

## **“My NC from A to Z”: Lessons to Accompany the Book**

Lesson plans developed by A+ Schools of NC  
<https://www.ncarts.org/aplus-schools>

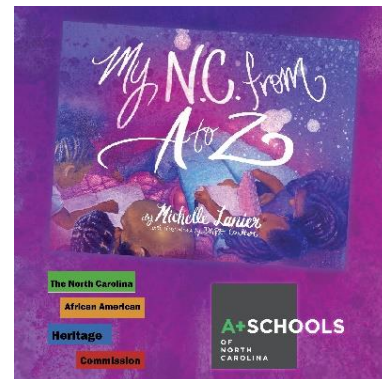
**Lesson Title:** Visionary Artists and Venn Diagrams

**Author/Collaborators:** Kristen Terry and Gideon Young,  
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**Grade Level(s):** K-5<sup>th</sup> grade

**Time Required:** Four to six 30-45 minute sessions

**Subjects/Content being integrated:** Visual Arts and ELA



State Standards in both arts and non-arts content that are being addressed:

### Visual Arts

- K-5.V.1 Use the language of visual arts to communicate effectively.
- K-5.V.2 Apply creative and critical thinking skills to artistic expression.
- K-5.V.3 Create art using a variety of tools, media and processes safely and appropriately.
- K-3.V.1.4 Understand characteristics of the Elements of Art, including lines, shapes, colors, textures, form, space and value.
- 4.CX.1.2 Recognize key contributions of North Carolina artists in art history.
- 5.CR.1.2 Critique personal art based on established criteria and expressive qualities.

### Mathematics

- NC.K.MD.1 Classify objects by attributes (long, short, heavy, light, big, small).
- NC.1.MD.4 Organize, represent and interpret data with up to three categories.
- NC.2.MD.10 Organize, represent and interpret data with up to four categories.
- 3-5 STANDARDS FOR MATHEMATICAL PRACTICE
  - 5. Use appropriate tools strategically.
  - 7. Look for and make use of structure.

### English Language Arts

- SL.K.5 Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.
- RI.1.9 With guidance and support, compare two familiar texts on the same topic.
- SL.2.5 Add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts and feelings.
- RL.3.7 Identify parts of illustrations or factual information that depicts a particular setting or event.
- SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.

## **LESSON PLAN DETAILS**

### Purpose/Objective

*(What do you want students to know and be able to do?)*

Students will compare and contrast two to five North Carolina African American visual artists by making art and Venn diagrams.

## Student Assessments

*(How and when will you know if students have mastered the content?)*

- **Pre-assessment:**  
Ask students for their responses to: Can you show **symmetry** with your body? Show me what **compare** means? Show me what **contrast** means? Same? Different? Can you think of a graphic organizer that helps people see differences and similarities?
- **During:**  
[What's My Word:](#) While learners are working, encourage their use of the vocabulary by using this slide deck. Instructions for use are on the first slide.  
[Find a Paintbrush:](#) This supplementary activity is an opportunity for enrichment and assessment with a behavior management tool imbedded within. When monitoring student working sessions, listen for students using target vocabulary words. When a student uses a targeted word, pause the whole class. Recognize the use of the vocabulary word and ask that student to select a number within the slide deck. If the number selected is a paintbrush, give that student a real paintbrush to keep on their desk for the day. If the number selected is not a paintbrush, have the whole class participate in the activity that comes up. There are five paint brushes available in the slide deck and the other slides contain artist information. Note, you could also use this activity as a warm-up or entry into any of the sessions in this lesson plan.
- **Post-assessment:**
  - Share the rubric (at end of lesson) with your learners while they are creating their art and preparing for their final gallery debut.
  - Students create their own Venn diagram of their own artwork in the final activity.

## Focus Questions

- How can we show what we know about five African American visual artists (style, form, technique, personal history, etc.) while also demonstrating understanding of use of a Venn diagram?
- How can we use critical thinking to compare the work of five African American visual artists?

## Multiple Intelligences

*(Which MIs will be supported and how?)*

- **Visual-Spatial:** Analysis of visual art for elements of art; multiple opportunities for the creation of visual art
- **Verbal-Linguistic:** Vocabulary bank and its use; classroom conversations, artist information slideshow
- **Logical-Mathematical:** Using a graphic organizer to compare information
- **Naturalist:** Organizing items, artists and art according to similarities and differences; using graphic organizers
- **Intrapersonal:** Introspective searching for life moments important to self to create art
- **Interpersonal:** Talking with partners about art plans; sharing completed art

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

*(Which 21<sup>st</sup> century skills will be supported and how?)*

- **Creativity and Innovation:** Taking a concrete concept (Venn diagram) and turning it into a piece of art that demonstrates how a Venn diagram works and shares information learned about the artists
- **Critical Thinking:** Analyzing and evaluating connections across and between artists
- **Collaboration:** Sharing planning with peers

- **Communication:** Designing a way to share their knowledge and understanding of the content

### Vocabulary

Non-arts vocabulary: Venn diagram, both, graphic organizer, label

Arts vocabulary: long line, symmetrical balance, overlapping, color value (lightness and darkness)

Shared vocabulary: compare, contrast, alike, different

### Materials Needed

(supplies, handouts, resources, etc.)

- Hula hoops (two or three)
- Colored string/yarn, tape or chalk for making Venn diagrams
- Variety of classroom items to sort (marker, pencil, paper, book)
- Smartboard, projector or student laptops for online resources
- Six pieces of drawing paper for each student (note: heavier weight paper in white, black or grey would be helpful for session four when students are painting)
- Coloring instruments for each student, or to share (crayons, colored pencils, markers, pencils)
- Paper scraps for collage, paint brushes (for glue) and a cup of watered-down glue per student for session two.
- Paint brushes, water cups, access to water, paper plates and white, black and grey paint for session four
- Scissors, per student
- Glue, per student (could be shared)
- Index cards, five per student
- [Visionary Artist Lesson Slide Deck](#) of Venn diagrams, information and images from all five artists
- Copies of rubric, one per student (see last page of lesson plan)
- Copies of blank Venn diagram handout (at end of this lesson plan)
- [Elements of Art](#) (to share or post)
- Copy of *My NC from A to Z* by Michelle Lanier
- If desired, [What's My Word](#), vocabulary activity slide deck
- If desired, [Find a Paintbrush](#), enrichment activity slide deck

### Teacher Background Information

(What might a teacher need to know prior to teaching this lesson? What might students already need to know prior to participating in this lesson?)

- Teachers will need to explore the background of all five artists ([Barnes](#), [Bearden](#), [Biggers](#), [Burke](#), [Evans](#)) and preview Visionary Artist Lesson Slide Deck. It is an option to seek additional images of the artists' art, but please note the images selected were chosen to align with ease when comparing and contrasting the work of these artists. Note that these are also the five artists mentioned in *My NC from A to Z*.
- Teachers will need to have some background knowledge of how a Venn diagram is utilized. Please see the extension section for processing Venn diagrams with students that are less familiar with this graphic organizer.
- Teachers should have a basic understanding of the elements of art, especially value, symmetrical balance and color intensity.
- Students should understand classroom rules, procedures and expectations for working collaboratively.
- Prepare materials for the anticipatory set activity.

## THE LEARNERS' EXPERIENCE

### Anticipatory Set/Engagement Before Instruction

(What happens to get the students engaged/hooked?)

- Before beginning, clear enough space in your room to lay two hula hoops on the floor, and have a basket full of items ready (a dime, printed copies of two of the art pieces from the slideshow, crayons, book, a ball, a small trophy or statue, etc.).
- Follow the instructions below for learners with less experience with Venn diagrams, or for learners who are familiar with Venn diagrams.

### Process option for learners with less experience with Venn diagrams and graphic organizers:

- The teacher will begin with one hula hoop on the floor and tell the learners that the "Title" for this hula hoop is "Things in My Bag."
- Teacher then poses the question, "What if I wanted to 'sort' the items into two groups?" prompting learners to respond in some way that indicates a need for an additional hula hoop/circle.
- The teacher will reveal the second hoop and create two separate circles. Move the title above the two hula hoops explaining that these are still items from the bag, but now we need to "label" the hula hoops to show how we are sorting them. Allow learners to offer label options.
- Pose the questions: "What should we "label" circle/hula hoop one?" "What should we "label" circle/hula hoop two?"
- Then, learners may notice an object that could go in two places. If children do not respond to prompt, lead them to finding one item that could go into both areas.
  - "If this item can go into both areas, where should I put it?"
  - "Do my hula hoops need to change/move?"
- From this point the teacher will be ready to move on to the bulk of the lesson. Introduce the terms "graphic organizer" as a picture that helps to organize your thoughts. "This particular graphic organizer is called a Venn diagram."

### Process for learners familiar with Venn Diagrams and graphic organizers:

- Ask the students, "Can you think of a graphic organizer that helps people see differences and similarities?"
- Lay two hula hoops in the shape of a Venn diagram on the floor.
- Invite students to help organize the items in the Venn diagram while using the following vocabulary (vocabulary list is page two of the lesson slide deck): alike, different, compare, contrast, both, graphic organizer, Venn diagram, label  
Use prompts such as:
  - How are these two things different?
  - Compare this and that
  - Are these both alike?
  - How does this Venn diagram help us to organize these items in a way that we can see?
  - Now that we have sorted the items, how could we label each section of this graphic organizer?

### Continue for both groups:

- Tell students that now that they have learned a little about how Venn diagrams help to organize information, they are going to look at some different examples of Venn diagrams.

- Introduce/review the term “graphic organizer” as a picture that helps to organize your thoughts. “The graphic organizer that we are using for these lessons is called a Venn diagram.”
- Show examples of Venn diagrams (in lesson slide deck).
- Tell students that over the next few sessions, they are going to learn about five African American visionary artists from North Carolina. Share the book, *My NC from A-Z*.
- Ask the following:
  - Do you know any artists?
  - Do you know any African American artists?
  - Do you know any that are from NC?
  - What can help us organize our learning about these artists and their art techniques?”
- Tell students about the process that will happen over the next few sessions. Students will create five drawings – one in the style of each of five artists – and at the end of the project, students will choose two or more of their drawings to cut into pieces in order to create a Venn diagram that compares and contrasts the artists.

### Student Engagement Activities/Learning Experiences

(What are the detailed instructions for carrying out the lesson?)

#### Session One:

- Show (project) Ernie Barnes’ art and artist photographs. Use the vocabulary term *long lines* as students explore his artwork.
- Lead a conversation about art being personal, and how the subject of an artistic piece is often related to the artist’s life. Ask students to look again at the artwork and ask:
  - Where do you see long lines in Barnes’ artwork?
  - What do you think was important in Ernie Barnes’ life, based on the art he created?
  - What makes you say that?
  - Where do you see movement in this artwork?
- Students will each access their memory for a remarkable moment of movement, from which, to create visual art.
  - Ask students to help create a minute of silence.
    - *Let’s close our eyes and keep ourselves still.*
  - Ask students to think to themselves during this minute and recall a moment from their lives when they or someone else made a movement they remember because it was remarkable. Maybe it’s the game winning point they saw, or a sibling’s first step or walking to recess yesterday.
    - *Try to let most of this minute be in silence, not teacher asking the above questions.*
- Students will turn and talk about their remarkable movement moment. This may help to clarify the moment for each student.
- Now have students make a plan to create their remarkable movement moment in the style of Ernie Barnes. Students will use drawing with the goal of using **long lines**.
  - Students will be using regular paper and colored pencils.
  - Teacher will encourage students to use most of the space on their paper in order to create real length to their lines.
- Students will create their art in the style of Ernie Barnes.
- When students are done, ask them to title their artwork.
- Instruct them to add their title and at least one sentence of information about Ernie Barnes to their art (on the art, on an index card, on the back, etc.). This can be created through teacher-led group writing, individual research or gleaned from the slideshow.



- Students will share their art with one partner. Students will look for **long lines** and a remarkable moment in each other's art.

### Session Two:

(Each session follows a similar format as session one)

- Show Romare Bearden's art and artist photographs, using vocabulary of **overlapping** in reference to collage.
- Come back to the conversation about how art is personal, and the subject of an artistic piece is often related to the artist's life. Remind students of how they considered this for Ernie Barnes in the last session and now they will consider the same question for Romare Bearden:
  - Where do you see overlapping in Bearden's art?
  - What do you think was important in Romare Bearden's life, based on the art he created?
  - What makes you say that?
- Students will each access their memory for a meaningful moment from which, to create visual art.
  - Ask students to help create a minute of silence. *Let's close our eyes and keep ourselves still. Let's press our thumbs together.*
  - Ask each student to think to themselves during this minute and remember a moment from their lives that was/is important to them.
- Students will turn and talk about their meaningful moment. This may help to clarify the moment for each student.
- Now have students make a plan to create their art in the style of Romare Bearden (collage) with the goal of **overlapping** pieces of paper.
- Students will create art in the style of Romare Bearden (collage).
  - Students will be using collage, with paper, paper scraps and glue.
  - Teacher will encourage students to tear or cut paper to create their collage.
- When students are done, ask them to title their artwork.
- Instruct them to add their title and at least one sentence of information about Romare Bearden to their art (on the art, on an index card, on the back, etc.). This can be created through teacher-led group writing, individual research or gleaned from the slideshow.
- Students, in groups of four to six, will take turns sharing their meaningful moment and their art. Their peers will look for **overlapping** and a meaningful moment in each other's art.

### Session Three:

(Each session follows a similar format as session one)

- Show John Biggers' art and artist photographs, using vocabulary of **symmetrical balance**.
- Come back to the conversation about how art is personal, and the subject of an artistic piece is often related to the artist's life.
  - Where do you see symmetry in Biggers' artwork?
  - Where do you see balance?
  - What do you think was important in John Biggers' life, based on the art he created?
  - What makes you say that?
- Students will each access their memory for something that in their life that has symmetry and/or balance, from which, to create visual art.

- Teacher will ask students to help create a minute of silence. *Let's stand up, hold our arms out to our sides to create symmetry, close our eyes, and keep ourselves still.*
- Teacher will ask each student to think to themselves during this minute and think of something in their lives that has symmetry and/or balance. Maybe they recall balancing on a log during a walk, or maybe their kitchen table is symmetric with the same number of chairs set on each side, or maybe their favorite stuffed animal is symmetrical.
- Students will turn and talk about their item or memory that is symmetrical/balanced. This may help to clarify the moment for each student.
- Now have students make a plan to create their art in the style of John Biggers, using crayon and markers, with the goal of employing **symmetrical balance**.
- Students will create art in the style of John Biggers.
  - Students will be using drawing paper, crayons and markers.
  - Teacher will encourage students to use most of the space on their paper in order to show symmetry and balance.
- When students are done, ask them to title their artwork.
- Instruct them to add their title and at least one sentence of information about John Biggers to their art (on the art, on an index card, on the back, etc.). This can be created through teacher-led group writing, individual research or gleaned from the slideshow.
- To share, students will stand in a large circle, each holding their art from the day, then carefully mill around the room, searching for similarities between their art and other students' art, while also looking for **symmetrical balance** in each other's art. Teacher will bring students back into a large circle and ask four to seven students to share the similarities they found.

#### Session Four

(Each session follows a similar format as session one)

- Show Selma Burke's art and artist photographs, using vocabulary of **value** (*darkness and lightness*).
- Come back to the conversation about how art is personal, and the subject of an artistic piece is often related to the artist's life.
  - Where do you see value, darkness and lightness in Burke's artwork?
  - What do you think was important in Selma Burke's life, based on the art she created?
  - What makes you say that?
  - Why do you think she selected the people who appear in her artwork?
  - Why do you think that?
- Students will each access their memory for something that they think has lights and darks, from which, to create visual art.
  - Ask students to help create a minute of silence.
  - Ask each student to think to themselves during this minute and think of someone who is very important to them. Then think: How can I create that person using only black and white and grey?
- Students will turn and talk about their important person and some of the details of that person. This may help to clarify the moment for each student.
- Now have students make a plan to create their art in the style of Selma Burke, using only black, white and grey paint on black or white paper to create a portrait with the goal of employing **value**.
- Students will create art in the style of Selma Burke.

- Students will be using white, grey or black drawing paper and white, black and grey paint.
- Teacher will encourage students to use the three paint colors to mix and blend different values of light and dark.
- When students are done, ask them to title their artwork.
- Instruct them to add their title and at least one sentence of information about Selma Burke to their art (on the art, on an index card, on the back, etc.). This can be created through teacher-led group writing, individual research or gleaned from the slideshow.
- To share, students will have an interview session with their partner from session one about the art that they have created so far.

Interview questions:

- What has been your favorite artist so far?
- How did you choose your important person for today's artwork?
- What artistic choice are you most proud to have made so far?
- Can you show me your darkest and lightest **values** in your art from today?

### Session Five

(Each session follows a similar format as session one)

- Show Minnie Evans' art and artist photographs, using vocabulary of ***symmetrical balance*** and ***color intensity (brightness or dullness)***.
- Come back to the conversation about how art is personal, and the subject of an artistic piece is often related to the artist's life.
  - Where do you see symmetrical balance in Evans' artwork?
  - Where do you see color intensity in her work?
  - What do you think was important in Minnie Evans' life, based on the art she created?
  - What makes you say that?
  - How do you think Minnie Evans' dreams may have influenced her art?
  - Why do you think that?
- Students will each access their memory for a dream from which to create visual art.
  - Teacher will ask students to help create a minute of silence. *Let's close our eyes, put one hand on top of the other, and keep ourselves still.*
  - Teacher will ask each student to think to themselves during this minute and try to remember a dream. *What details of the dream can you remember? What colors were visible?*
- Students will turn and talk about their dream detail, trying to verbalize colors and details. This may help to clarify the moment for each student.
- Now have students make a plan for their art in the style of Minnie Evans, with the goal of employing **symmetrical balance** and **color intensity**.
- Students will create art in the style of Minnie Evans.
  - Students will be using any drawing tools they would like - crayon, marker, colored pencil, Sharpie.
  - Teacher will encourage students to try to achieve color intensity in some areas, and to remember to find a place for showing symmetrical balance.
  - If teacher has access to foil, or foiled papers, adding these might be a fun and unique effect for intensity. Glue and scissors might be needed in this case.
- When students are done, ask them to title their artwork.
- Instruct them to add their title and at least at least one sentence of information about Minnie Evans to their art (on the art, on an index card, on the back, etc.). This can be created through teacher-led group writing, individual research or gleaned from the slideshow.



- To share, students will all place their art from today in the center of a large circle, each piece touching the next, to create “a class dream.” Students will gaze into the dream, looking for **symmetrical balance** and **color intensity** in each other’s art. A few students may want to voice their findings.

## Session Six:

### Closing Session

*(How will the lesson wrap up and bring closure for the students?)*

- The teacher may want to review Venn diagram examples with students to start this session.
- Bring students together, with their five pieces of art, in a seated circle with ample floor space in the center of the circle.
- Using the hula hoops, marking with tape or using string or yarn, create a large Venn diagram in the center of the circle.
- Guide students through a series of Venn diagram discussions similar to this first example, changing the circle labels each time, or inviting students to do so. Some examples of possible Venn diagram labels follow.
- Tell students that one circle is “long lines” and the other circle is “overlapping”. Have them view all five of their pieces of art and select one piece that fits in either circle or in the center. Have students place the piece they selected in the appropriate location on the large Venn diagram.
- Discuss why the pieces are in the places the students selected. Invite students to consider alternate placement on the Venn diagram as they discover other possibilities.
- Have students take back the art pieces they selected for the first round and return to the seated circle.
- Change the Venn diagram labels and repeat the process. Continue this as many times as desired. Make sure to have students experience that some art pieces might fall outside of the Venn diagram.
- Suggestions for Venn diagram titles: value: dark colors/light colors; intensity: bright colors/dull colors; subject: portrait/landscape; symmetrical/not symmetrical; realistic/imaginary, etc.
- Now ask students to return to their seats and using a blank Venn diagram handout, create their own Venn diagram for their own five pieces of art. Provide them with the rubric of expectations for their Venn diagram.
- Students should decide on the labels for their Venn diagram and write the title of each piece of their artwork in the correct location for their labels.
- Ask students to also include words that describe the artwork they selected for each section of the Venn diagram and that describe the style of the artist that each was created from. Also encourage them to use the art vocabulary words to help define their Venn diagram.
- Have students rate themselves on the rubric and include this with their artwork and Venn diagram on their desk.
- Gallery walk or paired sharing of these final personal Venn diagrams would be a great way to complete this lesson.

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Classroom/Behavior Management Tips and Tools

*(What techniques might be useful in managing this lesson?)*

- Having well defined procedures, processes and expectations is necessary to successfully complete this lesson. Students should have a process for obtaining materials, asking questions and working.

### Distance Learning Adaptations or Suggestions

*(How can this lesson be taught virtually – synchronously or asynchronously?)*

- This lesson can easily be created and responded to via [Seesaw](#), [Flipgrid](#) or even uploaded to Google Classroom.
- Adjust materials as needed for what students have at home.
- There are also many free online collage makers that range from easy to more complex that could be used for student to create Venn Diagrams.

K-5 [PicCollage](#)

4-5 [Befunky Collage Maker](#) or [Adobe Spark](#)



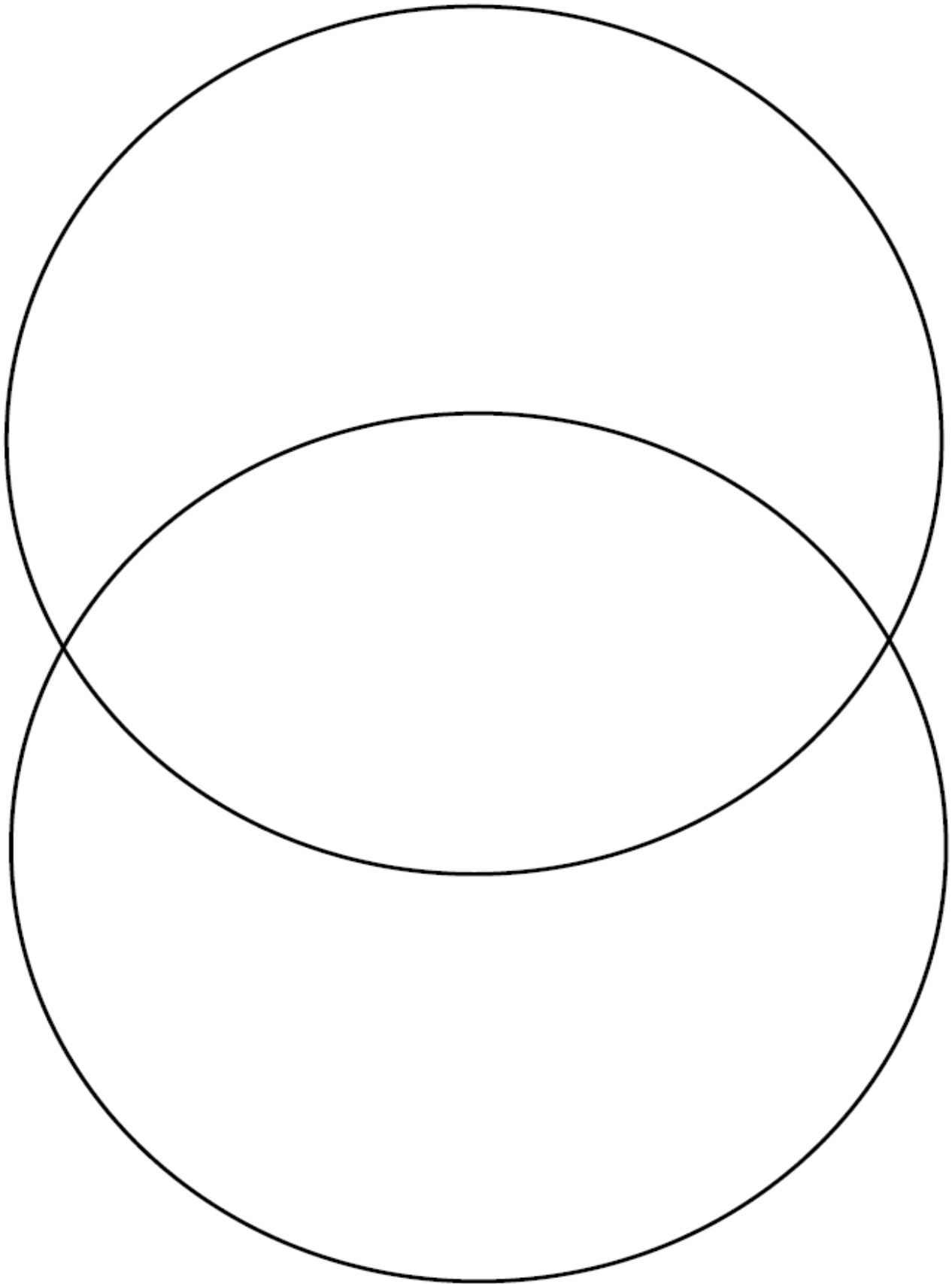
The above Venn diagram was made by going to the site [Befunky Collage Maker](#) and clicking on “create,” then to the collage maker. Once in collage maker, choose the heart image (graphics) on the left. Scroll down to geometry and choose the free circles. Choose the color picker to adjust the color of each circle. By clicking on the blend option and choosing “light to dark” and overlapping the circles, a Venn diagram can be created. Adding images can be done through the image manager option. Teachers may share images for learners to choose from or learners may search for their own. Text can be added as well.
















### Extensions, Follow-up or Additional Resources

- Invite students to do additional exploration of these African American visual artists. After viewing multiple pieces of an artist’s work, student could do a Venn diagram comparison of several pieces by the same artist.
- Challenge students to find current, living African American artists to explore. Some possibilities include Antoine Williams, Beverly McIver, Vandorn Hinnant, Dare Coulter, Endia Beal and Harry Davis among many others. Wikipedia has a fairly comprehensive list of living and past African American artists.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_African-American\\_visual\\_artists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_African-American_visual_artists)

The [My NC from A to Z Resource Guide](#) overs several activity sheets as well as the link to an audio recording of the author, Michelle Lanier, reading the book.



Expectations	_____’s Self-Assessment		
<p>My Venn diagram compares my artwork created in the style of at least two different artists.</p>	<p>Almost </p>	<p>Yes! </p>	<p>WOW!! </p>
<p>My Venn diagram contains at least four descriptive words about the style of the artists represented.</p>	<p>Almost </p>	<p>Yes! </p>	<p>WOW!! </p>
<p>I can use art vocabulary to communicate similarities about the art on my Venn diagram</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• long line</li> <li>• symmetrical balance</li> <li>• overlapping</li> <li>• value</li> <li>• intensity</li> </ul>	<p>Almost </p>	<p>Yes! </p>	<p>WOW!! </p>
<p>I can use art vocabulary to communicate differences about the art on my Venn diagram</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• long line</li> <li>• symmetrical balance</li> <li>• overlapping</li> <li>• value</li> <li>• intensity</li> </ul>	<p>Almost </p>	<p>Yes! </p>	<p>WOW!! </p>
<p>My Venn diagram has labels and a title that relate to the content of the diagram.</p>	<p>Almost </p>	<p>Yes! </p>	<p>WOW!! </p>