

## **Grace Before Jones: Camera, Disco, Studio** **Jimmy Robert: Akimbo**

**26 September 2020- 18 April 2021**

<https://www.nottinghamcontemporary.org/record/vr-exhibitions-grace-before-jones-and-jimr-robert-akimbo/>

This resource is designed for schools and community groups

Our activities are designed to encourage exploration and experimentation together. With a balance between skill and play to support a process driven approach, students will be encouraged to share perspectives and ideas and try out similar ways of working or thinking as the artists.

Activities often link to specific artworks, allowing for deeper engagement of a particular theme, as well as a connection to the overarching concepts that run through the exhibition. They provide an opportunity for students to make connections with the world around them.

Each activity can be expanded and developed further by teachers and group leaders. Through questioning participants ideas, especially the 'why's' and the 'what's', everyone is encouraged to debate and communicate their ideas. There are suggested discussion points within activities to consolidate learning as well as share individuals' reflections.

The activities often require participants to work in small groups. If you are working with a larger group, share your responses with everyone at the end of the activity.

## Activities

### **Captured Moments**

Arranging objects to tell a story

*Resources: Cameras or phones to take photos*

### **Stylish Silhouettes**

Explore textures and patterns using body shapes

*Resources: Printed templates, scissors*

### **Monuments**

Discuss the role of statues in contemporary society.

*Observation and discussion activity*

### **Shape, Texture, Layer**

Create a collage

*Resources: Large sheet of paper, mixture of different coloured and textured papers, masking tape, glue stick*

## Resources required

You'll need internet access and devices available to view the exhibitions. This can be a white board for large groups or for the whole classroom. For smaller groups, individual devices such as laptops, tablets or phones are recommended.

The students can document their work with cameras or tablets.

Other materials are listed for individual activities

## Captured Moments

### Explore the artworks

Visit **Gallery 1** of the VR exhibition together

In this activity we explore artworks that capture people and objects in unexpected moments; revealing more than something planned and posed.

**Look** around the gallery for photos and artworks which show Grace at home or behind the scenes, getting ready to perform. Check out 'Untitled Chair' by Nicole Wermers at the entrance to the gallery. There's also a photograph of Grace Jones in a tutu by Ming Smith



*'Untitled Chair', Nicole Wermers, 2015*



*'Untitled (Grace Jones Ballerina) Ming Smith 1975*

**Discuss** what you can see. What do you think the story is behind the artworks?

### Activity

**Look** around you in your space

**Take photos** of details and arrangements that tell a story of your presence. It could be something you may have just done – eaten a meal, how you have left your coat and bag, your work area, an activity you have just finished... whatever you want. The story should be told by furniture, clothes, objects, without you being in them.

First take photos that tell a story without rearranging anything.

Then maybe re-arrange some objects so that you make up a new story. It could be real or completely from your imagination. Take more photos.

**Discuss** the ways objects and their placement in the photos tell a story about you, your story, or your identities.

## Stylish Silhouettes

### Explore the artworks

Visit both **Gallery 2** and **Gallery 4** of the VR exhibition together



Grace Jones and Jimmy Robert both use their bodies in their art. Sometimes their bodies become the actual artwork. Grace has worn many stylish costumes and posed in many designer outfits that change how she looks, and how we look at fashion.

Jimmy uses his body to express his feelings about how he is seen as a Black, gay man. He is also interested in observing very closely the qualities of different materials and how they can be used instead of words to show feelings and ideas.

**Look** for artworks where Grace or Jimmy are wearing interesting outfits or are in interesting poses.

'Untitled (Plie II)', Jimmy Robert, 2015

### Activity

Copy or print the templates provided onto card. Carefully cut out the shape inside the area that has a thicker outline. What have you removed?

Take a peek through the hole you have cut out. How can you create new clothes for Jimmy or Grace for different moods? What would they wear if they were relaxed, energetic, thoughtful, joyful, angry...?

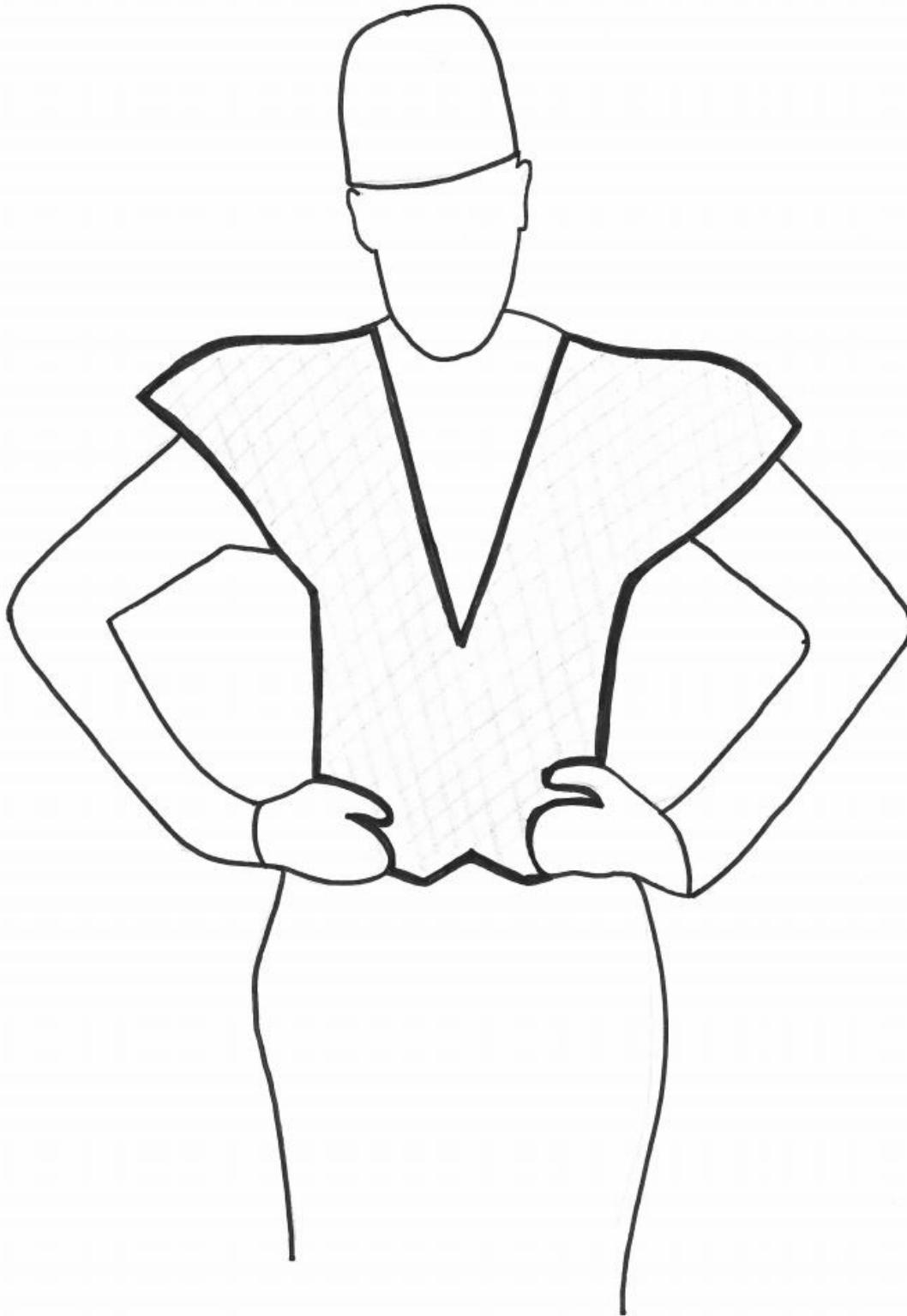
**Look** around your classroom or home, and place the sheet of card over interesting colours, patterns, textures so you can see them through the hole that you have cut out.

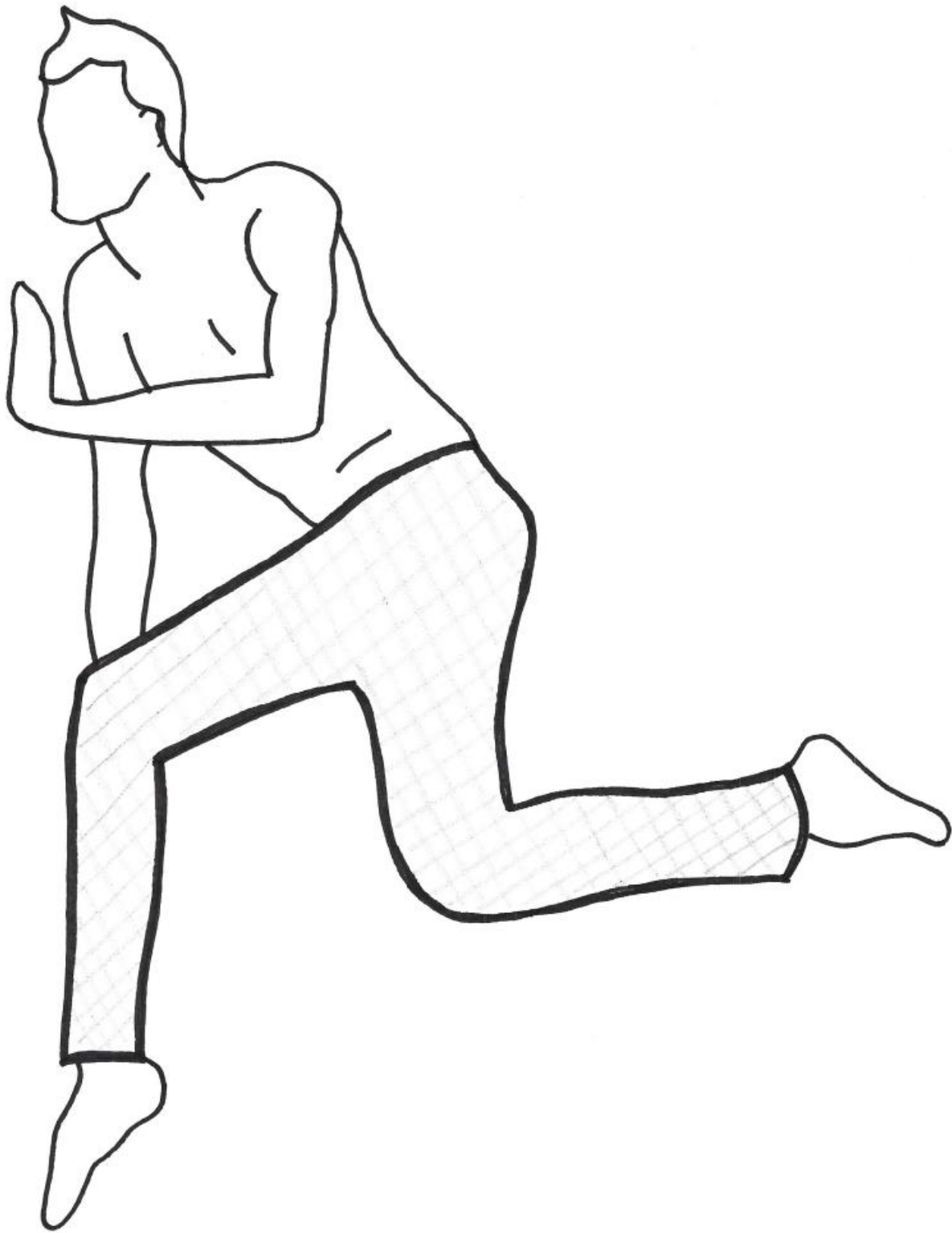
**'Dress'** both artists in a selection of original and outrageous outfits! What moods would Grace and Jimmy be showing us when wearing them?

**Take a photo** each time to create a photo fashion album of images.



## Templates: Stylish Silhouettes





## Monuments

### Explore the artwork

Visit **Gallery 3** of the VR exhibition together

'Untitled (Ompdrailles)' is a large black and white photo hanging from a wooden beam fixed at right angles to the wall.

The photo is of a monument in Brussels showing a scene from French author Leon Cladel's novel, *Ompdrailles, le tombeau des lutteurs* (*The Tomb of the Wrestlers*). Cladel tells the story of Albe Ompdrailles, a famous and handsome wrestler of who falls in love with an unattainable woman. In the sculpture Ompdrailles' trainer (and admirer) carries away his dead body after a match.



Jimmy Robert can also be seen in this photo. He is lying on the plinth on which the monument stands with his foot touching the statue of Ompdrailles.

This interaction with a public monument, made in 2013, seems very relevant now.

It can be linked to ongoing conversations about how history can be misrepresented through statues. Many of our public monuments ignore aspects of the histories of all the people who live in Europe and America today.

## Activity

**Look** closely at Jimmy Robert's artwork.

## Discuss

- Why do you think Jimmy chose the position he did? What do you think his body language is expressing?
- What is it about this monument that you think interests him?
- Why do you think Jimmy has hung the photo over the pole? How do you think it might help us understand his view?
- What do you think Jimmy is adding to the monument?
- What do you think he might be communicating about society today that may be different (or similar) to the 19<sup>th</sup> century?



## Shape, Texture, Layer

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### Explore the artwork

Visit **Gallery 5** of the VR exhibition together

'*Untitled (wall)*' by Jimmy Robert is a large printed paper on the wall and floor, held in place by masking tape and a piece of wood.

It is a photo of a simple arrangement of overlapping pieces of paper and card of different colours and textures.



### Activity

**Create** your own collage. Collect different textured and coloured paper, card or other 2D materials. Cut them or tear them to get a range of different sizes. You will also need masking tape and a glue stick.

**Think** about how you play with form. Choose how to display your background paper before positioning it

**Arrange** your materials carefully onto your background paper, thinking about the contrast of colours, textures and sizes. Try different arrangements or compositions before you fix anything down. Think about overlapping and layering the materials. When you are happy with your arrangement, use masking tape or glue stick to hold them in place.

Your collage can be abstract and doesn't need to look like a real thing.

**Take photos** as you go, showing your decisions as you place each shape.