

For me, it's . . . important that, as human beings, we assume the responsibility of remembering. We don't just drop the responsibility onto an object and a sculpture. Doris Salcedo

William Kentridge born 1955, Johannesburg, South Africa

Doris Salcedo born 1958, Bogotá, Colombia

Carrie Mae Weems born 1953, Portland, Oregon

Might a work of art move us to temper our more destructive impulses? In what ways do artists' feelings of empathy contribute to work that addresses the broader human condition? How do artists tackle problematic subjects? This episode features artists whose works explore conscience and the possibility of understanding and reconciling past and present, while exposing injustice and expressing tolerance for others.

DISCUSS

Before Viewing

- Describe or define the terms sympathy, empathy, and compassion. Discuss how these feelings influence our daily life.
- How might the notion of compassion inform the artistic process?
- Do artists have a social responsibility? To whom? To what?
- Do art objects possess the power to convey empathy or compassion? Discuss why, or why not.

After Viewing

- How does each artist's work reflect or incorporate elements of compassion, empathy, and/or sympathy and to what effect? How do these artists expose or reveal marginalized or hidden histories and perspectives?
- How do these artists view their responsibilities in relation to the subjects they address in their work? How does a sense of social responsibility challenge or inspire the creative process?
- Describe how the feeling of compassion might affect your experience of art. Discuss your response to particular works by these artists, to the artists themselves, or towards the events and people to whom they refer.

A body of work starts by daydreaming, imagining, looking at my own work, the work that's already around in the studio, and also looking at the work on the computer. Mary Heilmann

Cao Fei born 1978, Guangzhou, China

Mary Heilmann, born 1940, San Francisco, California

Jeff Koons born 1955, York, Pennsylvania

Florian Maier-Aichen born 1973, Stuttgart, Germany

How does our desire for perfection control us? What role does technology play in our ability to imagine? This episode presents artists whose works defy convention and transport us to unreal worlds and altered states of consciousness. With works at times irreverent and sublime, each of these artists pursues a vision first held in the mind's eye, inventing and reimagining along the way.

DISCUSS

Before Viewing

- What forms can fantasy take? Which fantasies are socially acceptable and which are not? Why? How are fantasies expressed or realized in everyday life?
- How do the definition, understanding, and expression of fantasy change or evolve from childhood to adulthood?
- Are dreams the same as fantasies? In what ways are they similar or different? What is the relationship between fantasy and reality?

After Viewing

- How do these artists use fantasy to animate the everyday world? How do they use fantasy to empower and/or enact alternate realities and identities?
- What are the elements of fantasy in the works of these artists? Describe the visual elements that signal the presence of fantasy.
- Consider how viewing the work of these artists in photographs or video might differ from looking at it in person. How do viewers use fantasy when imagining a work of art in real space and time?



What's a system? I think my idea is this: not so much structure that it's inhibiting or that there's no wiggle room, but not so loose that it could be anything. I guess it's like a corral around your idea, a corral that you can move—but not too much. And it's that limited movement that promotes creativity. John Baldessari

John Baldessari born 1931, National City, California
Kimsooja born 1957, Taegu, South Korea
Allan McCollum born 1944, Los Angeles, California
Julie Mehretu born 1970, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

How do artists use systems? Why do we accept some systems while rebelling against others? Who owns images? How do artists invent new grammars and logics in today's supercharged, information-based society? This episode features artists who realize complex projects, whether through acts of **appropriation**, accumulation, **collaboration**, living as an artist-nomad, or creating projects so vast in scope as to elude comprehension.

DISCUSS

Before Viewing

- Give examples of the ways in which artists borrow or **appropriate** material or ideas to create their work. Describe what they borrow, from where, and why.
- How does **collaboration** affect the making of something, such as a work of art? Describe a recent collaboration in which you participated, including the contributions of each collaborator, the process you went through to produce something collectively, and the result.

After Viewing

- What methods do each of the artists featured in this hour employ? How do these artists select and implement systems that allow them to imagine and create their work?
- How does each artist embrace creative or artistic freedom in his or her working process? How is that freedom tempered or driven by constraints or rules?

Art:21 production stills, 2009

My work is not about fantasizing about characters or situations. Some people have thought that I've always fantasized about the characters I do, about being a femme fatale or whoever, in my Film Stills. But when I'm doing the characters, I really don't feel like it's something that grows out of my fantasy, my own dreams. Cindy Sherman

Paul McCarthy born 1945, Salt Lake City, Utah
Cindy Sherman born 1954, Glen Ridge, New Jersey
Yinka Shonibare MBE born 1962, London, England

What strategies do we use to refashion identity? Do we seek out extremes in order to see ourselves more clearly? Are we motivated to explore transformation by virtue of today's multitude of possibilities? The artists in this episode populate their work with dolls, mannequins, and their own and others' bodies in ambiguous narratives. Whether satirizing society or reinventing **icons** of literature, art history, and **popular culture**, these artists inhabit the characters they create and capture the sensibilities of our age.

DISCUSS

Before Viewing

- Define and discuss the idea of transformation. What types of changes can transformation involve? What are some examples of transformation (people, places, or things) from your life?
- How might art support the act of transformation or reinvention?
- In what ways does one fashion an identity? How is identity defined and described? How might fashion, style, or a certain look inspire behavior or actions? How does identity lead us to participate in various group mentalities, ideas, and stereotypes?

After Viewing

- What have these artists transformed? Describe the vantage point from which each artist approaches the idea of transformation. What are the artists' intentions and results? Discuss the media used by each artist. How does the act of transformation differ, depending on the use of sculpture, photography, or video?
- Why do you think that these artists incorporate their own bodies in their work? How does the medium of performance affect the act of transformation and reinvention? How do each of these artists use performance?
- Why might these artists choose to inhabit a variety of personas to communicate their ideas? In what ways might a persona communicate more effectively than the artist?

