and rebuild homes and businesses, which often results in an increase in property values and the displacement of earlier residents.

**Redlining** A discriminatory practice in which services (financial and otherwise) are withheld from potential customers who reside in neighborhoods classified as “hazardous” to investment; these neighborhoods are often disproportionately inhabited by people of color and/or lower income.

**Redevelopment** New construction on a site that has preexisting uses. In the Hill District, “redevelopment,” after WWII—to make way for the Civic Arena and other structures—led to the displacement of 1,500 Black families, and a hollowing out of a once-thriving cultural center. Other terms similar to “redevelopment” include “urban renewal” and “revitalization.”

## Hill District People and Places

August Wilson

Charles “Teenie” Harris

Crawford Grill

Civic Arena

Duke Ellington

Ella Fitzgerald

Louis Armstrong

# Connect

---

- What do you know about the Hill District?
- What does “neighborhood” mean to you?
- What ideas, images, or feelings do you or others associate with your own neighborhood (positive, negative, or in-between)?
- How has your neighborhood changed over time?
- What do you think of when you hear terms like “redevelopment” or “revitalization”?
- What services should a neighborhood ideally provide?

## Map of Past-Present-Future of Place

Create #1

Create a map representing the past, present, and future of a neighborhood.

### Materials

---

Collage materials, images from online, maps, pens, paper, scissors, glue.

### Brainstorm

---

- Think about a neighborhood or neighborhood space that has meaning for you—somewhere you live, where a family member or close friend lives, or where you have spent time.
- What do you associate with this neighborhood or space (positive, negative, or in-between)? Write as much as you can think of: personal memories, stories passed along from others, sensations, colors, sounds, smells.

- What is it like now?
- What was it like 20 years ago? (You can use your imagination, do research, and/or ask someone who might have been there.)
- What do you imagine or hope it will be like in the future?
- If possible, gather images of the place from the past and the present (online, in magazines, or from personal photographs; you could also use maps).
- Create a “map” showing the past, present, and future of the place.

For example: Crawford Grill; pictures of who used to go there (Duke Ellington, etc.), pictures of what it’s like now, what might it be like if “revitalized”?

## Portrait

Create #2

Create a portrait of someone from your community.

### Materials

---

Paper, pencils. Optional: acrylic paint, watercolor, colored pencils, and anything else you might think of.



James “Yaya” Hough, *Untitled*, 2013, Copyright JTT

To create his portrait series “Points of Connection” (pictured above), Hough built relationships with everyone from formerly incarcerated people to members of the District Attorney’s office, discussing what justice meant to them.

- Taking inspiration from Hough’s project, think about someone from your community whom you’d like to make a portrait of. You might choose a neighbor, a friend, a family member, a well-known figure from the past who lived or spent time in the community, or even yourself.
- If possible, spend time with the person and ask them questions, or see what you can find about them (including videos or interviews) online.
- Think about not only what this person “looks like” but also what their personality is, what you feel about them, what they are passionate about, etc. If you had to represent them with a color or an object, what might these be? How might you portray the person’s history or inner life? Challenge yourself to incorporate these other facets into the portrait.

**Option 1** Make a 2-D portrait of the person using pencils, paper, and colored pencils or watercolor.

**Option 2** Move outside the box of what makes a traditional “portrait,” and portray the person in another medium: sculpture, song, collage, sound collage, photography, video, etc.

US Carceral  
System

Transformative  
Justice

Public Art

Hill District