

# Contemporary art and identity essays examples

[Art & Culture](#), [Artists](#)



The ways in which contemporary art addresses the identities of individuals within society and how contemporary art itself addresses these questions of identity is important in that it helps to communicate effectively the viewpoints of various aspects of life for many different individuals. This idea represents the intent of the artists to express a certain mood or feeling that they are presented with in their own lives. These expressive intentions can be seen as a fully developed narrative that is representative of a very particular instance of being that the artist wished to capture.

The idea of identity is fundamentally rooted in the social recognition of the individual within the greater framework of society. This is related to how a person identifies themselves, as well as how people identify and relate to others within society at large. In this way, the art created by contemporary artists has a foundation that is set in the sentimentalities of those that they come into contact with. These feelings are often presented in the light of various racial and class implications that can be seen within the art itself.

Works such as *Guarded Condition* by Lorna Simpson can provide insight into the way that people tend to guard or suppress themselves, but can only be fully understood when taking into account the time period of the late nineteen eighties of which it was from. The self-portraits by Mapplethorpe, on the other hand, show a raw humanity that really needs no further clarification. It is indicative of his presentation of the human figure and the humanity that goes along with it.

The work by Robert Colescott, *George Washington Carver Crossing the Delaware* is a satirical piece that seems to require the framework of the history of America, including not only the history of Washington himself, but

the history of slavery that followed. Five Portrait Heads of the Egyptian Queen Nefertiti by Fred Wilson is further expressive of how contemporary art can make comments on race and culture. These five heads are all in different skin hues, reflecting the artist's attempt to comment on racial diversity.

The fact that the viewer will often require a narrative to fully experience a piece of artwork is interesting in relation to contemporary art. While the content is not necessarily fully accessible without additional information or text, the situations and contexts of the subjects are often deeply relatable across many boundaries of human society.

Cyndy Sherman, who has taken some of the highest selling photographs, has used contemporary art to discuss the role of women in society. She presents women across many levels of society in her self-portraits. In this sense, the context of the narrative becomes apparent in the sense of how the individuals within the art can be understood. While their situation may not be fully expressed, the accessibility of the art lies in its ability to relate to people of all different walks of life.