

CENTURY: 100 Years of Black Art at MAM



Mickalene Thomas, (b. 1971). *Untitled #8*, 2014. Enamel, acrylic, oil paint, glitter, rhinestones, oil pastel, dry pastel, and graphite on wood panel. Museum purchase; Acquisition Fund 2014.10

Overview

Century: 100 Years of Black Art at MAM is a survey of over 70 artworks from the Montclair Art Museum's collection encompassing diverse themes that are rooted in the intergenerational experience of Black artists.

This pre-visit lesson focuses on 5 artworks that address the subject of identity. Students will examine these works and engage with the theme of identity through writing followed by a visual art project. The post-visit will integrate parts of the pre-visit lesson with the visit, culminating in a collage. These activities are designed to enhance a visit to the Museum but can also be used on their own. They are also designed to be adaptable, so please use what works best for your classroom.

Artworks used in this lesson plan:

- Mickalene Thomas, *Untitled #8*, 2014
- Dawoud Bey, *Alfonso*, 1989
- Nick Cave, *Soundsuit*, 2015
- Janet Taylor Pickett, *Incantations and Invocations*, 1990
- Joyce J. Scott, *Harriet Tubman as Buddha*, 2017

Subject Areas

Visual Arts, English
Language Arts

Grades

Elementary School
Grades 3–5

Key Vocabulary

Century: a period of one hundred years.

Identity: the fact of being who or what a person or thing is.

Collage: combination of materials, assembled to create a new whole.

Inner Self: the part of us that we are not always aware of or have control over. This includes values, beliefs, and characteristics.

Outer Self: what we present to the world—the parts that we choose to allow others to experience, such as appearance (hair, clothes, etc.), and demeanor.

Materials

- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Markers
- Pencils
- Colored pencils
- Colorful paper
- Magazines
- Adjectives Handout
- Poem Handout
- Portrait Handout

Identity Lesson Plan

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ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS (EU):

Students will understand...

- Artist can use words as a way to brainstorm before starting an art piece.
- Identity is a combination of many different characteristics that can be found on the outside and inside of a person.
- Collage is a form of art where many different art materials are combined in an assemblage to create a whole image.
- Different artists have used an array of art materials in order to express the many facets of their identities.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS (EQ):

Students will keep considering...

- How can I start brainstorming with words before creating a work of art?
- How can I express what is inside of me? What is visible and what is invisible about my identity?
- How can I make a collage?
- How can I combine different images to make a collage?

STUDENTS WILL KNOW...

- How to use different adjectives to describe their Inner and Outer Selves.
- How to use adjectives to find images to use an artwork.
- How to examine a work of art to understand what an artist is communicating with their use of visuals.
- How to create a collage using different images from the list of adjectives.

STUDENTS WILL BE SKILLED AT...

- Starting an artwork using words.
- Engaging with works of art and speaking about identity.
- Verbalizing their identity using adjectives.
- Combining different images and art materials to create a collage.

PERFORMANCE TASKS

- Completing a list of adjectives.
- Completing the *I Am* Poem Handout.
- Completing the Inner/Outer Drawing Handout.

ASSESSMENTS

- Completing the Post-Visit Final Self-Portrait collage artwork.
- Final presentations of completed collage work.

Learning Plan

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TASK 1: Adjectives Handout (20 minutes, pre-visit)

- The teacher will introduce the concept of identity. What do we mean when we say identity? Share definition: the fact of being who or what a person or thing is. What factors shape a person's identity? How would you describe your own identity? The teacher will share an example of a list of adjectives that they have selected for themselves.
- Students will receive the Adjectives Handout. Ask students to circle on the handout the adjectives that best fits them.

TASK 2: I Am Poem (20 minutes, pre-visit)

- Students will receive the Poem Handout and complete it using the list of adjectives they have already identified.

TASK 3: Slideshow Discussion (25 minutes, pre-visit)

- Students will view the slideshow of images included in the exhibition, available [here](#).
- Students will view the slideshow of images included in the exhibition. Students are encouraged to look closely at the images and share ideas inspired by discussion questions.
- What do you notice? How would you describe the person depicted?
- What clues do you see in each of these artworks that tell us something about the person's identity?
- Why did the artist choose to show the person this way? What is the artist trying to say?

TASK 4: Inner/Outer Portrait (25 minutes, pre-visit)

- Students will receive the Portrait Handout. Teacher should introduce concepts of Inner Self and Outer Self, sharing definitions. What parts of your identity do you show to others? What parts do you keep private?
- Students will use colored pencil to complete their drawings. On one side of the portrait they should draw what they look like on the outside. On the other half of the portrait, students will draw what is invisible or inside of them.

TASK 5: Collage Self-Portrait (45 minutes, post-visit)

- Students will create a final collage piece, using their Inner/Outer Portrait as a reference. Students will look through magazines and newspapers to select images that can represent aspects of their identity and be used for different parts of the face.
- They can start by finding eyes, nose, mouth, and ears and then continue building the image, adding different images to make up the hair, neck, and shoulders. The final image should be recognizable as a portrait.

VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS

- Anchor Standard 1: Generating and conceptualizing ideas. 1.5.5.Cr1a, 1.5.5.Cr1b
- Anchor Standard 2: Organizing and developing ideas. 1.5.5.Cr2a, 1.5.5.Cr2b, 1.5.5.Cr2c
- Anchor Standard 3: Refining and completing products. 1.5.5.Cr3a
- Anchor Standard 4: Selecting, analyzing and interpreting work.
- Anchor Standard 5: Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products. 1.5.5.Pr5a
- Anchor Standard 6: Conveying meaning through art. 1.5.5.Pr6a
- Anchor Standard 7: Perceiving and analyzing products. 1.5.5.Re7a, 1.5.5.Re7b
- Anchor Standard 8: Interpreting intent and meaning. 1.5.5.Re8a
- Anchor Standard 9: Applying criteria to evaluate products. 1.5.5.Re9a
- Anchor Standard 10: Synthesizing and relating knowledge and personal experiences to create products. 1.5.5.Cn10a
- Anchor Standard 11: Relating artistic ideas and works within societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding. 1.5.5.Cn11a

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Visual Arts: nj.gov/education/cccs/2020/2020%20NJSLs-VPA.pdf

English Language Arts: nj.gov/education/standards/ela/Index.shtml

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MODIFICATIONS

- Students with special needs can complete half of the *I Am* poem.
- Students with special needs may reuse the Portrait Template for their final project.
- Students with special needs can use stamps or stickers to complete the final project if cutting is not available to them.

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FURTHER LEARNING

- montclairartmuseum.org
- npg.si.edu
- edutopia.org
- kennedy-center.org
- sites.google.com/view/antiracistartteachers/artists

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

TASK 1: Adjectives Handout

This list of adjectives are words that can be used to describe yourself to someone who doesn't know you. **Circle the ones that fit you.**

- | | | | | |
|------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Adaptable | Discreet | Kind | Observant | Emotional |
| Courageous | Humorous | Pro-active | Sensitive | Independent |
| Giving | Patient | Cheerful | Agreeable | Philosophical |
| Neat | Smart | Fearless | Determined | Sympathetic |
| Self-confident | Amusing | Kooky | Helpful | Bright |
| Adventurous | Dynamic | Quick-witted | Optimistic | Efficient |
| Creative | Imaginative | Upbeat | Shy | Industrious |
| Good | Persistent | Clever | Ambitious | Talkative |
| Nice | Socialable | Forceful | Diligent | Energetic |
| Self-disciplined | Artistic | Quiet | Hilarious | Intelligent |
| Decisive | Easy-going | Versatile | Organized | Plucky |
| Sensible | Impartial | Communicative | Silly | Thoughtful |
| Affectionate | Pioneering | Frank | Amiable | Calm |
| Dependable | Brave | Likable | Diplomatic | Enthusiastic |
| Hardworking | Joyful | Rational | Honest | Intellectual |
| Reliable | Practical | Warmhearted | Passionate | Polite |
| Wild | Chatty | Compassionate | Sincere | Inventive |
| Romantic | Faithful | Friendly | Tidy | Powerful |
| Loving | Loyal | Funny | Careful | Trustworthy |
| Tough | Intuitive | Wise | Extroverted | Charming |

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

TASK 2: Poem Handout

Directions: Fill in the blank spaces with your own words to complete the poem. You may use words from the list of adjectives or come up with your own.

I Am Poem

I am...(your name) _____

I am from (person or place) _____

I wonder (curious about) _____

I hear (imaginary sounds) _____

I see (imaginary sight) _____

I want (a desire) _____

I am (your name) _____

I am (adjective to describe you) _____

I pretend (something to imagine) _____

I feel (feelings about the world) _____

I worry about (something that is bothersome) _____

I cry about (something that is sad) _____

I am (your name) _____

I am (an adjective to describe you) _____

I dream about (possible or impossible) _____

I hope (something to hope for) _____

I am (your name) _____

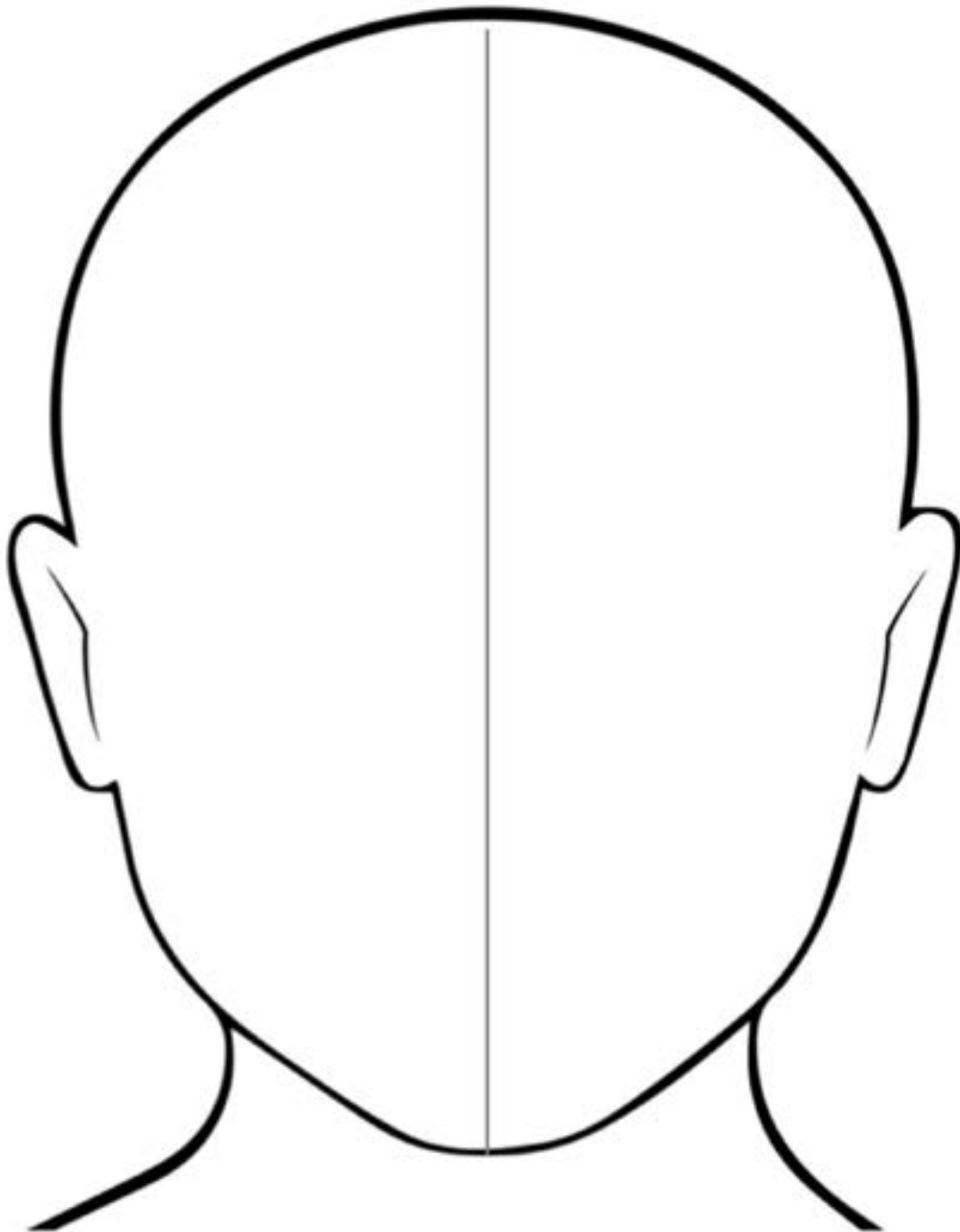
Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

TASK 4: Portrait Handout

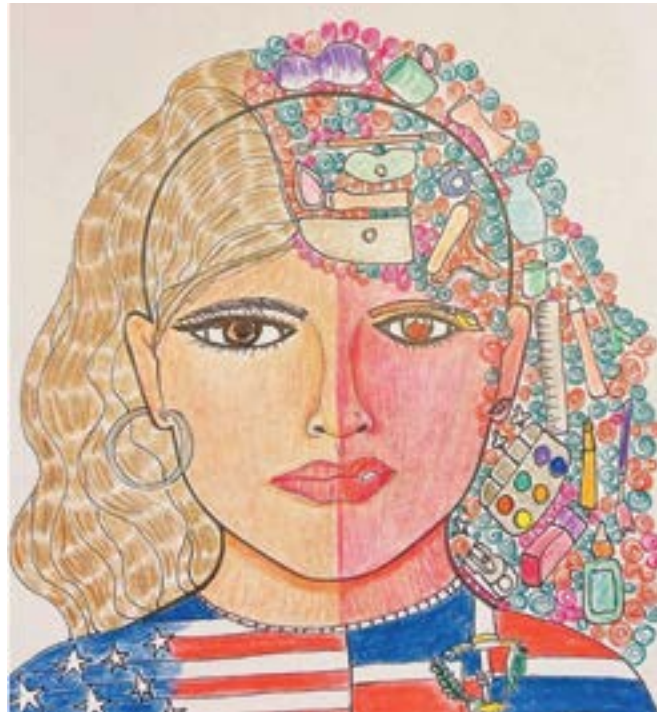
Inner/Outer Portrait Template

Inner Self: the part of us that we are not always aware of or have control over. This includes values, beliefs, and characteristics.

Outer Self: what we present to the world—the parts that we choose to allow others to experience, such as appearance (hair, clothes, etc.), and demeanor.



TASK 4: Samples



TASK 5: Sample



About Montclair Art Museum

The **Montclair Art Museum** collects, exhibits, preserves, and interprets American and Native American art, honoring the creative accomplishments of a diverse range of artists, past and present.

OUR MISSION:

Through art, we create experiences that inspire, challenge, and foster community to shape our shared future.

About the Curriculum Writer

Deborah Guzmán Meyer is a Montclair-based artist by way of Chicago, NYC, and the Dominican Republic. She earned her BA at Pace University and MFA at Columbia College in Chicago. She's a full-time art teacher at Bloomfield Middle School, and a ceramics instructor at the Montclair Art Museum. Her work has been featured in exhibitions and collected internationally, including in Miami, Chicago, New York, and France. She likes to think of herself as a modern renaissance woman, curious about all art forms and willing to try her hand at it. Art is why she gets up in the morning.



All MAM programs are made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, The Vance Wall Foundation, and Museum members.

We would love to hear from you! Please let us know about your experience using these lesson plans. Email us your feedback at tours@montclairartmuseum.org.

MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM

3 South Mountain Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07042
montclairartmuseum.org