

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

### Vada Hill – *Raise Up* Response Transcript

00:00:00,560 --> 00:00:06,748

Hi, this is Vada Hill, and just wanted to spend a couple of

00:00:06,748 --> 00:00:11,032

minutes giving you my observations on the Hank Willis

00:00:11,032 --> 00:00:16,744

Thomas' work *Raise Up* which was done in 2014. One observation is

00:00:16,744 --> 00:00:21,504

that this work could have a number of very appropriate

00:00:21,504 --> 00:00:23,408

titles - "Raise Your Hands,"

00:00:24,790 --> 00:00:29,956

"Assume the Position" are two potential titles, which frankly,

00:00:29,956 --> 00:00:35,696

are commands that instill fear in every African American Man.

00:00:35,696 --> 00:00:40,288

The other title, particularly appropriate in a

00:00:40,288 --> 00:00:46,028

post-George Floyd, post-Jacob Blake environment, is that of

00:00:46,028 --> 00:00:52,342

"Don't Shoot." And in some ways it's, I think, important to

00:00:52,342 --> 00:00:55,212  
reflect as citizens of this

00:00:55,212 --> 00:01:00,194  
great country, why these three  
themes could so easily be

00:01:00,194 --> 00:01:05,810  
applied to this work. It's not  
something we should be proud of,

00:01:05,810 --> 00:01:10,958  
frankly. Another takeaway is the  
fact that, for this piece of

00:01:10,958 --> 00:01:15,638  
work, the faces of the  
individuals is not necessary and

00:01:15,638 --> 00:01:20,318  
that I think reflects another  
sad observation, which is that

00:01:20,318 --> 00:01:24,998  
for many folks, black men are  
faceless. They don't have

00:01:24,998 --> 00:01:28,274  
individuality, they don't have  
uniqueness as individuals.

00:01:28,440 --> 00:01:32,864  
They are really part of a  
faceless,

00:01:34,100 --> 00:01:37,772  
intimidating, terrifying mass,  
and that is also something that

00:01:37,772 --> 00:01:41,852  
we should be very disturbed  
about as Americans. But enjoy

00:01:41,852 --> 00:01:45,932  
the exhibition. I think this is  
a great opportunity for

00:01:45,932 --> 00:01:50,828  
Cincinnati's, and hopefully we  
will take away a lot to help our

00:01:50,828 --> 00:01:54,500  
community be a better place.  
Have a good day.