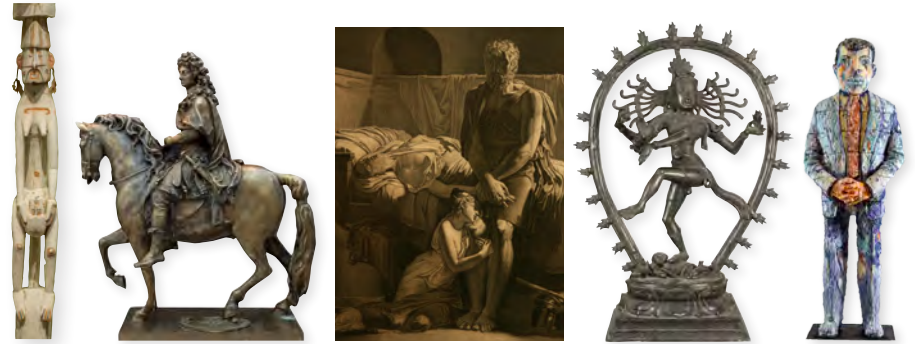


Mapping Masculinity

SELF-GUIDE



Art does not exist in a vacuum. Innately tied together, culture and art rely on each other to reinforce social and artistic norms. One area art defines over and over again is gender. In many cultures, femininity and masculinity exist as opposing ideals that define womanhood and manhood. Visual culture plays a key role in a society's perception and definition of gender: masculinity is often defined by images of power and domination. In this self-guide, we will explore how ideas of masculinity have changed over time and across cultures.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines masculinity as "the state or fact of being masculine; the assemblage of qualities regarded as characteristic of men; maleness, manliness."

Let's use this as a working definition as we explore the following artworks.



front view, detail



side view, detail

front view



Bis Pole

Pacific Islands (Asmat)

20th Century

Wood, fiber, pigment, woodworking

UMFA2015.1.5

- Take a moment to look closely at this artwork. Do you notice interesting patterns or ornamentation? How might these patterns relate to this culture's idea of masculinity? Draw a few of the patterns you see.
- This artwork was created to mark the start of a war or conflict. Does this change your ideas about the artwork? What do you think it says about the culture's framing of masculinity?
- Compare the two figures in this artwork. How does this artwork emphasize the differences between the figures?
- Do you think these figures frame this culture's ideas of gender? Why or why not? How does it relate to your culture's ideas of gender?

NOTES, SKETCHES,
OBSERVATIONS:



Equestrian Statue of Louis the XIV

Jacques-Philippe Bouchardon

France, 1771–1753

Bronze

UMFA1990.045.001

- Observe the details of this sculpture. What parts of the artwork stand out to you?
- How is masculinity framed here? Does it align with your culture's ideas of masculinity?
- Do you think the medium—what the artwork is made out of—impacts how ideas of masculinity are conveyed?
- What about his pose suggests the idea of power? Take a moment to strike your own power pose.



***Retour de Marcus Sextus dans sa famille,
Return of Marcus Sextus***

Pierre Narcisse Guérin

France, 1774–1833

Oil Painting

UMFA1986.054

- Explore this painting, taking in as much detail as you can.
- What parts of this artwork did you notice first? Jot down a few words or phrases that describe the mood of this artwork.
- How would you describe the relationship between the figures in this artwork? How does each figure frame ideas of gender?
- This artwork depicts the moment Marcus Sextus, a fictional Roman soldier, returns home from war to find that his wife has died. How does he react to this tragedy? How does this compare to the reaction expected of masculine-presenting people in your culture? How can only seeing masculinity and emotions framed in this way be toxic?



Dancing Siva (Siva Nataraja-King of Dancers)

India, Chola Dynasty
Rattan, wood, beads, shells, ivory
12th–13th century
Bronze
UMFA2001.11.1

- Take a moment to examine the sculpture.
- How does this artwork convey gender? Do you see elements of masculinity in this piece? How about femininity?
- This sculpture depicts the Hindi god Siva, the creator and destroyer. Siva is often depicted with an ambiguous gender or as being genderless. How did you gender this sculpture when you first saw it? Does this change your initial impression? Does it challenge Western gender binaries?
- Does this depiction of both masculinity and femininity in the same figure complicate your understanding of gender? How does this blending of gendered characteristics challenge your culture's understanding of gender?

NOTES, SKETCHES,
OBSERVATIONS:



front view



side view

Ethnic Man

Viola Frey

American, 1991

Earthenware, low fire glaze

UMFA2000.11.1A-O

- How would you describe this sculpture's relationship with the viewer? What feeling or tone does the figure convey?
- How is it different and similar to the other artworks in this guide?
- This artwork was created by Viola Frey, a woman sculptor. Does knowing the artist's gender change your reading of the artwork? How might her experience as a woman impact her depiction of masculinity?
- Do you think the concept of what is masculine has shifted over time? How does this artwork support or disprove this fluidity of masculinities?

NOTES, SKETCHES,
OBSERVATIONS:

Now that we have explored these artworks through the lens of masculinity, has your own perception of masculinity/masculinities changed? Do you see masculinity as a singular idea or as a group of connected ideas? Take a moment to think about and write a personal definition of masculinity. Is yours similar to the definition from the start of this tour? Is it different?

Post Tour

Art-making Activity

WHAT YOU NEED:

- A piece of paper
- Glue or tape
- Newspaper or magazine
- Pen or pencil
- Your creativity

INSTRUCTIONS:

Using what you learned from this tour, create a collage that expresses your own definition of masculinity. You can also add extra detail or ideas to your collage with a pen or pencil. Will you use only pictures or will you include some words? How will you engage with or refute your culture's ideas of masculinity? Will you make similar artistic choices to the artists we looked at today? How will/does your own gender identity shape your definition of masculinity?

If you want to further explore ideas of gender, check out another self-guide we have available that explores femininity in art.

We'd love to see your finished collage: if possible, post it on social media with #umfaathome and tag us on Instagram or Facebook with @utahmuseumofflinearts or on Twitter with @umfa.