INVISIBLE IDENTITIES

Learning Guide

GVSU | ART GALLERY
EXPLORE. DISCOVER. SHARE.

About this Guide

The information below can be used as a launch pad into learning about the themes of the exhibition. The questions and prompts can be used to start a deep-dive discussion about the artwork on view.

QUEER STUDIES

Queer theory is the lens used to examine and challenge heteronormativity; those ideas, narratives and discourses which suggest that heterosexuality is the default, preferred, or normal mode of sexual orientation. Its goal is to undo heteronormative hierarchies and fight against social inequalities. Question your own unconscious bias while viewing these works;

- **What assumptions did you make about the work initially?**
- **How do you think about the work after reading this?**

IDENTITY

Queer artists are often categorized based on the perceived queerness of their artwork. Artists that don't speak directly about their lived queer experience are relegated to straight and cisgender, having their identity erased for the benefit of a heteronormative audience. This exhibit strives to showcase artists as multi-dimensional creators. Start a discussion about queerness in art by asking;

- **Does queer art look different than other art?**
- **What subjects or ideas do queer artists make work about?**
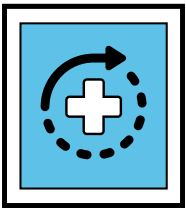
HEALING

When queer art is boiled down to a one-dimensional personification of pain and otherness it creates an anemic archetype of queerness. By recognizing this deficiency and broadening our conceptions of queer art we take a healing-centered approach to viewing and discussing work by queer-identifying artists. When viewing any artwork you can actively deconstruct stereotypes, misinformation and the past erasure of LGBTQ voices by taking this approach;

- **Look for an artist statement or label, it may provide important contextual information that will help you better understand the work.**
- **Consider the environment in which the work is exhibited, including the values or beliefs that institution supports, it may influence your understanding of the work.**
- **When you automatically assign value to artwork (good or bad), pause and ask yourself, "Why did I have that response? What is that response based on?"**

For additional learning resources visit **gvsu.edu/artgallery/ii** or contact:

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