

Compare and Contrast: Kori Newkirk + Hung Liu

Art + Social Justice



Themes

- Identity
- Race
- Intersectionality
- Stereotypes
- Oppression
- Racism
- Power
- Immigrant Experiences

The following artworks are in the permanent collection of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

Each work relates to the theme of art and social justice. Explore their meanings, answer questions, and discuss together.

Kori Newkirk

Kori Newkirk

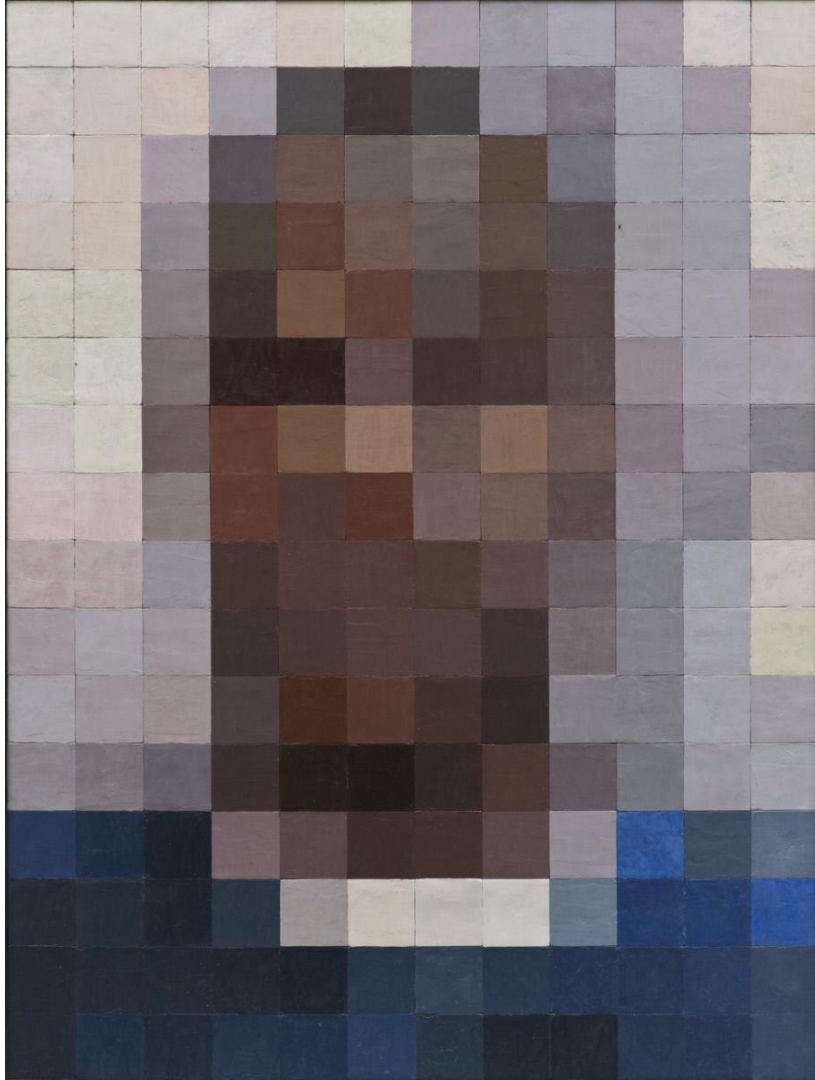
(American, b. 1970)

Channel 11, 1999

Encaustic on wood panel

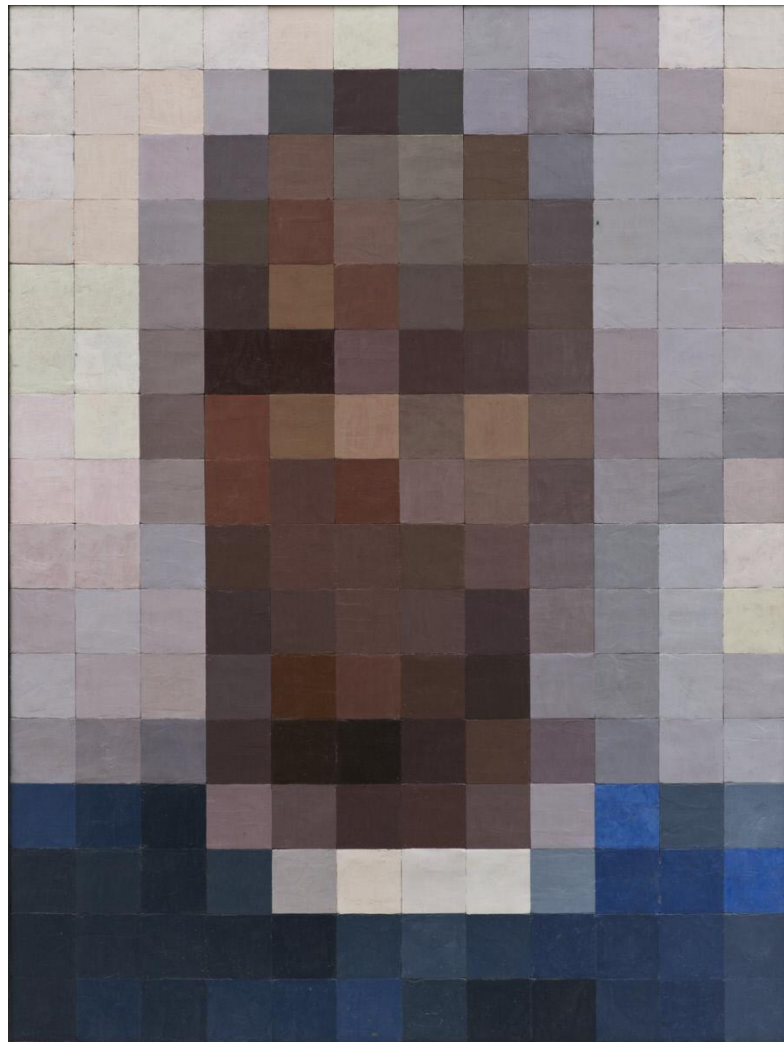
SBMA, Gift of Barry Sloane, 2009.74.2.

© Kori Newkirk

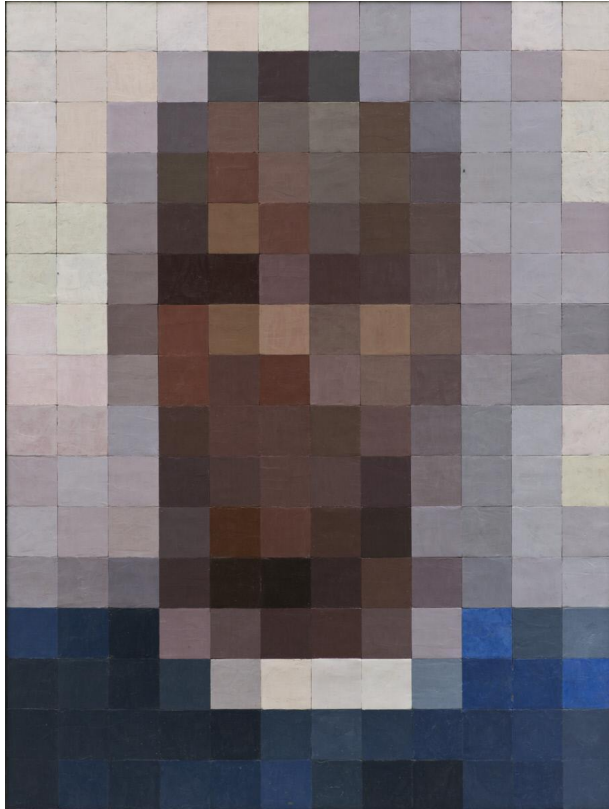


Kori Newkirk

1. What is your first impression of this painting? What do you see through the pixelation?
2. How might the artist be addressing race or racial stereotypes in this painting?
3. What do blurred images remind you of?



Kori Newkirk



Los Angeles-based artist Kori Newkirk creates art that explores issues of race, gender, and identity. *Channel 11* is from a series of self-portraits in which the artist's image is obscured via pixelation, appearing, instead, as the blurred face of a criminal suspect that would be broadcast on television.

Rendering the artist anonymous, the work keenly considers ideas of surveillance and racial stereotypes, and powerfully reveals the dynamics of being a Black male in the United States today.

Hung Liu

Hung Liu

(Chinese, b. 1948, active USA)

A Third World, 1993

Oil on canvas with gold leaf

SBMA, Museum Purchase with funds provided by the 20th Century Art Acquisition Fund, and by Jill and John C. Bishop, Jr. and Lillian and Jon B. Lovelace, 1993.29

© Hung Liu



Hung Liu



Read the following statement by Hung Liu:

“This painting is a self portrait I called ‘A Third World.’ In it, I address two very different ideologies: capitalism and communism. Through the painting, I mix the ideologies of personal and cultural identity together to combine a major point in my life with who I am. The gold-leaf third eye symbolizes the inner world in Eastern thought. It is in the shape of San Francisco as it was first mapped. I used San Francisco in this painting because translated, it means ‘old gold mountain.’ This was the main destination for Chinese immigrants. By contrast, I wore a red scarf and Mao button which represented Communist China.”

Hung Liu



“My painting makes relevance to me because at a younger age, when I had almost finished my education, I was forced to be re-educated along with thousands of other educated citizens as a part of the Cultural Revolution.* I was then sent to the fields to pick rice for four years. During this time, I experienced a change in maturity in myself. My eyes were opened to a lot of things that make mark in my paintings. The sad faces I paint in my paintings, along with my own self-portrait, are sad without hope—like the faces of Chinese woman going at hard labor.” - Hung Liu

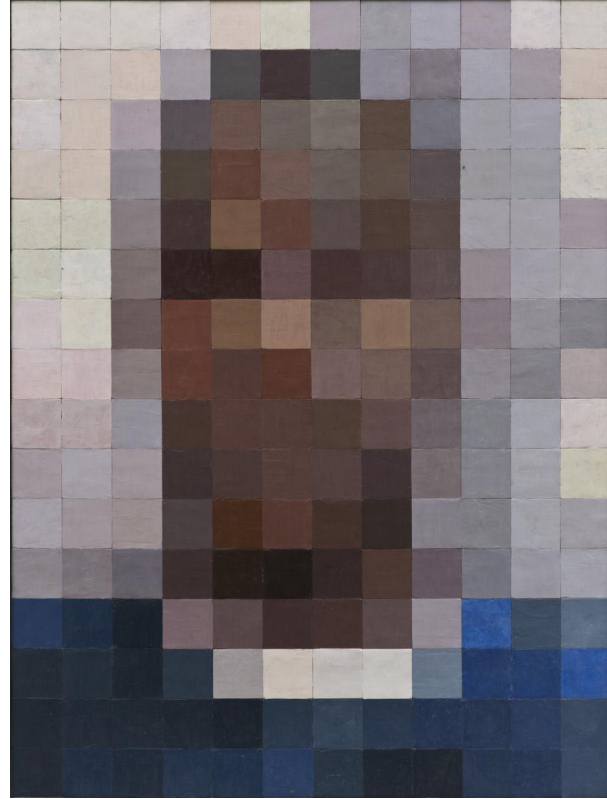
**This forced labor was part of Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution, a chaotic, painful, and deadly decade in China's history and in Hung Liu's personal experience.*

Hung Liu

1. How does the artist represent two different cultures in this painting?
2. Think about the significance of a forehead. Why do you think Liu painted the map of San Francisco there?
3. How does the artist confront the theme of identity in this work?

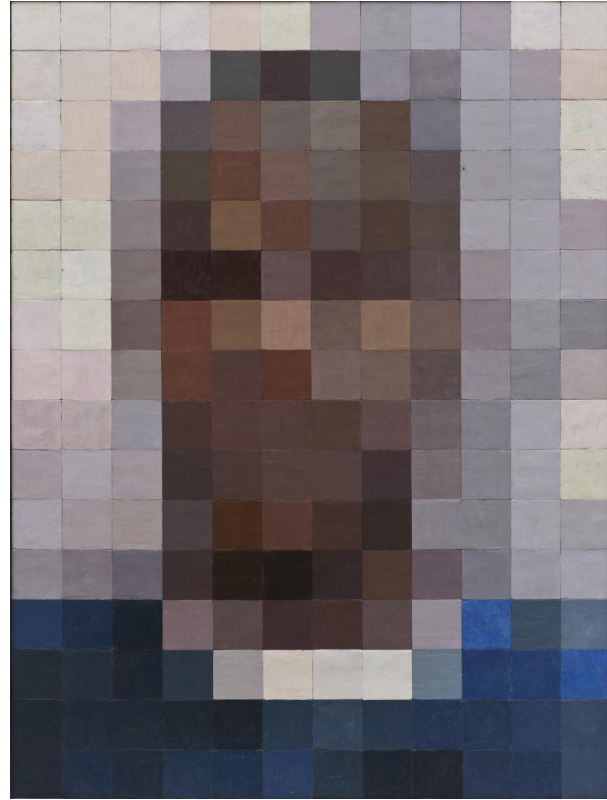


Compare + Contrast



DISCUSS: What are the similarities and differences between these two artworks?

Compare + Contrast



DISCUSS: How do the artists use self-portraiture to think through history and the current moment?

Art + Social Justice



This presentation was created by the Education Department at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art in 2020 in collaboration with Santa Barbara-based high school teachers.

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