

# Art and Social Change

Globalism and Identity  
in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

# Review

Last week we looked at these issues in art between the 1970s and 2000.

1. Civil Rights
2. Feminist Movement
3. Aids crisis

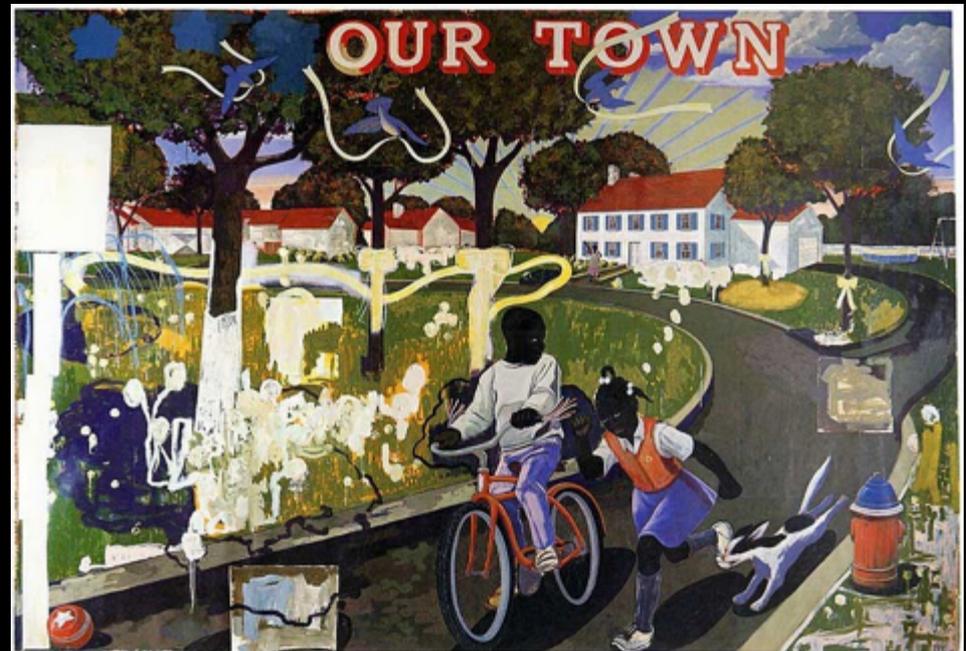


And the artwork influenced by these social event.

1. Female Artists
2. Artists of color
3. Gay artists and Identity

Keith Haring, poster 1980

Kerry James Marchall, *Our Town*, 1994



# Identity in Art

The examination of Identity in art arose from the postmodern attention to diversity.

Recognizing that historically, art had been mostly dominated by white men, many artists were using art to bring attention to issues of race, gender, class and sexuality (or sexual orientation).

Many contemporary theorists prefer to use the plural word “identities,” as opposed to ‘identity,’ emphasizing that identity is fluid and shifts throughout one’s life. Identity usually refers to race, gender, class, culture and sexuality.

As we continue examining artists working in the postmodern time, issues of identity become important.



Robert Mapplethorpe, *Self-Portrait*  
Carrie Mae Weems, *Mirror Mirror*



In the 1980's until now, consumerism, identity (race, gender and sexuality), systems of power (including that of art history) are all being addressed.

**Identity Politics** – the political debates around certain shared characteristics such as race, class, and religion became a way for artists, politicians and the public began to address these issues (in very different ways)

Lyle Ashton Harris, *Miss America*, 1987

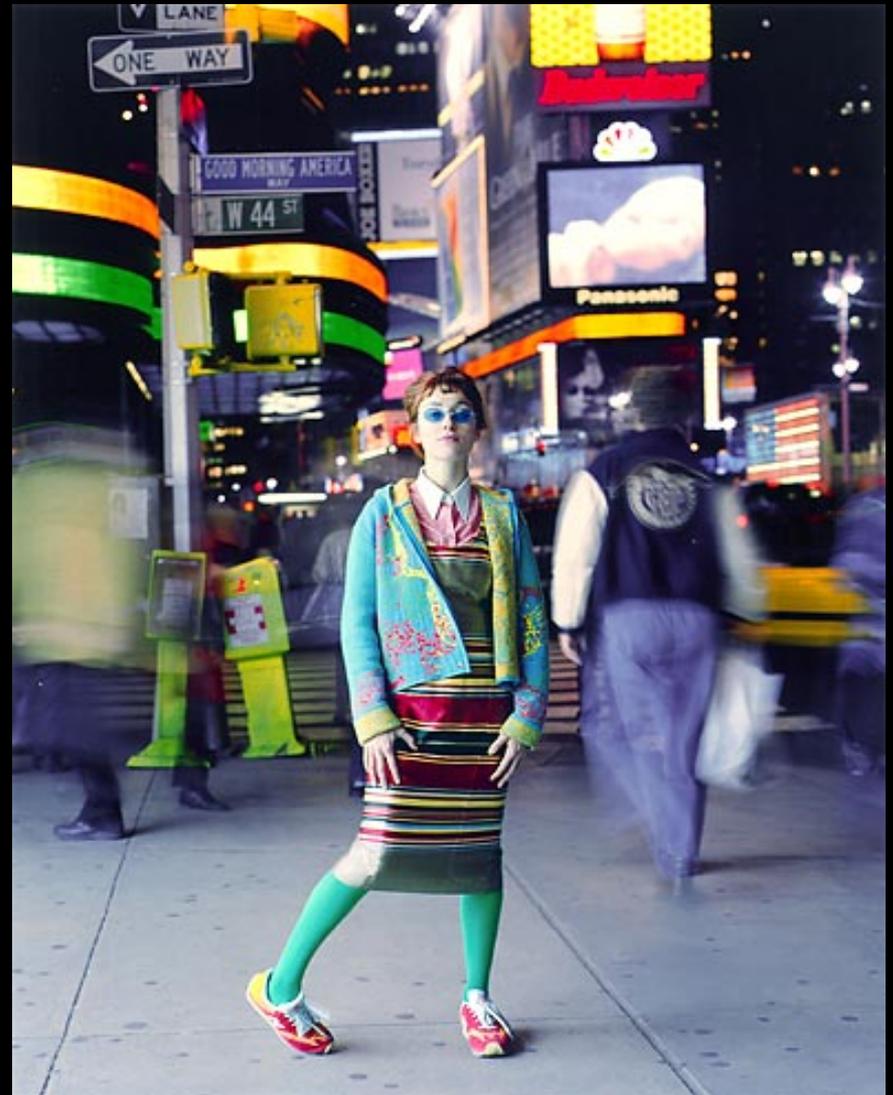


# Identity in Art

One of a number of artists working with multi-screen video installations, **Pipilotti Rist**, from Switzerland, takes a playful approach to power and gender relations.

Embracing what might be considered, an post-Feminist approach, her work is unapologetically about women's issues, women's bodies shrouded in Freudian symbols, dreams, desire, all centered on her experiences with the feminine.

Her works generally addresses issues related to gender, sexuality, and the human body with seriousness and play.



Pipilotti Rist in Times Square

# Identity in Art

Embracing all media, sculpture, sound, video, installation, her work involves:  
Play--Everyday Culture—Myth—Freedom--  
Female body—Desire.



Rist's *Cape Cod Chandelier*, is made from underpants collected from friends and family.

# Pipolotti Rist

*Ever is Over All, 1997, two channel video.*



During her studies Pipilotti Rist began making super 8 films. Her works generally last only a few minutes, and contained alterations in colors, speed, and sound create sensual, immersive environments for the viewer.

Watch the video here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a56RPZ\\_cbdC](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a56RPZ_cbdC)  
It takes a while to get past the ad and still photo

# Pipolotti Rist

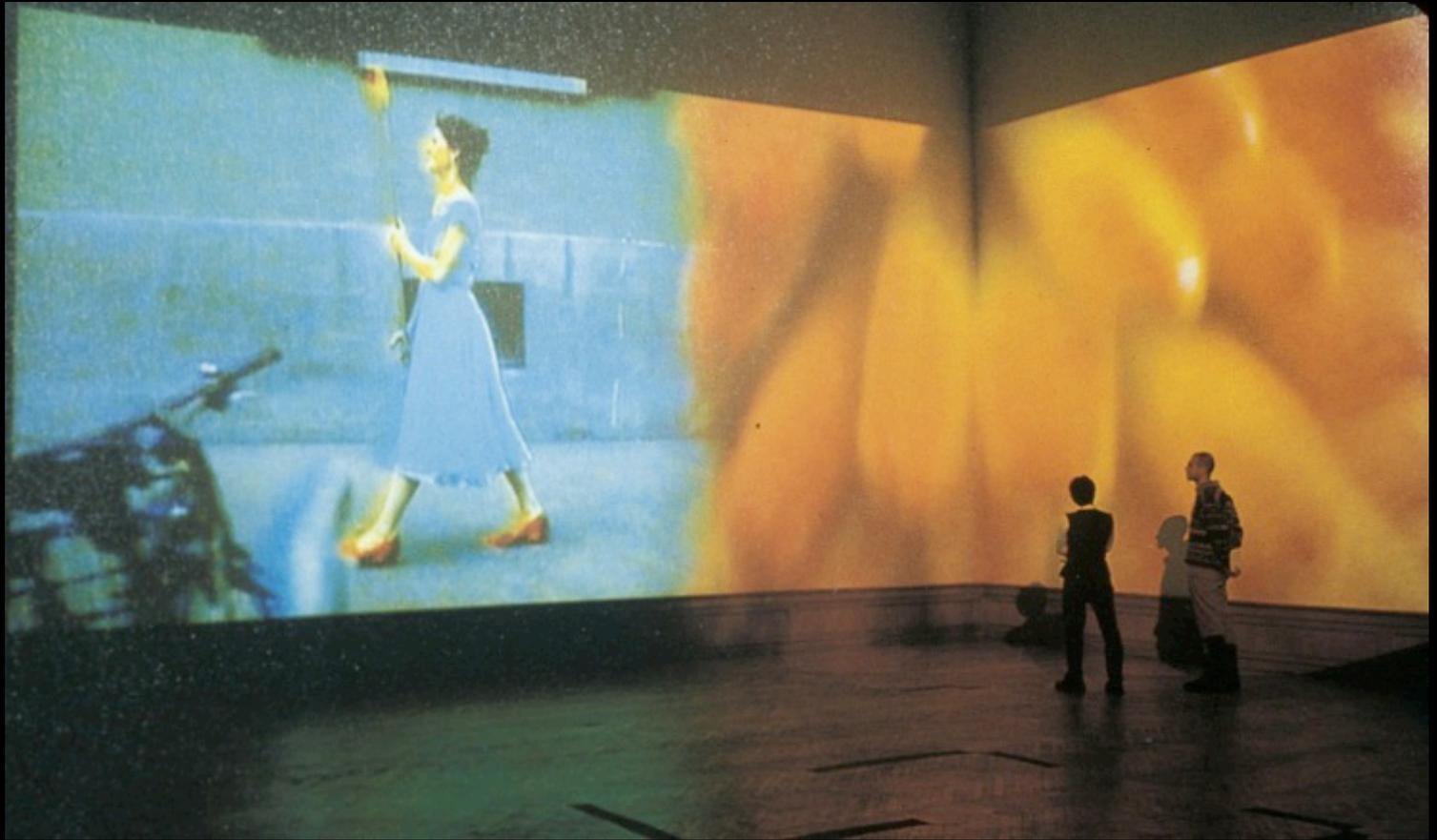
*Ever is Over All*, 1997, two channel video.



In this two channel video, *Ever is Over All*, 1997- the video envelops the viewer in two slow-motion projections on adjacent walls. The slow motion speed, intense colors and haunting soundtrack, lulls the viewer as a women in blue dress and ruby slippers walks down the street smashing car windows with a large flower.

# Pipolotti Rist

*Ever is Over All*, 1997, two channel video.



*Ever is Over All*, 1997- the video envelops the viewer in two slow-motion projections on adjacent walls. Comic tension is created in the whimsical scene while slow motion close-ups of flowers add a sexual element.



*Open My Glade*, 2000, was commissioned by the Public Art Fund and played in Times Square on the quarter hour between 8 am and 12:15am.

Seemingly playful at first, like kids pressing their faces on a car window, the images take on sexual and even violent implications as the video progresses.

# Contemporary Feminist

Many contemporary female artists working with identity are addressing issues related to their gender.

Jenny Saville's early paintings were large scale, self-portraits.

Rather than working from live models, she uses photographs of herself and others that work against the history of female 'idealized' bodies painted by male artists.

Her fascination is with the materiality of the human body, with flesh and with how bodies change or can be changed.

Some people have seen references to the Venus of Willendorf.



Jenny Saville, *Propped*, 1992, oil on canvas

# Jenny Saville

Some of her subjects come from morgue photos and the work of plastic surgeons.

She takes themes and subjects from observing people in everyday situations, some deformed, obese, brutalized or mutilated.

Her painting style is highly expressionistic with warm and cool colors layered in thick oil paint. The paint creates a visceral feel of skin.



*Still, Jenny Saville, 2003*

# Jenny Saville

I included this slide so you could get an idea of the scale of her works.

Looking at them in person is a very different experience than looking at a book or a slide lecture.

The entire painting can only be seen when you step back. But up close all the viewer sees is dabs and strokes of paint.



*Still, Jenny Saville, 2003*

# Jenny Saville



*Torso 2, Jenny Saville, 2004*



*Plan, Jenny Saville, 1993*

# Jenny Saville

In 2009, Saville had a child and within a short time another. She began working on a series of charcoal drawings using herself and her children as models.

Her drawings depicting the realities of motherhood were based on earlier ones of similar themes by famous artists like Leonardo da Vinci, Peter Paul Rubens and other old master artists.

Drawn and erased and drawn again we can see the ghost of earlier drawings. The mother appears to be struggling to prevent the one child from wriggling free.

This one is an oil painting based on the drawings.



*The Mothers (after Leonardo da Vinci), 2011 Oil on canvas.*

# Jenny Saville

This drawing is based on the drawing made by Leonardo da Vinci for his painting of the same title. Saville was inspired by this atypical depiction of Jesus and Mary, the infant is squirming in the Virgin's lap.

Saville's drawing references daVinci but with very different results. Notice the expression on the faces. Saville is showing the reality of motherhood.



Drawing for the  
*Virgin and Child  
with St. Ann and St.  
John the Baptist,*  
Leonardo da Vinci,  
1492

This drawing is considered a 'cartoon.' it means a drawing to scale.



Reproduction drawing II (after the  
Leonardo cartoon), 2009-10  
104 ½ x 69 ½

# Identity in Art

**Shirin Neshat** is an Iranian artist whose work addresses issues related to her culture, in particular women's issues.

Early photos from the *Speechless*, *Unveiling* and *Women of Allah* series explore notions of women in relation to fundamental Islamic and militancy in Iran.



Shirin Neshat, *From the Women of Allah series*, photographs.

# Shirin Neshat

Her work refers to the social, cultural and religious codes of Muslim societies and the complexity of certain oppositions, such as man and woman and the predisposed dualities. We see these in Western culture as well.

The work is deliberately open-ended to reflect her own internal conflict as a Muslim women.

Photography and films are both colored by religion, gender and a sense of cultural displacement as she now lives in NYC.



Shirin Neshat, *From the Women of Allah series*, photographs.

# Shirin Neshat

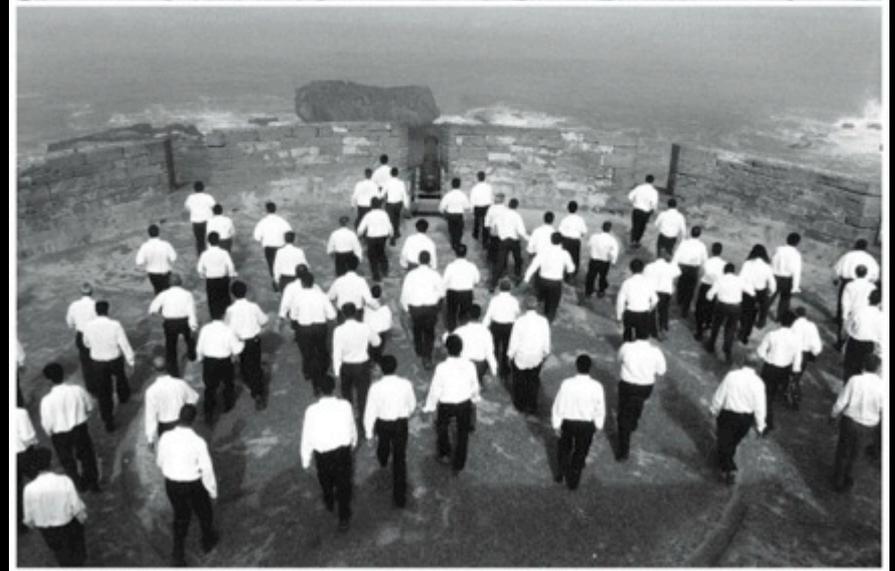
Neshat often emphasizes this theme showing two or more coordinated films concurrently, creating stark visual contrasts through motifs such as light and dark, black and white, male and female.

*Rapture*, 1999, 13 minute, 2-channel video

The two synchronized black-and-white video sequences that are projected on opposite walls; large in scale, evoke cinema screens. The story, told in fragments, constructs two parallel narratives: on one side of the room, men populate an architectural environment; in the other sequence, women move within a natural one.

Watch the video here:

<https://vimeo.com/65972620>



Shirin Neshat, *film stills from Rapture*, 13 minute, 2-channel video, 1999

# Contemporary Feminist

Wangechi Mutu was born in Kenya and now lives in NYC.

By combining found materials, magazine cutouts and painted imagery, her work addresses issues such as international politics, gender identity, war, Colonialism, global consumption, feminism and exoticization of the black female body.

She uses imagery from diverse sources such as; African traditions, fashion industry, pornography, and science fiction to bring attention to western ideas regarding the black female, many of which we have studied.



Wangichi Mutu, *Preying Mantra*, 2006

# Wangichi Mutu

Race, cultural and gender stereotypes are addressed.

In particular Mutu exploits Western views of African women as animal (closer to nature but also less than human) and overly sexualized.



**Wangechi Mutu *Misguided Little Unforgivable Hierarchies*, 2005. Ink, acrylic, collage, contact paper on Mylar, 81 x 52"**

***You are my Sunshine*, 2015**

# Kara Walker

Kara Walker is an African American female artist whose work refers to the complex psychological situations created by oppression.

Drawing inspiration from antebellum South, testimonial slave narratives, historical novels and minstrel shows, she brings together fact and fiction to expose racial and gender bias.

She uses the traditionally proper Victorian medium of the silhouette, applying them directly onto the walls of the gallery, creating a theatrical space in which her unruly cut-paper characters fornicate and inflict violence on one another.





Cut paper silhouettes are arranged on the wall as a kind of diorama for viewers to walk around. The images are often difficult, depicting violence and stereotypes on both sides. Walker wants her viewers to feel uncomfortable.

*Kara Walker, My Complement, My Enemy, My Oppressor, My Love, 2007*

# Kehinde Wiley

Kehinde Wiley is a black male artist.

Wiley has firmly situated himself within art history's portrait painting tradition.

Drawing on the tradition in western painting established by artists such as, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Titian, and Ingres among others, he exploits the style and other tropes to address issues of race and class.



Kehinde Wiley in his Brooklyn studio with some of his paintings.

He engages the signs and visual rhetoric of the heroic, powerful, and majestic in his representation of urban, black and brown men (and more recently women) found throughout the world.

# Kehinde Wiley

Where once there were only white kings and their queens, Kehinde Wiley inserts the "brown faces" long absent from Western art.



*Napoleon I on His Imperial Throne*  
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres  
(French, 1780–1867)

Remember  
Ingres?



Kehinde Wiley, *Ice T*, oil on canvas, 2005

# Kehinde Wiley

The paintings are large scale oil and enamel in the Neoclassical style of earlier white male artists.

Their subjects were rulers and wealthy clients. Now they are replaced with black celebrities and ordinary people of color.



Above, *Triple Portrait of Charles I*, 2007

Left, *Triple Portrait of Charles II*,

# Kehinde Wiley

This portrait imitates the posture of the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte in Jacques-Louis David's painting *Bonaparte Crossing the Alps at Grand-Saint-Bernard*. Wiley transforms the traditional equestrian portrait by substituting an anonymous young Black man dressed in contemporary clothing for the figure of Napoleon.



*Napoleon Crossing the Alps or Bonaparte at the St. Bernard Pass,*  
Jacques-Louis David (French, 1800-1)



*Above, Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps,* 2005

# Kehinde Wiley

In works like this Wiley confronts and critiques historical traditions that do not acknowledge Black cultural experience.

He presents a new kind of portraiture that redefines and affirms Black identity and simultaneously questions the history of Western painting.



*Triple Portrait of Charles I, 2007, Oil and enamel on canvas, Triptych, 82 x 96 in. overall; 82 x 45 in.*



*Charles I in  
Three  
Positions  
Anthony van  
Dyke, 1636*

Notice the dates of the earlier paintings. Wiley is looking back to the style and subject of the past.

Big difference— his subjects are black. How does using the style from the past add meaning to his?

# William Kentridge

William Kentridge is a white South African artist. He works with stop motion animation and drawing to address issues related to racial intolerance.

In particular, he acknowledges his own implication as a white male, in the violence that took place in his home during apartheid.

Sometimes based on actual memories, the drawings and animations reveal his guilt and horror at injustices that took place during apartheid South-Africa.

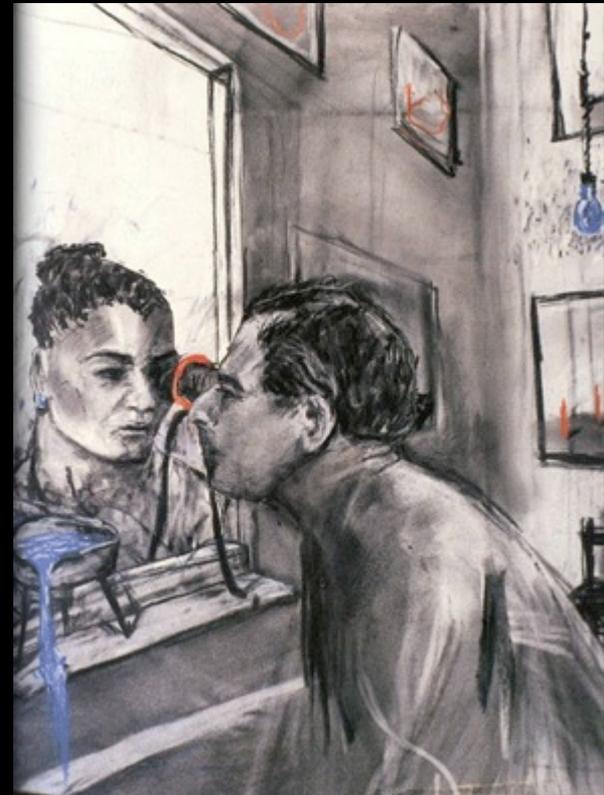


William Kentridge with a charcoal drawing of himself in the background.

# William Kentridge

The basics of South Africa's socio-political condition and history must be known to grasp his work fully.

These two film stills from, *Felix in Exile*, 1994, shows the main character, Felix, looking into the bathroom mirror and seeing the reflection of an African woman on the other side.



William Kentridge , *Felix in Exile*, 1994

# William Kentridge

Using traditional stop motion animation techniques, Kentridge draws the images in large scale, photographing them as still images.

He then makes changes to the drawings and photographs them again shooting hundreds of pictures for one short film.

Once the drawings are all photographed they are put together to create the illusion of a moving film.



William Kentridge , working on the drawings for the film,

# William Kentridge

Kentridge's work is heavily context-dependent given he's from South Africa, where until only recently second-class native African citizens still existed under apartheid.

Kentridge himself, a man of European descent, has a unique position as a third-party observer.

Watch the a clip of the film here.

<https://vimeo.com/channels/1193301/66485044>



William Kentridge , this is a series of film stills from the film, *Felix in Exile*.

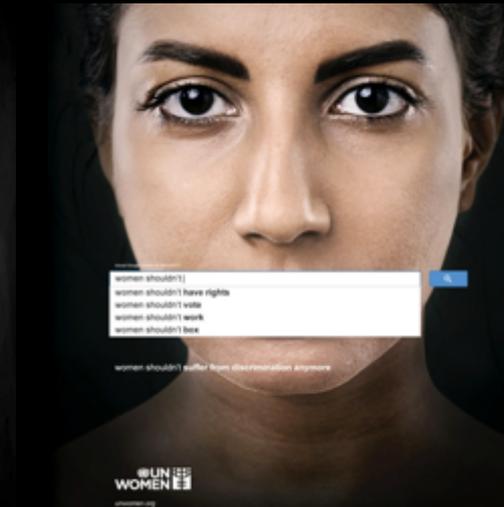
## IMPORTANT

This is so important I'm saying it again.  
You may remember this information  
from earlier in the semester.  
Read it again please and the new stuff.

This class is designed to help with  
understanding of the history of ideas  
through **Visual Literacy**.  
You are all aware of what Literacy  
means.

**Visual Literacy** is defined as the ability to  
understand, interpret and evaluate  
visual images.

It is based on the idea that pictures can  
be 'read' and that meaning can be  
communicated through a careful reading.  
Learning to read a picture will give you  
the ability to see intended or unintended  
meanings and begin to critique images  
you see.



Many of the images we've looked at in  
this class were thought of as "normal"  
at the time. We don't think that now.

Images are never neutral.

*UN Women, places popular search terms  
about women in front of portraits.*

## IMPORTANT

This is it. You made it to the end.  
No more lectures. This one more  
annotation.

The images for your third Analysis  
paper are in this and the previous  
lectures.

There are many more things I could  
show with regards to our topic from the  
time period after 1970. So, please  
accept my apology if I left out someone  
you think is important.

Please realize that for every Analysis  
Paper your context is in the lectures to  
get you started.



Enrique Chagoya, *When Paradise Arrived*,  
1989, Charcoal & pastel on paper,  
80 x 80 inches

Thanks for all you hard work.