

## Title:

Colorless Art: Exploring Museum Diversity

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## Image:



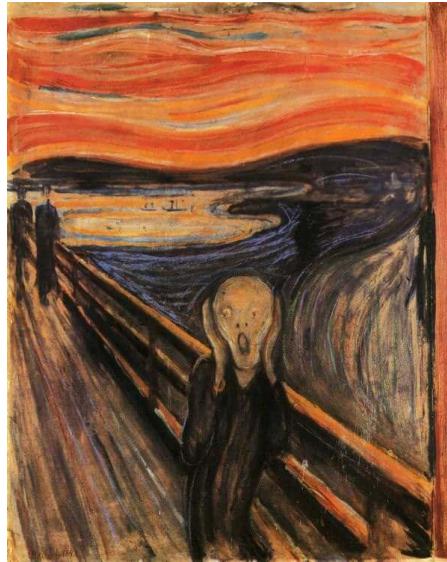
Cover Image from [Here](#)

## Introduction:

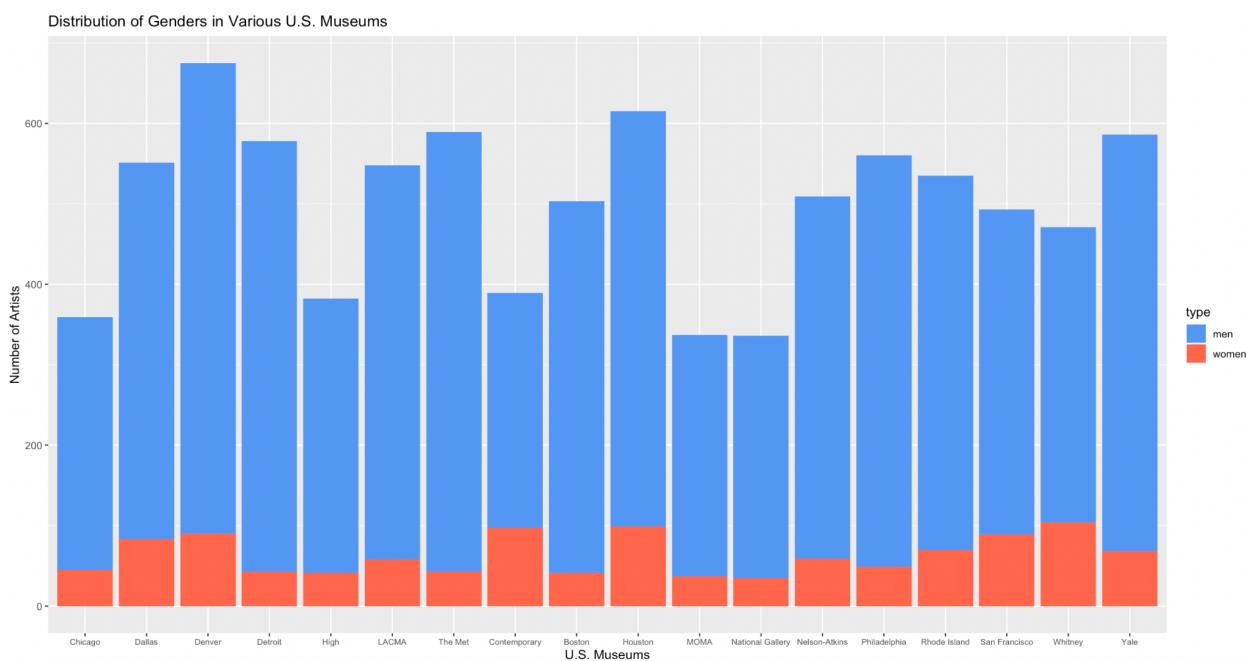
Museums are nonprofit institutions that can act as a representation of the culture's that surround it. With the U.S. being home to one of the most diverse populations in the world, it becomes essential to engage communities of color and reflect the diversity of these communities in the art displayed. When minority groups are actively able to see themselves represented in the museum, they are able to gain a sense of recognition, appreciation, and belonging. By exploring the demographics of the museum, we provide a starting point for all of us to think critically about what we see on the walls of museums, who put these paintings on the walls, and why it is important for art to have color.

## Body:

### Artist Genders in Major US Museums



*The Scream - Edvard Munch (1893)*



*Figure 1: Comparison of the gender distribution for artists across major U.S. Museums.*

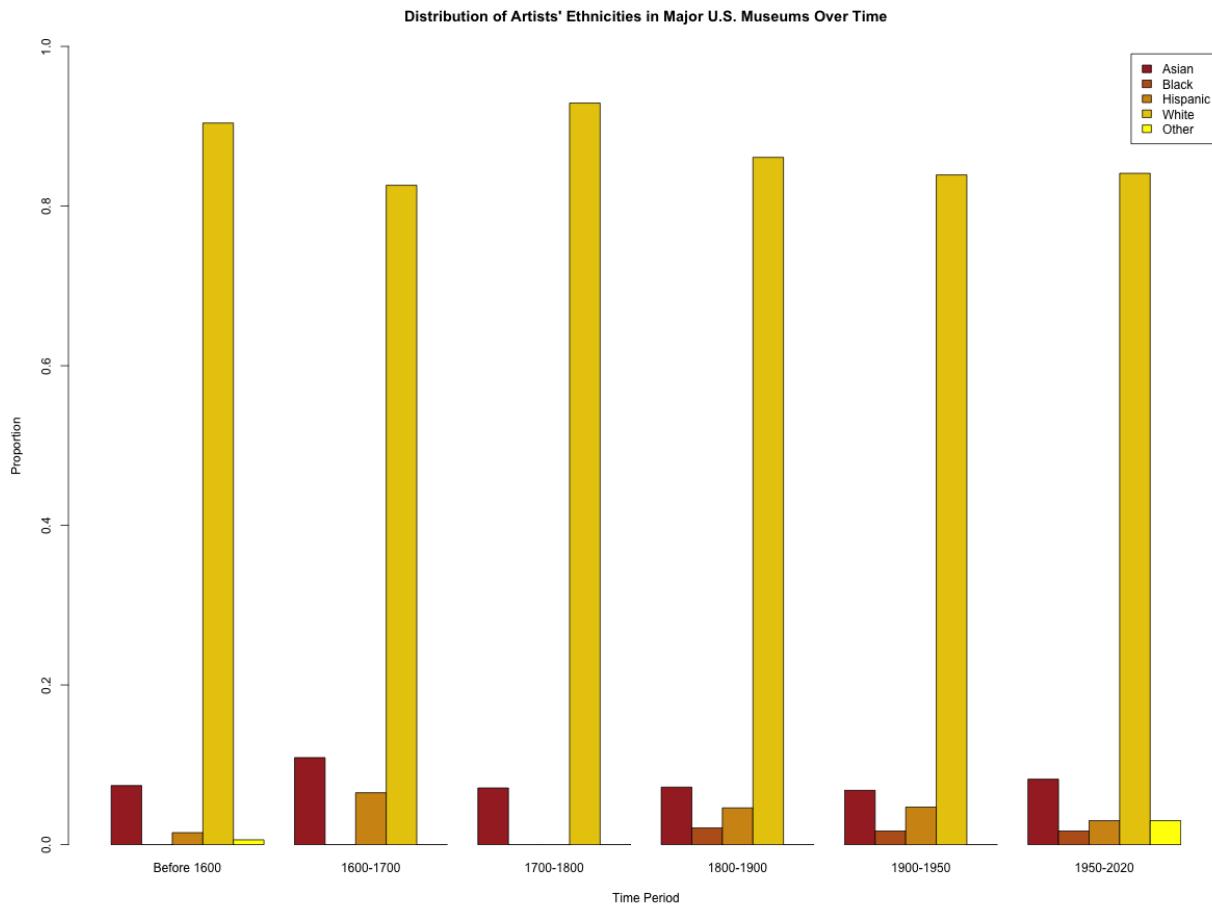
Figure 1 looks at the distribution of genders (male or female) across some of the U.S.'s most prominent museums. In every museum, a significantly larger proportion of artworks made by men are displayed, including over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the pieces. Men have historically been more prominent in the art world, so a slight difference in numbers would make sense. However, the disparity among the numbers is much larger than expected. Even more, in recent years, there has been an increase in female artists that is not reflected within these museums, with approximately a

132% increase in global turnover (Li and Xie). For this, the gender demographic of artists is not reflective of our new artistic world.

### **Artist Ethnicities in Major US Museums**

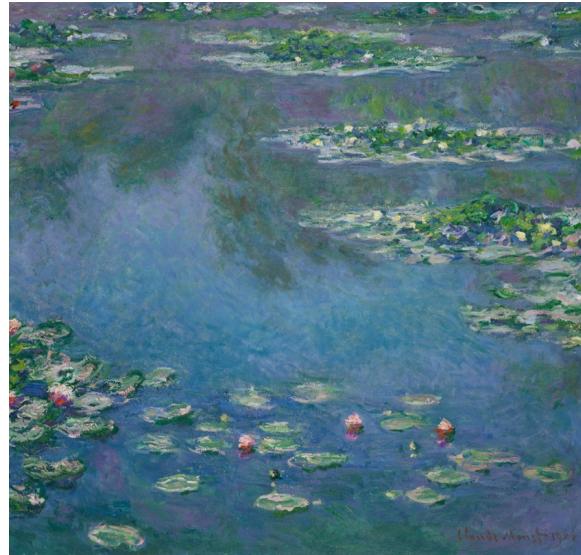


*Sunflowers - Vincent van Gogh (1888)*



*Figure 2: Artists' Ethnicities across Major U.S. Museums Over Time.*

Figure 2 displays the distribution of ethnicities of artists displayed in Major U.S. museums from before the 1600s through the 2000s. In looking at these distributions over the centuries, we can determine whether or not representation of minority artists has increased. Throughout the entire duration of this time period, white artists have a much higher proportion of representation compared to other ethnicities. Representation for non-white artists (Asian, Black, Hispanic, and other), however, has not significantly increased over this duration or in more recent years.



Water Lilies - Claude Monet (1906)

Nationality Representation of Artists in NY MoMA (Excluding American)

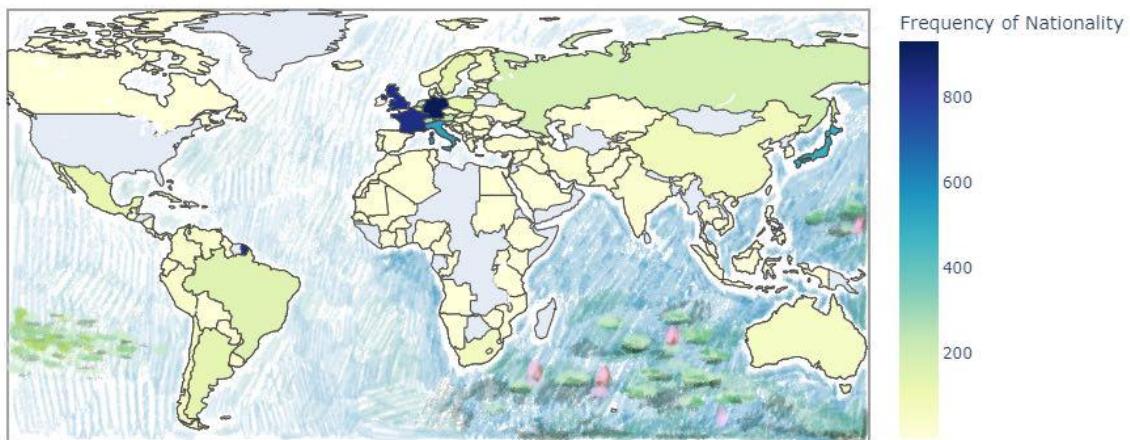
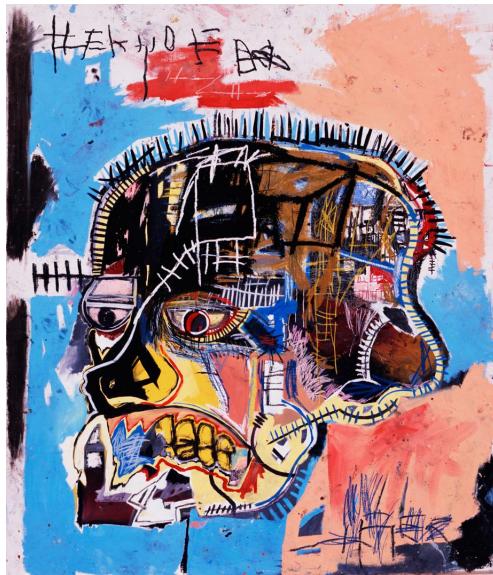


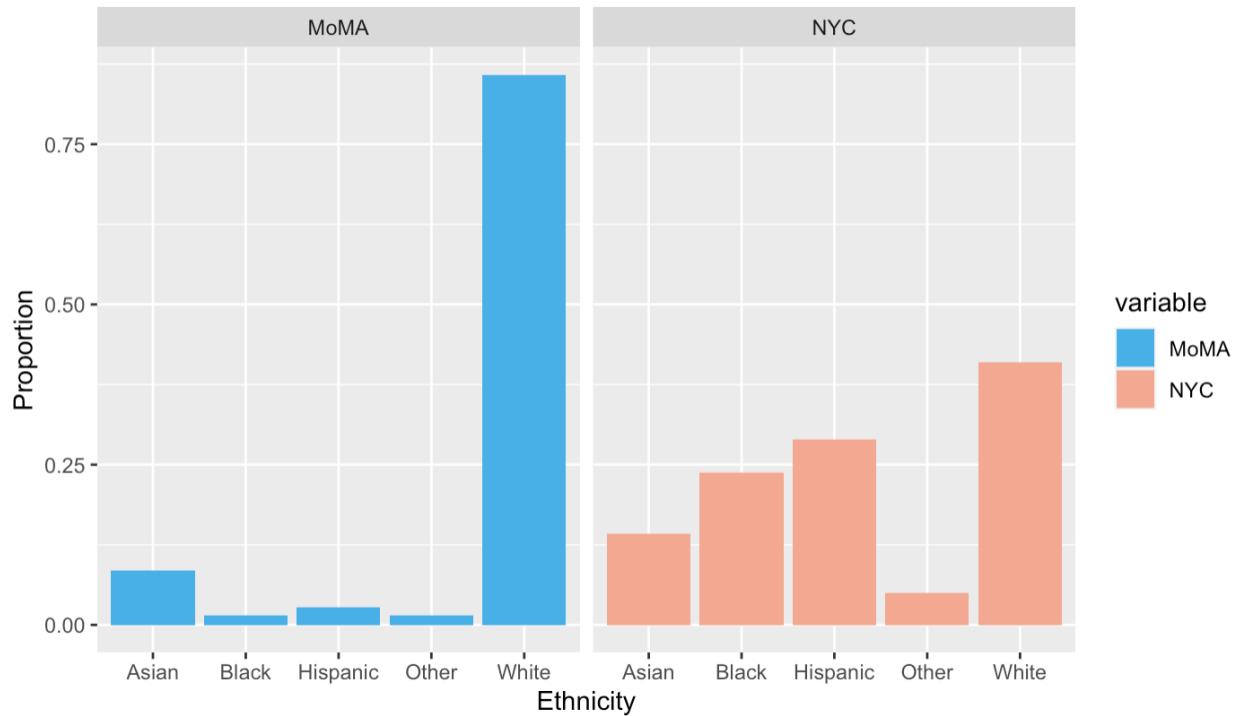
Figure 3: Map of the nationality representation of artists at The MoMA.

Figure 3 displays data taken from the New York Museum of Modern Art where they cataloged their entire art collection. We excluded the American nationality, as it had the largest frequency, to visually denote any discrepancies within the representation of other countries. The choropleth map clearly demonstrates a bias toward European countries and even more so Western European countries. This data only highlights the issue of curation within American museums and not the root cause of the issue. A general conclusion is that Western colonization has given value and prioritization to Western European art compared to other countries and regions.



*Untitled - Jean Michel Basquiat (1981)*

#### Ethnicities of MoMA Artists vs NYC Population



*Figure 4: Distribution of the ethnicities of artists displayed at The MoMA vs the population of New York City.*

This figure compares the proportion of artworks by ethnicity at The Museum of Modern Art in NYC to the general NYC population. Once again, we can clearly see that white people dominate

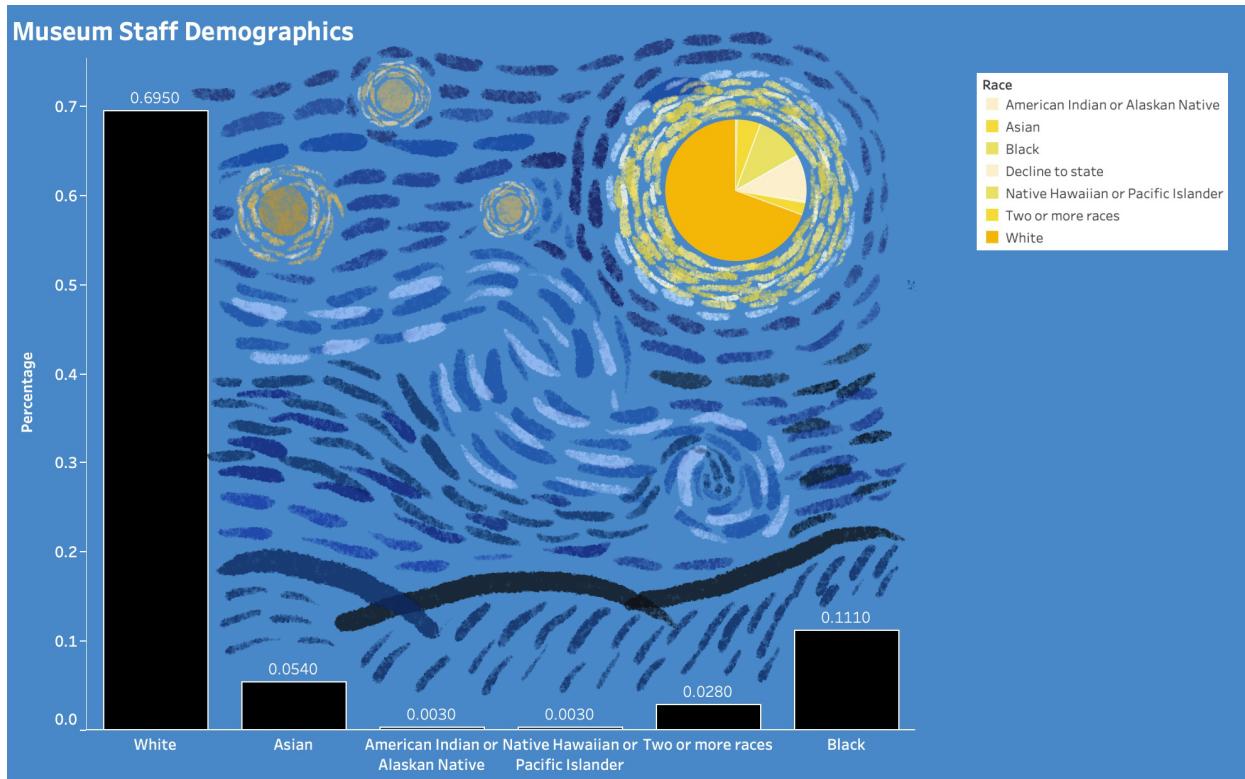
the art field, but at the same time they also make up the largest proportion of the NYC population, although not as skewed. This might indicate that the museum is catered toward the majority population, but other ethnicities are still underrepresented. For example, Black and Hispanic people make a large proportion of the NYC population but have almost no representation in The MoMA.

### **Museum Staff Demographics**

In addition to the demographics of artists displayed in museums, we explored the demographics of the staff that museums employ.



*The Starry Night - Vincent van Gogh (1889)*



*Figure 5: Distribution of the ethnicities of museum staff.*

The figure above illustrates the racial breakdown of art museum staff in the United States according to the 2015 and 2018 Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey. This data is shown in both bar graph and pie chart form. Consistent with artist representation, art museum staff is made up of predominantly white individuals, at 69.5%. The next largest group is black staff members at 11.1%, then Asian staff members at 5.4%.

## Conclusion:

There is one clear conclusion we can obtain from our data analysis, which is that white males dominate the museum field in both art and staff. Our choropleth map combined with our extensive selection of bar charts exemplify exactly this, and also highlight how women and communities of color are still misrepresented to this day. Because minority representation is so minimal, this demonstrates that U.S. museums generally still have a lot to work on in terms of representation.

GitHub:

<https://github.com/datares/F22-team-monetbaes.git>

Sources:

<https://artofstat.shinyapps.io/ArtistDiversity/>

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<https://artpro.com/news/32679>

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/newyorkcitynewyork>

<https://learnodo-newtonic.com/famous-artists>