



# WADSWORTH ATHENEUM MUSEUM OF ART

## Windows and Mirrors

A window is something through which we can see the world. It can be a way to experience another culture or the life of someone who may be different from ourselves. It can be a portal into shared experiences and perspectives. It can be a journey beyond our ourselves, and in concert with a mirror, it can be a journey within ourselves.

A mirror allows us to see ourselves: what we look like as we glimpse our heritage and ancestry, our ethnicity, our gender and our race. Sometimes, mirrors show us parts of ourselves that we didn't see before: our multi-faceted identities.

We can use windows and mirrors to look out to and reflect back on what we see. This approach empowers us to see ourselves in relation to the world. Do we feel connection or disconnection? Do we include or exclude? Do we hear and feel heard? Do we see and feel seen?

Some questions to ponder:

- Is the work representative or abstract?
- Who created this? What is the historical/social context of the work?
- What is the viewer's and/or artist's place in the artwork?
- Is the image telling a story or offering a perspective? Is it reflective and/or critical? Is it calling for an awakening or a new perspective?
- What or whose values does it represent?
- Is the perspective portrayed effectively? Why or why not?
- If it is telling a story, what part of the story has the artist chosen to represent? Why?
- How does the style support the content?
- Would you have chosen a different part? Why, why not?
- What is the tone of the piece of art? Joyous? Critical? Angry? Celebratory? etc.
- Do you relate to this piece? Why? Why not?
- How do color, shape and line and texture contribute to the work and affect your response?

\*\*Please note: The above is not an exhaustive list of questions but are meant to be idea starters. These would need to be adapted to the demographic of the visitors: i.e. age, background, etc.

\*\*\*Please feel free to contact us with comments and/or questions

Edlyn Blitzer – [edlyn.blitzer@gmail.com](mailto:edlyn.blitzer@gmail.com)

Christi Moraga – [trigal@comcast.net](mailto:trigal@comcast.net)

\*\*\*\* This idea was initially created as an approach to literature by Rudine Sims Bishop and adapted as an approach to the visual arts. You can find a video interview with her at <https://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/experts/rudine-sims-bishop>.