

Understanding Identity Through Portraiture Questionnaire

Notes to the instructor: These questions can be used as prompts for a classroom discussion or provided as a handout for students to complete as classwork or homework. This allows students time to think and reflect on their answers before participating in a class discussion.

- What do you notice about the colors and expressions in these portraits?
- Why do you think Amy Sherald paints her subjects' skin tones in grayscale? How does the absence of color affect the way we see her subjects?
- What do you notice about the backgrounds in her portraits? How do you think the bright colors and patterns help tell the story of each person?
- Sherald says her portraits represent everyday people in extraordinary ways. What do you think she means by that? How does she make ordinary people look extraordinary?
- How do the detailed, patterned backgrounds in Wiley's portraits affect the overall feeling of the artwork? What mood do the patterns create?
- Wiley's subjects often look powerful or heroic. What artistic choices (like color, pose, or scale) make his subjects appear that way?
- How do both artists use portraiture to explore and communicate identity?
- Both artists use color in unique ways to emphasize different parts of their portraits. How does each artist's use of color affect your understanding of the subject's personality or story?
- If you were to create a portrait of yourself inspired by either of these artists, which artist's approach would you choose and why?