

EXHIBITION TOOLKIT



Black Refractions

HIGHLIGHTS FROM
THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM

This toolkit encourages deep dives into UMFA exhibitions via four entry points: how this exhibition relates to our personal lives, connects to our studies, teaches us about foundational art elements, and conveys big ideas. Whether you use this in the galleries or in your classroom with the “slideshow” of larger images toward the end of this document, we hope educators can find inspiration for potential discussion topics, writing prompts, group exploration, or art-making—regardless of discipline.

These categories are:



Personal Connections



Classroom Connections



Elemental Connections



Thematic Connections

Barkley L. Hendricks, *Lawdy Mama*, 1969, oil and gold leaf on canvas. The Studio Museum in Harlem; gift of Stuart Liebman, in memory of Joseph B. Liebman, 1983.25. © Estate of Barkley L. Hendricks. Courtesy of the artist's estate, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York and American Federation of Arts.





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Personal Connections

Art can stir emotions—positive, negative, and anything in between. Whatever your response, your feelings about a work of art are valid and worth exploring. Most museum-goers spend just a few seconds in front of a single work, but we encourage you to look slowly before exploring the questions below.

- In three words, how does this exhibition make you feel?
- What's one work with which you feel a personal connection? Why?
- If you could talk to one artist in this exhibition, who would it be? What would you ask or say?
- Complete the following sentences:
 - o What I find most **interesting** about this exhibition is...
 - o What I find most **complicated** about this exhibition is...
 - o What this exhibition made me **think differently** about is....
- If you made a playlist for this exhibition, what are three songs you'd include? Why?
- What's something you'd like to learn more about because of this exhibition? Why?



Kehinde Wiley, *Conspicuous Fraud Series #1 (Eminence)*, 2001, oil on canvas. The Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum purchase made possible by a gift from Anne Ehrenkranz, 2002.10.14. © Kehinde Wiley. Courtesy of the artist, Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, California, and American Federation of Arts.



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FINE ARTS

Classroom Connections

Whether you're studying math, science, art, or the humanities, you can find surprising connections between your coursework and the work in this exhibition.

Questions for individuals, pairs, or groups:

- List three words you'd use to describe this exhibition.
- What are recurrent threads you notice throughout the exhibition? These could be themes, ideas, images, symbols, patterns, colors, etc.
- What is one thread or element that connects to your class coursework? How does it connect? Depending on your field, this could be tricky—creative leaps are encouraged!
- What's one work of art here that represents the connection you see? How does it do that?
- How could you apply your current coursework to this exhibition? For example, a creative writing student might write a poem about a painting, a history student might research a social movement that informed an artist's perspective, a biology student might analyze the environment within a landscape, etc.



Chakaia Booker, *Repugnant Rapunzel (Let Down Your Hair)*, 1995, rubber tires and metal. The Studio Museum in Harlem, gift of Friends and Family of Chakaia Booker, 1996.7. © Chakaia Booker. Courtesy American Federation of Arts. Photo Credit: Nelson Tejada.



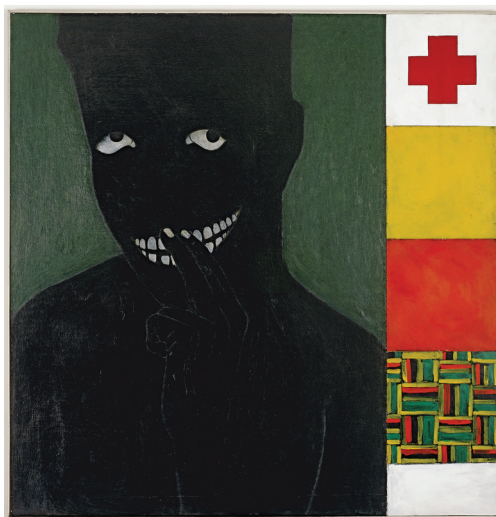
EXHIBITION TOOLKIT

UMFA
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Elemental Connections

Whether you're an artist yourself or someone who doesn't spend a lot of time with art, the elements of art give us a way of thinking about how a work was created and what it comprises. These include: line, shape, color, form, texture, space, and value.

- Which artist uses **lines** in the most interesting ways? How would you describe the feeling of those lines? (Organized, chaotic, simple, etc.?)
- Choose a work of art that utilizes interesting **shapes**. Can you sketch the work using only the basic shapes you identify?
- Scan a group of works, taking in the many **colors** the artists used. Which color catches your eye more than any other? Why does it stand out? What feeling does it convey?
- Find a work with interesting **textures**. How would you describe the textures to someone who wasn't looking at the piece?
- Identify a 3D work in this exhibition and consider **form**. How would this piece be different if it were a drawing or painting instead? What would the viewer miss? How would it change the way you think about the piece?



Kerry James Marshall, *Silence is Golden*, 1986, acrylic on panel. The Studio Museum in Harlem; gift of the Artist, 1987.8. © Kerry James Marshall. Courtesy of the artist, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, and American Federation of Arts. Photo Credit: Marc Bernier.



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Thematic Connections

Exhibitions might be organized with specific themes in mind. Sometimes these are explicitly stated in the title or description. Other times, they might be implicit or less obvious. Here are some questions related to themes we might find in any given exhibition:

- What might this exhibition help you understand about **identity**? Your own? Other people's?
- What might this exhibition tell us about **power**? Who has it? Who doesn't? What is it?
- What might this exhibition tell us about **memory**? What do we remember as individuals? What do we remember collectively? Who decides what our culture remembers or forgets?
- How does this exhibition connect to what's happening in our world right now, this **present moment**? What is the connection you see?
- What is a theme **you** identify within this exhibition? What makes you think that? There's no wrong answer here!

Left | Beauford Delaney, *Portrait of a Young Musician*, 1970, acrylic on canvas. The Studio Museum in Harlem, gift of the Estate of Beauford Delaney, 2004.2.27. © 2018 Estate of Beauford Delaney, by permission of Derek L. Spratley, Esquire, Court Appointed Administrator. Courtesy American Federation of Arts. Photo: Marc Bernier.

Right | Henry Taylor, *how i got over*, 2011, acrylic on canvas. The Studio Museum in Harlem; gift of Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg, 2013.11.1. Courtesy of the artist, Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, and American Federation of Arts. © Henry Taylor.



EXHIBITION TOOLKIT



Resources For Further Learning

[The Studio Museum Harlem's](https://studiomuseum.org) website provides access to their [collection](#), information on [programs and learning](#), and previews of [upcoming exhibitions](#). You can also check out their excellent [Studio Magazine](#).

<https://studiomuseum.org>

<https://studiomuseum.org/collection>

<https://studiomuseum.org/learn-engage>

<https://studiomuseum.org/exhibitions-events>

<https://studiomuseum.org/studio-magazine>

[Read this article in *Culture Type* about the Studio Museum's Black Refractions exhibition \(Nov. 20, 2018\).](#)

<https://www.culturetype.com/2018/11/20/studio-museum-in-harlem-is-launching-a-national-tour-of-100-artworks-in-january-2019/>

Explore artworks by artists of African descent in the [National Gallery](#), the [Museum of Fine Arts Boston](#), and the [Smithsonian American Art Museum](#).

<https://www.nga.gov/features/african-american-artists.html>

<https://collections.mfa.org/collections/315161/aoaafricanamerican-artists/objects>

<https://americanart.si.edu/art/highlights/african-american>

Learn more about our programming partner, the University of Utah's [Black Cultural Center](#).

<https://diversity.utah.edu/centers/bcc/>



Meschac Gaba, *Lipstick Building*, 2004, braided artificial hair and mixed media. The Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum purchase made possible by gifts from Anne Ehrenkranz, New York and Nancy Lane, New York, 2005.5.1. © Meschac Gaba, 2004. Courtesy American Federation of Arts. Photo: Adam Reich.

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Resources For Further Learning cont.

Read about the [elements of art](#) or check out The Getty Museum's [short guide](#).

<https://thevirtualinstructor.com/artfundamentals.html>

https://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/building_lessons/elements_art.pdf

[Ibram X. Kendi](#), bestselling author of *Stamped from the Beginning* and *How to Be an Antiracist*, created this [Antiracist Reading List](#).

<https://www.ibramxkendi.com>

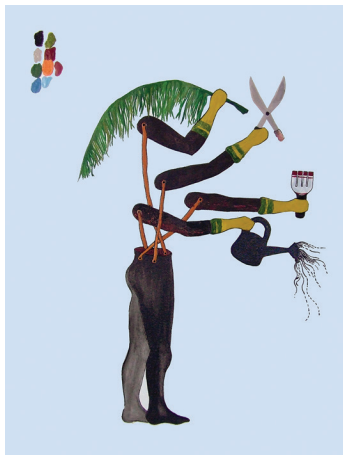
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/29/books/review/antiracist-reading-list-ibram-x-kendi.html>

Take a look at [embracerace.org's list of children's books](#) to support conversations on race, racism, and resistance. Or generate your own list with the help of [socialjusticebooks.org](#).

<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/20-picture-books-for-2020>

The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) has published the web portal ["Talking About Race."](#)

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race>



Left | Otobong Nkanga, *House Boy*, 2004, watercolor, ink and acrylic on paper. The Studio Museum in Harlem; gift of Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg, 2011.10.15. © Otobong Nkanga. Courtesy Otobong Nkanga, Lumen Travo, and American Federation of Arts. Photo: Sasha Jelán.

Right | Jordan Casteel, *Kevin the Kiteman*, 2016, oil on canvas. The Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum purchase with funds provided by the Acquisition Committee, 2016.37. © Jordan Casteel. Courtesy American Federation of Arts. Photo: Adam Reich.

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Sponsorships for

Black Refractions

HIGHLIGHTS FROM
THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM

Black Refractions: Highlights from The Studio Museum in Harlem is organized by the American Federation of Arts and The Studio Museum in Harlem. The exhibition is curated by Connie H. Choi, Associate Curator, Permanent Collection, The Studio Museum in Harlem. The presentation at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts is coordinated by Whitney Tassie, senior curator and curator of modern and contemporary art.



The UMFA exhibition is presented in partnership with the University of Utah Black Cultural Center:



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Barkley L. Hendricks, *Lawdy Mama*, 1969, oil and gold leaf on canvas. The Studio Museum in Harlem; gift of Stuart Liebman, in memory of Joseph B. Liebman, 1983.25. © Estate of Barkley L. Hendricks. Courtesy of the artist's estate, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York and American Federation of Arts.



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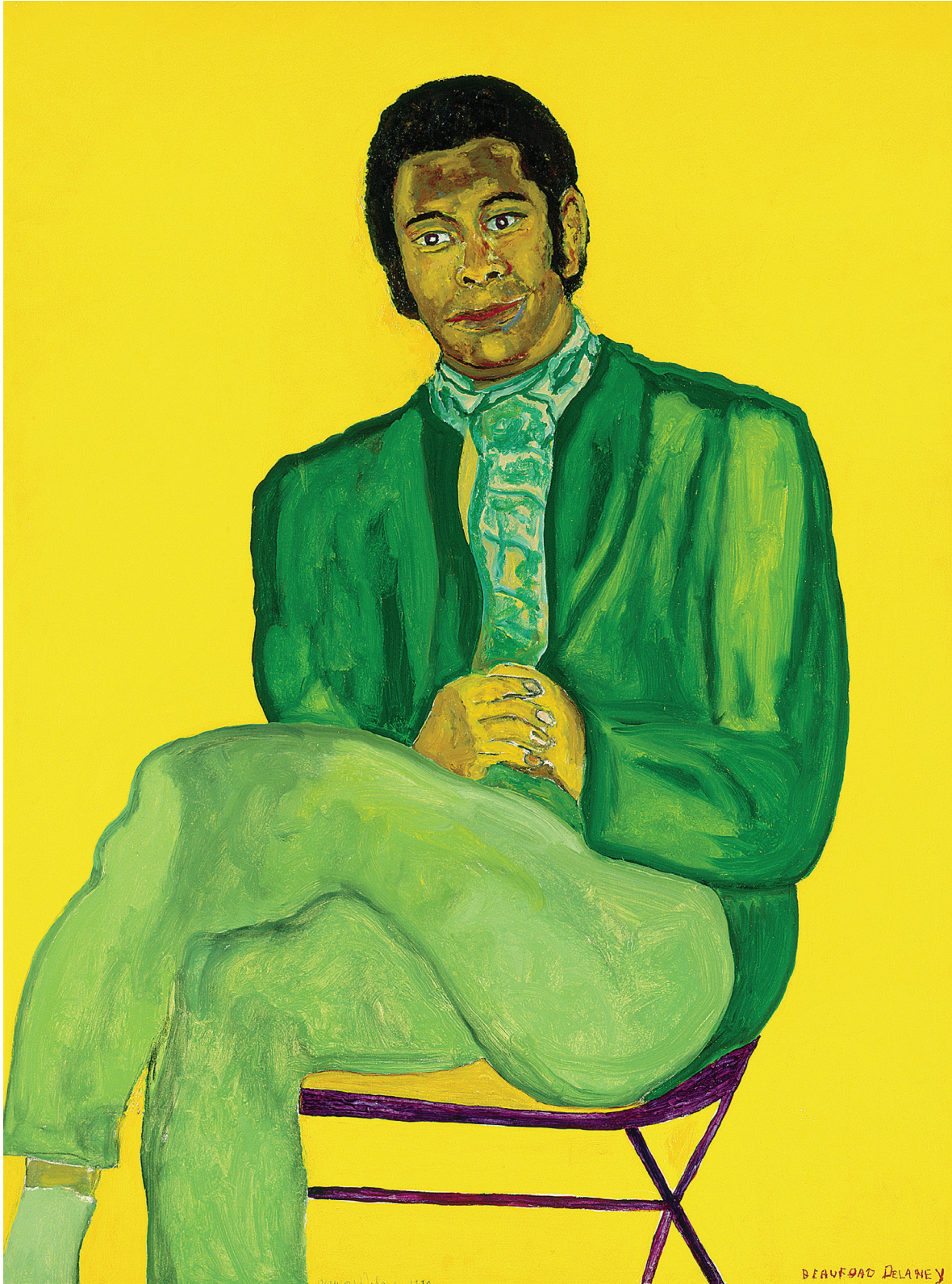
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