

Cincinnati Art Museum *Hank Willis Thomas: All Things Being Equal...* Workshop

Renee Mahaffey Harris – *I Am A Man* Response Transcript

00:00:01,530 --> 00:00:05,510

Thank you to the Cincinnati Art Museum and their community

00:00:05,510 --> 00:00:09,092

advisory committee and the committee that made this exhibit

00:00:09,092 --> 00:00:13,470

possible in our city at this time race and the conversation

00:00:13,470 --> 00:00:17,052

and the issue and systemic structural racism that persists

00:00:17,052 --> 00:00:20,236

throughout our city, state, County in our country.

00:00:20,830 --> 00:00:22,776

Or at the forefront of the news.

00:00:24,010 --> 00:00:28,840

But having it in the news is just an example of how far we

00:00:28,840 --> 00:00:32,635

have yet to go. Hate Willis Thomas exhibit gives us an

00:00:32,635 --> 00:00:37,460

opportunity. To really bring art and words together and he has

00:00:37,460 --> 00:00:40,979

done an phenomenal job of being able to depict.

00:00:41,720 --> 00:00:46,120

The fact that the humanization of black people because of our

00:00:46,120 --> 00:00:50,865

race. Has perpetuated in this

country for decades and is

00:00:50,865 --> 00:00:54,185
evidenced in his artwork
through marketing and through

00:00:54,185 --> 00:00:58,335
all the images he has depicted
in this incredible exhibit.

00:00:59,630 --> 00:01:02,790
I was specifically impacted.

00:01:03,370 --> 00:01:07,465
By his first piece and All
Things Being Equal, I AM A MAN

00:01:08,030 --> 00:01:11,904
My name is Renee Mahaffy Harris
and I'm the president and CEO of

00:01:11,904 --> 00:01:14,884
the Center for closing the
health gap in Greater Cincinnati

00:01:14,884 --> 00:01:18,162
and I am very blessed and
honored to have the opportunity

00:01:18,162 --> 00:01:21,142
to everyday fight against the
injustice and work to improve

00:01:21,142 --> 00:01:24,420
the health outcomes of black
people in this country and in

00:01:24,420 --> 00:01:25,910
her city in our state.

00:01:27,220 --> 00:01:29,750
But race is the construct.

00:01:30,730 --> 00:01:36,490
And as that first piece said, I
am a man, a man.

00:01:37,940 --> 00:01:44,479
The fact that the first piece of

his exhibit said I am three

00:01:44,479 --> 00:01:45,988
fists. Human wow.

00:01:46,880 --> 00:01:52,951
That is, it just makes me shiver
to think that my ancestors and

00:01:52,951 --> 00:01:54,819
most importantly to day.

00:01:56,070 --> 00:01:58,116
We still fight the same fight.

00:01:59,100 --> 00:02:03,294
But this exhibit gives us an
opportunity through his

00:02:03,294 --> 00:02:07,488
incredible artistry, to bring
together all of the images

00:02:07,488 --> 00:02:11,216
and help others understand
what we feel everyday.

00:02:12,980 --> 00:02:17,228
This exhibit has given me an
opportunity to look at the fact

00:02:17,228 --> 00:02:18,998
that I am a man.

00:02:19,860 --> 00:02:22,866
The question of am I a man? Am I

00:02:22,866 --> 00:02:28,293
a woman? The fact that I have to
tell someone that I am a woman.

00:02:28,930 --> 00:02:33,106
That are black men have to say I
am a man, but when we look at

00:02:33,106 --> 00:02:34,150
the criminal justice system.

00:02:34,910 --> 00:02:39,302

When we look at the poverty rates, when we look at the

00:02:39,302 --> 00:02:42,962
inequity that persist in almost every area of our life.

00:02:43,590 --> 00:02:48,660
And when we look at the wealth gap and economic gaps in this

00:02:48,660 --> 00:02:52,560
country, race is a construct that is pervasive. And this

00:02:52,560 --> 00:02:57,630
exhibit is so brilliantly done and that it helps us be able to

00:02:57,630 --> 00:03:01,530
visually understand the pain and hurt that we live everyday.

00:03:02,730 --> 00:03:06,396
I am very grateful to have the opportunity to comment on one of

00:03:06,396 --> 00:03:11,696
the pieces. And I know that together we will worked to

00:03:11,696 --> 00:03:16,904
remove the Inequity we will take down the barriers and that we

00:03:16,904 --> 00:03:20,810
will eliminate its systematic. We will eliminate systematic and

00:03:20,810 --> 00:03:25,150
structural racism that persists in our country because we are

00:03:25,150 --> 00:03:30,358
all created equal and humanity is at the root of this entire

00:03:30,358 --> 00:03:32,094
conversation in this issue.

00:03:33,030 --> 00:03:36,312

Humanity. Is for all of us, and

00:03:36,312 --> 00:03:38,848

it always was. And it must be.

00:03:39,540 --> 00:03:40,210

Thank you.