

Postmodern Art

Civil Rights.

Women's Rights.

Aids.

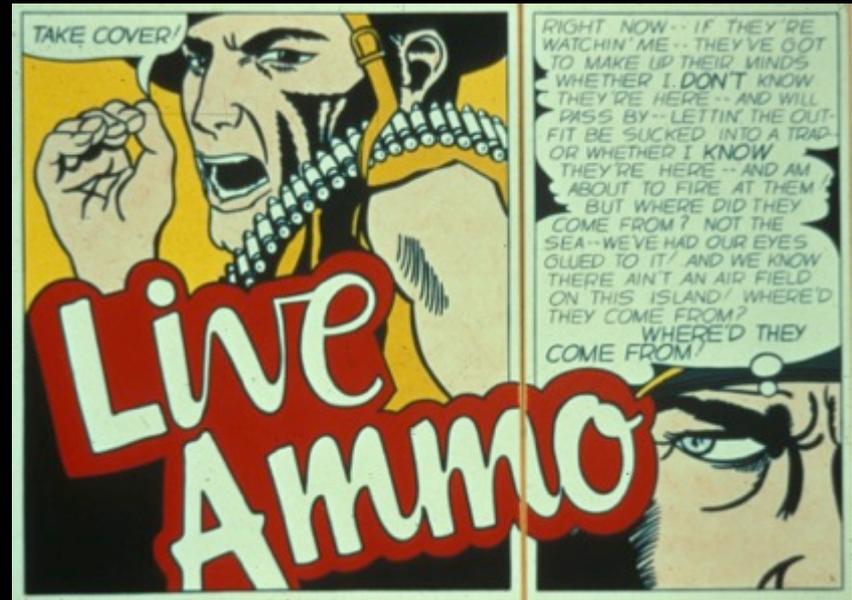
Review

The last two weeks--important:

1. Psychological support for gender discrimination.
2. Attitudes toward immigrants.
3. Ashcan school and immigration.
4. Harlem Renaissance
5. New York Art after WWII
6. American after WWII
7. Pop art and sexuality.
8. Civil Rights movement.

Roy Lichtenstein, *Live ammo*, 1965

Selma to Montgomery march 1965



Background

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s was a struggle of African Americans to achieve civil rights equal to those of whites in America. Equal opportunity in employment, housing, education, voting, use of public facilities and right to be free of racial discrimination.

It altered the relations between the federal government and the states as the federal government was forced many times to protect the rights of African American citizens.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made civil rights a law thus outlawing discrimination in all public places.



The civil rights movement forever changed the face of U.S. law and politics.

It led to legislation that gave greater protection to the rights of minorities.

It also greatly changed the role of the judiciary in U.S. government, as the Supreme Court had become more active in its defense of individual rights, often in response to litigation and demonstrations initiated by those in the movement.

Feminism 1960s and 70s

Known as second wave feminism, the women's liberation movement learned from the Civil Rights Movement.

Organizing and protesting for women's rights, the movement brought attention to issues such as discrimination in the workplace, rape, lesbian issues and sisterhood.

Often dismissed by male journalists as not very serious, the movement did lead to the Equal Rights amendment, abortion rights, equality and Title 9.

The feminist movement provided a framework for protests for gay rights.



March for equal rights for women in 1970 and Gay Liberation march in Times Square, 1969

Feminist Art and Art History

In 1971, the art historian, Linda Nochlin, wrote a pivotal essay in the history of art--*Why Have There Been No Women Artists?*

In this essay, Nochlin explores the institutional – as opposed to the individual – obstacles that have prevented women in the West from succeeding in the arts.

This essay changed the way art historians viewed the past, in particular as related to gender.

Before her article, no women artists were present in art history books.

Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays



Linda Nochlin

Thanks to Nochlin's article and the Feminist Movement, we are now discussing women artists and issues related to gender in art.

Her early article is published in this book. It's in our library.

Feminist Art Movement

The Feminist art movement emerged in the 1960s amid anti-war demonstrations and civil rights and queer rights movements.

Feminist artists wanted to rewrite a male-dominated art history as well as change the contemporary art world to make a place for women's art.

Women sought to expand the definition of fine art, and to incorporate a wider variety of artistic perspectives.

Sometimes this had to do with subject matter. Sometimes by using materials previously considered 'women's work' like sewing, embroidery, fabric, etc.



Harmony Hammond, *Bag XI*, 1971, Brooklyn Museum

Hammond asserts that traditionally feminine qualities are worthwhile artistic subjects and means for artistic creation. To this end, for example, she created sculptures in the early 1970s featuring swaths of fabric, a traditionally feminine material, as a primary material.

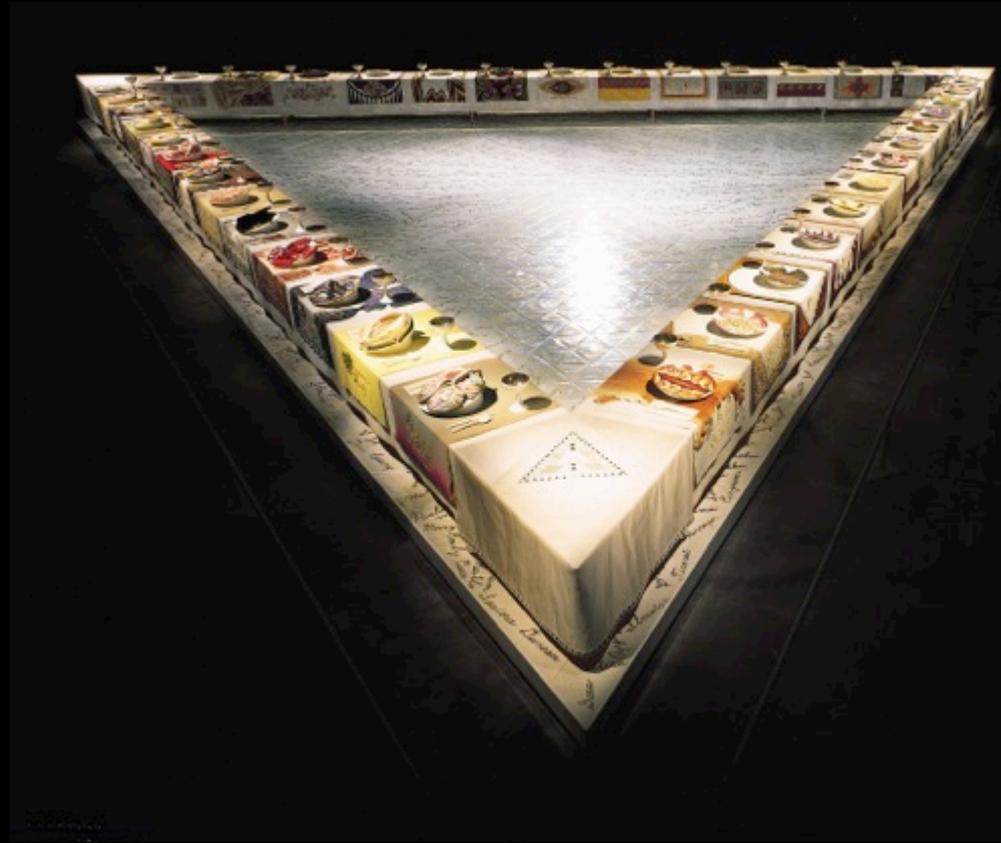
Feminist Art Movement

Widely regarded as the defining feminist artwork, *The Dinner Party*, functions as a symbolic history of women in Western civilization.

Designed to commemorate the achievements of women in history such as O'Keefee, Virginia Wolfe and Queen Hatshepsut, the plates are decorated with vaginal references because it is common to all women.

39 place settings are dedicated to a particular women and on the floor there are 999 more names.

Made with traditional female crafts such as china painting embroidery, needle point, etc.



JUDY CHICAGO, *The Dinner Party*, 1974-79. Multimedia, including ceramics and stitchery, 48' x 48' x 48' installed

Feminist Art Movement

The piece was made by many different people, even though Chicago is given credit. This collaboration was made in 1979 but it was just recently permanently installed in the Brooklyn Museum.

Go see it.



JUDY CHICAGO, *The Dinner Party*, 1974-79.
Multimedia, including ceramics and stitchery,
48' x 48' x 48' installed.

See all the plates here:

www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/5167/The_Dinner_Party

Feminist Art Movement

It may be difficult to understand this piece. It's a large triangle shaped sculpture that is designed as a dinner table.

The triangle shape means there is no head of the table but you may also remember the triangle in prehistoric times was a symbol for the female.

Judy Chicago used ceramic and embroidery because they were considered 'women's work' not high art like painting and sculpture.

She also made the plates with the female vagina to refer to earlier art and bring attention to the importance and role of the female body.



You may remember seeing this work the second week of the class.

This place setting, dedicated to the primordial goddess .

Chicago was celebrating women who up until that time, had been eliminated from history.

The goddess was one of these.

Feminist Art Movement

As a result of the movement, writings and awareness of patriarchal history, female artists began making work that pushed back.

You are all aware of the image of the reclining female nude. Here are a few made by female artists in response. How are they different to their sources?

Yasumasa Morimura, *Reclining Nude*, 1988



Kickalene Thomas, *A Little Taste Outside of Love*, 2007

Sylvia Sleigh, *Imperial Nude Paul Roaano*,





You might remember this slide. It was in the first lecture. Hope it makes more sense now.

This page contains work by female artists who attempt to subvert the tradition in different ways.

Sylvia Sleigh, *Philip Golub Reclining*, 1971, oil on canvas.



Yasumasa Morimura, *Portrait (Futago)*, 1988, photograph.

Jan Banning, *Danae Olympia*, from National Identities series, 2012.

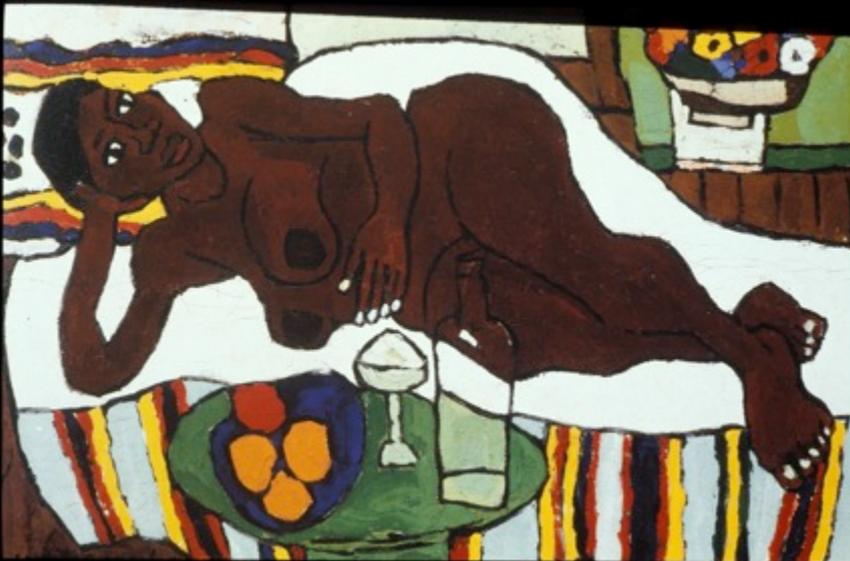


Feminist Art Movement

Even before the movement, artists of color and female artists were aware of the objectification of the female body.

These images were earlier. But both Johnson, an African American male artist, responded as did Paula Modersohn-Becker, a female.

William Johnson, *Female Nude*, 1939



Paula Modersohn-Becker, *Reclining Nude with Child*, 1906

Modersohn-Becker was part of the Expressionist movement. Her painting of mother and child brings the female reclining nude into the mother and child context we have been studying.

Feminist Art Movement

Guerrilla Girls are an anonymous group of feminist, female artists devoted to fighting sexism and racism within the art world. They created posters that were posted guerrilla style around the city of NY.

The group formed in New York City in 1985 with the mission of bringing gender and racial inequality within the fine arts to light. Members are known for the gorilla masks they wear to remain anonymous.



GUERRILLA GIRLS, The Advantages of Being A Woman Artist, 1988. Poster.



Feminist Art Movement

originally interested in bringing attention to women in the art world, their efforts moved to social issues and those of women of color.

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A WOMAN ARTIST:

- Working without the pressure of success.
- Not having to be in shows with men.
- Having an escape from the art world in your 4 free-lance jobs.
- Knowing your career might pick up after you're eighty.
- Being reassured that whatever kind of art you make it will be labeled feminine.
- Not being stuck in a tenured teaching position.
- Seeing your ideas live on in the work of others.
- Having the opportunity to choose between career and motherhood.
- Not having to choke on those big cigars or paint in Italian suits.
- Having more time to work when your mate dumps you for someone younger.
- Being included in revised versions of art history.
- Not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius.
- Getting your picture in the art magazines wearing a gorilla suit.

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD
532 LAGUARDIA PLACE, P237, N.Y., N.Y. 10012
WWW.GUERRILLAGIRLS.COM

GUERRILLA GIRLS' POP QUIZ.

Q. If February is Black History Month and March is Women's History Month, what happens the rest of the year?

A. Discrimination.

BOX 1056 Cooper Sta. NY, NY 10078 **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

GUERRILLA GIRLS, The Advantages of Being A Woman Artist, 1988. Poster.

An ironic statement that brings attention to the reality of being a female artist.

Pop Quiz, 1987

Feminist Art and Race

The Feminist Art movement only lasted until the 1980s when a backlash in both culture and art diminished its role.

However, the movement set the stage for questioning the art world, art history and why women and women's issues, and then people of color, have been left out.

Issues related to gender expanded to those of identity in general in particular-- Race.

Artists like Adrien Piper, a black female artist, made artworks related to her reality.



Dressing up as a man in, *Mythic Being* performances 1975, she walked New York's streets to see how black males were made into objects of racism.

Postmodernism

Events since World War II (like the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War and Feminism), and the perception of those events, gave rise to the notion that the Western Humanist tradition was flawed and corrupt, even oppressive.

People began to realize how racist and misogynistic ideas gave some people power over others. Art and cultural ideas began to change.

The name given this new period is **Postmodernism.**

Postmodernism embraces everything... common culture, past art styles, everything.



Barbara Kruger,
*Untitled:
We have
received
orders
not to
move,*
1982

"**Pluralism and diversity**" are other defining features. Questions of **identity** and **embracing all forms** as equally valid.

Female artists, artists of color and others previously outside the mainstream of art, addressed issues of identity and social critique.

Remember this one?
You saw it week 1.

Contemporary Artists realize this history and make work to bring attention to the realities of representation and power.

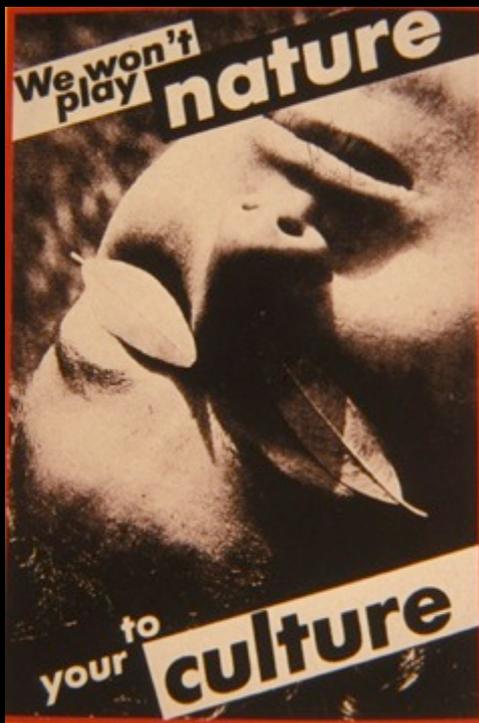
Female artists recognize how art and advertising present women who represent the 'ideal' as defined by men.

Many contemporary female artists address this reality in their work.

This method of analyzing art falls within the 'Feminist Method.'
More discussion of Critical Methods to come.

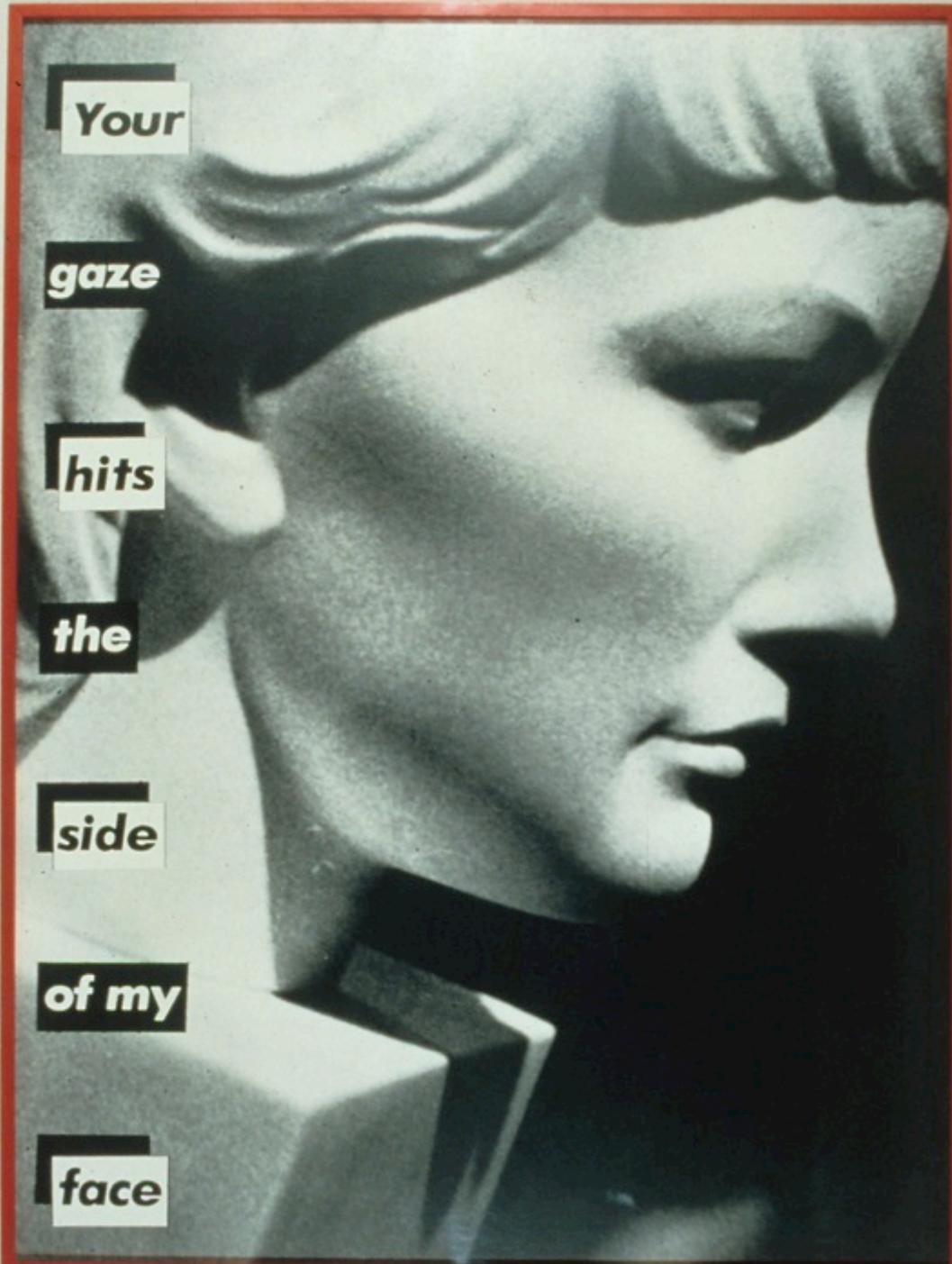


Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your body is a battleground)*, 1989



Using images and tactics from advertising, Barbara Kruger created bold statements about female stereotypes and marketing techniques, based on art and cultural history.

BARBARA KRUGER, *Untitled (Your Gaze Hits the Side of My Face)*, 1983.
Photostat, red painted frame, 6' 1" x 4' 1".
Courtesy of Mary Boone Gallery, New York.



Black Identity

Faith Ringgold is an African American artist and author who became famous for innovative, quilted narrations and paintings that communicate her political beliefs.

Taking inspiration from artist Jacob Lawrence and writer James Baldwin, Ringgold painted her first political collection named the *American People Series* in 1963. It portrays the American lifestyle in relation to the Civil Rights Movement and illustrates these racial interactions from a woman's point of view.

She is best known for her quilts depicting African American life and her children's book, *Tar Beach*.



Faith Ringgold, *The Flag is Bleeding* , 1967

Quilted
Illustration
From *Tar Beach*,
1980s

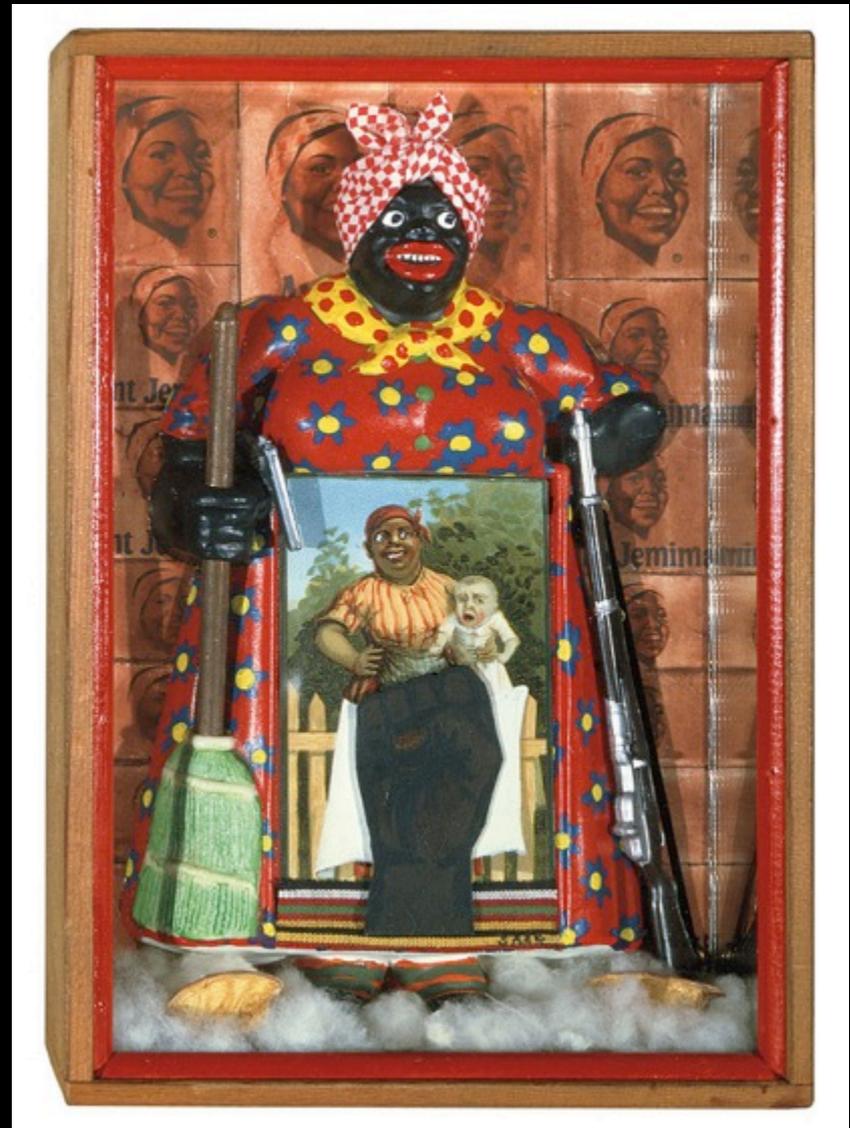


This one was also in week 1.

In addition African American Artists, like Betye Saar, made art that brings attention to ways images functioned to dehumanize an entire race.

In this case, Saar reminds us that the image of Aunt Jemima existed to tame and control – create a stereotype– of African American women as caretaker and passive. Someone who need not be feared.

~~I removed the questions that were on the original slide.~~



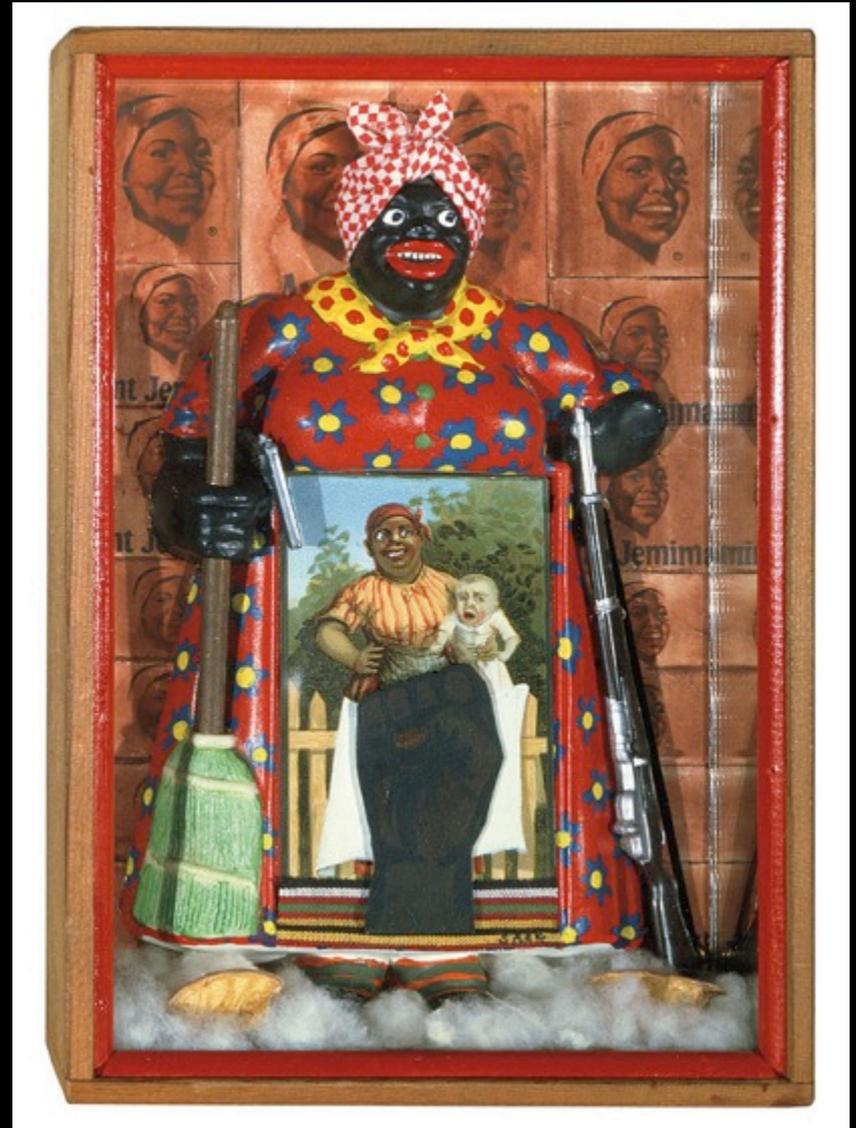
Betye Saar, *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima*, 1972

Race and History

The background of *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima* is covered with Aunt Jemima advertisements while the foreground is dominated by a larger Aunt Jemima notepad holder with a picture of a mammy figure and a white baby inside.

The larger Aunt Jemima holds a broom in one hand and a rifle in the other, transforming her from a happy servant and caregiver to a proud militant.

A large, clenched fist symbolizing black power stands before the notepad holder, cotton balls litter the ground below.



Betye Saar, *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima*, 1972

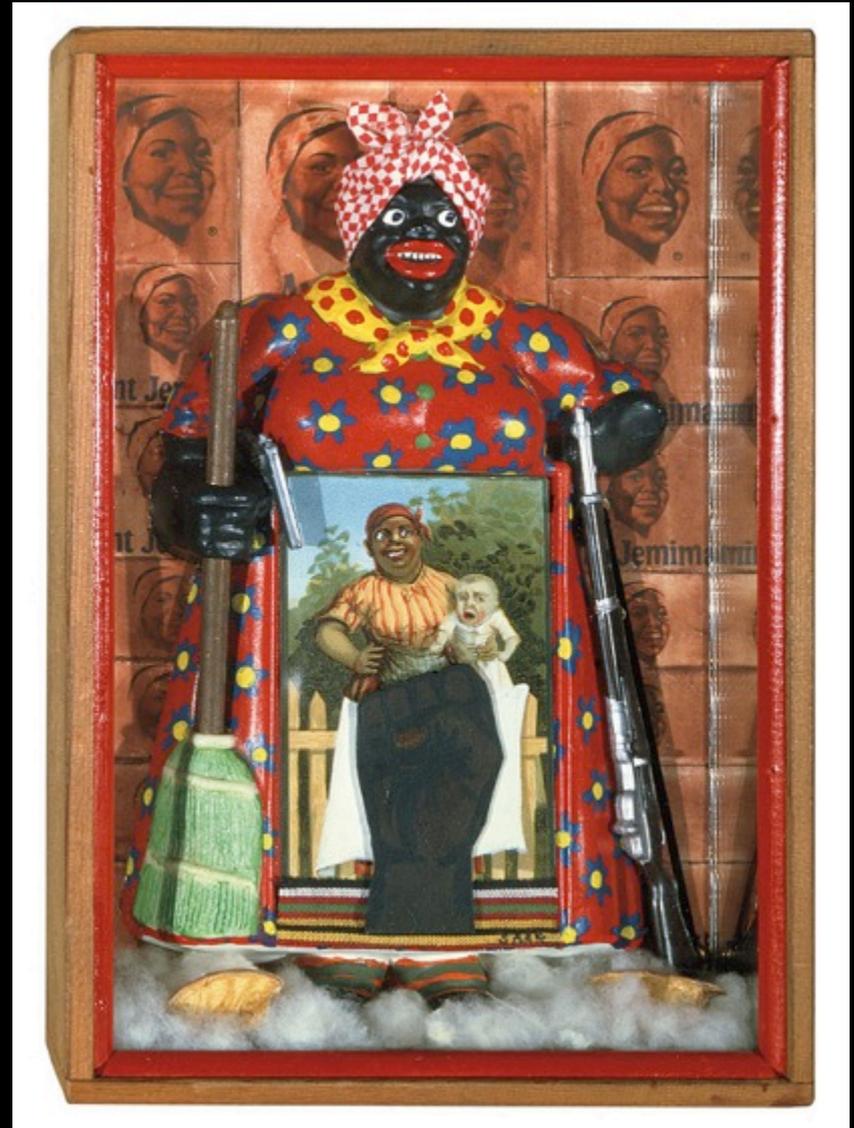
Race and History

Aunt Jemima is transformed from a passive domestic into a symbol of black power. She has liberated herself from both a history of white oppression and traditional gender roles.

Through the use of the mammy and Aunt Jemima figures, Saar reconfigures the meaning of these stereotypical figures to ones that demand power and agency within society.



The original Aunt Jemima, used to sell pancake mix and syrup.



Betye Saar, *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima*, 1972

Race and History

Carrie Mae Weems is a socially motivated artist whose works invite contemplation of race, gender, and class. Increasingly, she has broadened her view to include global struggles for equality and justice.

Her series, *Mirror Mirror*, from the *Ain't Jokin' Series*, is a series of 5 photographs of Weems looking vulnerable in her slip asking the fairytale question, "Mirror Mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?"

The answer bluntly: "Snow White, you black bitch, and don't you forget it!"

Feminist issues are addressed by a person of color in a statement about both race and gender.



Carrie Mae Weems, *Mirror, Mirror* from the *Ain't Jokin' series*, 1987-88

The work addresses the pressure on women for physical perfection and in particular for women of color who are excluded from Western standards of female beauty.

KERRY JAMES MARSHALL

Marshall is an African American artist whose paintings, installations, and public projects are often drawn from African-American popular culture.

They are also rooted in the geography of his upbringing. He said, *“You can’t be born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1955 and grow up in South Central [Los Angeles] near the Black Panthers headquarters, and not feel like you’ve got some kind of social responsibility.”*

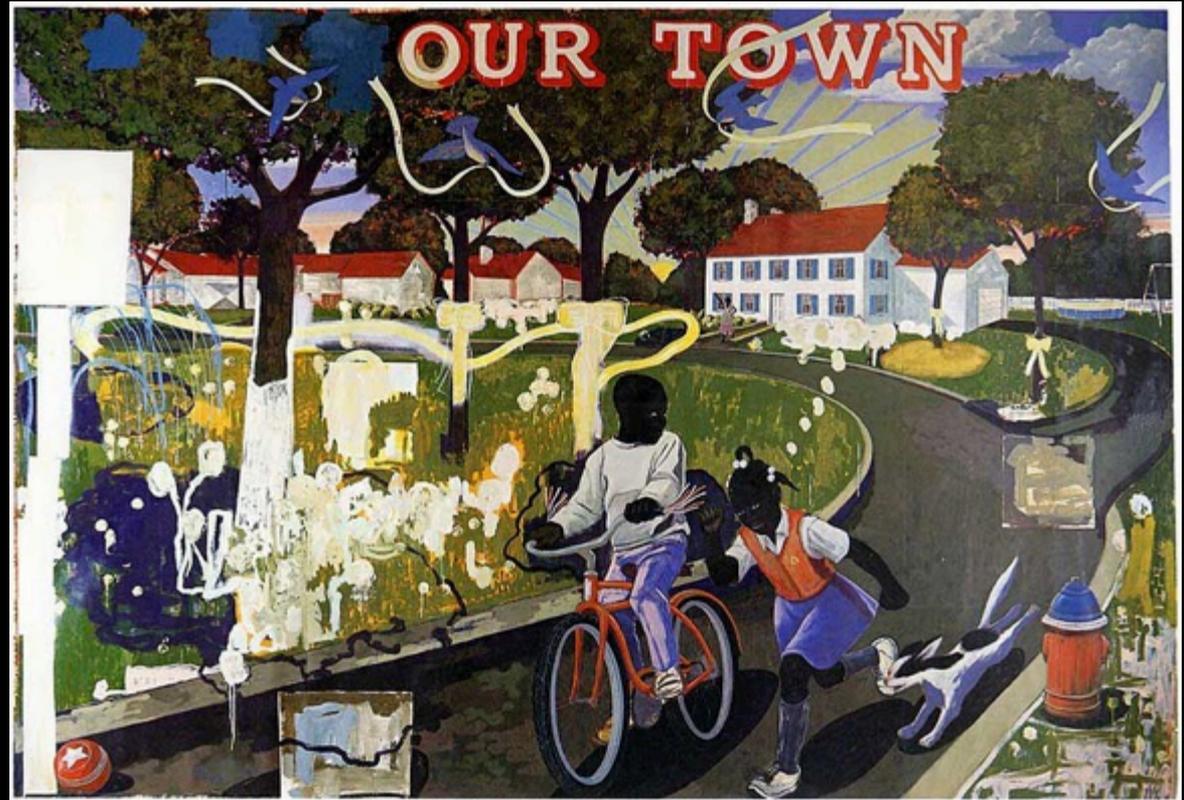


Many Mansions, 1994

This is the first in a series of paintings Marshall did depicting public housing projects. Thinking it ‘ironic’ that many were called ‘Gardens’ this painting is filled with the contradictions of living in public housing.

KERRY JAMES MARSHALL

His works address issues of race, juxtaposing images from the history of Blacks and Whites in America.



OUR TOWN, 1994

In this work, a black boy and girl play in an upper class neighborhood. With references to plantations, cotton fields and urban graffiti, the work brings together many contradictory images referring to the reality of social relations and history.

The Aids Decade 1982-92

By the end of the 1970s social and political campaigns to strengthen gay and lesbian communities challenged earlier ideas that homosexuality was a pathology by celebrating these identities as alternate ways of living and being.

The exhibition, *Extended Sensibilities* 1982, at the New Museum in New York was the first museum show to focus on sexual identity and the first to integrate art by gay men and lesbians.

Many artists who should have been in the show were not because they refused to 'come out' fearing the context.



Aids Decade

By 1992, 10 years after the Extended Sensibilities show, 50,000 AIDS cases had been reported in the US alone.

By 1995 a quarter of the men who exhibited in the show had died, including many others who were not included.

The effects of AIDS became the dominant issue in art. It altered how art, homosexuality and the relationship between them was understood.



Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled (Portrait of Ross in L.A.)*, 1991

Cellophane-wrapped candies are used to stand-in for the body of his lover Ross who had died of AIDS. Specified to be installed and maintained at the weight of his lover, gallery goers are encouraged to take the candy and eat it.

Aids and Art

Felix Gonzalez-Torres was a Cuban artist who died of AIDS-related complications in 1996. But before he died his extensive body of work commented on the fragility of life and the belief that everything does, and should change.

He was interested in how the public and private are intertwined and uses everyday objects as complex metaphor for human experience.

Employing simple, everyday materials like, stacks of paper, puzzles, candy, strings of lights, beads, he addresses themes such as love and loss, sickness and rejuvenation, gender and sexuality.



Other every-day objects like two clocks set at the same time, were metaphors for life, death and love. Inevitably, one clock battery would die before the other, with one clock slowing down and then stopping. Eventually, both would stop.

Aids and Art

Keith Haring found a thriving alternative art community in New York that was developing outside the gallery and museum system, in the downtown streets, the subways and spaces in clubs and former dance halls.

His first works were chalk drawings in the NY subway.



Keith Haring in NY Subway station

Aids and Art

Throughout his career, Haring devoted much of his time to public works, which often carried social messages.

He produced more than 50 public artworks between 1982 and 1989, in dozens of cities around the world, many of which were created for charities, hospitals, children's day care centers and orphanages.

The now famous *Crack is Wack* mural of 1986 has become a landmark along New York's FDR Drive.

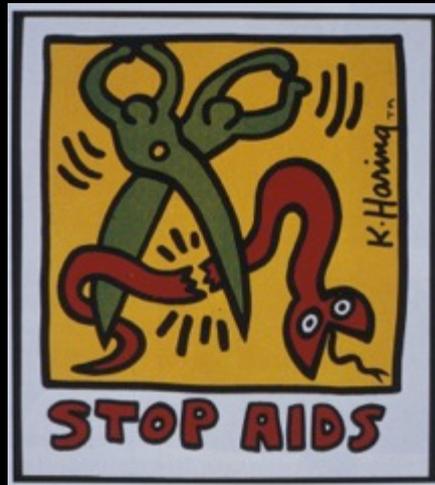


Keith Haring, *CRACK IS WACK*, FDR Drive

Aids and Art

Haring was diagnosed with AIDS in 1988. In 1989, he established the Keith Haring Foundation, to provide funding and imagery to AIDS organizations and children's programs.

Haring enlisted his imagery during the last years of his life to speak about his own illness and generate activism and awareness about AIDS.



Artwork and posters to bring attention to AIDS

Keith Haring died in February, 1990.

Robert Mapplethorpe

Robert Mapplethorpe's work featured an array of subjects including celebrity portraits, still-life images of flowers and a controversial body of work around the variety of erotic practices.

In each case, the black & white images focus on the iconic and sensuality in photographed images.

Robert Mapplethorpe, Calla Lily, 1988, photographs



Identity

Mapplethorpe did a series of self-portraits in various stages of his life, revealing different aspects of his personality.

As variously costumed characters, Mapplethorpe researches his own identity, capturing his complex and contradictory nature.

Whether depicting himself in a playful, fierce, or vulnerable state, the artist's explorations are intensely personal and self-reflexive.

Robert Mapplethorpe, *self-portraits*,
photographs



Identity

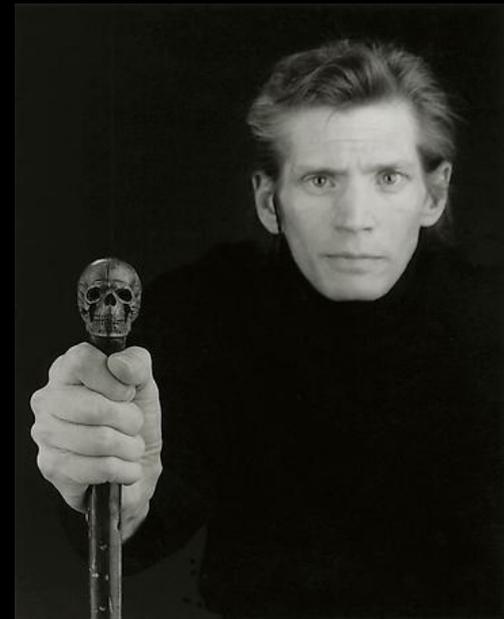
It was not until after his diagnosis with AIDS in 1986 that Mapplethorpe honest vulnerably is revealed in his portraits.

Taken only months before his passing, for *Self Portrait (with cane)*, the artist is no longer playing a role. Mapplethorpe faces the camera directly, as if he were looking death in the face.

The skull-headed cane that he holds in his right hand acts as a *memento mori*, foreshadowing his inevitable fate.
(from the press release Skarstedt Gallery.)

Robert Mapplethorpe died of AIDS related complex, March, 1989.

Robert Mapplethorpe, *Self-Portrait*, 1989



Identity

Mapplethorpe's most controversial imagery were those with blatant homoerotic content.

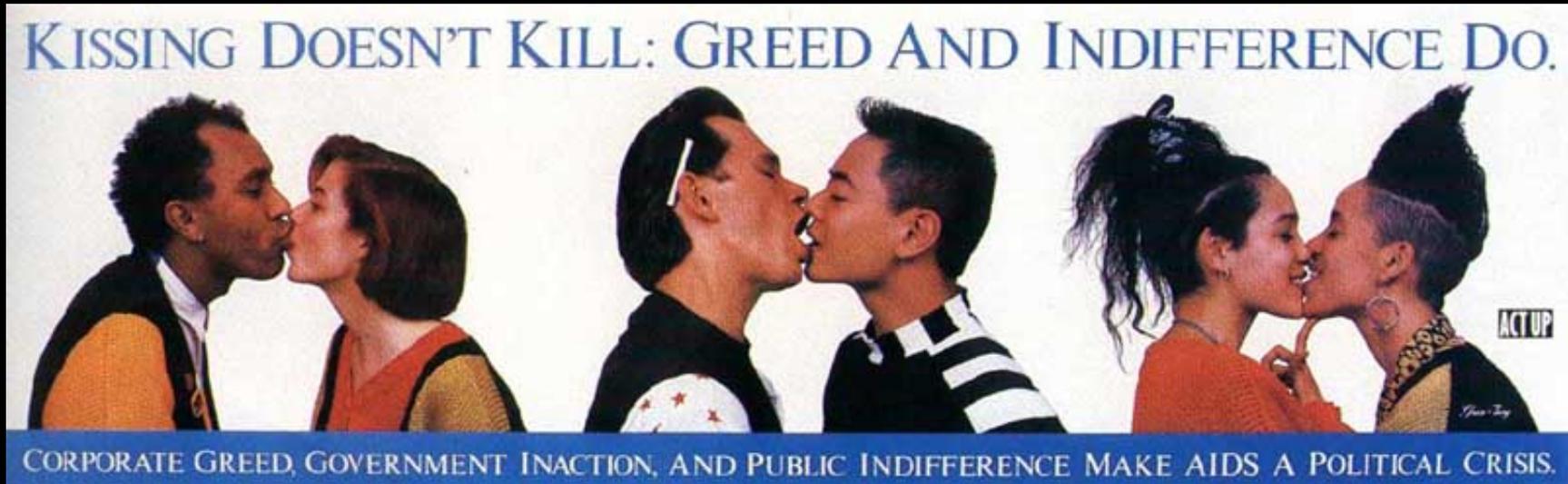
The most direct, creating censorship battles over moral and pornographic issues in art.

Mapplethorpe never intended these images to be made public. For him they were explorations into his own subculture.

However, these are the images that became a source for homophobic exploitation, as Mapplethorpe's photographs became a battle cry against the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) and against homosexuality by conservative politicians.



*Robert Mapplethorpe, Dennis with Flowers, 1983
and Leather Pants, 1980.*



Gran Fury, *Kissing Doesn't Kill: Greed and Indifference Do*, printed on postcards and displayed as billboards and bus posters, 1989.

This is also a slide you saw the first week.

Contemporary artists and designers use visual representation (images) to reflect the ideas of our time.

But can we also have 'blind spots' when it comes to seeing and understanding differences?

Maybe we can learn to see them.



Robert Mapplethorpe, *Self-Portrait*, 1980

IMPORTANT

As we move into the post Civil Rights and post Feminist era, things are changing in our culture and in art.

Here are the questions for this week:

1. Do you think ideas and images that have turned women into objects of male desire have anything to do with recent circumstances in the news regarding sexual harassment and/or sexual abuse? Discuss.
2. Do you think stereotypes regarding people of color have anything to do with the current Black Lives Matter movement? Discuss.
3. Do you think art and/or media images affect how people see those who are different than them? How?



Next week we look at artists who came after Civil Rights, the Feminist Movement and Postmodern ideas that bring attention to the realities we've been studying about history and difference.