Please be advised – some of the work on display in our Level 2 galleries contains mature themes including language and violent situations.

**ARTIST BIO**

**Noel Anderson**

Born in 1981, Louisville, Kentucky

Lives in New York. Currently teaches as a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Art and Art Professions at NYU

Education: Received a B.F.A. from Ohio Wesleyan University, Painting and Printmaking. MFA from Indiana University, Printmaking. M.F.A. from Yale University School of Art, Sculpture.

Taught as an Assistant Professor in the College of DAAP at the University of Cincinnati.

**Andrea Bowers**

Born in 1965, Wilmington, Ohio

Lives and works in Los Angeles, California

Education: Received a B.F.A. from Bowling Green University and M.F.A. from California Institute of the Arts

Bowers has been arrested for her activism work
**QUOTES**

“I focus on African American males because I am one. I am not satisfied with what I see in the world in terms of the limited vision of what African American men are or are supposed to be. I want to encourage new, more diverse visions of what it can mean to be an African American man.” – Noel Anderson

“I also want viewers to question whether a work is a painting, a photo, a print or even a photo of a painting. Just as with the complex theme of black masculinity, it’s more interesting when it’s less defined, when it’s unclear and muddy. I would also term it as liquid. You have to figure it out yourself.” – Noel Anderson

“I’m always trying to prove that art and activism are inseparable. That art and politics are inseparable. I’m always trying to bleed those dividing lines and simultaneously do activist work through my artwork.” – Andrea Bowers

“The negative space that draws attention to the fact that we might otherwise not pay attention to these people because they’re just one of many. It’s about recognizing issues or important voices that are perhaps being disregarded.” – Andrea Bowers

**EXHIBITION/WORK**

- Anderson’s exhibition was prompted by the provocative question, “When did you first know you were black?” or “When did you first realize you were other?” He collects oral, artifact-based and visual histories to try and reconstruct his own personal origin.

- The artist Noel Anderson takes archival images from the media, often of African American men, and distorts them. These altered images are then made into tapestries and stretched across canvases. The use of tapestries is important because Anderson feels it connects the history of textile works-from high art in the late medieval period to mass-produced blankets made today. Once stretched, these works are often distressed or cut into.

- Andrea Bowers uses various mediums (video, drawing and installation) to engage in social and political activism. Her work focuses on reoccurring issues such as immigration, feminism and environmental politics.

- Bowers has interest in blurring the line between activism and the art world. She wants to create a space for the voices that are often marginalized and forgotten.

**KEYWORDS AND THEMES**

- Identity
- Masculinity
- Appropriation
- What it means to be “other”
- Origin

- Archive
- Black Culture
- Politics
- Feminism
- Activism/Protest
**MATERIALS**

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**DISCUSSION**

**Before Viewing**
- Talk with students about what the word identity means to them. Have them think about words that others would use to describe them. Discuss how identities can change over time.
- Ask students if they feel that everyone should be treated equally. Follow up by asking if they think everyone has equal rights in modern America. Why or why not? Talk with the class to see if they’ve ever been treated unfairly and discuss how it made them feel.
- As a group, talk about what it means to be an activist. Ask students what causes they care about and talk about how they support these causes.
- Ask students what their expectations are of male identity. How is this different from expectations of female identity?

**After Viewing**
- Talk with the class about the work of both Bowers and Anderson. How were their exhibitions similar? How were they different?
- Ask the class if the exhibition changed their thoughts about art as a tool for activism.
- Talk with students about how the world around us can influence art. How did it influence the artists in the exhibition?
- Discuss with the class what message each artist was presenting through their show. How did each message make them feel?

**RESOURCES**

- [https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/investigating-identity](https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/investigating-identity)
- [https://www.vielmetter.com/artists/andrea-bowers/selected-works.html](https://www.vielmetter.com/artists/andrea-bowers/selected-works.html)

**LESSONS**

Follow the link for lessons that focus on CAC exhibitions: [http://www.contemporaryartscenter.org/learn](http://www.contemporaryartscenter.org/learn)