

Studio Saturdays: Star Telescopes

After Metamorphoses by Amy Sillman



Amy Sillman

After Metamorphoses

2015-16

Single-channel video on 5:25 minute looped, color, sound

The Alfond Collection of Contemporary Art at Rollins College, Gift of Barbara '68 and Theodore '68 Alfond.

Image courtesy of the artist.

Amy Sillman is an artist that works in layers, placing abstract shapes, colors, and textures on top of one another and inside of other images to create a story for her viewers. She is a multi-media artist, meaning she works with many different materials and creates many types of art, like drawings, cartoons, collages, iPhone videos, and art films.

Sillman's video, *After Metamorphoses*, draws inspiration from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* (8CE) a very old collection of Roman myths, including the stories behind some of the constellations we can still see in the night sky today. *Metamorphosis* is a Latin word that means "changing shape" and Sillman's animated video shifts between abstracted images of humans and animals to compare and contrast the two. Our craft focuses on the story of Arcas and his mother, Callisto. Callisto was turned into a bear by the goddess Diana out of anger. One day Arcas was out hunting, but he did not know the bear he was chasing was actually his mother! To protect them, Jupiter, ruler of all the gods, turned both Callisto and Arcas into stars and placed them in the night sky. This myth serves as the story of origin, which tells us where something comes from, for the constellations Ursa Major (Great Bear) and Ursa Minor (Little Bear).

Today, we'll be making star telescopes, so we don't have to wait until it's dark outside to see our constellations! I chose to follow Sillman's artwork and use Ursa Major as my constellation, but you can use whichever one you like. We encourage you to research other constellations, and the stories behind them, to find your favorite! Every culture has their own constellations and stories, so please feel free to search outside of Roman mythology. While researching, think about your connections to the stories you find, either personal, cultural, or within your family.

THINK LIKE AN ARTIST

- 1) What constellation did you choose and why?
- 2) Has researching constellations and learning the stories behind them changed the way you see the night sky? Why or why not?

LIST OF MATERIALS

- Sheet of Black Paper
- Toilet Paper/Paper Towel Roll (empty)
- Tac or Sharp Tipped Tool
- Pencil or white crayon
- Scissor
- Tape or Rubber Band
- Sheet of Paper

OPTIONAL: Markers/Crayons/
Color Pencils for decorating
telescope

INSTRUCTIONS

Start by tracing the circular end of your toilet paper or paper towel roll onto the sheet of black paper. You might want to use a white crayon to help you see where you've drawn. To make a larger telescope, choose a larger tube.

Draw a second circle around it that's about half inch or 1 inch thick.

Now it's time to draw our constellation! Start with drawing the star points alone and then connect them to see the whole picture.

Take a pair of scissors and cut out your constellation along the outer circle. Glue each of your pieces to your stamp block and allow to dry.

Draw 6 additional lines between your circles, three on each side, to serve as tabs. Cut into the lines, but be sure not to cut into the circle with your constellation drawing. Bend your tabs inward.

With an adult's help, take your tac and CAREFULLY poke a hole into each star point. Poke through slowly and feel for the tac on the other side to protect your fingers. You can also choose to lay your circle on a piece of foam and press the tac down into it.

Place your roll over the circle and line it up so your constellation is centered.

Fold your tabs up around the tube and use tape or a rubber band to hold them down and create a seal around the roll's opening.

Make sure your ends are well sealed to stop light from getting in through the sides.

Next, make a shell for your telescope using one of the sheets of white paper. Measure the height and width of the tube before cutting out the shell.

Wrap your shell around your telescope and use glue or tape to close the ends.

Create an abstract drawing inspired by Amy Sillman's work on your shell to decorate your telescope! You can use crayons, markers, pastels, paint, or pencil line drawings like me. Get creative with it!

Hold up your telescope to the light to enjoy the night sky any time!