

AT A GLANCE

An artful approach to dialogue

Byron Kim's artwork "Synecdoche" is a set of more than 400 panels, each painted a unique shade to match the skin tones of strangers, friends, and relatives. The full work is part of the collection at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. In 1998, Kim created a set of 20 panels (shown here) for the Blanton Museum at The University of Texas at Austin with the participation of strangers he met on campus.

In 2017, the museum, the Austin Independent School District, and community organizations collaborated to produce *Free to Be Me: Exploring Identity*, a discussion guide for "Synecdoche." Educators can use it to facilitate student discussion about the artwork and the issues of race and identity it raises. The guide could be adapted to the ages and needs of different students or adults.

The following reflection questions, which were co-written by *The Learning Professional* columnist Angela Ward, are excerpted from the guide. You can find the full downloadable guide at blantonmuseum.org/freetobeme.

LOOK

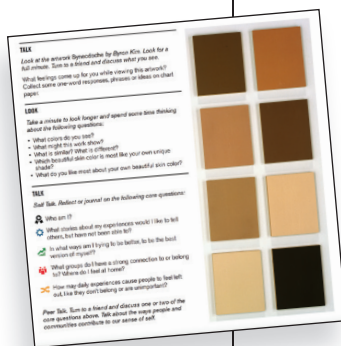
- Examine the artwork. What might it show? What is the artist's message?
- What colors do you see and which one is most like your own unique skin color?
- What do you like most about your own beautiful skin color?

TALK WITH A PEER

- Why is it important to notice our differences and our similarities?
- How might it feel to be identified by your skin color alone?
- How might this artwork be empowering?



Byron Kim, *Synecdoche*, 1998, Oil on wax on twenty panels, 10 x 8 in., Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Michener Acquisitions Fund, 1998



Free to Be Me was created through a collaboration among the Blanton Museum of Art, the Austin Independent School District's Office of Cultural Proficiency & Inclusiveness, and the Anti-Defamation League's No Place for Hate initiative. This resource is one in a series featuring a work of art from the museum selected to foster important conversations and inspire students to act. For more resources, visit blantonmuseum.org/PK12resources.