

Preview Content

LOVE

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Big Ideas

Culture, Unity,
Love, Identity

Essential Question

How can art and design affect
individuals and communities?

Other Artists to Explore

- Romare Bearden
- Margaret Kilgallen
- Barry McGee

Vocabulary Term

cultural identity An individual's sense of belonging to a certain group or community, such as a nation, religion, subculture, or ethnicity.

Discuss

- How do you define “love”? What kinds of “love” can be found in all communities?
- Why do you think Adams chose to depict the word “love”? How do the visual choices (colors, shapes, font, and so on) effect how we view the word in this context? Does the meaning change when this word is displayed in a public space?
- What are the connections between culture, identity, and community? How can your collective experiences, the physical location of the community, and your beliefs inform your cultural identity?

Explore

- What do you know about your community? Choose a community you belong to and search for historical information on how the community first began, how it has changed or grown, and what it is like now. Construct a timeline of your community. Then, identify the prominent attributes of this community and list the colors, shapes, and images that would help you describe this community to others.
- Explore album cover art designed by Cey Adams and make a short list of your favorites. Listen to some of the music in these albums and explain (using art and design vocabulary) how the overall design of the album works to describe the visual identity of the music.
- Create a list of logos and symbols that are nostalgic for you. Sketch each logo from memory. Next to each logo, describe the feelings, memories, and characteristics that it represents for you. Choose one logo from your list and research how this logo may have changed over time. Compare your memory of the logo with the various versions. Discuss your findings in small groups.



About the Artist

Cey Adams, a New York City native, started creating graffiti as a teenager in the 1970s and 80s, and was featured in the 1982 PBS hip hop documentary *Style Wars*. He studied painting at the School of Visual Arts before starting a career as the creative director for Def Jam Records in 1983. Two years later, he co-founded the graphic design firm The Drawing Board. Incorporating bold typography placed onto backgrounds of colorful shapes, his simple, bold statements uplift and empower communities and individuals, sending messages about social issues, race and gender relations, consumerism, and popular culture.

About the Artwork

In *LOVE*, Adams incorporates his fondness for collage and pop culture with his typography design and color and pattern choices, which give a three-dimensional quality to the letters, called 3D graffiti style. The bold, positive message of *LOVE*—referencing Robert Indiana's Pop Art *LOVE* works—can be viewed from miles away, inspiring a sense of belonging, or cultural identity, in the community.

The illusion of depth alongside patterns, colors, and shapes—a nostalgic nod to 1960s style—create a visual unity in the mural. The effectiveness of this artwork is driven by Adams's knowledge of branding, communication, and graphic design.

Artwork and artist portrait photograph courtesy of Cey Adams.