

# CONVERSATIONS IN SCULPTURE: IDENTITY

SUGGESTED AGE RANGE: 6TH–12TH GRADE



Reflect on how artists represent identity by exploring *Rendezvous* and *Urban Excursion* by Chakaia Booker. Use what you've learned to create a work of art that represents an aspect of your identity.

## MATERIALS

- Pencil and paper for recording notes and reflections
- Phone or camera
- Found objects or other art materials

## VOCABULARY

**Environmentalist:** a person who works to protect the natural world from pollution and other threats.

**Identity:** the qualities, beliefs, etc., that make a particular person or group different from others.

## DIRECTIONS

**Look carefully** at *Rendezvous* and *Urban Excursion* by Chakaia Booker and record your observations below.

What is going on in this sculpture?

Chakaia Booker. *Rendezvous* and *Urban Excursion*, 2004. Recycled rubber tires.



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What do you see that makes you say that?

What do the textures, shapes, color and material in these sculptures remind you of? List your associations here. Get creative—there are no wrong answers!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

**Watch** Chakaia Booker describe what inspires her work and use of materials in this [video from Tedx](#)



Then, listen to Curator of Arts Education Amber Oudsema talk about looking at *Rendezvous* and *Urban Excursion* [in this video](#).

Look at the photo of *Rendezvous* and *Urban Excursion* again. Chakaia Booker spoke about being inspired by her family's history of making clothing, by the urban environment of New York City and by her daily life. Can you see any of these parts of her identity represented in her sculptures? Does looking at these sculptures now make you think of anything new? List your associations here.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Chakaia Booker's sculptures are non-objective, meaning that they do not represent recognizable people, places or things. Booker relies on the visual qualities of her materials to communicate information about her life and her identity to the viewer.

Our identities can include our:

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Pets
- Who we love
- Culture
- Jobs
- Strengths
- Challenges
- Family roles (sister, brother, nephew, etc.)
- Where we were born/immigration status
- Socioeconomic status
- Home language
- Religion/spiritual practice
- Abilities
- Interests
- Family structure (number, parents, role)
- Hobbies or passions
- Physical attributes like hair color or texture
- Fandoms

What makes up your identity? Choose one or more of the aspects on this list, then look around your home for a material or object that could represent that part of you. What objects or materials in your house remind you of important family members, places you've lived, hobbies you enjoy, routines or traditions you have?

Take a photo of what you find and give it a title that tells the viewer something about you.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Many of Chakaia Booker's sculptures make reference to black hairstyles. [Read about the history of black hair discrimination in US schools and workplaces here](#), then choose one of the extension activities below.

### **Create Something** (Visual Art, 6th-12th)

Artists like Chakaia Booker, Hayv Kahraman, Sonya Clark and many others celebrate non-white, non-Western beauty ideals by representing them in their work. In 2020, Michael Cherry's short film Hair Love won the Oscar for Best Animated Short. [Watch Hair Love here](#). Then create a work of art or record a short video that celebrates an aspect of your identity. It could be something big or small, something you cherish, or something about you that is misunderstood.

### **Write About It** (Social Studies, 6th-12th)

Are there protections against hair discrimination in your state? [Learn more about the CROWN Act](#) and find out whether your state has similar legislation. Write a letter to a friend or to your local representative explaining your opinion on this issue and whether you think your state should adopt similar protections.

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References:

Definitions for vocabulary sourced from:  
<https://learnersdictionary.com>

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