

# Learn with MoMA



**MoMA**

## Step 1 Look closely

1. If you were to describe this artwork in detail to someone who can't see it, how would you describe it?
2. What elements are recognizable? What do they remind you of?

## Step 2 Learn more

This artwork by David Hammons, *African-American Flag*, reimagines the flag of the United States of America. What has he kept the same? What has he changed?

He created this flag for the exhibition *Black USA* in 1990. The curator of the exhibition told Hammons that he “‘needed something special to install outside the building,’ perhaps using the flagpole, as a way to express ‘a kind of liberation’ for Black art.’ An African American flag was Hammons’ response; and on a napkin, he drew an American flag and identified the red, black and green colors.”<sup>1</sup>

He replaced the American flag’s colors with the red, green, and black of the Pan-African flag, which symbolizes unity for people of the African Diaspora. The color red symbolizes the blood that was shed throughout history, black for the people it represents, and green for the plentiful wealth of the African continent.

## Step 3 Activity: Design your own flag

Materials: paper, pencils, and colored pencils or markers; or colored paper, scissors, glue

1. On a piece of paper, write down a list of values and beliefs that are important to you.
2. Brainstorm ways you can represent these values visually through colors and symbols. You can incorporate imagery from existing flags that have meaning for you.
3. Decide on the shape of your flag—it doesn’t need to be rectangular!
4. Design your flag by drawing with colored pencils, collaging with colored paper, or a combination of both.

## Step 4 Share!

Share your flag design with another friend or classmate, or you can email a photo to us at MoMA: [schoolprograms@moma.org](mailto:schoolprograms@moma.org).



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Image: David Hammons. *African-American Flag*. 1990. Printed cotton. 5 (This edition was the first version of Hammons's *African-American Flag*.). Gift of The Over Holland Foundation. David Hammons created this flag for the groundbreaking exhibition "Black USA," curated by Jan Christiaan Braun in Amsterdam, April 7–July 29, 1990. © 2023 David Hammons

1. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/how-a-celebrated-artist-redesigned-the-stars-and-stripes-to-mark-pride-black-america-180980401/>