

Identity and the Artist - American Verses

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS: Your identity is a collection of experiences that have happened to you and shapes who you are. Identity is a collection of factors that shape you and how you see yourself. Identity can include race, gender, nationality, activities (e.g., sports or music), religion, socio-economic status, culture, key life experiences and so forth. Think about the mediums you have seen this week through which identity is expressed: speech, song, dance, visual arts.

Let's get to know these three artists featured in the American Verses exhibition by watching three short videos:

Terry Adkins [Merele Adkins: Terry Adkins on Art, Music, and Potential Disclosure](#)

Mark Bradford [An artist's chance meeting with Anderson Cooper leads to "60 Minutes" story](#)

Or [Wild Wild West: A Beautiful Rant by Mark Bradford](#)

Kerry James Marshall [Kerry James Marshall Interview: Paint it Black](#)

As you watch, think about these guiding questions:

How does each artist represent their identity in their art?

What images are used?

What materials or mediums are utilized?

What decisions does the artist make about their materials and why are those materials chosen?

More importantly, what is NOT represented in their art?

What experiences have shaped each artist?

What does Mark Bradford mean by 'let the medium guide you'?

EXTENSION -Choose a piece of literature, music, performance or art that represents a part of your identity. Why did you choose this? What aspects of the piece align with aspects of your identity? Now think about the mediums (materials and methods) you have available to you. Using your medium of choice, create a piece that reflects your identity.

RESOURCES: To learn more about the American Verses exhibit currently on view at the Peoria Riverfront Museum exhibit [click here](#).

Illinois State Learning Standards - Visual Arts Standards for High School

CREATING Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Investigate, Make, Plan

- Enduring Understanding: People create and interact with objects, places, and design that define, shape, enhance, and empower their lives.

- Essential Questions: (a) How do objects, places, and design shape lives and communities? (b) How do artists and designers determine goals for designing or redesigning objects, places, or systems? (c) How do artists and designers create works of art or design that communicate effectively?

- Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design

CONNECTING Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

- Enduring Understanding: People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art.

- Essential Questions: (a) How does art help us understand the lives of people in different times, places, and cultures? (b) How is art used to impact the views of a society? (c) How does art preserve aspects of life?

- Describe how knowledge of culture, traditions, and history may influence personal responses to art.