



Desert X Mask Activity with Serge Attukwei Clotey

This mask-making activity is connected to Serge Attukwei Clotey's project for Desert X, *The Wishing Well*. For the art piece, Serge uses yellow plastic jerrycans (also called Kuofor gallons) that are used in West Africa to transport water.

Serge cuts up these jugs and uses them to create sculptures that reference the wells that people must travel to for water in his native Ghana. Many people around the world have to travel 30 minutes to these water sources with their jerrycans.

What are some things you do every day that use water?

Serge has performed at the artwork here in Palm Springs and at another artwork in his hometown of Labadi in Accra, Ghana. In these performances, Serge wears a mask and for a moment becomes a water warrior. He moves through the installation carrying an empty jerrycan in a search for the water that shapes the lives of people in this desert and in other places like this.

In this activity, you will create your own warrior mask!

If you received a Desert X mask kit, it includes one jerrycan fragment like those used in *The Wishing Well*. If you do not have a kit, gather some or all of the following supplies: Paper plate, recycled materials (cardboard, paper, plastic, and fabric scraps), beads, feathers, paint or markers, glue, stapler, scissors, pipe cleaners, raffia.

Before you begin, imagine the story your recycled materials hold:

**Who did it belong to? Where has it been?
How has it formed part of someone else's life?**

As you decorate and color your mask, think about how you are giving new meaning to this fragment. Maybe you think of the object as trash, but by using it to create your mask you turn it into something else.

**How did repurposing the plastic fragment change your perception of the object?
What other objects or fragments of trash could you use to make your mask?**

Incorporate some or all of the materials to create your own warrior mask.

Serge uses a similar shape again and again to create a patterned effect in his artworks. Dots, lines, and shapes used in sequence can create a pattern that is unique to you. Make a pattern in your own mask using markers, or by gluing down cut shapes.

Sketch an idea for your pattern here:

About the Artist

Serge Attukwei Clottey (Accra, Ghana, 1985) explores the economic, environmental, and cultural legacies of the colonial project in Africa. Using yellow plastic jerrycans known as Kufuor gallons, he creates sculptures, installations, and performances that speak to histories of colonial pillaging and its effects on trade and migration. These gallons function as material and a striking symbol in Attukwei Clottey's practice: a reminder of the way violent pasts manifest in the everyday.

The Wishing Well

James O. Jessie Desert Highland Unity Center
480 W. Tramview Road, Palm Springs, California
On view sunrise to sunset through May 16, 2021

The artist and Desert X would like to thank the generous support of the Desert Highland Gateway Estates Community Action Association and SIMCOR.

To learn more, visit www.desertx.org

