REPRESENTATION MATTERS

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CAREER & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT CENTER BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

PROJECT GOALS

Our goal was to develop a proposal on ways to catalogue artist identity. We wanted to be as respectful of artists and their identities as possible. This meant we had to very carefully consider the language used, where the language was used, and how the language was displayed.

CURRENTLY
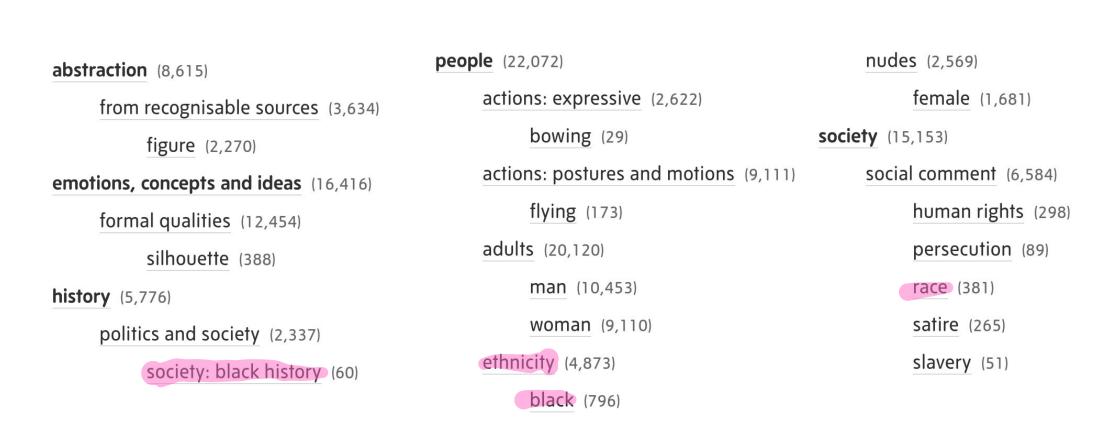
Faith Ringgold

(October 8, 1930 -)

American painter, sculptor, born ca. 1930.

Note: Faith Ringgold is an African-American artist born in New York City. She was educated at the City College of New York. She uses a technique of painting she calls "black-light painting," which favors intensity over value to achieve contrast between light and dark.

Contains information from the J. Paul Getty Trust, Getty Research Institute, the Union List of Artist Names, which is made available under the ODC Attribution License.

Many artists are lacking demographic information in the college's catalogue, TriArte. Faith Ringgold, a Black female artist, is called an "African American artist" on her biography page. The page uses she/her pronouns but does not explicitly call her a female artist.

EXPLORE

abstraction (8,615)
  from recognisable sources (3,634)
  figure (2,270)
emotions, concepts and ideas (16,416)
  formal qualities (12,454)
  silhouette (388)
history (5,776)
  politics and society (2,337)
  society: black history (60)

people (22,072)
  actions: expressive (2,622)
   bowing (29)
  actions: postures and motions (9,111)
   flying (173)
  adults (20,120)
   man (10,453)
   woman (9,110)
  ethnicity (4,873)
   black (796)

nudes (2,569)
  female (1,681)
society (15,153)
  social comment (6,584)
   human rights (298)
   persecution (89)
  race (381)
  satire (265)
  slavery (51)

Cataloging data on Kara Walker, another Black female artist, from the Tate Museum. We conducted research about how other institutions catalogue.

QUESTIONS

How much attention do we want to draw to an artist's identity versus their work? What are the best terms to use when describing different artists?
How much information about the artist should be public-facing?

RESEARCH COMPARISONS

Both systems do not explicitly call the artists women. The Tate, as a British museum, uses Black instead of African American.
The Tate places Walker's work in Black history related art. Despite Ringgold also being a part of similar movements, this information is not included in TriArte. We used the research from other institutions when developing our proposal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Working together with another intern Graziella, and Eliana, who was on a related project, we created a proposal for new cataloging guidelines. These guidelines include:
- How to research artist identity
- Guidelines on determining terminology for future use
- What artist information should be public facing