



IDENTITY AND EQUITY TEACHER RESOURCE

newarkmuseumart.org

THE
NEWARK
MUSEUM
OF
ART

WELCOME TO THE NEWARK MUSEUM OF ART!

Dear Teachers,

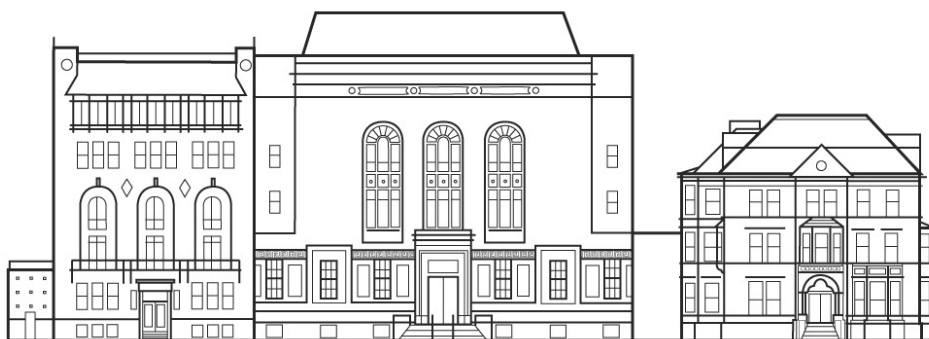
We are happy to present *Identity and Equity* Teacher Resource. The goal of our school and teacher programs is to provide students an opportunity to connect museum objects with their own lives and understand how these objects connect to subject matter they are learning in their classrooms.

This teacher guide is based on our collection and provides a framework for you and your students. The discussions and activities introduce some key themes and concepts for classroom reflection and lessons.

We look forward to the conversations sparked among your students.

Thank you for choosing The Newark Museum of Art!

NMOA School Programs Team



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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

IDENTITY AND EQUITY

*The duty
of the writer, of the poet
is not to shut himself up like a coward
in a text, a book, a magazine
from which he will never emerge
but on the contrary to go out
into the world
to jolt
to attack
the mind of the public
if not
what is he for?
and why was he born?*

—Antonin Artaud

Identity and Equity explores artists' role of agency and use of artwork. It reinforces the idea that artwork is not beautiful for beauty's sake but has a message and a purpose, and it is the viewer's job to discern that meaning.

Art always has hidden messages that educate us, whether it be through composition, material, subject matter, concept, etc. Art has the ability to teach history and comment on society in a subtle and covert manner, or in contemporary times, overt, confrontational, and unapologetic manner.

Students will be encouraged to engage in slow observation and conversation, form connections to their personal lives, listen to diverse perspectives and cultures, participate in activities, and think critically.

PRE-VISIT

SPARK A CONVERSATION

Before getting into the meat of the lesson, we recommend that you and your students explore and discuss the themes of the resource. We have included some selected images from the collection, along with relevant information. You can print out the images or project them in your classroom

Pre-visit Objectives:

- Introduce students to the artists and works in the collection
- Examine themes and topics students may encounter
- Explore how artists interpret their surroundings and how it is manifested in their work

1. Identity in Art: What is Identity?

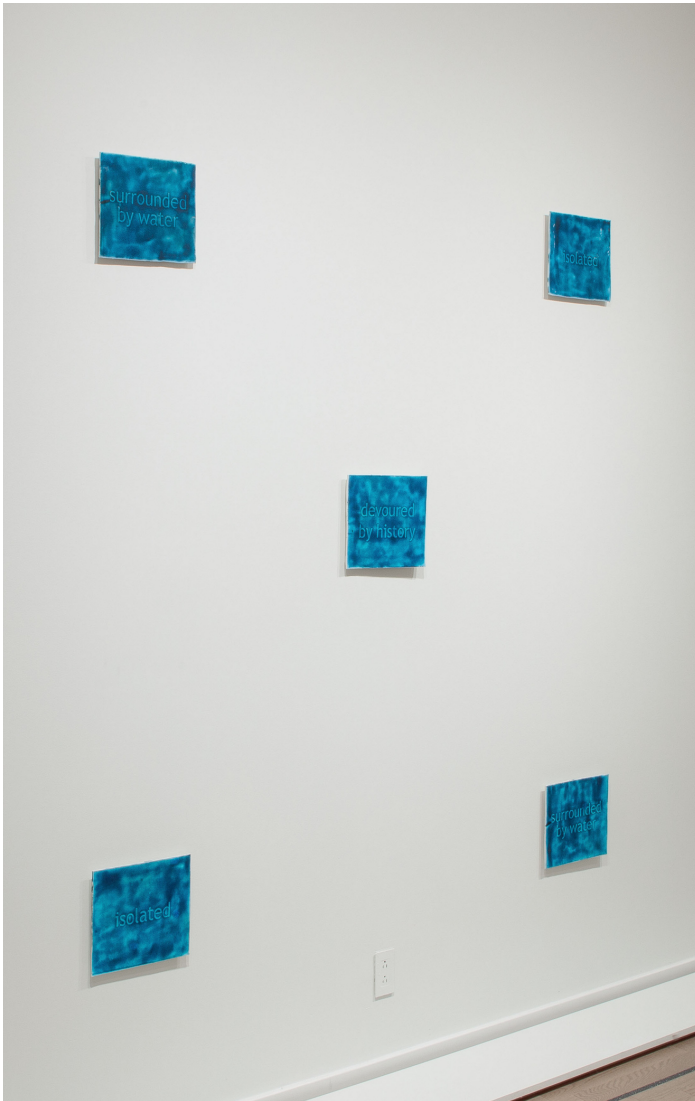
These works feature artists who use materials, techniques, approaches, and subject matter to reinforce identity and sometimes to challenge preconceptions about identity. Have a discussion with your students about identity. What is identity? What makes up a person's identity? How is an identity formed? How is identity presented to others? Ask your students to spend some time thinking and writing in a word cloud their personal definitions of identity and elements of their identity. Save their answers for further discussion after they see the works in the collection (see post-visit project 2 on page 11).

2. Equity in Art: How can we make art equitable?

While we live in a diverse world, with different experiences arising from skin color, gender, ethnic background, and religion. Equity is about making things accessible to everyone. Children should be given equal educational opportunity no matter their race, ethnicity, religion, or gender identity, or whether they are rich or poor, citizen or non-citizen. Unfortunately, this statement is not true for everyone; all children do not receive the same educational opportunities. How can we make our beautiful diverse world more equitable? How can we help each other gain access to the same things? How can the art world (museums, galleries, artists) help make access to art more equitable?

JUANA VALDES

THE DEEPEST BLUE | EL AZUL MAS OSCURO



Juana Valdes, *The Deepest Blue | El Azul Más Oscuro*, 2002
Glazed porcelain tiles, 9¼ x 11¼ x ¼ in. (23.5 x 28.6 x 0.6 cm)
Purchase 2004 Alice W. Kendall Bequest Fund; 1.2-5 Emma Fantone
Endowment Fund 2004.7A-E
© J. Valdes

Juana Valdes uses printmaking, photography, sculpture, ceramics, and site-specific installations, to explore issues of race, transnationalism, gender, labor, and class. Functioning as an archive Valdes's work analyzes and decodes experiences of migration from the perspective of a person of Afro-Caribbean heritage. She holds in balance such questions as "where and what is the art in art?" and "when does it separate from daily life?" The outcome speaks to contemporary controversies and tensions, which explore issues of personal identity and one's role in multiple collectives. Her work integrates the socio-political discourse within the art object to analyze relationships between contemporary and historical imagery, their connection to the social, political, and economical dominance of the cultures that produce them and their impact on cultural memory. Valdes records her own experience of migration as an Afro-Cuban-American and interprets an exile's perspective. Through art, she investigates the experiences of transculturation directly and poetically, recreating from a personal archive of both displacement and remembrance.



EDMONIA LEWIS

MINNEHAHA AND HIAWATHA



Edmonia Lewis, *Minnehaha*, 1868
Marble, 12 x 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 in. (35.6 x 19.7 x 12.1 cm)
Purchase 2000 Endowment Fund 2000.69.2

Edmonia Lewis, *Hiawatha*, 1868
Marble, 4 x 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (30.5 x 19.7 x 12.7 cm)
Purchase 2000 Endowment Fund 2000.69.1

Edmonia Lewis was the first sculptor of African American and Native American descent to achieve international recognition. Her father was Black, and her mother was Chippewa (Ojibwa) Indian. Orphaned at an early age, Lewis grew up in her mother's tribe where her life revolved around fishing, swimming, and making and selling crafts. In 1859, she attended Oberlin College in Ohio, one of the first schools to accept female and Black students. She developed an interest in the fine arts, but an accusation of poisoning, probably racially motivated, forced Lewis to leave the school before graduating. She traveled to Boston and established herself as a professional artist, studying with a local sculptor and creating portraits of famous antislavery heroes. Moving to Rome in 1865, she became involved with a group of American women sculptors and began to work in marble. Sculptors usually hired local workmen to carve their final pieces, but Lewis did all her own stonework out of fear that if she didn't, her work would not be accepted as original.

In addition to creating portrait busts, Lewis sculpted biblical scenes and figural works addressing her Native American heritage and the oppression of Black people.





FRANCISCO MATTO

CONSTRUCTIVO NEUVA YORK

Francisco Matto, **Constructivo Nueva York**, 1960
Oil on artist board, 48½ x 38 ¾ x 1¼ in. (123.2 x 98.4 x 3.2 cm)
Purchase 2018 Alberto Burri Memorial Fund established by Stanley J. Seeger 2018.3.1

Francisco Matto (1911–1995) began his career with figurative and representational paintings that looked to his European contemporaries. Later, he began exploring the connections between modern abstraction and the Pre-Columbian traditions of the ancient Americas. Beginning in the 1930s, Matto began acquiring what would become an extraordinary collection of Pre-Columbian art; the abstract geometrical patterns of Nazca ceramics, Maya weavings, and Mapuche silver provided inspiration for his lifelong quest to create modern art that was spiritual and timeless. In the 1940s, he filled his paintings with symbols, revealing the development of an artistic alphabet of mythic signs and signifiers for various ideas, which later would prove influential on artists. Unlike his contemporaries in the United States, who were obsessed with immediacy, ever-changing subjects and ultimately commerce, Matto found power in repetition and elemental forms. Matto was a pioneering transitional figure between the generation of modernism and abstract art of the Americas, and the later development of that impulse into Constructivist and Kinetic art of 1960s, 1970s, and beyond.





JEFFREY GIBSON

COME ALIVE! (I FEEL LOVE)

Jeffrey Gibson, *Come Alive! (I Feel Love)*, 2015-2016
Acrylic felt, rawhide, wood, glass beads, stone arrowheads, steel wire, assorted beads, tin and copper jingles, artificial sinew, acrylic paint, druzy quartz crystal, steel and brass studs, 78 x 35 x 22 in.
Purchase 2016 Helen McMahon Brady Cutting Fund 2016.29 © Jeffrey Gibson

Artist Jeffrey Gibson, a half-Cherokee member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, takes a multidisciplinary approach to his work—he is painter, sculptor, photographer and performer. His oeuvre is an artful mashup that challenges his audience to question cultural and political assumptions. For his subject matter, he draws from his Native American heritage, his youthful exploration of nightclub subculture, and his global education in Korea, Germany, England, and other countries where he lived growing up. His artistic emphasis can be said to be a collaborative embrace of marginalized identities, nonconformists, and societal outsiders. Gibson's use of native beadwork, quilt-inspired craftsmanship, and protest slogans is recognized for propelling contemporary art and social dialogue forward.

"As the times have become increasingly more political, people have begun projecting more politicalness into the work," notes Gibson, whose most recognized artwork is a series of repurposed Everlast punching bags adorned with embroidery, multicolored glass beads, fluorescent nylon fringe, metal jingles and labeled with pop song lyrics. "It's always been about using my personal narrative to complicate the popular notions of being queer, being gay, being Native American—any of these singular adjectives."

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/artist-jeffrey-gibsons-artwork-activates-overlooked-histories-and-marginalized-identities-180972255/>





YINKA SHONIBARE CBE, RA LADY WALKING A TIGHTROPE

Yinka Shonibare CBE, RA, *Lady Walking a Tightrope*, 2006
Mannequin, textile, fiber, metal, 67 x 122 x 43¼ in.
Purchase 2007 Helen McMahon Brady Cutting Fund 2007.5A,B ©
Yinka Shonibare, MBE

Born in London in 1962, Yinka Shonibare moved to Lagos, Nigeria, at the age of three. He returned to London to study fine art at Byam Shaw School of Art and Goldsmiths College, where he received his Masters in Fine Art. Working in painting, sculpture, photography, film, and installation, Shonibare's work examines race, class, and the construction of cultural identity through incisive political commentary on the tangled interrelationship between Africa and Europe, and their respective economic and political histories. Shonibare uses wry citations of Western art history and literature to question the validity of contemporary cultural and national identities.

Central to his work, both materially and conceptually, are richly patterned textiles known as "Dutch wax" cloth or African factory-printed textiles. Although these textiles signify "Africanness," they were first produced in Europe for a West African market, complicating notions of African authenticity. His figures are typically headless, defying racial categorization. The Victorian lady teetering atop a tightrope may be seen as a metaphor for Shonibare's own balancing act as an artist who resists fixed meaning in his work.



POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Post-visit Objectives:

- Enable students to reflect upon and discuss some of the themes and ideas from the exhibition
- Have students explore some of the artists' ideas through discussion, art-making, and writing activities

1. Reflection

After viewing the works, ask your students to take a few minutes to write about their experience. What new ideas did the works give them? Discuss the impact of seeing the works. For instance, did they see anything that challenges their perception of identity? Did any of the works change their ideas on the role of art and the artist? Explore more work by the artists in this resource by using the links on page 13.

2. Identity in Art: The Written Word

Have your students reflect on the artwork and present this quote:

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.” —Audre Lorde

Do they agree with this quote? What are ways they self-indulge? Have your students write a letter to Audre or instructions on how to self-indulge and how it preserves their sense of self and identity.

3. Identity in Art: Design

Have the students reflect on the symbolism in the artwork. How do the elements of the work reinforce the identity or narrative of the artist? Task the students with creating a work inspired by Matto's *Constructivo Nueva York*. What symbols will they use to portray elements of their identity? Discuss the power of words as seen in Valdes's *The Deepest Blue*. Will they include words in their grid, and if so, in what language? This project can be created using variety of materials, such as collaged paper, paint, photographs, or digital art. How do the materials contribute to the narrative, as in Gibson's or Shonibare's works?

4. Creating a Yinka Shonibare–inspired work

"Art making is a form of alchemy, in a way, because you are trying . . . to make gold from nothing. When it works very well is when you manage to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary."

—Yinka Shonibare CBE (RA)

Materials:

- Soft wire 18-gauge copper wire
- Base for wire sculpture—wood block, clay, or cardboard, or you can hang sculpture with fishing string
- Wire cutters

Step 1:

Review Yinka Shonibare's work. Discuss the patterns of the fabric in comparison to the design of the dress. What differences do you see and what similarities? Read Shonibare's explanation why he uses these fabrics and dress design. What can we learn about history when viewing Shonibare's work? Discuss the theme of balance—How does it feel to be unbalanced?

Step 2:

Using wire, students will create their own sculptures that imitate an action where one may feel unbalanced. Think about how we look when we feel unbalanced—it could be literal like Shonibare's *Lady Walking a Tightrope*, or it can be an emotional unbalance.

- Use wire cutters to cut wire and mold into an armature that imitates the concept of balance.
- Be creative and use critical thinking to build up your sculpture. Students will twist, bend, and use other tactics to attach and build on their sculptures.

Step 3:

Have students reflect on their artwork and discuss the pose and how it reflects the idea of balance. They can create a journal and write about a time they felt unbalanced.

LINKS

Juana Valdes

<http://www.juanamvaldes.com/blog/>

<https://dialoguesincubanart.org/miami-artists/juana-valdes/>

Edmonia Lewis

<https://americanart.si.edu/artist/edmonia-lewis-2914>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/sculptor-edmonia-lewis-shattered-gender-race-expectations-19th-century-america-180972934/>

Francisco Matto

https://www.ceciliadetorres.com/artists/focus/francisco_matto

<http://franciscomatto.org/en/bio.php>

Jeffrey Gibson

<https://www.jeffreygibson.net/>

<https://whitney.org/media/42627>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/artist-jeffrey-gibsons-artwork-activates-overlooked-histories-and-marginalized-identities-180972255/>

Yinka Shonibare

<http://yinkashonibare.com/home/>

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/name/yinka-shonibare-ra>

<https://art21.org/artist/yinka-shonibare-cbe-ra/>

Antonin Artaud

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/antonin-artaud>

Audre Lorde

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/audre-lorde>

AT THE MUSEUM

The Museum supports teachers, administrators, and parents through an array of programs carefully designed to connect different levels of curricula to the Museum collections.

For more, visit: <https://newarkmuseumart.org/learn/school-programs/>

Field Trips

Field trips are available to students, educators, and parents. Designed to include our permanent collection, Planetarium, and special exhibitions, our programs provide curriculum connection in all subject areas.

Virtual Field Trips

NMOA virtual field trips connect to classroom curricula and New Jersey State standards. Each virtual experience is fun, social, and educational, and offers observations, games, writing, drawing, and movement via live sessions with Museum educators.

Professional Development

The Museum provides in-person and virtual professional development opportunities for educators, administrators, and parents.

Residencies

For virtual and in-person art and STEM residencies, the Museum partners with schools with teaching artists to create projects that connect to Museum objects.

Virtual Science & Tech Fairs

Give your students a full day of learning about astronomy, dinosaurs, and fossils and making projects related to those topics!

ABOUT THE MUSEUM

We welcome everyone with inclusive experiences that spark curiosity and foster community.

The Newark Museum of Art, in Newark, Essex County, New Jersey, is the state's largest museum. It holds fine collections of American art, decorative arts, contemporary art, and arts of Asia, Africa, the Americas, and the ancient world. Its extensive collections of American art include works by Hiram Powers, Thomas Cole, John Singer Sargent, Albert Bierstadt, Frederick Church, Childe Hassam, Mary Cassatt, Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keeffe, Joseph Stella, Tony Smith and Frank Stella.

Founding Director John Cotton Dana believed that museums were established to promote the appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of the arts and sciences. Together with a group of public officials, prominent businessmen, and local collectors, he established the Museum in 1909 at the Newark Public Library. He provided the intellectual leadership that made it one of the most progressive cultural institutions in the country.

LEARNING STANDARDS

1.5.5.Re7a: Speculate about artistic processes. Interpret and compare works of art and other responses.

1.5.5.Re7b: Analyze visual arts including cultural associations.

1.5.5.Re9a: Identify different evaluative criteria for different types of artwork dependent on genre, historical and cultural contexts.

1.5.5.Cn10a: Create works of art that reflect community cultural traditions. Discuss using formal and conceptual vocabulary.

1.5.5.Cn11a: Communicate how art is used to inform the values, beliefs and culture of an individual or society.

1.5.5.Cn11b: Communicate how art is used to inform others about global issues, including climate change.

1.5.8.Pr6a: Analyze how exhibitions in different venues communicate meaning and influence ideas, beliefs and experiences.

IMAGE CITATIONS

Juana Valdes

<https://www.umass.edu/magazine/file/juana-valdes.jpg>

Edmonia Lewis

<https://americanart.si.edu/artist/edmonia-lewis-2914>

Jeffrey Gibson

<https://www.advocate.com/slideshow/2019/1/13/8-indigenous-queer-artworks-jeffrey-gibson#media-gallery-media-5>

Francisco Matto

<http://franciscomatto.org/en/bio.php>

Yinka Shonibare

Yinka Shonibare. © Royal Academy of Arts, London. Photography by Marcus Leith