



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2022 Volume III: The Social Struggles of Contemporary Black Art

"Do you see me?" "I see you." - Identity and Activism in Black Art

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The curriculum unit has been designed for my 10th -grade ELA students, who will review academic vocabulary while practicing skills like annotation, persuasive and analytical writing, research, and oral presentation. We will begin with a week-long survey of works from the artists of the AfriCOBRA movement. During the second and third weeks, we will examine artworks from Kerry James Marshall and Hank Willis Thomas respectively. Works from additional artists (Faith Ringgold, Kehinde Wiley, Ester Hernandez, and Betye Saar) will supplement the selections from Marshall and Thomas. Students will examine the politics of celebratory representations of blackness as well as the ways that Black artists resist and undercut a dominant culture stemming from European and American colonialisms that would erase or malign Black identity. Students will consider the ways that personal style (clothing, hair, music, dance) can serve as forms of resistance. Finally, students will examine the ideological power of advertisements and the ways that some artists seek to disrupt that power through an engagement in advertising content and techniques.

(Developed for English, grade 10 and grade 10 Honors; recommended for English, grades 11-12, and U. S. History, grade 11)

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