

Educational Activity: Art Reveals Our Implicit Bias



Peter Williams
Barcelona, 2004
Oil on canvas, 48"x36"; Gift of Burt Aaron



James Chatelain
Untitled, 1977
Oil on canvas, 20.75"x21.5"; Gift of Burt Aaron



Holly Branstner
Untitled (Landscape with Figures), 1988
Oil on masonite, 49"x73"; Gift of Rex E. Lamoreaux

"Implicit bias" suggests that people can act on the basis of prejudice and stereotypes without intending to do so.

Part I: Visual Thinking Strategies

Take a few minutes to look carefully at these works of art.

1. What is going on in these pictures?
2. Why do you say that?
3. What more can you see?

Explore more about these works online:

<https://artmuseum.wayne.edu/people/1992/peter-williams>

<https://artmuseum.wayne.edu/objects/4008/untitled>

<https://artmuseum.wayne.edu/objects/606/untitled-landscape>

Part II - Understanding Multiple Perspectives

1. When describing these works did you specify the race, gender, sexual orientation or ability of any of the individuals in these works?
Implicit bias acts as a powerful force that shapes how we interpret the world.
2. Why was identifying race, gender, sexual orientation or physical ability relevant when describing what was happening in these works of art?
3. What does it tell you about your perspective? How does this help you understand other perspectives?

University Art Collection

Artist Bios

Holly Branstner is a Michigan native, raised in Detroit and currently resides in Toledo, Ohio. She received a MFA from Wayne State University in Detroit in 1983. Branstner has exhibited her work extensively and is included in the collections of the Detroit Institute of Arts, University of Evansville and Crown Equipment Corporation. Her work is often inspired by the idyllic summers of her youth in northern Michigan.

James Chatelain was raised in Findley, Ohio and currently divides his time between New York and Detroit. He received a BFA from Wayne State University in Detroit in 1971, and is closely linked to the famed "Detroit Cass Corridor Art Movement" of the 1960s and 70s. He was included in the celebrated "Kick Out the Jams" exhibition at the Detroit Institute of Arts and the inaugural exhibition, *Bad Painting*, at the New Museum in New York City. His work has been exhibited at Revolution, Paul Kotula Project, Marianne Boesky and Marlborough Chelsea Galleries, and is included in the collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts and Cranbrook Art Museum. Chatelain's undefinable and dynamic paintings have spanned both the figurative and abstract narratives.

Peter Williams was born in Nyack, New York. He received a MFA from the Marilyn Institute and a BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. Williams spent 17 years living and working in Detroit while on faculty at Wayne State University, and recently retired from the University of Delaware. His career has spanned over four decades and his work is included in the Smithsonian Art Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, Howard University and the Detroit Institute of Arts. Williams work blends humor with the tragedy of the black experience in America, using "cultural criticism to form new creations myths retelling the history of America from a fresh and comic perspective".

The Wayne State University Art Collection is an evolving collection that contains over 6,500 works of modern and contemporary art that celebrates Detroit and regional artists. Its mission is to use art to educate, inspire, foster creative thinking and promote the advancement of social and cultural leadership.

The collection is a resource for scholarship and provides students with an authentic hands-on experience with art. Undergraduate and Graduate students in the James Pearson Duffy Departments of Art and Art History have written essays that accompany many of these works, providing them the opportunity to conduct research on art, to write about it and have their writings published online.

Highlights from the art collection can be found online, viewed throughout public buildings on campus, and is accessible to students and the community in public areas, including an outdoor "ArtWalk" of monumental sculpture found installed all around our beautiful urban campus (<https://artcollection.wayne.edu/artwalk/guide.pdf>).

