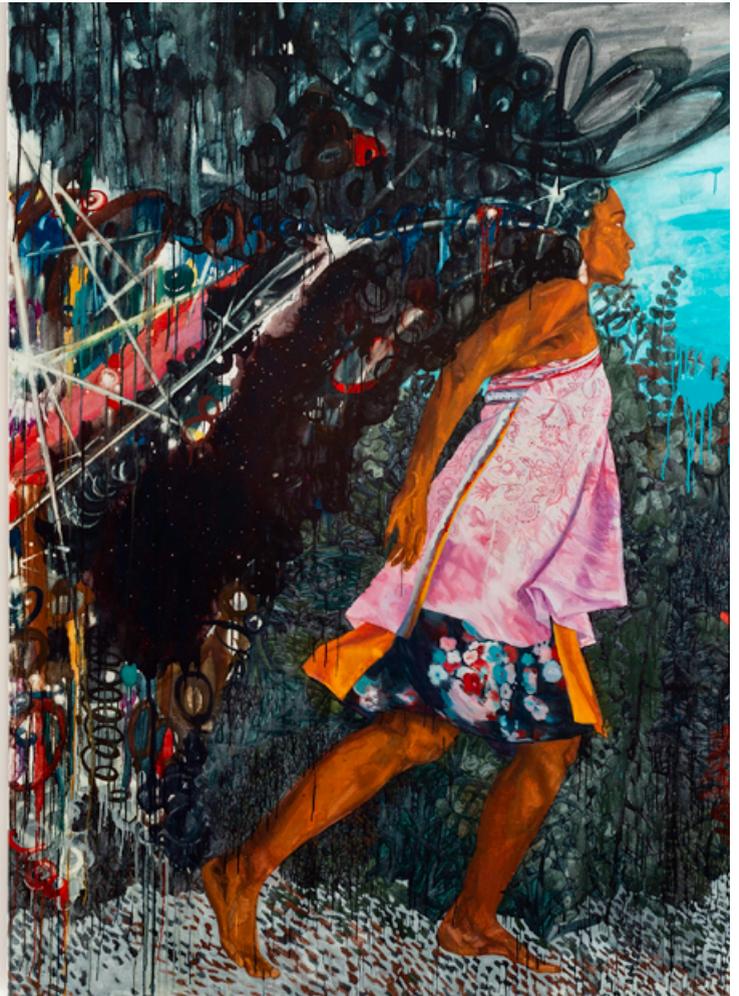
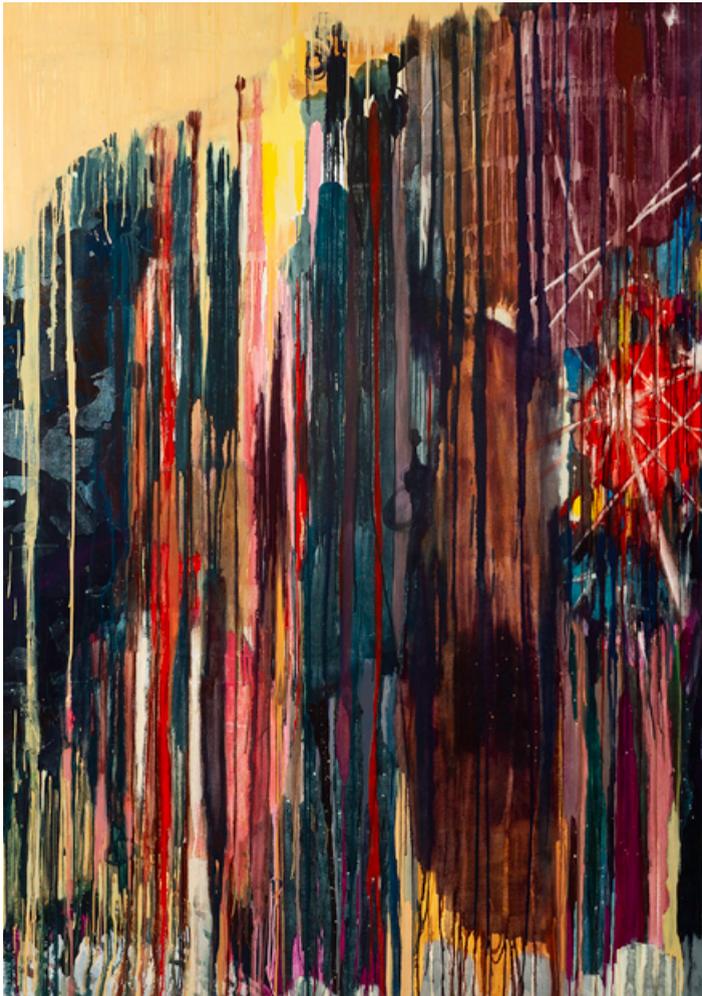


Social Justice USING YOUR VOICE

A collaboration between the Anti-Defamation League, Austin ISD, and the Blanton Museum of Art



Parade

Mequitta Ahuja

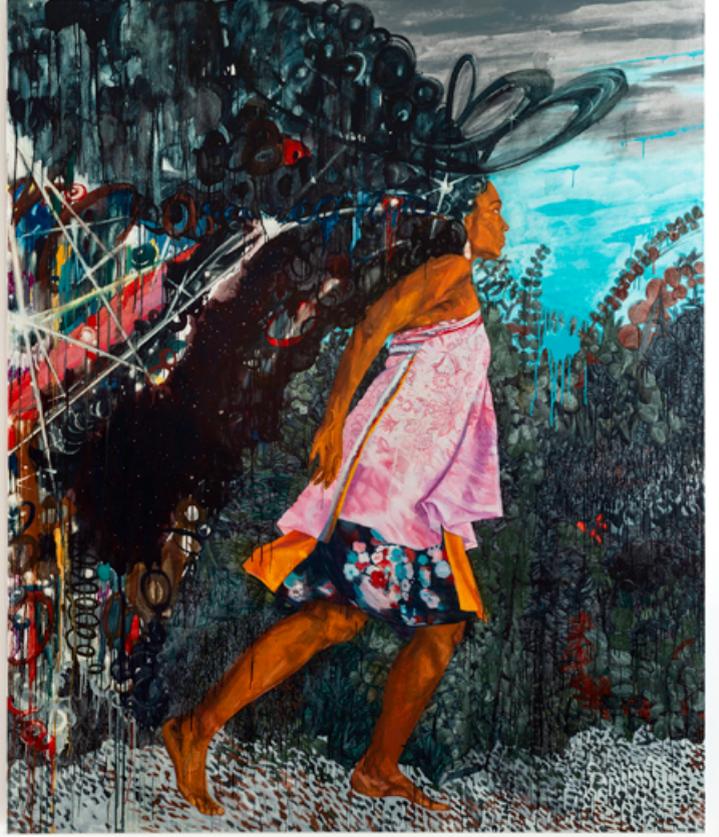
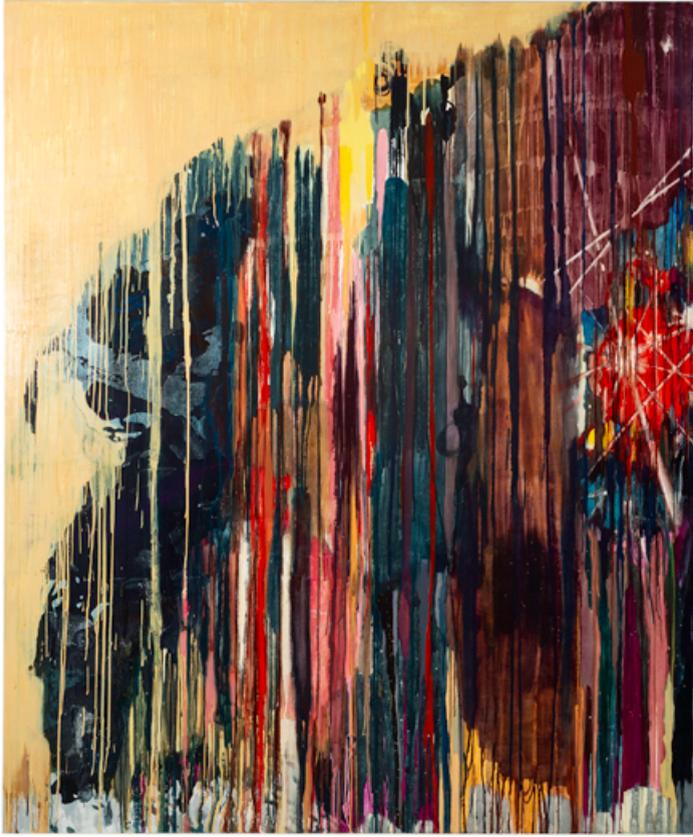
Parade, 2007

Enamel on canvas, two panels, 96 in. x 160 in.
Blanton Museum of Art, The University
of Texas at Austin, Gift of Melanie Lawson
and John F. Guess, Jr., in honor of Jeanne
and Michael Klein, 2010

Mequitta Ahuja's work explores the construction of identity, including her own. Recognizing that there is always an element of invention when it comes to depicting oneself, the artist refers to her heavily manipulated self-portraits as "automythography." The term was inspired by a genre invented by the writer Audre Lorde, who braided personal history together with mythology in her "biomythography," published in 1982.

Ahuja's process of self-documentation begins with photographs. Using a remote shutter control, she performs privately for the camera. Then, through a series of sketches and preparatory drawings, she introduces inventive, often fantastical elements into the resulting images. Her final works wed the real with the surreal, nonfiction with fiction. *Parade* captures this complicated marriage, offering in two parts the primary modes of painting: figuration and abstraction. The artist appears, poised mid-stride, on the right-hand canvas. Bright colors describe her figure and emanate from her black hair, which, as it carries over toward and onto the left-hand canvas, expands to become a dense cloud of increasingly abstract markings. The brushwork conveys Ahuja's lively kinetic process in laying down pigment. She has referred to her interest in "the psychic proportions hair has in the lives of Black people," which here dominates the composition, both physically and conceptually.





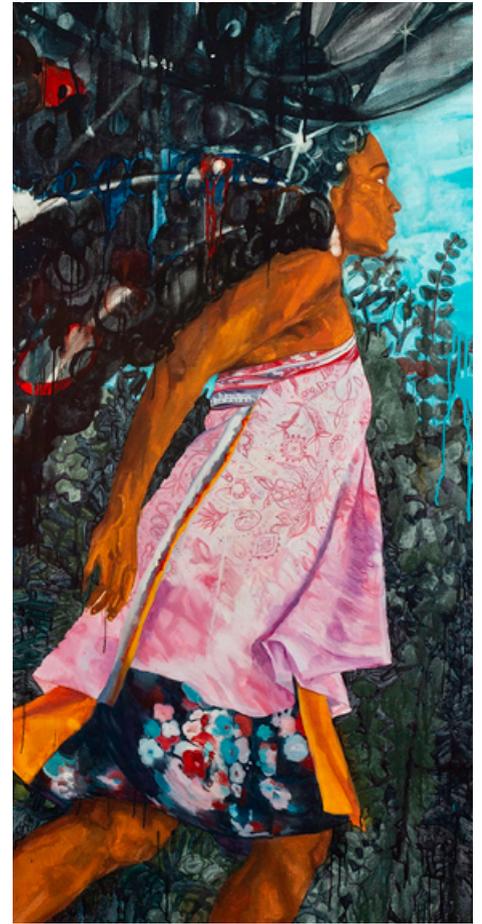
LOOK

Invite students to look at the painting in silence for a full minute. Next, ask everyone to write down (or think about) one word they might use to describe the person depicted and one question they have about the work of art.

TALK

Have each student share their one-word description of the image. (If you are using Zoom to facilitate, students can enter their words in the Chat, and the teacher can read them all aloud, to honor each contribution.)

- Who do you think this is, and what might they be feeling?
- Where is this person?
- What else do you see in the painting?
- How do the colors make you feel? What sounds might be heard in this scene?
- Compare/contrast the two panels. Why do you think the artist divided the painting?



READ

Mequitta Ahuja is a young artist of South Asian and African American descent. She often uses her own body as visual source material for her paintings. She is interested in exploring her cultural identity, as well as experimenting with a wide range of ways to work with paint. She is influenced by colonial American portraiture, as well as Indian narrative paintings. She titled this painting *Parade*, “because she is a parade of one.”



TALK

- What in the painting do you connect to personally?
- How is the person's hair represented throughout the painting?
- Why might hair be important for us to think about?
- What does the spark of white paint on the person's head mean to you?

USE YOUR VOICE

- Who are you? What identities can people see in you now?
- What identities do you see in your future?
- Which of your identities give you hope?
- Which identities make you feel powerful?
- How can you use your voice to celebrate identities different from yours?

What is your parade? Create a description—either visual or written—of yourself as a powerful citizen of the world, ready to use your voice. What issues in today's world will you address?



To learn more about this artist, take a look at this video of her in the studio at bit.ly/SELResource2.

Resource Guide

ADL's No Place for Hate®, the Blanton Museum of Art, and AISD have teamed up to bring anti-bias education and object based learning to our schools. This resource is one in a series featuring a work of art from the Blanton selected to foster important conversations and inspire students to act! The theme for this series is **Using Your Voice**, and considering this work of art should inspire students to use their voices to confront injustice in our world.

This guide has everything you need to create successful discussions and a No Place for Hate Action Project.

Here you will find:

- No Place for Hate guidelines for Action Projects
- Information about the artist and artwork
- Guiding questions for initial discussion and making
- Suggested community action projects



As this guide reaches multiple schools, we hope it will inspire students to work together to create action projects that can be shared and celebrated.

Please share your projects to Austin@adl.org, Education@blantonmuseum.org and Cultural.Proficiency@austinisd.org

No Place For Hate®

No Place for Hate® is a self-directed framework helping educators and students take the lead on improving and maintaining a school climate where all students thrive. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) offers resources to ensure that anti-bias and diversity education are an integral part of the school curriculum. No Place for Hate® also helps create and sustain inclusive school environments where all students feel valued and have the opportunity to succeed by promoting respect for individual difference while challenging bigotry and prejudice. Launched in Austin schools in the fall of 2004, the popular campaign has been embraced by hundreds of campuses throughout the Central Texas region. Austin ISD is the largest No Place for Hate® school district in the United States.

The Need for Discussion

The success of No Place for Hate® relies on the assurance that all members of school communities have a central voice in creating a plan that will lead to lasting change. The foundation for creating that change is a strong coalition of school leaders — students, educators, and family members — who have a stake in the outcomes of that plan.

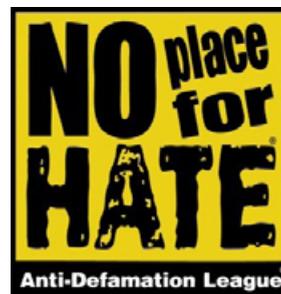
There is no more obvious stakeholder than a student. Too often, adults assume they know what is needed to support youth, but without engaging students in the process, change can be elusive. No Place for Hate® Committees create activities that amplify students' voices and give them opportunities to be active participants.

All qualifying activities must be consistent with the No Place for Hate® mission by challenging bigotry, bias and bullying; exposing young people to diverse identity groups, backgrounds and points of view; promoting respect for individual and group differences; and providing opportunities for community-building within the school. Projects should challenge students to think critically, instill a sense of empathy, and empower students to become allies for one another.

No Place For Hate® Activities Should:

- Involve all students in active learning
- Involve all students in discussion and debriefing of activities
- Address school-based issues
- Have a school-wide impact
- Take place throughout the school year, with three or more activities spread out over time
- Focus on inclusivity and community

For more information visit austin.adl.org/noplacementforhate.



Blanton School Programs

During the temporary pause in the Blanton Museum of Art's gallery teaching program, the education team has designed a robust program of digital content for the semester, outlined below. We will be rolling out the content on a staggered basis. All digital resources can be accessed at bit.ly/BlantonEducation.

Each lesson will feature works of art from the museum's permanent collection. All lessons are designed both for asynchronous learning and to stimulate classroom conversation; many lessons can be broken down into smaller units for greater flexibility.

- **Social Justice [Grades 3–5, 6–8, 9–12]:** Downloadable art images with discussion prompts to engage issues of equity and inclusion.
- **#ArtWhereYouAre Studio [all ages]:** Video series led by a museum educator featuring easy, make-at-home art activities inspired by works in the museum collection.
- **SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) [Grades 4–7]:** Short video-based lessons that lead students through a close-looking activity, followed by journaling prompts.
- **STEAM [Grades 3–5]:** Longer video-based lessons that can be broken down into shorter lessons. All lessons include an art-making activity and connections to science and/or math TEKS.
- **Early Literacy [Grades PK–2]:** Short video-based lessons that give younger students the opportunity to engage with a picture book and works of art from the museum collection. Lessons include a video of a museum educator reading the selected book, as well as related activities.

Gallery educators are temporarily not available for online or in-person teaching. The galleries are open for individual visitors and families, but not for group tours. Please check our website for policies and updates regarding visits at blantonmuseum.org.

Certain materials in this resource are included under the fair use exemption of the U.S. Copyright Law and have been prepared according to the educational multimedia fair use guidelines and are restricted from further use.

Generous support for School Programs at the Blanton is provided by Art Bridges, the Buena Vista Foundation, the Burdine Johnson Foundation, the CFP Foundation, the Lowe Foundation, the Meinig Family Foundation, and The Powell Foundation, with further support from the Applied Materials Foundation, the Tapestry Foundation, Texas Commission on the Arts, and the Susan Mayer Art Enrichment Endowment.



Additional support is provided by The Brown Foundation, Inc. Education Endowment and the Burdine Johnson Foundation Education Endowment.