

# Learn with MoMA



**MoMA**

## Step 1 Look closely

1. What do you notice about these garments?
2. What elements are familiar? Where might you have seen them before?
3. Who do you think might wear this kind of garment?

## Step 2 Learn more

In this artwork, *How Does a Girl Like You Get to Be a Girl Like You?*, artist Yinka Shonibare combines [nineteenth-century Western-style costumes](#) with Dutch wax-print fabric. Although typically African and worn as an expression of an idealized unified identity, these wax-print fabrics actually came from Holland and were made in factories in England, where Shonibare, who was brought up in Nigeria, now lives and works. His choice of fabric made in Holland using an Indonesian technique and exported to Africa speaks about a history of colonial trade.

Shonibare said, "African fabric signifies African identity rather like American jeans (Levi's) are an indicator of trendy youth culture. In Brixton, African fabric is worn with pride amongst radical or cool youth. ... It becomes an aesthetics of defiance, an aesthetics of reassurance, a way of holding on to one's identity in a culture presumed foreign or different."

## Step 3 Activity: Using clothing to express identity

Materials: paper, pencils, and colored pencils or markers

1. Make a list of all the clothing you are wearing; include jewelry and other accessories.
2. Which of the items on your list convey something about who you are? How do they do that?
3. Which items on the list do not feel like they connect to your identity? Why not?
4. Consider the types of clothes that you feel reflect something about your life and identity. What would you like more of? What types of clothing would you prefer not to wear?
5. Design an outfit that expresses one aspect of your identity. You can use items from your list or design new items. Draw this ideal outfit.

## Step 4 Share!

Share your design with a friend and describe how it expresses your identity, or you can email a photo to us at MoMA: [schoolprograms@moma.org](mailto:schoolprograms@moma.org).



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Image: Yinka Shonibare. *How Does a Girl Like You Get to Be a Girl Like You?*. 1995. Dutch wax print cotton on mannequins. Gift of Agnes Gund