

WIDE RAINBOW LESSONS: Artist Nellie Mae Rowe

ARTIST INTRO:

Nellie Mae Rowe (b. 1900 – 1982) was a Black self-taught artist from Georgia, Atlanta. Rowe was known for her drawings, collages, sculptures (made of everyday objects), and her decorated house that she transformed into an artwork called the “*Playhouse*” where she welcomed the world in. Despite a difficult childhood living in poverty and segregation, Rowe became a celebrated folk artist later in her life and created inspiring works of art surrounding themes of liberation, girlhood, spirituality, and play. Her artworks have been exhibited widely and are included in major public museum collections today.

ARTWORK:





Nellie Mae Rowe

Untitled, 1978

**Felt-tip pen and black-and-white
photograph on paper
14 1/2 x 14 3/4 inches**

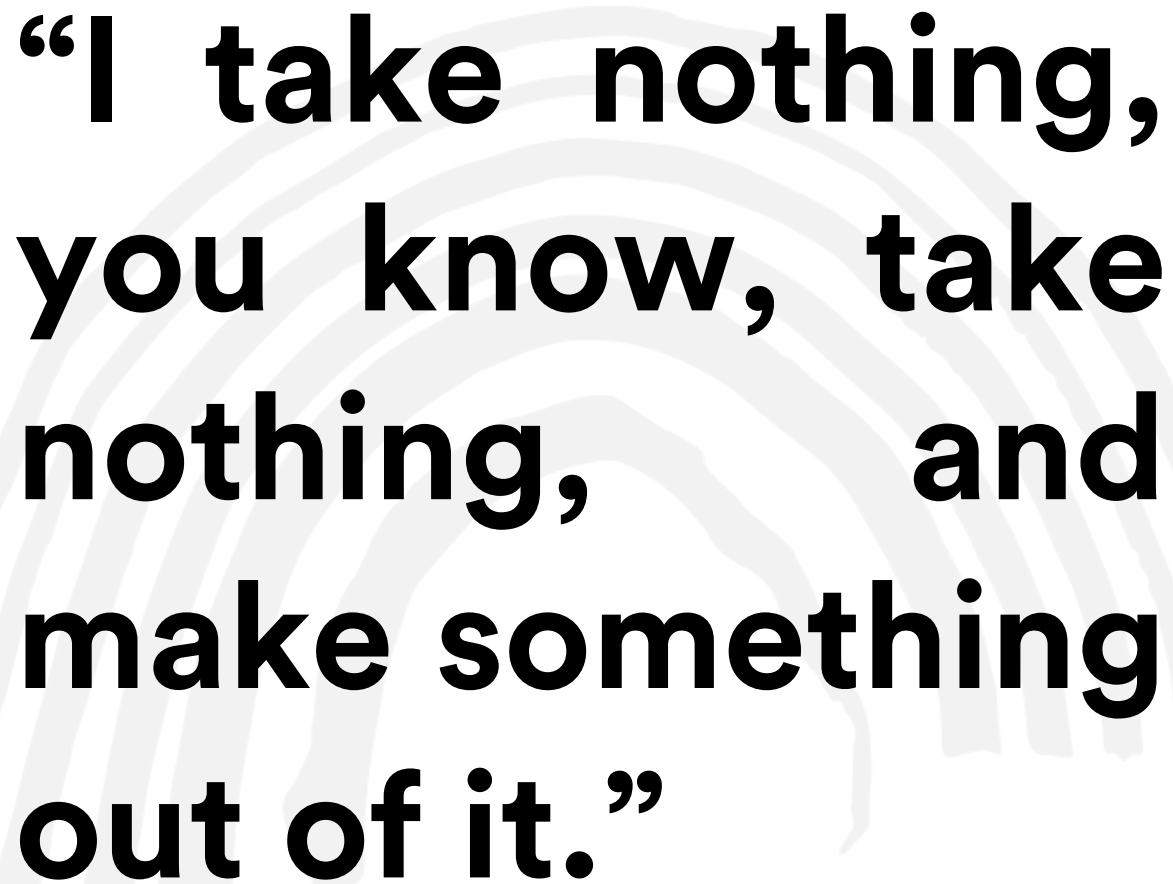
WORKSHOP:

Let's take inspiration from self-taught artist Nellie Mae Rowe and draw an imaginary "Playhouse" of our own!

1. Think about your house - How could you transform it into an artwork?
2. Start by drawing your house as you see it on a piece of paper
3. Draw your favorite objects inside
(Ex: furniture, windows, pets, family, friends etc.)
4. Get creative with colorful crayons and pencils
5. Use your imagination and add more fun objects that would turn your house into a 'playhouse'
6. Finish your drawing, share, and welcome friends, fellow students, and family into your new *playhouse* !

MATERIALS:

- Colored Pencils
- Crayons
- Paper



**“I take nothing,
you know, take
nothing, and
make something
out of it.”**

**- Nellie Mae
Rowe**



FOLLOW UP:

What objects did you choose to include from your real house? Why? What objects from your imagination did you add to transform your house into a *playhouse*? Why did you choose those objects? Did you like using your imagination? How is your *house* and your *playhouse* unique? How are they different? How did you use your materials and color in your drawing? What was your favorite part of this art activity?

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