

EVERY PICTURE (SILENTLY) TELLS A STORY

Suggested Grade levels/subject: 8-12; US History, Social Studies, Art

Time required: One 40 minute period

Essential Questions: How can art tell a story?
Who decides whose story gets preserved in history?

Objectives

- Students will analyze and interpret artwork with peers.
- Students will justify stories they think artwork tells with concrete details from the work.
- Students will determine how stories (and sites) get preserved through history.
- Students will be able to understand the historical context of the eras related to artwork (Civil Rights era and Civil War era)

Materials

- Images from *Everything that Rises: Untitled (Boonton)* and *Music. Even Laughter. And always the Gunfire.*
- Chart paper
- Colored markers
- Sticky notes or index cards

Vocabulary

Collage
Underground Railroad
Riots
Civil Unrest
Foreground

Point of view
Middle Ground
Background
Perspective
Composition

Instructions

1. Make 3 copies of each of the two images noted above from *Everything that Rises*. Place one image at the center of each piece of chart paper and write "What's the story here?" on each paper.
2. Break students into groups of 3-5 and give each student in the group a different colored marker and each group one of the big paper sheets.

3. Tell students that they need to engage in thoughtful dialogue around the question posted on their sheet, and that silence is crucial – they need to write their conversations. Any claim, counter, question, or comment should be written; students can ask questions and sketch arrows from questions to clarify or deepen the involvement of their particular curiosity. This is a brainstorming session and will be “messy;” if they get too far off topic they can remind each other by writing a sentence with, “So what we’ve said so far is…”
4. Set a time limit—about 10-15 minutes—and remind students to finish their thoughts as the one minute left mark approaches. You should circulate and can also add your thoughts or add more short prompts to the student generated thoughts, but mostly you are facilitating the activity.
5. Display the papers around the room and let the students go on a “gallery walk” to look for similarities to their own groups’ conversations, or directions taken that they wish they had noted. They can write comments on other posters, or highlight common themes or connections.
6. Now conduct a whole class discussion aloud around the images, using the following guiding questions:
 - What stories emerged from each work?
 - What did you see that makes you say that? (Use art vocabulary as appropriate)
 - What questions arose when you viewed the work?
 - How might you find answers to those questions?
 - Do you think these sites are real or imagined? What makes you say that?
7. Provide the titles of each of the works to students. Ask how does knowing the title influence your viewing of the work? Why do you think the artist chose that title? How does the artist use color, composition, point of view, and perspective to suggest or hint at an outcome or part of the story? (Note how the scenes are both still and frozen in time, yet during the historical period they depict there was likely a lot of noise and chaos.)
8. Explain to students that these are real sites in New Jersey, chosen because of a historical event that happened at the site. Have students hypothesize what era/event the images represent. What do you see that supports your hypothesis? What event do you think took place here? What do you see that makes you say that?
9. Provide info to them about each site as desired from the “Background information for the Educator” section. How does knowing this information change your idea of the story behind the site? Why do you think the artist chose to make a collage of this site?

Wrap-up

Give each student a sticky note or index card and provide them with a few minutes to write the answer to one of these questions (you can choose one or give students the option to choose)

How can art tell a story?

Who decides whose story gets preserved in history?

They should hand you the card/post the sticky note as they exit class.

Extension Activities

Students could use Google Earth to find what each of these sites looks like today. *Untitled (Boonton)* is at Main and Liberty Streets, Boonton and *Music. Even Laughter. And always the Gunfire.* is 10 17th Avenue, Newark. What do they notice about the site today? What do they notice about the surrounding areas? How do they imagine it looked in the past when the historical event it is associated took place? Students could illustrate what they think the historical view was, and/or write a story about the site during that time period.

Background Information for the Educator

Casey Ruble is a New Jersey artist and resident who, after researching sites of civil unrest and the Underground Railroad in her home state, photographed the sites as they are today. She used these photographs to create paper collages that rather than become faithful reproductions, convey the mood and emotion of the place. Some of the titles of her work come from newspaper accounts of the event that took place at the site. For more see [ww.caseyruble.com](http://www.caseyruble.com).

Untitled (Boonton) depicts the current use of a site that once belonged to Dr. John Grimes, a Quaker abolitionist and publisher of Boonton's first newspaper. He was arrested for harboring a fugitive slave. In 1846, New Jersey passed a law that freed all black children born from that year forward, but deemed its remaining slaves as "apprentices for life." As a result of this provision, New Jersey became the last northern state to still have enslaved people in 1860, earning it the nickname "the slave state of the North." For more, see

<http://www.northjersey.com/news/the-underground-railroad-ran-through-our-towns-1.267229>

Steal Away, Steal Away: A Guide to the Underground Railroad in NEW JERSEY (PDF)

Music. Even laughter. And always the gunfire. depicts the Newark Police precinct where a crowd formed shortly after word of the arrest and beating of an African American cab driver, John Smith, was taken after his arrest in July, 1967. Initially the protest was peaceful, but later, residents threw bricks, bottles, and Molotov cocktails at the building. Looting began in nearby stores, and the city became the site of five days of rioting and civil unrest.

For more, see

<http://www.thirteen.org/newark/history3.html>

<http://www.blackpast.org/aah/newark-riot-1967>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=11966375>

Standards Alignment

Social Studies

6.1 U.S. History: America in the World: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities.

6.1.4.D.11- Determine how local and state communities have changed over time, and explain the reasons for changes.

6.1.8.D.4.c - Explain the growing resistance to slavery and New Jersey's role in the Underground Railroad.

6.1.12.C.13.c- Evaluate the effectiveness of social legislation that was enacted to end poverty in the 1960s and today by assessing the economic impact on the economy (e.g., inflation, recession, taxation, deficit spending, employment, education).

6.1.12.D.13.a - Determine the impetus for the Civil Rights Movement, and explain why national governmental actions were needed to ensure civil rights for African Americans.

Visual and Performing Arts

1.1 The Creative Process: All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

1.1.8.D.1 -Describe the intellectual and emotional significance conveyed by the application of the elements of art and principles of design in different historical eras and cultures.

1.2 History of the Arts and Culture: All students will understand the role, development, and influence of the arts throughout history and across cultures.

1.2.8.A.3 - Analyze the social, historical, and political impact of artists on culture and the impact of culture on the arts.

1.4 Aesthetic Responses & Critique Methodologies: All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of arts philosophies, judgment, and analysis to works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

1.4.8.A.1- Generate observational and emotional responses to diverse culturally and historically specific works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art

1.4.8.A.5 -Interpret symbolism and metaphors embedded in works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

1.4.8.A.7 - Analyze the form, function, craftsmanship, and originality of representative works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

1.4.12.A.2- Speculate on the artist's intent, using discipline-specific arts terminology and citing embedded clues to substantiate the hypothesis.

- 1.4.12.A.3- Develop informed personal responses to an assortment of artworks across the four arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre, and visual art), using historical significance, craftsmanship, cultural context, and originality as criteria for assigning value to the works.

For more information about programs for educators and students please contact Cara Bramson, Director of Education and Community Engagement, at cbramson@artcenternj.org or 908.273.9121 x 213.



The exhibition, Casey Ruble: Everything That Rises, and related programs were made possible by a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this exhibition, website and exhibition catalog do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities or the New Jersey Council for the Humanities.



Created in partnership with Museum Partners Consulting, LLC.
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Casey Ruble
Music. Even laughter. And always the gunfire., 2015
Paper collage
8 1/4 x 6 inches



Casey Ruble
Untitled (Boonton), 2014
Paper collage
6 x 8 inches

New Jersey Council for the Humanities & Visual Arts Center of New Jersey

TEACHER SURVEY FORM

Lesson Plan: *Every Picture (Silently) Tells a Story*

*Complete this survey and receive a free Membership to the
Visual Arts Center of New Jersey at the Individual Level!*

Please return the completed survey to: Visual Arts Center of New Jersey, Attention: Cara Bramson, 68 Elm Street, Summit NJ 08901 or cbramson@artcenternj.org.

1. Overall, I found the quality of this lesson plan to be:

☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Average ☐ Disappointing ☐ Unsatisfactory

2. Did the lesson plan align with your curriculum? ☐ Yes ☐ No
How or why?

3. Please tell us what impact the lesson had on your students. (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learned something new about the topic | <input type="checkbox"/> Reflected on the topic from a new perspective |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engaged in a meaningful discussion | <input type="checkbox"/> Explored an issue of importance to their community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inspired to learn more about the topic | <input type="checkbox"/> Explored how art can impact other disciplines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expressed a desire to visit a gallery/museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

4. Do you plan to share ideas from this lesson plan with other teachers. ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Did you know about the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey prior to using this lesson plan? ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Do you plan to visit the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey within the next year? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Was NJCH acknowledged for its support of this lesson plan? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Additional Comments/Suggestions:

continued on next page

9. How would you describe yourself?

Age: ☐ Adult (19-39) ☐ Adult (40-64) ☐ Senior (65+)

Ethnicity: ☐ African American ☐ Asian ☐ Caucasian ☐ Latin/Hispanic ☐ Other

Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other

10. I would like more information from ☐ Visual Arts Center of New Jersey ☐ New Jersey Council for the Humanities

Name (First and Last) _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Casey Ruble: Everything That Rises

Exhibition Artwork



Casey Ruble

Everyone here is aware of what has happened but they also want to forget as quickly as possible., 2014

Paper collage

8 x 6 inches



Casey Ruble
Music. Even laughter. And always the gunfire., 2015
Paper collage
8 1/4 x 6 inches



Casey Ruble
Untitled (Burlington), 2014
Paper collage
8 13/16 x 6 5/8 inches



Casey Ruble
Untitled (Jersey City), 2015
Paper collage
8 x 6 inches



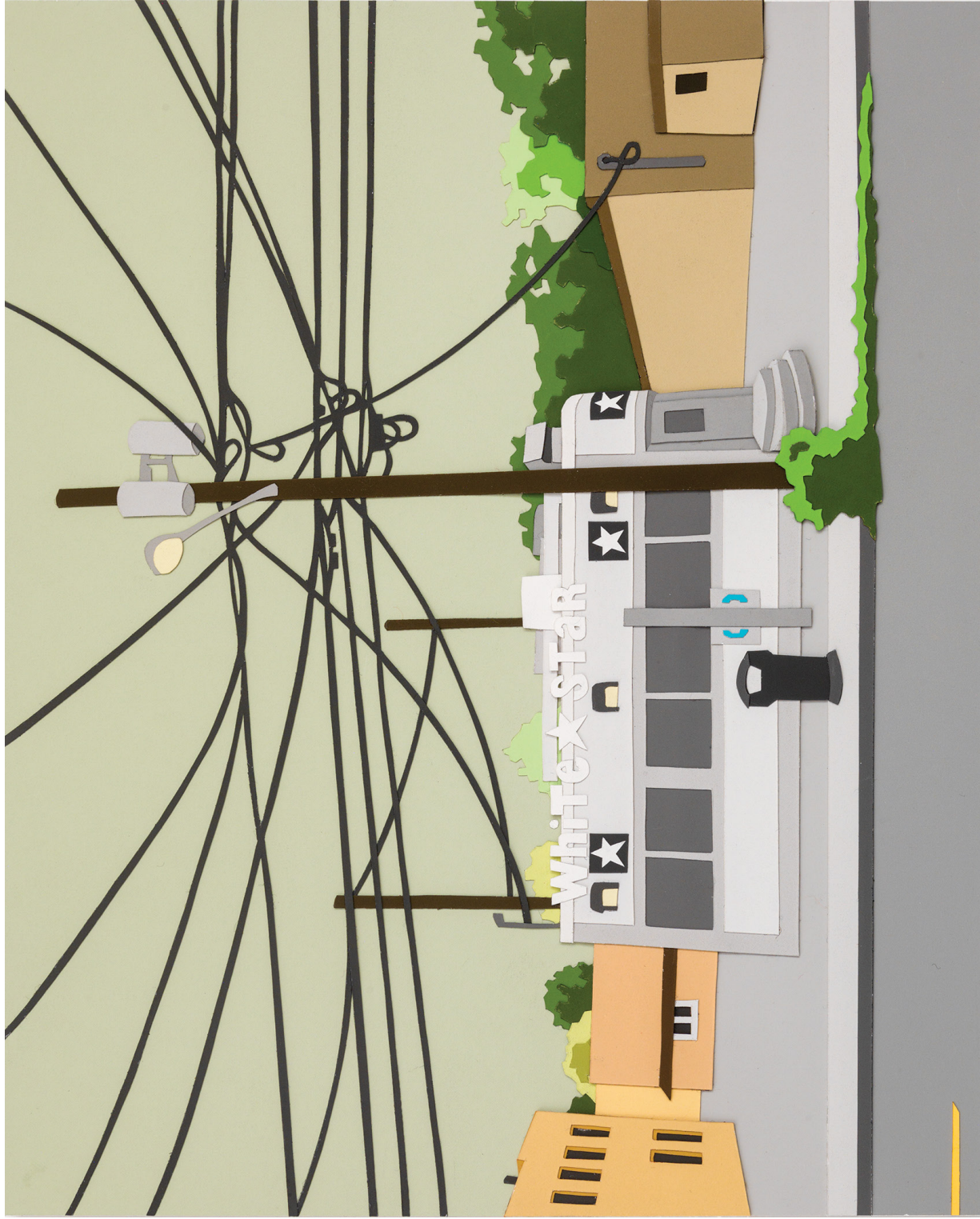
Casey Ruble
What happened?, 2015
Paper collage
7 x 7 inches



Casey Ruble
Untitled (Swedesboro), 2015
Paper collage
8 x 6 inches



Casey Ruble
Untitled (Jersey City), 2014
Paper collage
6 x 8 inches



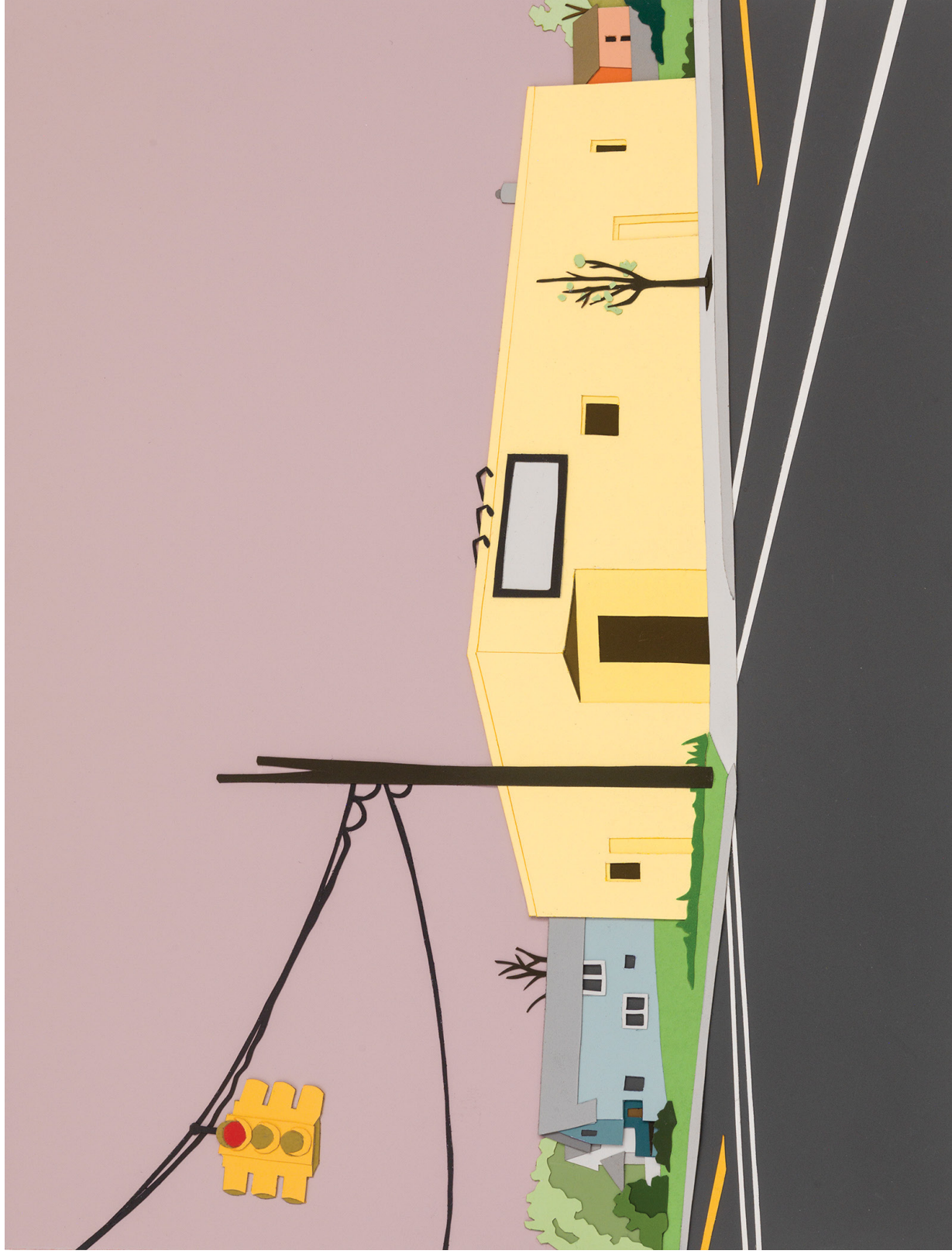
Casey Ruble
"They said they'd rather die here than in Vietnam.", 2015
Paper collage
6 1/2 x 8 inches



Casey Ruble
Untitled (Allentown), 2014
Paper collage
6 x 8 inches



Casey Ruble
Untitled (Cherry Hill), 2015
Paper collage
6 x 8 inches



Casey Ruble
The wind was out of the west at 20 m.p.h., 2014
Paper collage
6 x 8 inches



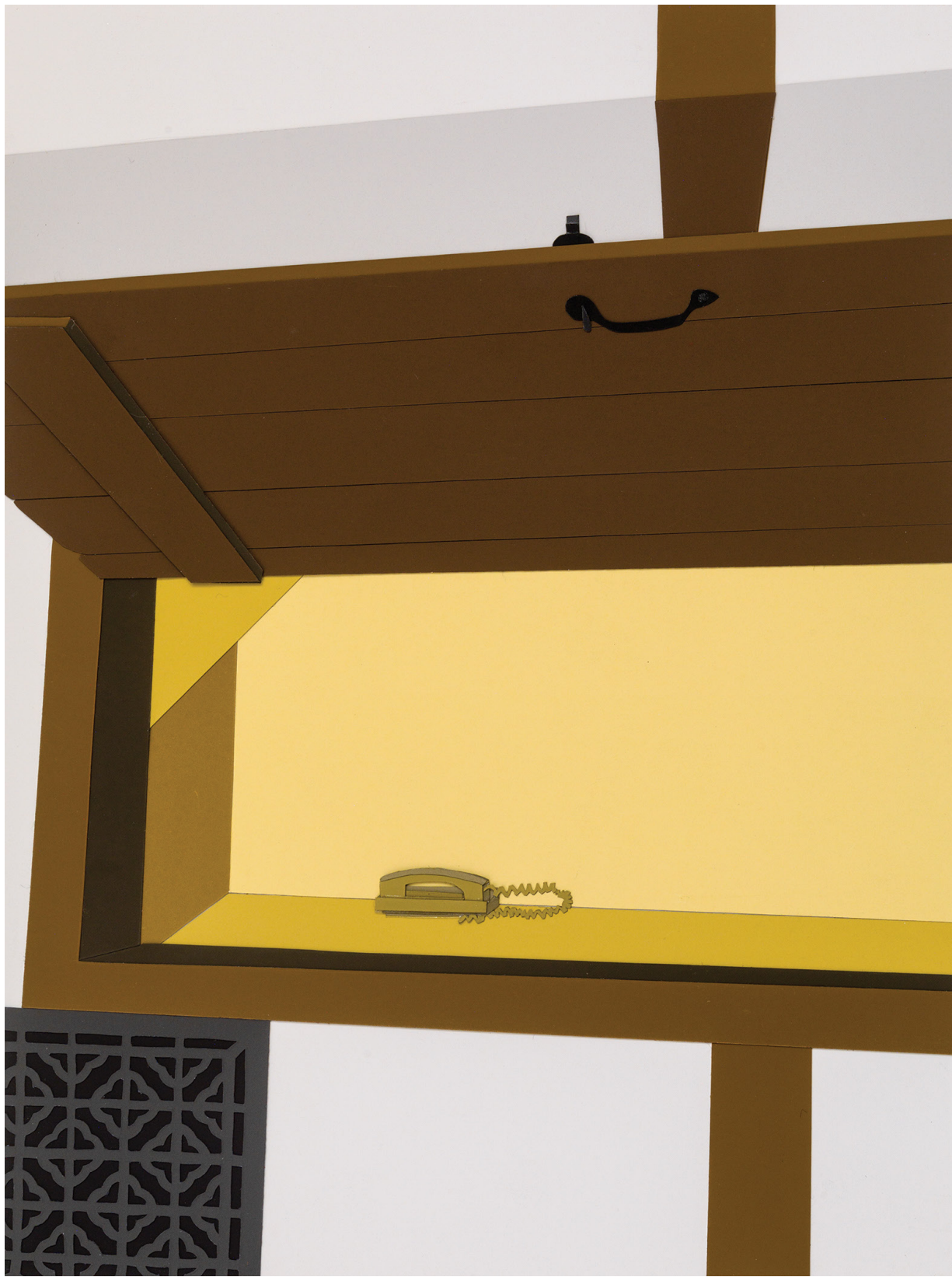
Casey Ruble
Untitled (Boonton), 2014
Paper collage
6 x 8 inches



Casey Ruble
The governor answered "no" when asked about any Communist instigation of the riots., 2014
Paper collage
6 x 8 inches



Casey Ruble
Untitled (Timbuctoo), 2014
Paper collage
6 x 8 inches



Casey Ruble
Untitled (Lawnside), 2015
Paper collage
6 x 8 inches