

## Close Study: Close Viewing

### Barbara Kruger

**Artist:** [Barbara Kruger](#) (b. 1945, Newark, New Jersey)



**Work:** Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (We Will No Longer Be Seen and Not Heard)*, 1992; Lithograph on embossed foil, 11 x 8 3/4 x 3/4 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Steven Scott, Baltimore, in honor of the artist and the Thirtieth Anniversary of the National Museum of Women in the Arts; © Barbara Kruger; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

**About the Artwork:** Barbara Kruger's distinctive artworks offer concise critiques of complex social, economic, and political issues. In particular, the unapologetic feminist confronts the ways consumer culture and mass media perpetuate stereotypes, especially those related to femininity. In artworks like *Untitled*, Kruger appropriates (uses preexisting images and text) the mass media's own visual vocabulary to, as she describes, question its "power to tell us who we are and who we aren't, to dictate what we can and cannot be." Though typical of

her graphic style, limited palette, and subject matter, this piece is unusual for being printed on metallic foil rather than paper.

**Target grade range:** 9–12

**DCPS Curricular Unit:** Language of Layering

**DCPS Curricular Arc:** Language

**DCPS Curricular Theme:** Concepts of meaning in art

Note: Annotation is a key feature of Close Study, ensuring that students are engaged in the process of evidence gathering. Annotation can take a range of forms across grade levels and disciplines. Annotation can provide assessment information as to each student's depth of comprehension. Additionally, it can be a useful tool for launching critical discussions. Encourage students to annotate this work physically or virtually.

## Round 1

Type of Question: General Understanding/Responses

Sample Question: **What do you see in this artwork?**

Guidance: The goal of this conversation is to generate a range of student responses to the work. There is no wrong answer, but rather the idea is to open the conversation and create an environment in which students see the value of both their own opinion and the possible range of opinions.

## Round 2

Type of Question: Key Details

Sample Questions: **How would you describe the woman portrayed here? Where might you find similar pictures?**

Guidance: The conversation should focus on gathering evidence from the image; formal and technical evidence, as well as evidence based on the imagery. Student responses should include discussion of specific visual aspects of the work. You may ask guiding questions such as **“Whom or what do you think the woman is looking at? Why?”** OR **“What role does language play in this piece?”** OR **“How does the metallic background affect the composition?”**, pushing students to focus on the visual aspects of the work and how they might begin to support the responses discussed in Round 1.

## Round 3

Type of Question: Structure

Sample Questions: **How does layering the words over the image affect your response to the piece? How might your response be different if the text appeared above or below the image instead? If the composition included only the words or only the image?**

Guidance: This discussion should focus more specifically on how the structure of the work is supporting the students' interpretations of the work. This conversation might be around compositional strategies, the use of evocative visual designs, or the inclusion of distinct features.

## Round 4

Type of Question: Intent/Inferences

Sample Questions: **Who do you think the “we” refers to in the statement? Why?**

Guidance: Unlike the intentional omission of information in other rounds, prior to asking students to respond to this question, the teacher should provide some context for the work. This context should come in the form of another visual work. The nature of the context should promote the goals of the overall lesson or unit. This work might be:

- Another work by the same artist
- A work that serves a similar purpose in a more familiar context
- Another work from the same school, movement, or genre

Possible Contextual Works:

- [Ellen Gallagher](#), *DeLuxe*, edition 5/20, 2004–5; Grid of sixty photogravure, etching, aquatint, and drypoint prints with lithography, screenprint, embossing, tattoo-machine engraving, laser cutting, and chine collé; some with additions of Plasticine, paper collage, enamel, varnish, gouache, pencil, oil, polymer, watercolor, pomade, velvet, glitter, crystals, foil paper, gold leaf, toy eyeballs, and imitation ice cubes, 12 7/8 x 10 3/8 in. each; 15 3/8 x 12 3/4 x 1 7/8 in. framed; 84 7/8 x 176 in. overall; Collection of the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation; Photo by Alex Delfanne
  - **About the Artwork:** Ellen Gallagher comments on issues of race, racism, and identity by transforming popular imagery, especially from publications of the 1930s through 1970s that targeted an African American audience. For each of the sixty prints comprising *DeLuxe*, the artist appropriated (used preexisting) advertisements from magazines like *Ebony* and *Our World* and altered them by adding or subtracting pictures and text, as well as incorporating materials such as fabric, crystals, and googly eyes. The prints created from her collages were then subject to additional changes. The artist says, “This idea of repetition and revision is central to my working process—this idea of stacking and layering and building up densities and recoveries.” The finished prints impart empty promises and questionable advice and confront the role our media-saturated world plays in perpetuating stereotypes and marginalizing African American culture.
- [Jaune Quick-to-See Smith](#), *Four Directions*, 1994; Lithograph with linocut collage, 48 1/4 x 34 x 1 1/2 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Anastasia Pfarr; © Jaune Quick-to-See Smith
  - **About the Artwork:** Born on the Flathead Reservation in western Montana, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith is an enrolled Salish member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation of Montana. Her paintings and prints typically juxtapose images and text from a range of historic and contemporary sources, such as the ancient pictographs and modern phrases in *Four Directions*. By placing these disparate elements in a different context and arranging them in proximity to and overlapping one another, she creates new meanings and questions. Through layered, collage-like compositions like this one, Smith draws attention to environmental destruction, consumerism, and oppression of indigenous cultures, among other critical issues.

According to the artist, these complex compositions allow her to “engage the viewers from a distance with one image and lure them in for exposure to another layer, which changes the initial view into quite a new reality.”

#### Round 5

Type of Question: Opinion/Application

Sample questions: **If you were to create an artwork that confronts a complex social, economic, or political issue, what subject would you choose? Why? How could you incorporate techniques such as layering, appropriation, and/or collage to communicate your message?**

Guidance: This round is asking students to internalize the knowledge and information built in the previous rounds by using the concepts generated to visualize a work that applies to a personal goal of communication. The direction of this question is directly related to the broader thematic goal of the lesson or unit.





Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (We Will No Longer Be Seen and Not Heard)*, 1992; Lithograph on embossed foil, 11 x 8 3/4 x 3/4 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Steven Scott, Baltimore, in honor of the artist and the Thirtieth Anniversary of the National Museum of Women in the Arts; © Barbara Kruger; Photo by Lee Stalsworth





Ellen Gallagher, *DeLuxe*, edition 5/20, 2004–5; Grid of sixty photogravure, etching, aquatint, and drypoint prints with lithography, screenprint, embossing, tattoo-machine engraving, laser cutting, and chine collé; some with additions of Plasticine, paper collage, enamel, varnish, gouache, pencil, oil, polymer, watercolor, pomade, velvet, glitter, crystals, foil paper, gold leaf, toy eyeballs, and imitation ice cubes, 12 7/8 x 10 3/8 in. each; 15 3/8 x 12 3/4 x 1 7/8 in. framed; 84 7/8 x 176 in. overall; Collection of the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation; Photo by Alex Delfanne





Ellen Gallagher, *DeLuxe* (detail), edition 5/20, 2004–5; Grid of sixty photogravure, etching, aquatint, and drypoint prints with lithography, screenprint, embossing, tattoo-machine engraving, laser cutting, and chine collé; some with additions of Plasticine, paper collage, enamel, varnish, gouache, pencil, oil, polymer, watercolor, pomade, velvet, glitter, crystals, foil paper, gold leaf, toy eyeballs, and imitation ice cubes, 12 7/8 x 10 3/8 in. each; 15 3/8 x 12 3/4 x 1 7/8 in. framed; 84 7/8 x 176 in. overall; Collection of the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation; Photo by Alex Delfanne



**CUTIE \$12.99  
FREE SKIN**

**FREEDOM \$10.99**

**SEMI-AFRO \$10.99**

**CURLY CUTE  
FABULOUS**

**SHORT'N CASUAL**

**JUMBO AFRO \$11.99**

**LONG GYPSY \$14.99  
FREE SKIN**

**CURLY GYPSY \$16.99  
FREE SKIN**

**LOVELY LOOK**

**LONG SKIN TOP**

**FREEDOM WIG \$15.99  
STYLE #2 FREE SKIN**

**LAYERED FLIP \$15.99  
FREE SKIN**

**SUPREME FREEDOM \$11.99**

**CASCADE \$ 8.99**

**so natural...  
so healthy**

**Allstate Fashions**  
PERMANENTLY STYLED  
AND STRETCHABLE  
LOWEST PRICE  
FOR BEST QUALITY

Now you can be beautiful every day with no trouble at all. Just choose from the styles shown and you can look fashionable and feel comfortable all day.

Allstate Wigs are so natural that no one will suspect that you're wearing a wig.

**SAVE YOUR TIME AND MONEY  
MAIL THIS COUPON NOW!**

**Allstate Fashion Wigs, Inc.**  
2 West 45 Street, New York, New York 10036

Description	Color	Price
Jet Black • Off Black • Dark Brown • Medium Brown		
Light Brown • Light Ash Blonde • Golden Blonde		
Strawberry Blonde • Titan (Red) • Dark Auburn		
Light Gray • White Blonde • Platinum • Lt. Silver		
Dark Frosted • Medium Frosted • Blonde on Blonde		
Salt and Pepper <input type="checkbox"/> Exact Match		

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I have enclosed the full amount plus \$1.00 for shipping and handling.

☐ C.O.D.

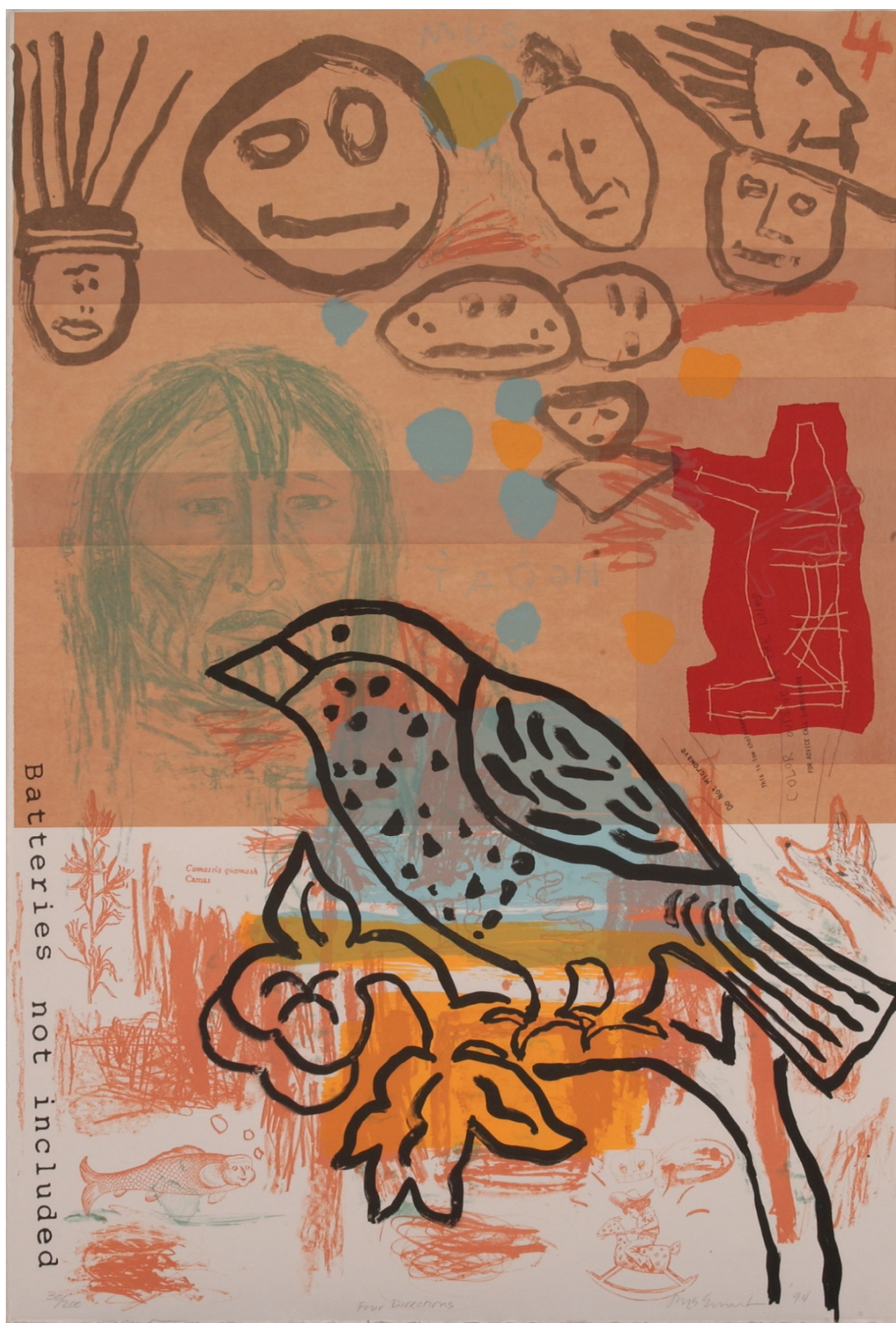
I have enclosed \$2.00 deposit for each item. I will pay \$2.00 the postman the amount plus postage and COD charges.

Ellen Gallagher, *DeLuxe* (detail), edition 5/20, 2004–5; Grid of sixty photogravure, etching, aquatint, and drypoint prints with lithography, screenprint, embossing, tattoo-machine engraving, laser cutting, and chine collé; some with additions of Plasticine, paper collage, enamel, varnish, gouache, pencil, oil, polymer, watercolor, pomade, velvet, glitter, crystals, foil paper, gold leaf, toy eyeballs, and imitation ice cubes, 12 7/8 x 10 3/8 in. each; 15 3/8 x 12 3/4 x 1 7/8 in. framed; 84 7/8 x 176 in. overall; Collection of the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation; Photo by Alex Delfanne





Ellen Gallagher, *DeLuxe* (detail), edition 5/20, 2004–5; Grid of sixty photogravure, etching, aquatint, and drypoint prints with lithography, screenprint, embossing, tattoo-machine engraving, laser cutting, and chine collé; some with additions of Plasticine, paper collage, enamel, varnish, gouache, pencil, oil, polymer, watercolor, pomade, velvet, glitter, crystals, foil paper, gold leaf, toy eyeballs, and imitation ice cubes, 12 7/8 x 10 3/8 in. each; 15 3/8 x 12 3/4 x 1 7/8 in. framed; 84 7/8 x 176 in. overall; Collection of the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation; Photo by Alex Delfanne



Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, *Four Directions*, 1994; Lithograph with linocut collage, 48 1/4 x 34 x 1 1/2 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Anastasia Pfarr; © Jaune Quick-to-See Smith