

Visual Arts Lesson Plan

Title: *Stacking Stories: Self-Portraiture and Story-making*

Grade: grade 7

Timing: 2 x 45 min.

Overview: This lesson encourages students to examine concepts of self-identity and autobiography through a study of artists' self-portraits. The lesson includes a study of historical and contemporary self-portraits, a viewing game to develop critical thinking skills, and a studio project that involves making rolled self-portraits that can be used to create stories with others in the class.

Curriculum Expectations: (at least one from each of the three visual art strands)

VA – identify the area of emphasis (or focal point) in a work of art;

VA – produce 2 and 3D works of art that communicate a range of thoughts, feelings and experiences for specific purposes and to specific audiences;

VA – explain their preference for specific artworks, with reference to the artist's intentional use of the elements and principles of design;

LA – Reading – clarify and develop their own points of view by examining the ideas of others;

LA – Writing – produce pieces of writing using a variety of forms, techniques and resources appropriate to the form and purpose, and materials from other media.

Assessment Strategies:

Process:

- Observation
 Anecdotal Notes
 Checklist/Rubric
 Interview/Conference
 Presentation/Performance

Product:

- Sketchbook/Journal
 Portfolio Review
 Self-assessment
 Peer-assessment
 Interview/Conference

Product:

- Presentation/Performance
 Critique
 Exhibition/Display
 Checklist/Rubric
 Other:

Special Needs Modifications:

Type of Special Needs: (check one)

- Physical Challenges
 Learning Disabled
 Behavioural
 ESL
 Gifted

Modifications: (check those which apply to the special need you selected)

- Increase time for lesson
 Increase space available
 Written Instructions
 Oral Instructions
 Visual Instructions

- Peer Tutor/Partner
 Modify Materials
 Modify Tools
 Extend Lesson
 Other:

Space: A regular classroom is sufficient for the lesson.

Materials & Tools: slide or LCD projector, screen, biography game handout, slides of artworks, 9"x24" cartridge paper; cardboard rolls, scissors, tape, pencils, erasers, rulers, oil pastels, sharpies, food dyes and/or tempera cake paints, brushes, water containers, newspapers

Artists/Artworks: Rembrandt van Rijn, Frida Khalo, Mark Hammons, Elizabeth Vigee-Lebrun, Andy Warhol, Paul Gauguin, Julian Schnabel, Jeff Wall

Set-Up: Set up slide proctor and screen. Prepare sufficient handouts for the class. Have art materials laid out on tables or easily accessible.

Homework/Communication with Parents/Guardians: Inform parents in weekly newsletter about the project. Display during curriculum night; encourage parents to try stories game.

Delivering the Lesson

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| Timing | Sharing the Objectives: Whole class |
| 5 min. | <p>Introduce the theme of the program; give a brief overview of its components. What is self-identity; what does this term mean? How do we communicate our self-identity to others? Brainstorm a list with the class of what humans use to portray their identity to others: clothes, hairstyles, jewellery, language, mannerisms, actions, hangouts, music, jobs, cars/possessions, etc. Point out that artists typically explore their self-identity through self-portraits.</p> <p>What is a self-portrait? How do artists make pictures of themselves?</p> |
| | Body of the Lesson (Step-by-Step) |
| 8 min | <p>Slide Discussion: Whole class</p> <p>Rembrandt, <u>Self-Portrait</u>, 1658 (oil painting) Rembrandt, <u>Self-Portrait</u>, 1660 (oil painting)</p> <p>What can you tell me about these self-portraits just by looking at them? Are these men or women? When did they live? How did the artist feel about himself in each? What parts of the self-portraits communicate aspects of the artist's self-identity to you? How did the artist focus your attention on these parts?</p> <p>Have the students analyze and compare the sitters in terms of their pose, facial expression, clothing, accessories, etc. Someone will probably make the connection that they are the same person. Be sure to define the terms focal point/emphasis. Which self-portrait was painted first? What can you guess happened in Rembrandt's life in the two years between the self-portraits?</p> |
| 7 min | <p>Mark Quinn, <u>Self</u>, 1991 (blood) Frida Khalo, <u>Tree of Hope, Stand Fast</u>, 1946 (oil painting)</p> <p>How have the artists shown themselves in these works? What do their poses/portraits tell you about their personalities or life stories? Do these two self-portraits have anything in common?</p> <p>Mention a bit of the artists' life stories; ask if any of this comes out through the form of the works. Note that some artists, like Khalo and Quinn, use their work to tell their stories, to demonstrate what their own focal points in their lives are. Be sure to discuss the visual focal points in each.</p> <p>Which of these four self-portraits did you like best? Why?</p> |
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| 20 min | <p>Acting as an Art Historian: Small group</p> <p>Put students in groups of 3-4. Ask them to roleplay as art historians and unravel a mystery about a series of self-portraits only recently discovered in an old bank vault. Explain that these works were found with biographies of the artists who made them - but it is unclear which descriptions go with which self-portrait. Ask each group to view the works, and match one of the biographies to one of the artworks.</p> <p>Give them 1-2 minutes to look at each work and decide which description best describes the artist. As you go through each work, have each group guess which biography matches it. When complete, have them list their answers on the board. At the end review each art work and have them identify the proper match, showing the clues that might have led them to the right answer.</p> |
| 5 min | <p>Studio Activity Instructions: Whole Group</p> <p>Introduce the studio project: to design a self-portrait that communicates aspects of your self-identity or character through its design, and can be used as a way to create stories. Inspired by Tibetan prayer wheels (a form of rotary book) and totem poles, these self-portraits use a wash resist painting technique to make slender self-portrait paintings that will roll up for storage. When combined with others' portraits, they provide instant inspiration for stories in language class.</p> <p>Discuss the steps needed to create the rolled self-portraits. Brainstorm a list of words that describe your self-identity or character; then write 4-5 sentences that describes your character. Give your character a summarizing name (eg. the friend, the helper, the jock.) Create a plan on scrap paper of how to combine the sentences with images, considering how you will create an area(s) of emphasis. Transfer the plan to cartridge paper, using permanent marker for the words and pastel for any line work; cover the surface with tempera or food dye wash to add colour. Cut the edges (or add interior cuts) to add visual interest. Tape one end of the paper to a cardboard roll; roll and tie for storage.</p> |
| 25 min | <p>Studio Time: Individual</p> <p>Provide the time and materials necessary for the completion of the painted self-portraits. Give students a clear deadline for completion.</p> |
| 5 min. | <p>Clean-up: Whole Class</p> |
| 10 min. | <p>Closure: Small group</p> <p>Have pairs of students discuss each others' works, identifying each others' focal points and offering what they think is working well. In language class move them into groups of four to use their characters to brainstorm a plot for a story; then shuffle groups to create a second story-line. Ask them for homework to write up one of story lines in their writing journal.</p> |

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Authentic Art Ed:(at least 3 of the areas)

- Art Production
- Art History
- Art Criticism
- Aesthetics

- Integrated with other Curriculum

Multiple Intelligences:

- Linguistic
- Logical/Mathematical
- Spatial
- Bodily/Kinesthetic
- Interpersonal
- Musical
- Naturalistic
- Intrapersonal

Extensions:

Drama – create a short play using the self-portraits as inspiration for the main characters
 Music - select music to complement their self-portraits
 VA/LA - research the biography of an artist and with a partner write a series of letters back and forth between the two artists as if you were the artist (eg. a first person tense)