

# CENTURY: 100 Years of Black Art at MAM



Kehinde Wiley, *Matar Mbaye (Study I)*, 2007. Oil wash on paper. Museum purchase; Acquisition Fund 2018.7

## Overview

*Century: 100 Years of Black Art at MAM* is a survey of over 70 artworks from the Montclair Art Museum's collection encompassing diverse themes that are rooted in the intergenerational experience of Black artists.

This pre-visit lesson focuses on 5 artworks that address the subject of identity. Students will examine these works and engage with the theme of identity through writing, followed by a visual art project. The post-visit will integrate parts of the pre-visit lesson, culminating in a Typography Portrait. These activities are designed to enhance a visit to the Museum but can also be used on their own. They are also designed to be adaptable, so please use what works best for your classroom.

### Artworks used in this lesson plan:

- Kehinde Wiley, *Matar Mbaye (Study I)*, 2007
- Dawoud Bey, *Alfonso*, 1989
- Nick Cave, *Soundsuit*, 2015
- Janet Taylor Pickett, *Incantations and Invocations*, 1990
- Joyce J. Scott, *Harriet Tubman as Buddha*, 2017

### Subject Areas

Visual Arts, English  
Language Arts

### Grades

Secondary School  
Grades 7–12

### Key Vocabulary

*Century*: a period of one hundred years.

*Identity*: the fact of being who or what a person or thing is.

*Typography*: the art and technique of arranging type to make written language legible, readable and appealing when displayed.

*Inner Self*: the part of us that we are not always aware of or have control over. This includes values, beliefs, and characteristics.

*Outer Self*: what we present to the world—the parts that we choose to allow others to experience, such as appearance (hair, clothes, etc.), and demeanor.

### Materials

- Sharpies
- Photograph
- Lightbox/Chromebook
- White paper
- Pencils
- Identity Handout
- Adjectives Handout
- Brain Map Handout
- Typography Handout
- Step Guide

# Identity Lesson Plan

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## ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS (EU):

Students will understand...

- Identity is a combination of many different characteristics that can be found on the outside and inside of a person.
- A Brain Map is a tool to think (brainstorm) about a subject before starting an art piece.
- Typography and the written word can be used to make images. The words can be used to create a wide range of values.
- Different artists have used an array of art materials in order to express the many facets of their identities.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS (EQ):

Students will keep considering...

- How can I use words to create an image?
- How can I use words to create value?
- How can I start brainstorming with words before creating a work of art?
- How can I express what is on the inside of me? What is visible and what is invisible about my identity?

## STUDENTS WILL KNOW...

- How to use a Brain Map to generate ideas for creating a work of art.
- How to examine a work of art to understand the message an artist is communicating visually.
- How to create a value scale using fonts (words).
- How to use typography to create a portrait using words.

## STUDENTS WILL BE SKILLED AT...

- Starting the creative process using words.
- Engaging with works of art and speaking about identity.
- Verbalizing their identity using adjectives.
- Using typography to create a portrait.

## PERFORMANCE TASKS

- Completing a list of adjectives.
- Completing the Typography Value Scale Handout.
- Completing the Brain Map handout drawing Handout.

## ASSESSMENTS

- Completing the Post-Visit Final Typography Portrait.
- Final presentations of completed Typography Portrait.

# Learning Plan

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## **TASK 1: Identity Discussion** (30 minutes, pre-visit)

- The teacher will introduce the concept of identity. When you hear the word identity what do you think about? What factors contribute to a person's identity? What makes your personal identity unique? Teacher distributes the **Task 1: Identity Handout** for students to complete. Students can share with the class the answers they are comfortable sharing. Class can discuss which identities are visible and which are invisible.

## **TASK 2: Slideshow** (25 minutes, pre-visit)

Students will view the slideshow of the images included in this lesson, guided by the discussion questions below.

- Students will view the slideshow of images included in the exhibition, available [here](#).
- What do you notice?
- How would you describe the person depicted?
- What clues do you see in each of these artworks that suggest the subject's identity?
- What does the artwork contain that makes you think about the person who created it?
- What is the artist trying to say?

## **TASK 3: Identity Brain Map and Adjectives Handout** (25 minutes, pre-visit)

- Students will complete the **Task 3: Brain Map Handout**. Using this handout, students will explore different identifiers, both visible and invisible. Teachers can review the definitions of Inner/Outer Self contained in this lesson. Teachers can share something about themselves that is visible and something that is invisible to illustrate for the students how to complete the handout.
- Next, students will complete the **Task 3: Adjectives Handout** to generate a list of adjectives that describes their identity to someone who does not know them. They can circle the adjectives that best describe them, and also add their own adjectives to the list in the spaces provided.

## **TASK 4: Typography Portrait** (40 minutes, post-visit)

- Students will use the Adjectives Handout to create a final Typography Portrait. Students will first complete the **Task 4: Typography Handout**. This will be a useful reference when they create the final portrait. Teachers can then demonstrate the steps for creating the Typography Portrait, as outlined in the **Task 4: Step Guide**. Students can take a selfie with their Chromebooks. Students can trace the contour of their faces using a printout and a lightbox or trace right from the Chromebook using tracing paper. Students will then fill in different areas of their faces using the adjectives they have selected. They will add more words to create value in darker areas and less words to lighter areas. The final image should be recognizable as a portrait.

**VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS**

- Anchor Standard 1: Generating and conceptualizing ideas. 1.5.12prof.Cr1a, 1.5.12acc.Cr1b, 1.5.12adv.Cr1a
- Anchor Standard 2: Organizing and developing ideas. 1.5.12prof.Cr2a, 1.5.12adv.Cr2a
- Anchor Standard 3: Refining and completing products. 1.5.12prof.Cr3a
- Anchor Standard 6: Conveying meaning through art. 1.5.12prof.Pr6a, 1.5.12acc.Pr6a
- Anchor Standard 7: Perceiving and analyzing products. 1.5.12prof.Re7a, 1.5.12prof.Re7b, 1.5.12adv.Re7b
- Anchor Standard 8: Interpreting intent and meaning. 1.5.12prof.Re8a
- Anchor Standard 9: Applying criteria to evaluate products. 1.5.12prof.Re9a
- Anchor Standard 10: Synthesizing and relating knowledge and personal experiences to create products. 1.5.12prof.Cn10a

**COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

**Visual Arts:** [nj.gov/education/cccs/2020/2020%20NJSLs-VPA.pdf](http://nj.gov/education/cccs/2020/2020%20NJSLs-VPA.pdf)

**English Language Arts:** [nj.gov/education/standards/ela/Index.shtml](http://nj.gov/education/standards/ela/Index.shtml)

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**MODIFICATIONS**

- Students with special needs can have more time to complete this assignment.
- Students with special needs may print out their adjectives in different fonts if handwriting is difficult for them. They can add these words with glue onto the printed photograph.
- Advanced students can complete the typography portrait on watercolor paper and then apply paint to add another layer to the final piece.

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**FURTHER LEARNING**

- [montclairartmuseum.org](http://montclairartmuseum.org)
- [npg.si.edu](http://npg.si.edu)
- [edutopia.org](http://edutopia.org)
- [kennedy-center.org](http://kennedy-center.org)
- [sites.google.com/view/antiracistartteachers/artists](https://sites.google.com/view/antiracistartteachers/artists)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# TASK 1: Identity Handout

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**When I hear the word Identity, I think...**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ old

I am generation \_\_\_\_\_

I speak \_\_\_\_\_ at home

I identify as \_\_\_\_\_

My ancestor's land is \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

Looking at your answers above, which of these identities are visible, and which are invisible?

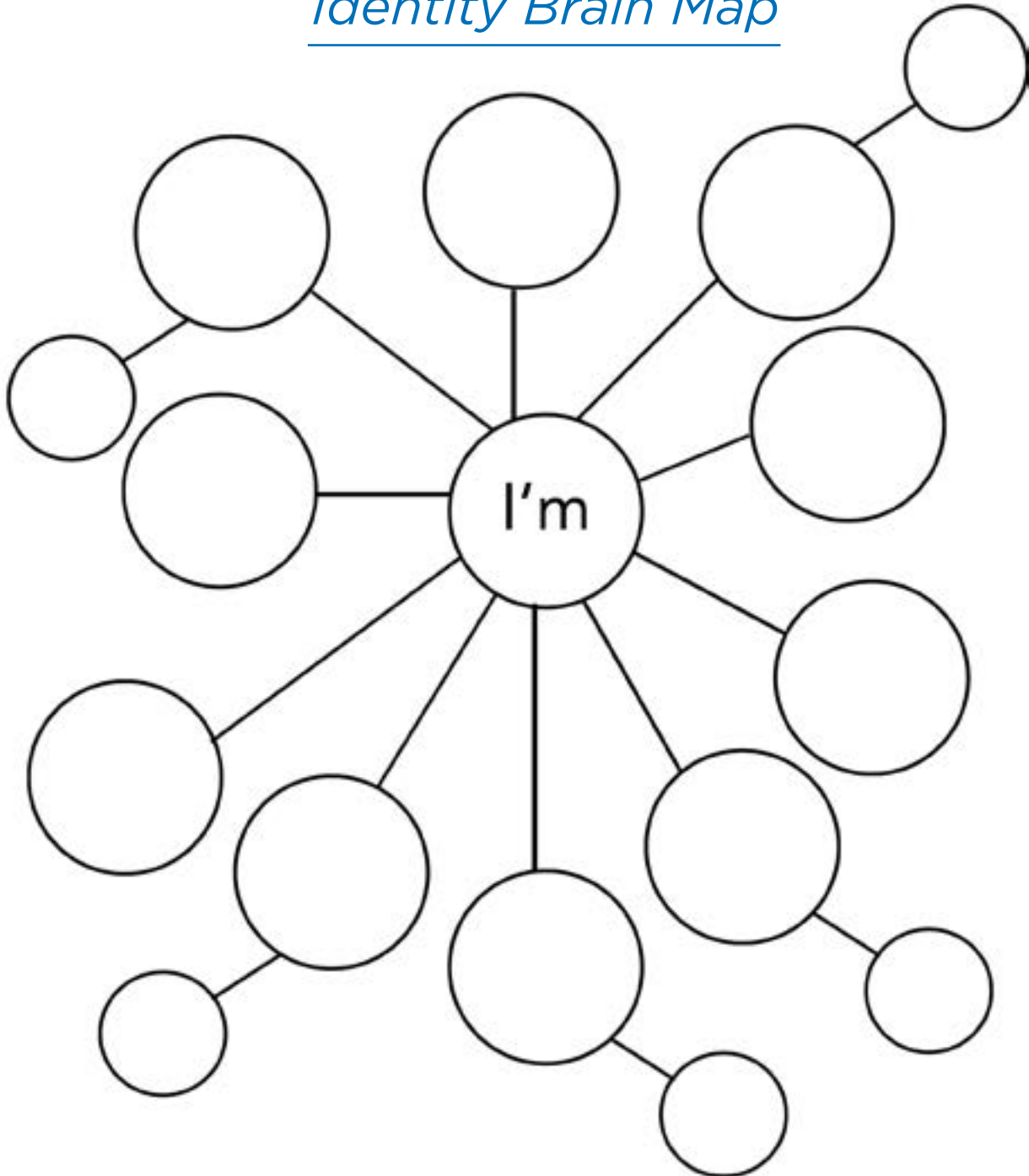
Circle the ones that you think are invisible.

## TASK 2: Brain Map Handout

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Directions: Fill in the blank circles with your own words to complete your identity map. Think about what makes **you** unique.

### Identity Brain Map



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# TASK 3: Adjectives Handout

This list of adjectives are words that can be used to describe yourself to someone who doesn't know you. **Circle the adjectives below that you feel apply to you. In the spaces below, come up with your own list of adjectives. The adjectives can describe your inner or outer self.**

Courageous	Humorous	Kind	Sensitive	Emotional
Self-confident	Smart	Cheerful	Optimistic	Energetic
Adventurous	Imaginative	Fearless	Shy	Intelligent
Creative	Persistent	Quiet	Ambitious	Powerful
Wild	Tough	Loving	Hilarious	Trustworthy
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# TASK 4: Typography Handout

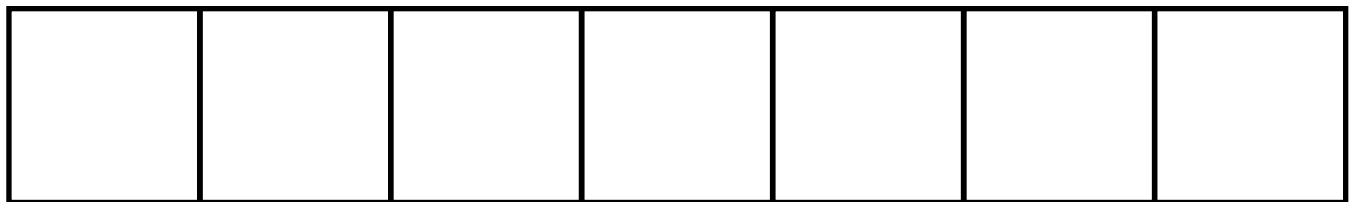
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## Typography Value Scale

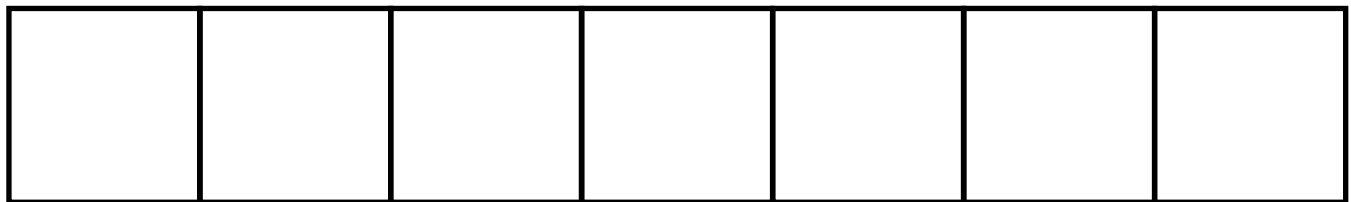
Create your own value scale in the boxes below. Use the Identity Brain Map and your Adjectives List to select words to use in your value scales.



**My value scale #1:** you may use sharpie, pencil or colored pencil to complete this:



**My value scale #2:** you may use sharpie, pencil or colored pencil to complete this:





# TASK 4: Step Guide

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## Typography Portrait

Follow these steps to complete this project. This portrait can be created using printing paper, pencils, and sharpies, or use watercolor paper with ink or paint.



### Step 1

Print a photo and trace the contour (outlines of your face, hair, and neck/ shoulders). You can use tracing paper, carbon paper or a light-box.



### Step 2

Check your tracing to make sure you didn't forget any parts of your portrait. You should have an outline of the entire portrait.



### Step 3

Start writing with pen or sharpie on the lines you have traced in pencil. If you are less confident with your writing, use pencil first and then trace with marker after.

# TASK 4: Step Guide

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## Step 4

Continue building your typographical portrait, line by line. You can repeat your words in the same order you selected or mix them up as you need them. Sometimes a shorter word will fit in the space left on your line better. Leave some negative space where necessary.



## Step 5

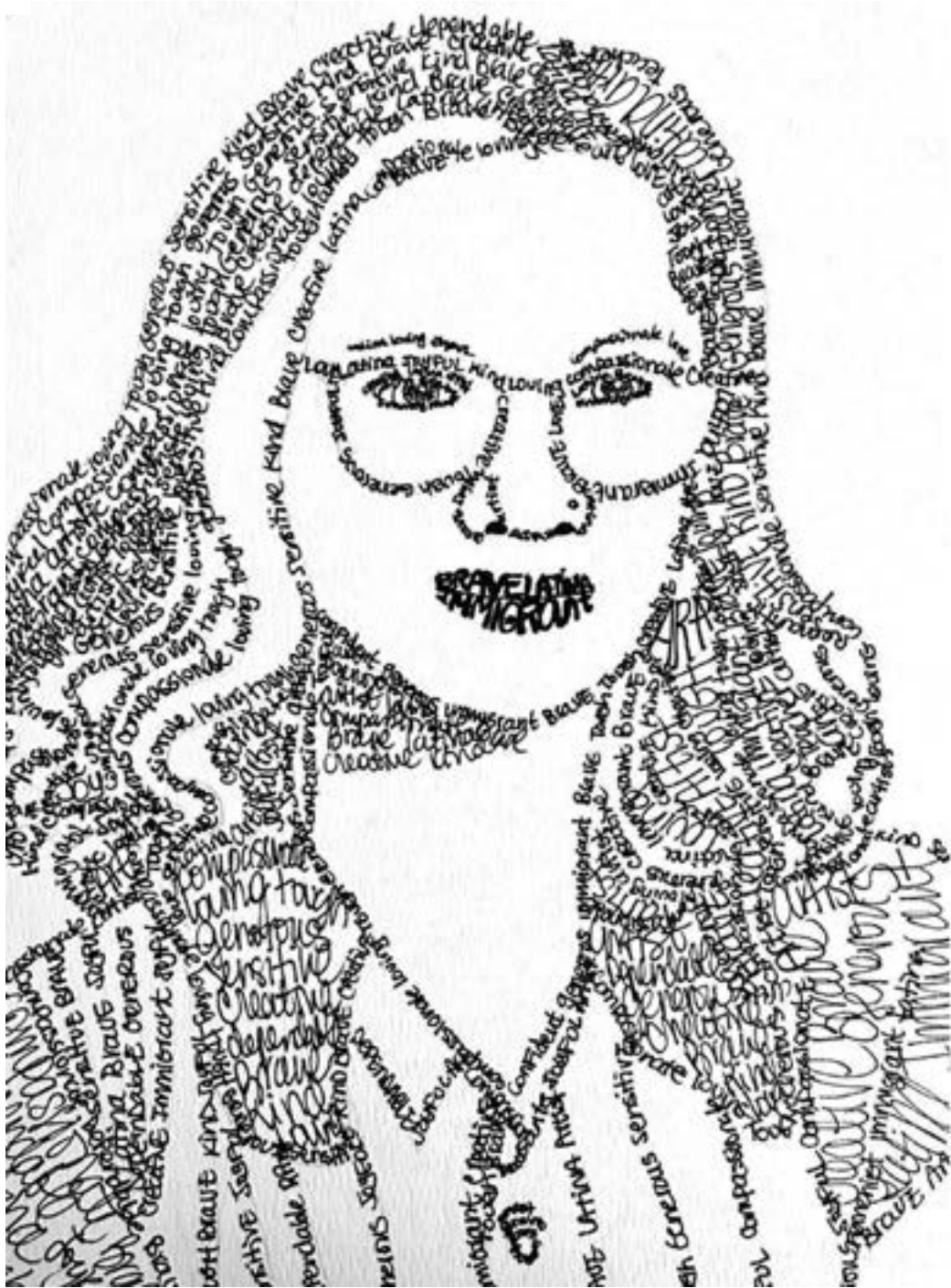
Go around the entire portrait including your clothing and any accessories.



## Step 6

Fill in shadows by changing the size and thickness of your words to add different values to your piece as you finalize your portrait.

# TASK 4: Sample



## About Montclair Art Museum

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The **Montclair Art Museum** collects, exhibits, preserves, and interprets American and Native American art, honoring the creative accomplishments of a diverse range of artists, past and present.

### OUR MISSION:

**Through art, we create experiences that inspire, challenge, and foster community to shape our shared future.**

## About the Curriculum Writer

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**Deborah Guzmán Meyer** is a Montclair-based artist by way of Chicago, NYC, and the Dominican Republic. She earned her BA at Pace University and MFA at Columbia College in Chicago. She's a full-time art teacher at Bloomfield Middle School, and a ceramics instructor at the Montclair Art Museum. Her work has been featured in exhibitions and collected internationally, including in Miami, Chicago, New York, and France. She likes to think of herself as a modern renaissance woman, curious about all art forms and willing to try her hand at it. Art is why she gets up in the morning.



All MAM programs are made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, The Vance Wall Foundation, and Museum members.

**We would love to hear from you! Please let us know about your experience using these lesson plans. Email us your feedback at [tours@montclairartmuseum.org](mailto:tours@montclairartmuseum.org).**

### MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM

3 South Mountain Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07042  
[montclairartmuseum.org](http://montclairartmuseum.org)