



PARRISH ART MUSEUM

Parrish Home Art Studios

HERO DRAWING AND PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Monument in Waiting by Theaster Gates is a sculpture in the Parrish Art Museum's outdoor exhibition [Field of Dreams](#). *Monument in Waiting* questions why some people are celebrated as heroes in history and others are overlooked—particularly as they relate to the preservation of Black cultural and social histories.

Through this sculpture the artist asks us to think about who a real hero is. Look at the images below. In the detail image on the right you can read the words Gates carved into one of the stone bases, or plinths, "UNTIL REAL HEROES BLOOM, THIS DUSTY PLINTH WILL WAIT." Come see the work in person and consider the tradition of historical, monumental sculpture; how and why does someone deserve, or not deserve, to be recognized for their acts?

Who do you think should be monumentalized?



Theaster Gates (American, born 1973)
Monument in Waiting, 2020 Granite tile
and stone 360 x 200 x 69 ½ inches
Courtesy of Gray, Chicago/New York.
Photo: Timothy Schenck.

For this project, you can focus on heroes from everyday life or your hero can be someone who acts on a global level, who makes a positive difference in our world. Choose a hero who is someone special to you!

For example, we all know someone who has been particularly kind, generous or thoughtful to us. Maybe it's your next door neighbor who always remembers your birthday, or a friend at school who shares a lunch when you forgot to bring lunch money! Or maybe you know someone who is a healthcare worker, who raises money for charity, or who supports an important cause. This lesson is about celebrating a special person or people who make a difference in your life.

DAY 1



Materials:

Paper
Drawing materials (colored pencils, crayons)
Scissors
Glue
Photograph if available and appropriate. (If you use a photograph, make sure it's ok to cut it out!)

1) Pictured to the left is a photograph of my parents. I chose to dedicate my sculpture to them because I'm so grateful for all the love, support and opportunities they gave to my siblings and me!

If you want to draw someone, go ahead! You don't have to use a photograph! You can also cut a photograph out of a magazine or newspaper.

2) Where will your monument be? Does your hero have a favorite place? The beach or the city? My parents loved New York, that's where I placed my monument. Sketch out your background. Remember to draw your horizon line—the line that separates the sky from the ground, ocean or roof lines of a city.

3) Cut out or draw your hero or heroes, and glue the image down where you'd like. Think about the base of your sculpture, will it be round or square? You decide! Make sure your hero looks like they're on top of your plinth.

4) Draw your hero's favorite things: books, animals, flowers or even cupcakes. Include words you'd like to say to your hero. Do you wish to thank them or praise their accomplishments? Just like Theaster Gates carved his message to all of us, you can include a message on your art work.

5) After completing your sketch, use your colored pencils or crayons to make your monument a colorful work of art.



DAY 2

Your artwork can be a special gift to your hero! Glue it onto another piece of paper to create a frame, or turn it into a special card for your special person.

Another way to honor an important person in your life is to dedicate a story to that person. You can do this by writing a personal narrative. Many grade level ELA and ELL classes have a Personal Narrative component to their curriculum. Personal narratives can be written as a story, essay or even a graphic storyboard in which the narrator (you) speaks in the first person to describe a particularly meaningful "small moment" in the life of the narrator and the person to whom the story is dedicated. Think about a particular moment when your "hero" really made a positive impact in your life and give examples of what makes you feel that way.

The narrator is the main character, and sets the scene: where does the action take place? Get your reader interested in your story! Describe the place and the characters

who will play a part in the story. Use precise details in your descriptions, write what was being said and what you were thinking when the moment or action occurred. Stretch out the moment to include your inner thoughts and feelings! You can describe sounds, was the wind whooshing? Were birds chirping or traffic zooming by? Were you on the beach on a sweltering sunny day or sitting with your family by the cozy but smoky fireplace? Have in mind a beginning (setting the scene and characters) a middle (the actions, words spoken and thoughts and feelings in response to the action) and an ending. How did the main character resolve the action? Make sure your ending connects to your beginning and middle of your narrative.

Have fun creating your art and personal narrative!

TAKE IT FURTHER

Learn more about Theaster Gates and *Monument in Waiting*. Visit the outdoor exhibition *Field of Dreams* at the Parrish Art Museum and listen to Gates speak about the sculpture on our website.

[Field of Dreams: Theaster Gates on Monument in Waiting](#)

Field of Dreams

August 20, 2020–August 31, 2021



We would love to see what you made! To share, post your artwork on Instagram with the hashtag #ParrishHomeArtStudios