

CONVERSATION PLATES



Kerry James Marshall is a Black American artist from Alabama. He uses phrases like “Black is Beautiful” and “Black Power” in his art to bring attention to issues about Black Americans. He put these words onto plates so that you would view the words differently than if you read them somewhere else. You might say that this art is about getting people to talk about issues in our world and in our own lives.

Think about what people say at your own dinner table. What do people talk about? What are some things you feel people should be talking about?

Create some phrases using words from your family dinners to get people talking the next time you eat together.

Above: Kerry James Marshall. *Five Dinner Plates*. 1998. The Baltimore Museum of Art: Contemporary Art Fund, BMA 2000.155.1-5.
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MATERIALS

A pencil, ruler or straight edge, Sharpie or other markers, and paper plate (preferably shiny)

INSTRUCTIONS



- 1 With a ruler and a pencil, draw three lines in the plate’s inner circle: one at the top of the circle, one at the bottom, and a dashed line in between. Use these lines as guides when writing your phrases.



- 2 Start writing your phrases! You can use letters of any style for your words, like boxed or bubble letters. Use your pencil and your ruler to make straight lines and create a boxed or bubble letter outline for your text.



- 3 Use a Sharpie or your favorite markers to fill in the letters.

At your next family meal, talk about the phrases on your plates and why you chose those words.



We’d love to see your work! Snap a picture of your final creation and share with us on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter using the hashtag #ArtBMAFromHome for a chance to be featured.

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