

EXPLORE Women in art



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DIFFÉRENCIATION

WAY 1 WAY 2

- **Observe** the artwork in your textbook. **Describe** its composition and the slogan. **Identify** the context in which it was produced.

The artwork is both in colours and in black and white. The photograph shows a woman's face divided into two parts and including the slogan *Your body is a battleground*, which was produced for the Women's March on Washington in 1989.



▲ *Untitled (Your body is a battleground)*, produced for the Women's March on Washington, 1989

WAY 1

1. Before listening: **look** at the title and the source, then **tick** the right answer.

- This audio is: ☐ a speech ☒ a radio programme ☐ a talk show
- It might be about: ☒ an upcoming exhibition ☐ a demonstration on women's rights

2. a. **Listen to** the document and **pick out** the stressed words.

American visual artist/images/cultural commentary/critical observer/provocative text/humour/empathy/presidential election/message/important/circle/idea

- b. **Use** some of them to introduce the artist.

This audio introduces us to Barbara Kruger, a visual artist who has always used images to make a social commentary.

3. **Focus on** the dates and numbers and **identify** what they correspond to.

- over 40 years: time Barbara Kruger has been a critical observer
- 2016: the presidential election
- 2021: opening of the exhibition and abortion ban in Texas

4. **Listen to** the audio again and **take notes** on:

Barbara Kruger's style and message	The story behind <i>Your Body is A Battleground</i>	The exhibition and potential other messages behind her work
• Images: a source of cultural commentary • Combines images with provocative texts: uses direct address and direct pronouns • She exposes the power dynamics	• The artwork appeared on social media during the Brett Kavanaugh hearings • Updated version with LED format	• Exhibition planned for 2021, after the 2016 exhibition • A powerful message which can expand into civil liberties, go beyond gender: address race and class

5. **Focus on** the expression "delivering a gut-punch with a spoonful of sugar".

- a. **Pay attention to** the two elements composing it and **rephrase** what they evoke to you..

- "gut-punch": something that punches in your stomach, that is to say something that touches you to the core
- "a spoonful of sugar": it evokes something easy, simple

b. Then **guess** what the whole expression means.

The whole expression means presenting a powerful, possibly difficult or painful idea in a soft, attractive, or comforting way. In other words, it describes something that looks nice or sweet on the surface, but actually carries a deeper, stronger impact.

c. Say why the journalist is using it.

To show that she conveys powerful messages through simple images.

6. Recap the main information of the audio using some of the key words from the previous questions.

In this audio, the speaker who must be an art specialist, introduces visual artist Barbara Kruger who has inspired her for her essay and for an exhibition.

She explains how the artist has been a critical observer of American society over the past 40 years, combining images and provocative texts to convey powerful messages. *Your body is a battleground* was made at first to denounce gender discriminations and the artist has updated it over time to adapt to audiences and contexts. For the speaker, this artwork still conveys a powerful message and could be expanded to other issues such as race and class or civil liberties.

WAY 2

1. Pay attention to the title and source, then **say** what the audio might be about.

The photograph shows a woman's face divided into parts and including the slogan *Your body is a battleground*, which was produced for the Women's March on Washington in 1989. The title and the source seem to indicate that the radio programme will deal with artist Barbara Kruger and possibly an exhibition.

2. Listen to the document and **identify** the main topic of the programme.

The radio programme introduces Barbara Kruger, a visual artist who has been using her artworks to make a social commentary over the past few years.

3. Explain the artist's technique and **sum up** her goal with her art.

Barbara Kruger uses images and direct address to create her artworks. She combines images and provocative texts. She also uses direct pronouns to attract the viewer's attention. Her goal is to make art to show who people are to one another.

4. Explain the art specialist's connection with Barbara Kruger.

The art specialist was in charge of creating the exhibition about Barbara Kruger. She explains how she started working on her essay and images of *Your body is a battleground* was all over social media during some hearings.

5. a. Make hypotheses about the meaning of the expression "*a gut-punch with a spoonful of sugar*".

By looking at the two parts of the expression, we can suppose it might mean a powerful message with an easy form.

b. Listen to the audio again and **explain** why the journalist is using such an expression.

The journalist was using the expression to evoke Barbara Kruger's technique and the impact of her artworks. It introduces the fact that she uses images with provocative texts and direct address to viewers.

6. Recap what you understood. **Focus on** the evolving messages of *Your Body is A Battleground* over time.

In this audio, the speaker introduces visual artist Barbara Kruger who has inspired her for her essay and for an exhibition which is not a retrospective.

She explains how the artist has been a critical observer of American society over the past 40 years, combining images and provocative texts to convey powerful messages. *Your body is a battleground* was made at first to denounce gender discrimination during the march on Washington back in 1989 and the artist has updated it over time to adapt to audiences and contexts. For the speaker, this artwork still conveys a powerful message today and could be expanded to other issues such as race and class or civil liberties.