

Derrick Adams: Buoyant Teaching Resource

Ages 5–11

Materials needed:

- mixed-media paper and recyclables
- markers, colored pencils, and/or crayons
- glue and/or tape
- cardboard

1 hour (includes two 20- to 30-minute activities)

Essential Questions:

- What is leisure?
- How do you spend your free time?
- What is mixed media?
- What brings you joy?



Part 1: Introducing Derrick Adams

Derrick Adams was born in Baltimore, Maryland and lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. He is a contemporary artist, fashion designer, curator, and professor. Adams created his *Floaters* series—a collection of vivid, colorful mixed-media portraits of Black people relaxing, playing, and enjoying themselves—because he wanted to make art showing people joyfully doing the things he does with family and friends.

Look at the artworks below and at hrm.org/derrick-adams.

What do you see? What is happening in these artworks?



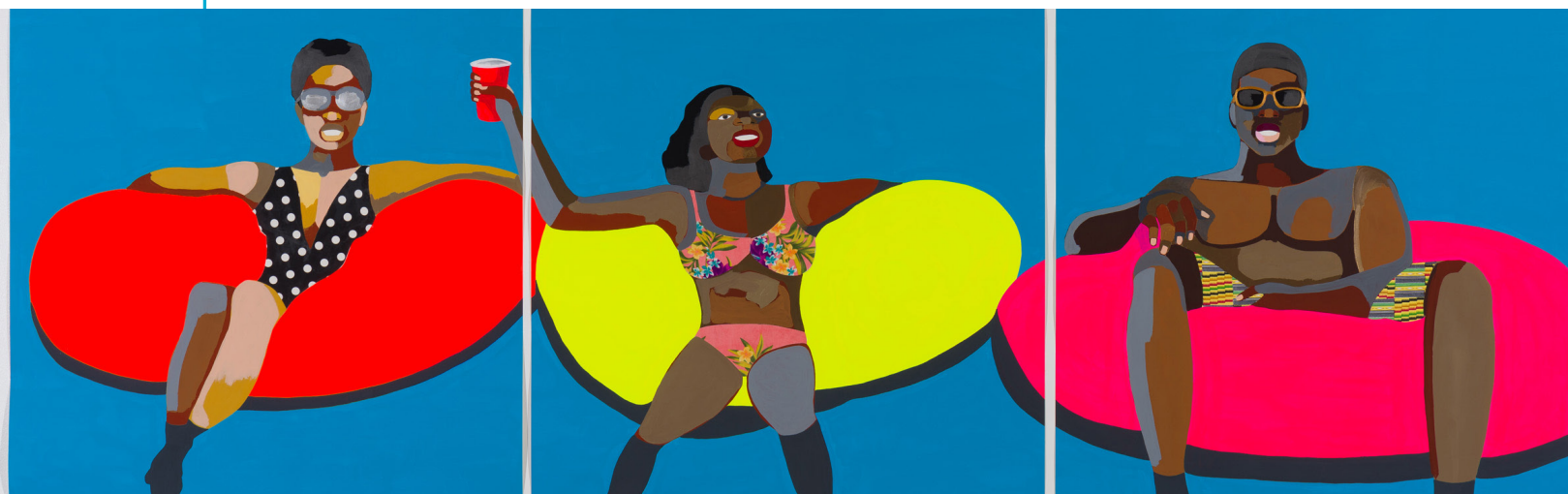
Part 2: Discuss

What does leisure mean?

- **Leisure** is the use of free time for enjoyment and relaxation. Leisure is self-directed. That means YOU decide how you spend your time!
- **Entertainment** is offered to you; it is something that is planned like a movie or concert.
- Things that you find to be fun are not always leisure activities. For example, if you play on a sports team or go to Scouts, that is planned time even though you enjoy them.
- **Hobbies** you do on your own time at your own pace can be called leisure activities too.

Questions to ask to encourage discussion are below. It is helpful to reinforce children's answers aloud and to note their responses on paper.

- How do you spend your day? How do you spend a Tuesday, Wednesday, or a Saturday? Do you do different things on different days and at different times?
- Right now, we are all staying in our homes. How do you spend your time when you can only be in one place? How do you plan your day when you can only be in one place?
- How do you feel when you are at home and you are asked to do something by a family member?
- How do you feel when you have to go somewhere or do something and it is not your decision?
- When you are not doing school work, or chores for your family, how do you spend your time?



Part 3: Brainstorm

- When do you have leisure, or free, time? You can think about free time right now, or free time from your memories or imagination.
- Where do you spend it?
- Are you alone, or are others there too?
- What are some things you do during your own free time?
- Do you have any hobbies? What are they?
- How do you feel when you are taking part in free time activities?
- What colors would you use to depict yourself engaging in free time activities? Why?
- What colors would you use to depict yourself having fun?
- Think about the clothing people wear during different activities. What would you expect a person to wear to go to an office? The pool? A party?
- Think about if there are any objects or accessories you might need to have during your chosen free time. What would those be?



Part 4: Create a 'Free Time Collage'

Duration: 20–30 minutes

Materials:

- mixed-media paper and recyclables, like fabric scraps, empty boxes, old magazines, old newspapers, and anything you find around the house!
- markers, colored pencils, and/or crayons
- glue or tape
- cardboard

Procedure:

1. **Pick a free time activity.** Think about one activity that you like to do alone or with a group like reading or going to the beach. For inspiration, check out the *Floater*s in the [Derrick Adams exhibition](#).
2. **Gather your materials.** Mixed-media paper and recyclables from newspapers, magazines and mailings; fabric scraps; markers/colored pencils/crayons; glue or tape; cardboard. Missing any of these materials? Get creative and come up with your own!
3. **Sort your colors.** Plan how you want your collaged portrait to look and think about the colors you are going to use. Is the activity indoors or outdoors? What type of clothing and equipment will people need?
4. **Create your collage.** Use recycled cardboard for the supporting surface, or base, of your collage (cutting up an old cereal box works well!). Cut up the paper and fabric and glue the pieces to the cardboard and use markers and crayons to make your own portrait!
5. **Share your work.** Take a photo of your collage and post it to Instagram using the hashtag #HRMBuoyant and tag the Hudson River Museum.



Part 5: Design Your Own Joyful Floater!

Duration: 20–30 minutes

Materials:

- Print one of the following two pages OR draw freehand on a piece of paper. (See example below for inspiration!)
- Markers, colored pencils, and/or crayons

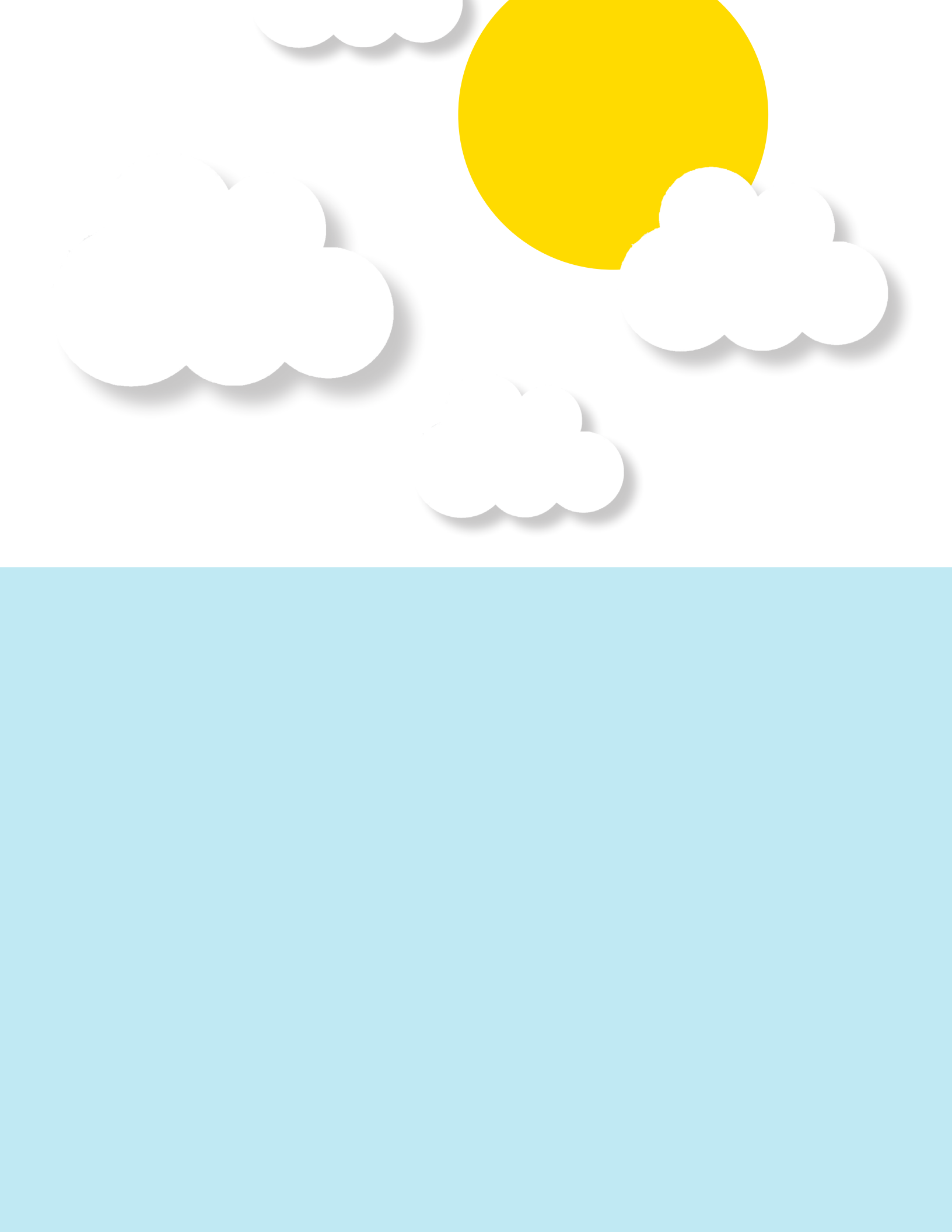
Procedure:

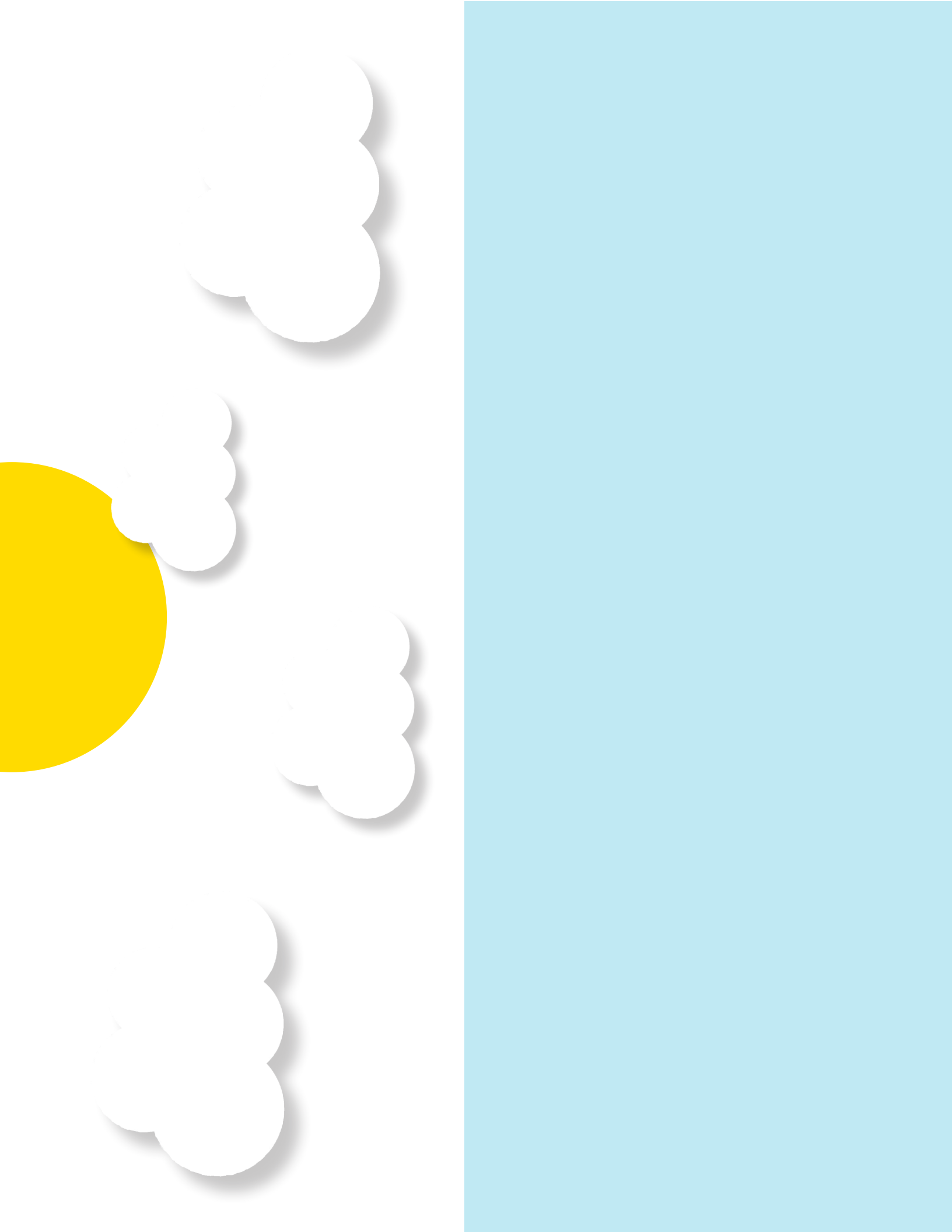
1. Design a *Floater* that reflects your interests and personality!
2. Sketch yourself sitting or lying down on a unique float in a pool, on a lake, or at the beach.
3. Imagine drifting on calm waters under the summer sun with your eyes closed. What comes to mind? Add what brings you **joy** in the daydream clouds.

Share your work:

Take a photo of your work and post it to Instagram using the hashtags #HRMBuoyant and #MuseumFromHome, and tag the Hudson River Museum.







Part 6: Glossary & Further Reading

Background: The area against which a figure or scene is placed.

Collage: A work of art and technique where fragments of paper and other materials are arranged and glued to a supporting surface.

Contemporary art: The art of today.

Curator: Someone who studies, organizes, and presents art, objects, and/or experiences for people to enjoy.

Leisure: The use of free time for enjoyment and relaxation.

Mixed media: An artwork that is created using more than one material.

Portrait: A representation of an individual, meant to capture their appearance and/or personality. A self-portrait is when an artist represents themselves in a work of art. A group portrait includes more than one person.

Derrick Adams: Buoyant

<https://www.hrm.org/derrick-adams>

Derrick Adams' Website

<http://www.derrickadams.com/>



Illustrations

Page 1 *Floater 78*, 2018. Tamia and Grant Hill Collection. *We Came to Party and Plan 1*, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Luxembourg & Dayan, New York/London, and Salon 94, New York.

Page 2 *Floater 73*, 2018. UBS Art Collection. *Floater 2*, 2016. Collection of Victoria Rogers, New York City. Portrait of Derrick Adams by Christopher Garcia Valle. *Floater 25*, 2016. Bendit Collection. Courtesy of Pettit Art Partners. *Floater 80*, 2018. Courtesy of the artist.

Page 3 *Floater 59*, 2017. Collection of Paul and Judith Fried.

Page 4 *Tables Turned 2*, 2016. Courtesy of the artist.

Page 9 *We Came to Party and Plan 13 and 7*. Private collection, Munich. *We Came to Party and Plan 10 and 8*. Courtesy of the artist and Luxembourg & Dayan, New York/London, and Salon 94, New York.