Introduction

José Parlá is inspired by busy cities like New York, Miami, and Austin. He creates large, abstract collages that look like billboards with years and years of advertisements pasted and torn away. Parlá’s work symbolizes the generations of people who lived before him and created the spaces around him. This mural is his largest yet at more than 25 feet tall and 160 feet wide. It is inspired by Austin.

Questions

How does the artist use language in this mural?
When you walk through Austin what kind of letters and markings do you see?
What does it tell you about the neighborhood or the people who live there?
Can you see evidence of different languages and cultures?

Activity

Make a personal statement collage using scraps from magazines. Tear out letters, words, phrases, or symbols and glue them to a sheet of paper. Use markers, crayons, or pencils to incorporate the pieces into one, cohesive composition.
José Parlá, continued

Look Again

Can you see smaller compositions within the larger mural? Why do you think the artist chose to design the mural in this way?

Vocabulary

Collage - A work of art created by layering paper or other objects onto a sheet of paper or canvas
Symbolism - When an artist uses an object to represent someone or something
Abstract - A work of art that doesn't represent or look like a person, place, or thing

Artists with related works

Casey Reas, A Mathematical Theory of Communication
Sol LeWitt, Wall Drawing #520
Nancy Rubins, Drawing