

MILFORD GRAVES: Fundamental Frequency



Milford Graves, *Collage of Healing Herbs and Bodily Systems*, 1984. Mixed media collage. Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves.



What connections between our bodies and nature are suggested in this collage?

Milford Graves: Fundamental Frequency

Allow students to look carefully at the artwork and share thoughts about what they see. What ideas are inspired by the image for creating artworks of their own?

What connections between our bodies and nature are suggested in this collage?

K-2

INQUIRY

- Look closely at *Collage of Healing Herbs and Bodily Systems*. Think about how it was made. Describe the tools and materials the artist used to make the work.

PROJECT

- Use old magazines or the internet to find images of different plants and flowers. Arrange in a composition of a face and paste onto a sheet of paper.
- Explain the image choices made for the face.

3-5

INQUIRY

- The artist chose to organize his images into groups. Describe several of the individual pictures you see.
- What are the differences and similarities of each group? What might the groupings mean?

PROJECT

- Milford Graves studied plants very carefully. Find and use a diagram of various plant parts. Select one plant part to draw with close attention to detail.

6-8

INQUIRY

- Explore the artwork's composition and visual energy.
- Describe the qualities of the overall design. Where does repetition appear and how do the strong lines guide the

viewer around the collage? Describe the central element's impact and meaning.

PROJECT

- Imagine that the collage is a map. Write a creative description of how and where the map guides you and what you find there.

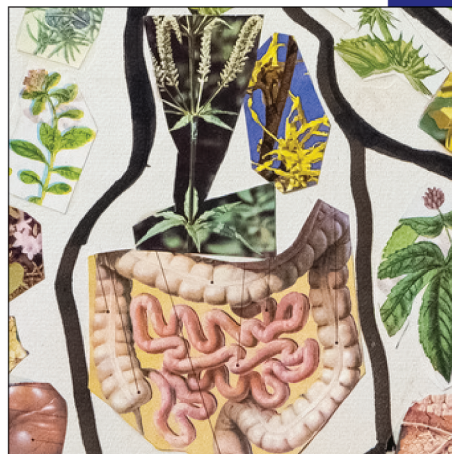
9-12

INQUIRY

- By using Virtual ICA LA, view the exhibition virtually with your computer. Explore and write notes about the vitality and breadth of Graves's creative expression.

PROJECT

- Reflect on the level of curiosity, productivity, and energy in Graves's creative work and share responses.
- Discuss how making art or interacting with an artform affects our wellbeing.
- Write a reflection detailing how a specific artform or artwork positively impacts your life.



Collage of Healing Herbs and Bodily Systems, 1994 (detail)

Milford Graves: *Fundamental Frequency* is organized by Artists Space, New York, in collaboration with Mark Christman and Ars Nova Workshop, Philadelphia. The exhibition is curated by Danielle A. Jackson with Stella Cizman. The presentation at ICA LA is organized by Amanda Straka, Senior Curator, with Caroline Ellen Liou, Curatorial Assistant. Major support for *Milford Graves: Fundamental Frequency* is provided by Karen Hillenburg and Sebastian Clough. The exhibition is also generously funded by Betty Greenberg and Steve NyBlom, Akio Tagawa, and Yuval Bar-Zemer. Additional support provided by Kate Lally and Paul Schuman. ICA LA is supported by the Curator's Council and Fieldwork Council. © 2023 Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Printing: Patrick Seebolzer, Continental Colorcraft. Design: Lynn Robb

ARTransmissions connects school communities with the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA) and introduces resources for art education and learning tools. This poster serves as a visual aid to reach a deeper understanding of selected artworks exhibited at the museum.

Milford Graves: Fundamental Frequency is dedicated to the life and work of the late Milford Graves (1941-2021), whose revolutionary experiments in music, medicine, movement, and art centered on rhythm.

An innovative force in radical music making since the mid-1960s, Graves transformed the role of drumming in jazz, proclaiming that the drummer was not simply a beat-keeper but rather a dynamic and influential improviser. Instrumental in the free jazz movement, Graves was a key member of the iconic ensemble The New York Art Quartet and the breadth of his collaborative experiments and influence on music extended across the US to Europe, Japan, and beyond.

A true polymath and innovator, Graves trained as a cardiac technician to understand the connection between drum rhythms and the heartbeat; he invented a martial arts form called Yara based on the movements of the praying mantis, African ritual dance, and the Lindy Hop; he was also a skilled botanist with a community garden; and for decades, he was a highly influential professor at Bennington College. Exploring cosmic relationships between rhythms and the universe—through movement, music, spiritualism, and the study of human anatomy—Graves embraced an expansive approach to sound that pushed the boundaries of art and performance.

ARTransmissions

Milford Graves



Collage of Healing Herbs and Bodily Systems, 1994 (detail)



Collage of Healing Herbs and Bodily Systems, 1994 (detail)

Virtual ICA LA allows you to virtually visit our space and navigate through *Milford Graves: Fundamental Frequency* and other exhibitions using your computer or smart phone. theicala.org/en/digital-projects