



Portraits

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Lesson Plans for Educators • March 20, 2013

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Image List

1. Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, British
The Counter
Oil on canvas
LYB10.027
Courtesy of the artist, Corvi-Mora, London and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.
2. Philippe Halsman, American
Alfred Hitchcock
Gelatin silver print
c. 1950
Gift of the Dr. James E. and Debra Pearl Photograph Collection, (c) Philippe Halsman/Magnum Photos
UMFA2002.4.2
3. Mike Disfarmer, American
Untitled (Standing Man in Tie and Shirt Sleeves, Castle Background)
Gelatin silver print
c. 1940
Purchased with funds from Dr. Donald L. and Alice A. Lapp
UMFA2005.35.1
4. Shonto Begay, American (Diné [Navajo])
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Acrylic on canvas
2011
Collection of Diane and Sam Stewart; Art © Shonto Begay, courtesy of Mark Sublette of Medicine Man Gallery
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UMFA1951.005
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Self Portrait in a Velvet Cap with Plume
Etching
1638
Gift of Merrilee and Howard Douglas Clark
UMFA1996.47.1

Good News

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, English



Lynette Yiadom-Boakye paints people, but not real ones. Instead of focusing on the needs of a living subject, she partners with paint, respecting and responding to its formal qualities to elicit a rendering of the world she sees and experiences. Her subjects, almost always black figures, are invented, inspired by various source material including memories, the history of art, found images, literature, and whatever is on her mind that day. In her words, “it might be something as simple as the position of a woman's wrist as she turns a book page on the Underground that I try to remember and re-draw later or an image of a seascape in a magazine that I want to cut out and keep.”

Yiadom-Boakye’s style shows her deep understanding of, and engagement with, the Western history of painting. In a sense, her work is a pastiche of earlier artistic styles. Her shadowy backgrounds and apt use of contrasting color to attract the eye seem indebted to Francisco Goya (Spanish, 1746–1828), particularly his Black Paintings (1819-1823). Her attention to the materiality of paint and her two-dimensional treatment of figures is reminiscent of Édouard Manet’s (French, 1832 –1883) handling of paint and subject matter. Her depiction of psychological complexity and movement call to mind the masterpieces of Edgar Degas (French, 1834 –1917), while her simplified backgrounds and swaths of color, which loosely define space, pay homage to the work of Paul Cézanne (French, 1839–1906). Like these artists, Yiadom-Boakye is less concerned with perfect anatomical representation or the rules of the academy and is more interested in making the esoteric qualities of life tangible through paint. This incompleteness - this rejection of realism - is a tenet of modernism that ultimately led to abstraction. But, in Yiadom-Boakye’s paintings, this subtle digression from realism seems anachronistic. Her new subject matter alters the mood and connotations of the early modernist techniques, highlighting modernism’s flawed perceptions of race.

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Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, British
The Counter
 Oil on canvas
 LYB10.027
 Courtesy of the artist, Corvi-Mora, London and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Styles of Portraits Lesson Plan

written by Amber Robb

Objectives:

- Students will discuss the art of portraiture and its elements
- Students will learn to see visual portraits as not merely static moments or personal ideals, but as stories that move through person/place/time
- Students will create written stories from portraits of real and imaginary individuals
- Students will discuss other styles of portraits, ones of language and music
- Students will create visual representations of written and musical compositions

State Core Links:

Reading standards: Grades 3rd-8th

Writing standards (text, type, and purpose): Grades 3rd – 8th

Speaking and listening standards: Grades 3rd-8th

Language standards (convention and acquisition): Grades 3rd-8th

Music standards (listening): Grades 3rd-8th

Visual arts standards (making, perceiving, expressing): Grades 3rd -8th

Grade Levels:

3rd – 8th

Materials:

- Computer (with online access)
- Print of Good News by Lynette Yiadom Boakye, courtesy of UMFA
- Poems
 1. “Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out” by Shel Silverstein
 2. “Annabele Lee” by Edgar Allan Poe
- Musical compositions
 1. “Chuncho” by Yma Sumac
 2. “Dance of the Little Swans” by Pyotr Tchaikovsky
- Paper
- Pastels
- Watercolors/ paintbrushes

Introduction:

Discuss portrait as a visual representation of people, one that uses varied artistic elements and techniques. Begin with the portrait by Lynette Yiadom Boakye titled Good News. What colors, shapes, movements, and forms do you see in this painting? (deep/dark backdrop, white movement from the center of the piece, long lines, heavy shading) How might the viewer interpret such elements in correlation to the person/personality represented? (Gray/black colors = depression/ mystery/evil, white garments = salvation/purity/simplicity, long lines in unison = harmony/movement/direction in life)

Another aspect of portraiture is that artists can employ either real or abstract models for portraits. Here in Good News the artist creates a visual representation of imaginary people...individuals constructed from her mind. Why might an artist do this, instead of capturing the image of someone real? (perhaps to convey hidden truths within our humanity)(to convey political, spiritual, or philosophical beliefs without having them associated with a specific person or character)(to expand the often-constricted interpretation of how we view others)

Looking at both real and imagined portraits, we can see how such visual exchanges offer a story, and not simply a static, constrained ideal of man or woman. Ask students to create a short written composition that is inspired by the painting.

- What do you hear from the deep and dark palette? (perhaps a dreary evening, perhaps the unknown, perhaps a blemished or tarnished humanity)
- Are the individuals portrayed happy or sad? What are they wearing? Who might they be? (joyful, content expressions)(white, clean clothes with hints of shade)(brothers, kinfolk, men of faith, employees, laborers)
- How might the viewer interpret the light central figures? (redemption, salvation, simplicity in a complicated system of contradictions)
- Are the men square and stationary? Is there a sense of movement? (are the two men going on a date/walking to church/coming from a party/coming home from work?)

Share and critique the stories created in class. Ask students to connect the specific word choices and language patterns to visual cues within the piece. (use of adjectives, metaphors, exclamations)

Activity:

1. Discuss- Painted and photographed portraits represent stories that capture an exchange between person, place, and time. What other mediums could be used to recreate a person's story? (language, music) Can such written and musical compositions then be considered portraits? Why or why not?

2. Read- Share the poems "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out" by Shel Silverstein and "Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allan Poe.

3. Discuss as a class- Questions for consideration:

- What specific words create an image within the listener's/reader's mind? (from Shel Silverstein: "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout" used in connection with a stubborn child being punished, "scour the pots" and "spice the hams" to speak to the hardworking nature and movement of the child, "gristly bits" and "rubbery blubbery" to connect with shapes and textures surrounding the personality)(from Edgar Allan Poe: "kingdom by the sea" draws a fluidity of cool background colors, "this maiden she lived with no other thought than to love and be loved by me" to create a pure image of steadfast devotion, "chilling and killing my beautiful Annabele Lee" connects with dark haunting shades, "bright eyes" to represent a penetrating focus of warm colors surrounded by delicate form and beauty)
- What patterns of language might offer a reinforcement of personality? (questions, stream of conscious reflection, repetition, analogies, rhythm)
- What elements of art or visual cues might you use to create a traditional portrait of Sylvia or Annabel Lee? (Shel Silverstein: achromatic heavy lines that move = sarah and her stubborn nature, colorfilled textures and curves within a static shape = persistent nature of descriptive foods and trash)(Edgar Allan Poe: encroaching heavy blues and grays = the ocean and impending death by the waters, white lines of delicate curves = beauty and purity of the maiden's love, warm yellows = penetrating bright eyes)

4. Make- Direct students to create simple sketched portraits inspired by the female characters in the two poems using pastels. Share the drawings with the class and discuss effective uses of pastels in transforming written portraits into visual stories.

5. Listen- Now listen to the musical compositions “Chuncho” by Yma Sumac and “Dance of the Little Swans” by Pyotr Tchaikovsky.

6. Discuss- Questions for consideration:

- What sounds do you notice? (a high operatic woman’s voice, oboes, flutes, violins)
- How might the music create a portrait? What instruments correlate to visual elements? (Yma Sumac: guitar = repetitive thin lines of earthy colors, woman’s voice = punctuated yellows of birds, woman’s voice = bold circular lines of deep red to connect with human nature)(Tchaikovsky: bassoon and oboes = dark colors, flutes = fluid delicate lines of tints and whites, violins = circular sustained cool colors to hint at the intuitive beauty of woman)
- What type of person or people can you envision from these varied sounds? (Yma Sumac: native Peruvians and their ancestors inhabiting the forests)(Tchaikovsky: females of youth, beauty, and whimsical grace)

7. Make- Direct students to create watercolor stories that relate to the musical portraits played. Critique the visual portraits. Ask students to discuss their color/line/shape choices and how such decisions were made according to the sound of a woman’s vibrato, bassoon, flute, or guitar. (heavy lines = forceful vocal presence, punctuated red bursts = asserted vibrato, thin static lines = guitar rhythm, white moving shapes = purity and beauty)

Assessment:

- Students should be able to express their perspectives on portrait as a medium for creating personal stories
- Students should be able to construct written stories from the elements of a portrait
- Students should be able to offer connections between such written language interpretations of visual cues
- Students should be able to discuss more abstract references to portraiture, to include the mediums of language and music
- Students should be able to effectively relate colors/lines/movement to auditory or written cues

Sources:

Shel Silverstein poem: <http://mysongbook.de/msb/songs/s/sarahcyn.html>

Edgar Allan Poe poem: <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/annabel-lee/>

Yma Sumac song “Chuncho”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKprLT-JxPY>

Pyotr Tchaikovsky song “Dance of the Little Swans”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVsb3dFszH4>



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Alfred Hitchcock

Philippe Halsman, American



“Philippe Halsman (1906-1979) was born in Riga, Latvia and began his photographic career in Paris. In 1934 he opened a portrait studio in Montparnasse, where he photographed many well-known artists and writers — including André Gide, Marc Chagall, Le Corbusier, and André Malraux, using an innovative twin-lens reflex camera that he designed himself.

Part of the great exodus of artists and intellectuals who fled the Nazis, Halsman arrived in the United States with his young family in 1940, having obtained an emergency visa through the intervention of Albert Einstein.

Halsman’s prolific career in America over the next 30 years included reportage and covers

for every major American magazine. These assignments brought him face-to-face with many of the century’s leading statesmen, scientists, artists and entertainers. His incisive portraits appeared on 101 covers for LIFE magazine, a record no other photographer could match.

Part of Halsman’s success was his joie de vivre and his imagination — combined with his technological prowess. In 1945 he was elected the first president of the American Society of Magazine Photographers (ASMP), where he led the fight to protect photographers’ creative and professional rights. In 1958 Halsman’s colleagues named him one of the World’s Ten Greatest Photographers.”

Philippe Halsman Archive, Career Overview, <http://philippehalsman.com/career/biography/>.

Philippe Halsman, American
Alfred Hitchcock
Gelatin silver print
c. 1950
Gift of the Dr. James E. and Debra Pearl Photograph Collection, (c) Philippe Halsman/Magnum Photos
UMFA2002.4.2

Sounds of a Portrait Lesson Plan

written by Amber Robb

Objectives:

- Students will learn about the artistic concept of portraiture
- Students will engage in interpretations of portraits and will defend their analyses through the context of artistic elements (line, color, form, movement)
- Students will contemplate the connections between visual elements of portraits and sound
- Students will create portraits from voices captured during interviews and lectures, translating those individual voices into visual representations/ portraits of those people

State Core Links:

Speaking and listening standards: Grades 3rd-8th

Language standards (conventions and vocabulary acquisition): Grades 3rd-8th

Fine arts standards (making, perceiving, expressing, contextualizing): Grades 3rd-8th

Social studies standards: Grades 3rd-8th

Grade Level:

3rd -8th

Materials:

- Computer (with online access)
 - Print of Alfred Hitchcock by Philippe Halsman, courtesy UMFA
 - Photographs of the people mentioned above
 - Paper
 - Colored Pencils
 - Collage Materials (magazine pages, food wrappers, newspapers, cloth)
 - Glue
 - Sample of Alfred Hitchcock's voice
 - Varying voice samples of famous people (see "Suggested Sources" below)
1. Orson Welles
 2. Jaron Lanier
 3. Amy Sedaris
 4. Ayn Rand
 5. Mike Tyson
 6. Ai Weiwei
 7. Margaret Cho
 8. Danny John-Jules
 9. Kathleen Turner
 10. David Sedaris
 11. Peter Dinklage

Introduction:

Begin by showing the iconic photograph, *Alfred Hitchcock*, by Philippe Halsman. Discuss the style of art (portraiture) and the relationship between artist / subject / viewer. What elements of art are used by the artist to create and reinforce the personality of the subject? (lines, colors, movement, absence or addition of

surrounding objects)

Questions for consideration:

- What are the artist and subject communicating in this portrait?
- What do you see in this photograph? What are some objective comments on this piece? (a large person, static posture, alone)
- What are some subjective comments or judgments about the person photographed? (do you think this is a man or woman? do you think he/she is wealthy/powerful? do you think the person is one to manipulate or is the person being manipulated? does the individual seem happy/sad/mysterious?)
- What specific elements of art can be used to defend interpretations/ perceptions? (starkness in the achromatic palette connects with a serious nature or bleak emotional state, shape and form of the profile to obscure and lend an air of mystery, shape to highlight a grand presence, depth and darkness to perhaps speak to the subject's personality)

Many times not only does the portrait express something to the viewer in the visual realm, but often the piece of art activates other senses (smell, sound, and taste).

- What type of voice or sounds might we expect from this portrait? Remember to correlate such projections to visual artistic cues. (heavy, deep, booming voice? light and airy voice? might there be a lisp or an accent? does one hear a drawl or whisper?)
- Can someone please create a voice for this unspoken man?

Now listen to an interview of this portrait's subject, Alfred Hitchcock (director). Compare and contrast the students' interpretations of the portrait's voice to the actual voice of Mr. Hitchcock.

Do students find that the subject's real voice is symbolically reflected in the visual portrayal of the man?

Activity:

1. Listen to interviews/talks: 1. Orson Welles, 2. Jaron Lanier, and 3. Amy Sedaris (make sure to minimize the computer screen so that students hear the voices, but have no visual cues).

Questions for consideration:

- What physical qualities do you notice in the voices? (low, high, breathy, stutter)
- How do these voices differ? How are they similar? Are the voices male? Are they female? Are the individuals tall or short, large or thin? Why? Are the people blond or brunette? Why?

Listen to the voices once again. Ask students to use paper /colored pencils and sketch simple portraits that correspond to the voices that they have heard. Analyze the visual representations created by students.

- What visual artistic elements did the students use to express the sounds? (large/simple shapes, thick lines, dark colors/shades for deep voices)(repetitive, thin lines and vibrant colors for high sounds)
- How do the portraits compare with actual photographs of Orson Welles, Jaron Lanier, and Amy Sedaris? (show the photographs)

2. Now play interviews: 4. Ayn Rand, 5. Mike Tyson, and 6. Ai Weiwei (make sure to minimize computer screen so that students hear voices, but have no visual cues)

Questions for consideration:

- Again, what physical variations can you detect between these sounds? (accent, lisp, loud, soft, high, low)
- What underlying characterizations/emotions/judgments might be associated with these voices (poverty, education, culture, tension, ease, ferocity, irritation)?

- Can sounds, at times, be effectively correlated to perceptions or preconceived notions regarding character? (defend any assessments that are drawn, for example a lisp = childhood poverty/limited rehabilitation, loud = assertiveness/sense of self, moderate speed of speech = ease, soft = meekness/humble nature, English-speaking accent = education/wealth, muffled drawls=depression)

3. Listen to the audio files once again. Ask students to use paper/collage materials to create more complex portraits that represent the physical and characterized aspects of the voices played. Analyze the creations.

- What visual elements of portraiture were used to represent the physical nature of voice? (heavy, rigid lines or static elements to reflect loud sound) (delicate, fluid shapes to reflect soft sound)
- What visual depictions connected to the more subtle, emotional interpretations of sound? (bland/ uniformed palette to connect with monotones/depression/poverty, warm colors to represent high energy/agitated states, cool pastels or tints to connect with passivity)
- What visual cues were used to represent generalized assumptions/judgments in regards to perceptions of class/culture/race in the vocal samples? (Russian, African-American, Asian)(If cultural underpinnings were detected, did students use stereotypical elements in their portraits...square Russian jaws, almond Asian eyes, and broad/flat African noses? Why? Were these assumptions damaging or helpful to artistic renderings?)
- Discuss the definition of “stereotype”. Are stereotypes always bad or can they be good? Why do we have stereotypes?
- How do the portraits compare with actual photographs of the three individuals, Ayn Rand, Mike Tyson, and Ai Weiwei?

5. Now listen to the sound recordings: 7. Margaret Cho, 8. Danny John Jules, 9. Kathleen Turner, 10. David Sedaris, and 11. Peter Dinklage.

- What portraits, according to our physical and characteristic analysis of sound, might be constructed? Discuss ideas amongst students (aspects previously drawn upon in their collages and sketch portraits)

Compare and contrast the descriptions to actual photographs of Margaret Cho, Danny John Jules, Kathleen Turner, David Sedaris, and Peter Dinklage

- What differences did the students notice? (contradictions? limitations in the judgment and characterization of voice? ...deep voice in a woman, no accent detected in a woman of Asian descent, high voice for a man, British accent for a black man, etc.)
- What social implications might arise in stereotyping within portraiture?

Variations:

Science: Discuss the human vocal tract (physical dimensions), resonance, sound waves, and frequencies. As well, talk about the science of color and frequency. Draw correlations that may be applied to the art of portraiture.

Social Sciences: Expand upon the topic of perception and judgment in regards to what we actually hear in a voice and what information we really can't hear yet often add to the reception of sound (pre-conceived notions, personal histories). Further analyze the social implications of labels and generalizations, within our global culture and the artistic offerings of humanity.

Assesment:

- Students should be able to discuss the art of portraiture and elements of art, while representing their understandings through visual artistic engagement.

- Students should be able to discuss perspectives/perceptions/judgments of sound and the connections to visual artistic elements
- Students should be able to interpret sound visually within portraiture
- Students should be able to critique the benefits and limitations of sound represented in portraits

Suggested Sources:

1. Alfred Hitchcock

Portrait: http://collections.umfa.utah.edu/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/16006

Vocal tracts/links: <http://youtu.be/umfiwl-710M?t=25m43s>

2. Orson Welles

Portrait: <http://www.viewzone.com/orson0.jpg>

Vocal/Sound clip: <http://youtu.be/Zj0ZZnbVEMM?t=5m50s>

3. Jaron Lanier

Portrait: <http://news.3am.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/jaron-lanier-mini.jpg>

Vocal/Sound clip: <http://youtu.be/jtuM1j-vFsA?t=16m14s>

4. Amy Sedaris

Portrait: http://images.tbd.com/entertainment/amy_sedaris_simple_times_606.jpg

Vocal/Sound clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eygy9IbClqw>

5. Ayn Rand

Portrait: http://img.timeinc.net/time/daily/2011/11/04/360_culrand_0425.jpg

Vocal/Sound clip: <http://youtu.be/CoAKer8Ifds?t=1m2s>

6. Mike Tyson

Portrait: http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_IFHUqrdpoYY/TMZVBR4QOJI/AAAAAAAAAFM/CVPMHlpm9t8/s1600/Mike_Tyson97_Wallpaper_1024.jpg

Vocal/Sound clip: <http://youtu.be/F2Y0kVdD1aU?t=10m20s>

7. Ai Weiwei

Portrait: http://www.mdnphoto.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/20111021_aiweiwei_portrait_beijing_studio_china01.jpg

Vocal/Sound clip: http://youtu.be/AOQ_9SGSKsA?t=3m25s

8. Margaret Cho

Portrait: http://cherrygrrl.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/3669205268_0f0e1669ed1.jpg

Vocal/Sound clip: <http://youtu.be/YbSVaH0fMUs?t=5m43s>

9. Danny John Jules

Portrait: http://microwave.filmlondon.org.uk/assets/ffff90ee306a7483c9cb5b3b57aad6b4.medium_457x380.gif?1287202662

Vocal/Sound clip: <http://youtu.be/ymjDpHKuh20?t=2m21s>

9. Kathleen Turner

Portrait: http://i.goldstar.com/gse_media/11111/kathleen-turner-122711.jpg?q=30&h=520&w=920

Vocal/Sound clip: <http://youtu.be/tcNpu-Usr1I?t=6m35s>

10. David Sedaris

Portrait: <http://scope.uiowa.edu/assets/Uploads/sedaris.jpg>

Vocal/Sound clip: <http://youtu.be/WoH7X1ZOslc?t=47s>

11. Peter Dinklage

Portrait: <http://www.gq.com/images/entertainment/2011/12/MOTY/peter-dinklage/peter-dinklage-lightbox-2.jpg>

Vocal/Sound clip: <http://youtu.be/CuEfEv00IsY?t=7m53s>



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Untitled (*Standing Man in Tie and Short Sleeves*) **Mike Disfarmer, American**



“What distinguishes this product of a seemingly ordinary Main Street portrait studio from that of others on every Main Street in the United States? In seeking an answer, we must consider the character of his subjects, the time in which they were recorded, and the photographer’s artistry.” –Julia Scully (Julia co-discoverer the work of the now-famous Disfarmer in 1974)

Artist Mike Disfarmer (1884-1959) was an American photographer from the rural town of Heber Springs, Arkansas. While little is known of Disfarmer, his photographs suggest a straightforward awareness and passion for his surroundings and those around him.

Specific information about Disfarmer’s life are sketchy at best, which some attribute to his reclusive lifestyle. He was also not well known or celebrated during his lifetime.

Disfarmer was born Mike Meyers, but later changed his name to Mike Disfarmer, which he announced in the town newspaper. It is said this was a way for him to disconnect from his agrarian roots. His sense of individuality continued when he rebuilt his house to include a photography studio in 1926, where he both lived and worked until his death.

Disfarmer’s work is characterized by a stark realism. Through his simple, but profound portraits, an aesthetic of minimalism tells a story of his town and of the subjects he captured with a mysterious familiarity. Interestingly, his photographs became more bare as his work evolved. His portraits, known as “penny portraits”, were bought for twenty-five to fifty cents from the town people and given as tokens to family and friends.

The collection of photographs captures the heart of a particular time, place, and the people occupying it. After a few years of declining health Disfarmer died alone in his studio in 1959. Joe Allbright, the former mayor of Heber Springs, gained permission to collect Disfarmer’s glass negatives after his death. It wasn’t until 1970 that Peter Miller with the help of Julia Scully preserved, catalogued, and published his prints. Since then relatives and townspeople contributed their own photographs to exhibits and collections to live on today.

Mike Disfarmer, American
Untitled (Standing Man in Tie and Shirt Sleeves, Castle Background)
gelatin silver print
c. 1940
Purchased with funds from Dr. Donald L. and Alice A. Lapp
UMFA2005.35.1

Portraits of a Time and Place Lesson Plan

written by Jennie LaFortune

Objectives:

Using Disfarmer's piece and story as a catalyst, students will:

1. Learn about Disfarmer's story and how he created his photographs
2. Recreate simplistic photographs
3. Create their own time and place portrait
4. Discuss and critique their creations

Duration:

Approximately 1 ½ hours or two 45 minute class periods. Lesson may be stretched for greater complexity and or depth.

Grade level:

Grades 3-12. Lesson may be simplified or advanced depending on grade.

Materials:

- Image of Untitled [Standing man in tie and shirt-sleeves, castle background]
You can find an image on the UMFA collection database at:
http://collections.umfa.utah.edu/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/17412
- Other images (optional) by Disfarmer (see above link)
- Access to a digital camera, iPhone, or the like
- Handouts for group assignment and plan (attached)
- Paper for backdrop
- Dress up clothes (optional and depending on chosen era)

Concepts/Key Terms to Review or Introduce:

Digital- Involving or relating to the use of computer technology and photography.

Gelatin Silver- A process using gelatin as the binder and developed silver as the image material. The most common black and white print process, introduced in 1885 and still in use today.

Realism- The attempt to represent subject matter truthfully without artificiality and avoiding artistic conventions.

Setting- The place and time or type of surroundings where something is positioned or where an event takes place.

Tone- The quality of color in art, the lightness or darkness, and or the general mood and feeling the work evokes.

Activity:

1. Getting Started: Start a discussion about photographs. Ask the students to think about their homes and the photographs hanging up around them. Involve the class in a general discussion about how photography has changed. Ask them why they take photographs and how easy it for them to post pictures with a touch of their finger. Explore the pros and cons to our photographic/digital world.
2. Directing the Learning:
 - a. Show students Disfarmer's Untitled image on the overhead or LCD. Ask for general observations. Explain a little bit about how the setting tells a story. Where, when, why, how.

- b. After briefly sharing Disfarmer's story and practice ask for more observations and see if or how the students' remarks change.
- c. It's fun to see some of the other photographs of "everyday" people too. UMFA has a collection here: <http://collections.umfa.utah.edu/index.php/Search/Index?search=disfarmer>
- d. Ask students if they've seen pictures from when their parents were their age. Ask what their own children might say about their photographs or portraits in the future. Describe how time, and place helps describe an era.

3. Activity: Students will be creating their own minimalistic photographs of one another (some singles, groups, or acting as, just like Disfarmer's portraits). Possible options for this activity include different eras (i.e. the 1950's, or 1990's) depending on class decisions, curriculum connections, etc. The portraits will be taken with digital photography for ease and later displayed in the classroom gallery stroll.

- a. Put students into groups of three to four
- b. The group (or teacher) will discuss and decide who will be assigned each role. Some may act as more than one.
 - i. Photographer
 - ii. Producer/set design (in charge of location in school or classroom and minimalistic back drop)
 - iii. Persons photographed
 - iv. Costumes (optional)
- c. Give students time to come up with a plan of action (this can be turned in for points/accountability)
- d. Later that day or the next, it is photo studio time and the fun begins! Students will schedule times to shoot and make their pictures come to life.
- e. Later that week print out the portraits and have each group briefly describe their photo shoot using elements of time and place.
- f. Have the class wander around and view other groups' portraits at the class gallery stroll.

*Possible extension activity/lesson: using the produced photographs to write narratives and or create character sketches.

Grandfather's Funeral

Shonto Begay, American



Navajo artist Shonto Begay represents contemporary Navajo culture in both realistic and imaginative forms. While his work is often compared to the post-Impressionists, he maintains that the broken lines in his paintings represent the energy of the universe. In *Grandfather's Funeral*, Begay portrays the passing of a generation in the background, while the boy in the foreground is enfolded into the pulsing liveliness of the sky.

Shonto Begay was born on a Navajo reservation sheep camp. His mother was a traditional rug weaver of Tonalea storm patterns and his father was a respected medicine man.

Shonto Begay, American (Diné [Navajo])

Grandfather's Funeral

Acrylic on canvas

2011

Collection of Diane and Sam Stewart; Art © Shonto Begay, courtesy of Mark

Sublette of Medicine Man Gallery

L2012.59.11

Authentic Storytelling Lesson Plan

written by **Megan Hallett**

Objectives:

To facilitate authentic visual storytelling with students that incorporates evidence of culture and communities; and to frame art making as storytelling in the classroom. We are telling stories about ourselves by telling stories about our cultures and communities. We engage with stories to better understand who we are.

State Core Links:

Visual Art:

Standard 1 - (Making): The student will explore and refine the application of media, techniques, and artistic processes. Objective 1 - Explore a variety of art materials while learning new techniques and processes.

Standard 3 - (Expressing): The student will choose and evaluate artistic subject matter, themes, symbols, ideas, meanings, and purposes. Objective 2 - Discuss, evaluate, and choose symbols, ideas, subject matter, meanings, and purposes for students' own artworks.

Social Studies:

Benchmark: All people exist within cultures, or the way of life of a group of people. All human communities have cultural attributes. These attributes change over time in response to changes in the world around them.

Standard 2- Students will understand cultural factors that shape a community. Objective 1 - Evaluate key factors that determine how a community develops.

Grade levels:

Third and above

Materials:

cultural bubble worksheet

faces worksheet

colored pencils

skin color colored pencils

Introduction:

This activity happens in four stages- introduction and inspiration with My Grandfather's Funeral, cultural identity activity, skin color activity and the a final visual storytelling activity. This process asks students to explore their home cultures, to understand the unique ways that culture is expressed and to represent a personally significant family/cultural event. They will be urged over the course of the lesson to represent in their pictures "difference" and to think about how their artistic choices with color and symbols can convey the richness of their particular experience.

Step 1-Visual Inventory of My Grandfather's Funeral

- Show the students the image of My Grandfather's Funeral.
- As the introduction to this lesson where we will be working on telling a personal story about our family cultures, I will be leading a visual inventory of this image.
- Performing a visual inventory means looking and discussing what you see. There are no "right or wrong answers," but it is important to be able to back up what you think with evidence from the painting.

- The visual inventory will happen in two stages. First we will identify what we see and then we will discuss how what we see makes us feel or is like something from our own lives.
- We want our inventory to be “exhaustive.” That means that we will keep going until we feel confident that everything has been seen and said. If we feel pleasantly exhausted or tired at the end, we will know that we have done good work!

- What we see:
 - Name everything that you see in the painting. Remember we are naming objects first, not yet trying to talk about what they may represent or how they make us feel.
 - Describe the colors in the painting.
 - Describe what the boy is doing.
 - Describe what the people in the background are doing.
 - Describe the expression on the boy’s face.
 - Describe the postures of the people in the background.
 - What is the boy holding in his hand?
 - How many insects are there?
 - Tell the students the title of the painting. Do they see anything more or differently than they did before they knew the title.

- What we feel and can we make connections to our own experiences?
 - How does this painting make you feel?
 - How do you think the boy feels? Why?
 - How do you think the people in the background feel? Why?
 - Have you ever been to a funeral? How was it alike or different than the scene in the painting?
 - Now that you know that the painting is titled, My Grandfather’s Funeral, what do you think about the butterflies? Could they be a symbol of something important to the story we see here? Is there anything about the butterflies life cycle might give us clues to the meaning?
 - Give me one word to describe what you feel when you hear the word funeral. Give me one word to describe the feeling of this visual story. Do the words match?

Step 2- What does it mean to tell an authentic personal story?

- From Shonto Begay’s biography-
Shonto speaks to audiences of all ages. He presents his personal history as a Navajo who happens to draw upon his culture in its modern context. He illustrates his talks with slides and prints and gives short art lessons to students.
"I have always had a love for art. From a very young age, I found excitement in the experience of drawing. To recreate facets of my universe in varying degrees has always been my life's adventure.
I was born in a hogan in Shonto, Arizona. My parents are traditional Navajo people. My father is a medicine man, and my mother weaves rugs and herds sheep.
My message is simple. Build bridges through the arts and stories of your culture, validate and share these visions and voices. Celebrate your personal identity through the arts. In my talks, I am as much a student as I am a teacher," says Shonto.

- When Shonto Begay encourages people to “celebrate their personal identity,” he is encouraging you to tell stories that are authentic.
- Authentic- Conforming to an original so as to reproduce essential features; or true to one’s own personality, spirit, or character.

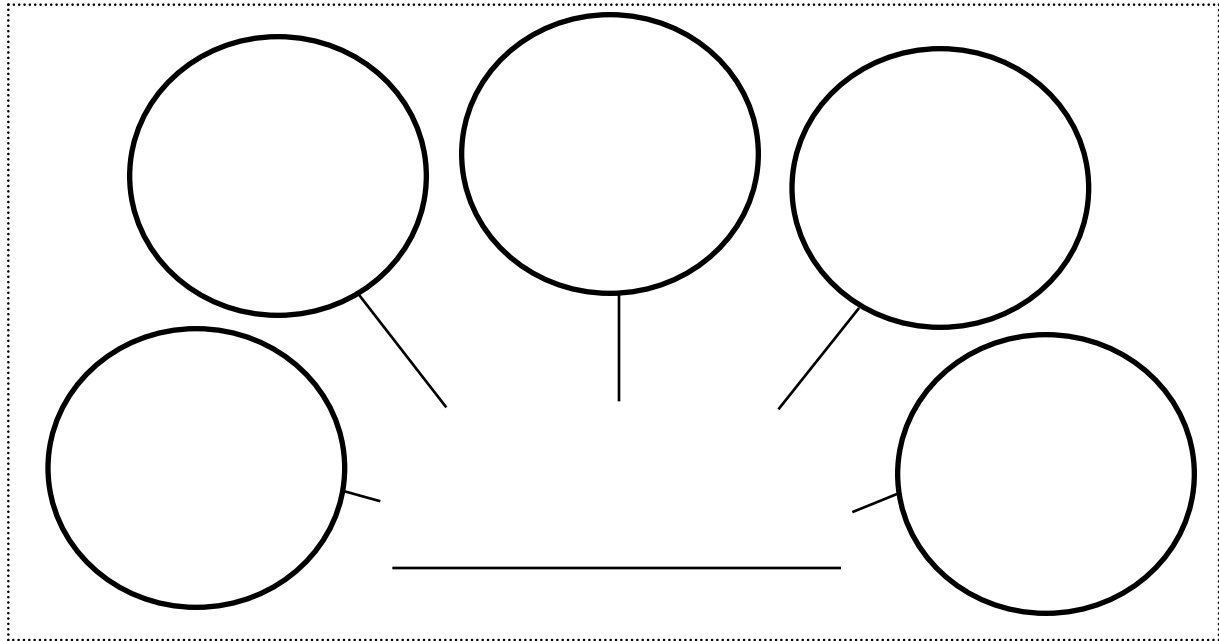
- Synonyms: true, right, real enough, bona fide, original. Antonyms: fictitious, pseudo, simulated
- All stories do not have to be “authentic,” but with this activity we will have authenticity be one of our main goals.
- We are going to use an example of an authentic story as a source of inspiration to tell a visual story about ourselves that is “true” to our own lives.
- In order to hold ourselves to the ideal of authenticity we will first explore our ideas about our own cultural identities. We will work to define them, understand how they overlap and think about ways to represent them visually.

Activity I:

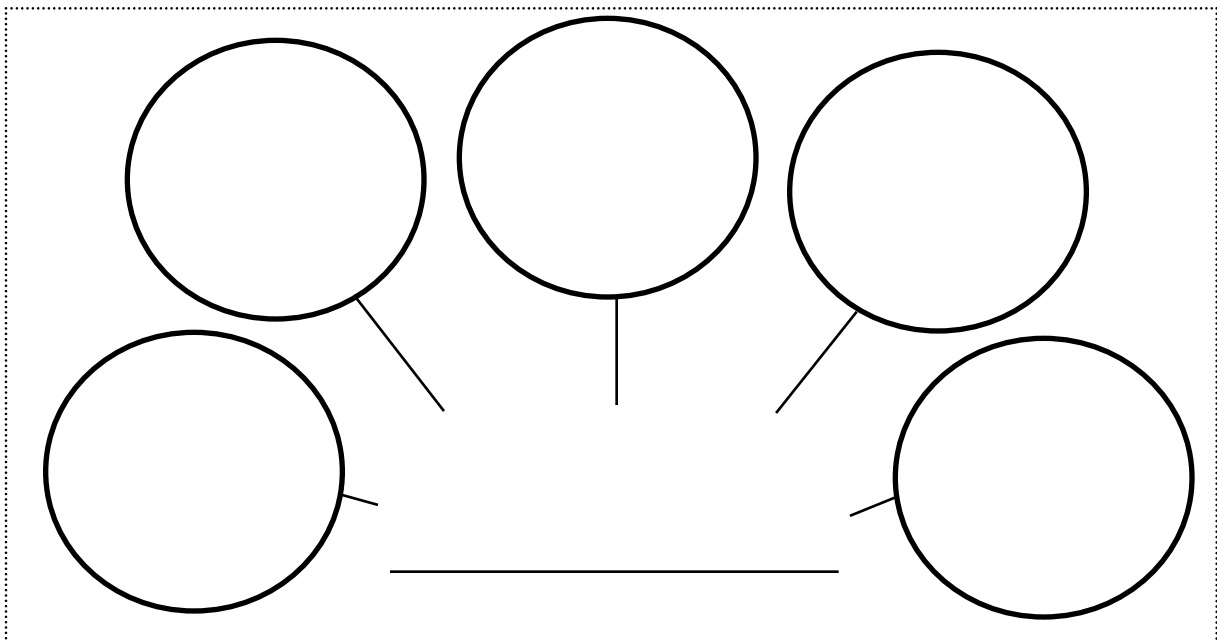
Exploring Culture

- What does the word culture mean? It is a shared system of meanings, beliefs, values and behaviors through which we interpret our experiences. It is collective, or shared. Culture is learned and changes over time.
- Culture is generally understood to be "what we know that everyone like us knows."
- Define the school culture. Think about appropriate behaviors, the way you are supposed to behave as you walk through the halls, what you do each day in your classroom. Are there differences between the culture of a kindergarten classroom and a third grade classroom? What about second and third? Does this school have a culture that is different than another elementary school?
- Culture can be seen in- Ceremonies, traditions, traditional foods, dress, music, holidays and festivals, rules for behavior, values, and stories.
- How you define your culture can change over time. We can belong to multiple cultures and have many cultural identities.
- We are going to use the worksheet to represent the multiple cultural identities we have.
- Think about kid culture. What things do you do, or talk about, that your parents do not know as much about?
- Think about places where you go and use specialized equipment and skills- sports culture, dance culture, artist culture, video game culture, reader cultures... These are all places where we “know what everyone like us that shares this cultural identity knows.”
- Think about your families. What celebrations are important to you? Do you know specific dances or performances that are special to your family and community? Do you speak another language? Do you ever attend classes to learn more about your culture? Are there places that you go where you understand the activities in a way that someone else might not?
- Think about kid culture. What things do you do, or talk about, that your parents do not know as much about?
- Think about places where you go and use specialized equipment and skills- sports culture, dance culture, artist culture, video game culture, reader cultures.....

On the line in the middle write your name. Inside the bubbles place the name of the different cultures that you identify with.



Now you will fill it out a second time. But this time you will come up with a symbol that represents the cultural identity. It will be a simple picture. Consider foods, dress, people, tools and equipment, places where you experience that culture.

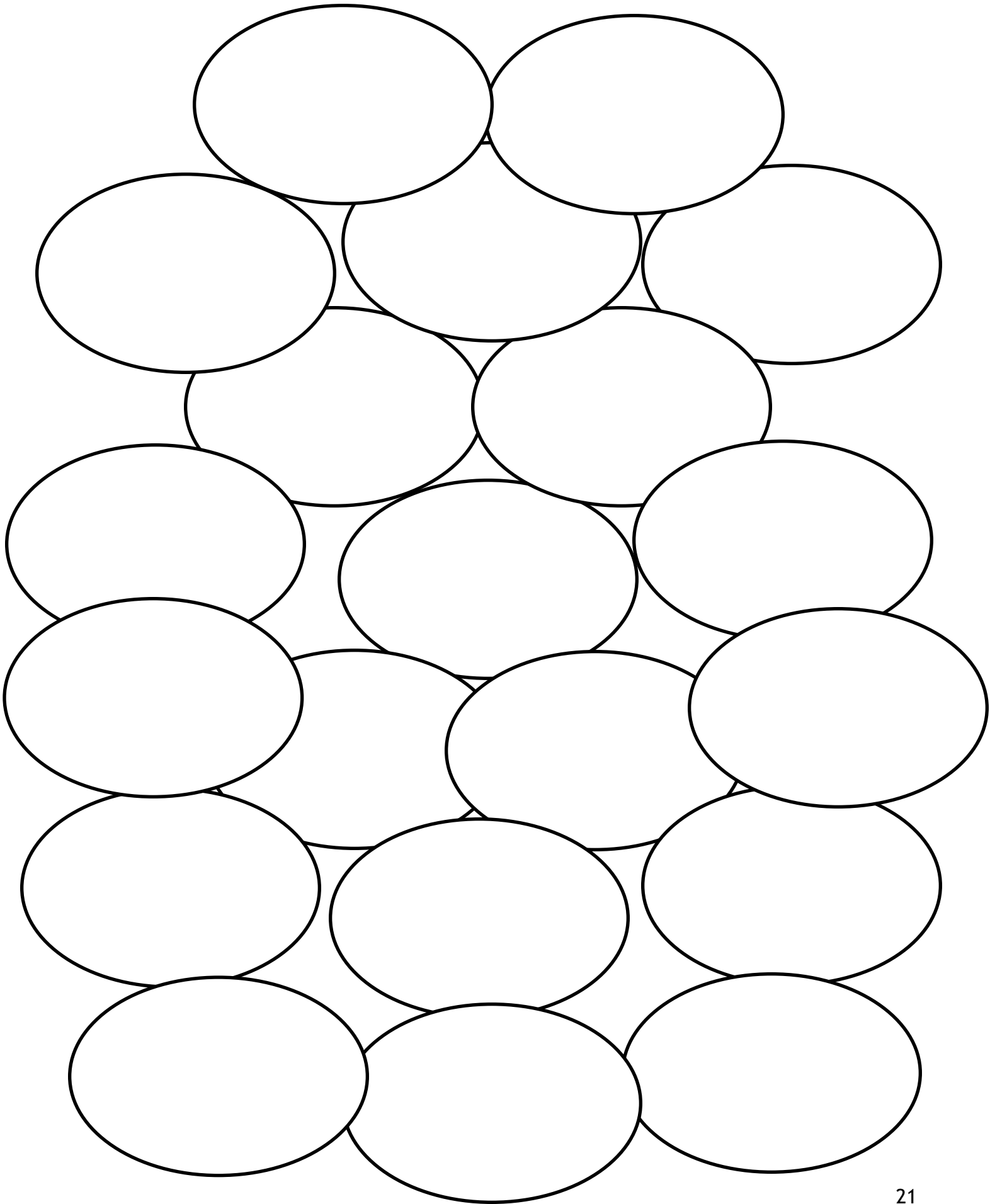


Activity 2: The Skin You Are In

- When telling an authentic story about ourselves we will want to represent ourselves, our families and our communities the way we really look. If you have glasses, a picture of you will have glasses. If you have beautiful brown skin, so should a picture of you! We do not all look the same, so let's show that in our artwork.
- In this activity we will be experimenting with "mixing" or layering different colored pencil colors from a set to try to match our own skin color. We will first take a look at an artist who creates artwork that is about how different skin color really is.
- Show them Byron Kim's artwork, Synecdoche.



- From the National Gallery of Art: "Synecdoche is a continuing project of portraiture now comprising more than 400 panels, each a single hue ranging from light tan or pink to dark brown. Finding sitters among strangers, friends, family, neighbors, and fellow artists, Kim records each person's skin color in oil paint mixed with wax that he applies with a palette knife on a single 10 x 8-inch panel, a common size for portrait photography. When installed, the accompanying subtitle consists of the names of the sitters, arranged alphabetically by first name."
- For the activity you will need- faces worksheet and Sargent Multicultural Colored pencils. (both Nasco and Dick Blick carry these. Unlike other brands they can be used in an electric pencil sharpener.)
- Use the set of colored pencils provided to fill out the ovals on your worksheet. Your goal is to fill them with 20 different colors of skin. In order to get that many different colors, you will have to experiment with different pressure as you color and also layering different colors on top of each other.
- When you are done work with two other students to create skin matches for you and for them by layering the colored pencils.



Activity 3: Putting it all together

- We have looked at the work of Shonto Begay and learned through his own words how his artwork tells a story that is true to him and true to his culture and values. We have mapped out our own cultural identities and created symbols for those identities. We have created a sampling of a huge variety of skin colors just using our colored pencils and found colors that will work as a match for our own.
- Now we are going to put all of these ideas together into an authentic self portrait.
- Your assignment is to think about an event or activity that is important to you and your family. Remember that you determine who your family is. For some of you family is the people who live in your home, but for some people family is a term that includes people in their community.
- Draw and color a portrait of this event and the people who are there. Think about and show what it looks like and what you look like at that event. Include the details that someone else will need to understand your story-who is there, what are they doing, how does it feel to be there, and where does it take place?

Resources:

Additional Information on Shonto Begay can be found here: <http://www.shontogallery.com/bio.html>

Information on Byron Kim's Synecdoche can be found here: http://www.nga.gov/press/2009/byron_kim.shtm

Madame de Noailles

Hyacinthe Rigaud, French



“Hyacinthe Rigaud (18 July 1659 – 29 December 1743) was a French baroque painter of Catalan origin whose career was based in Paris. He is renowned for his portrait paintings of Louis XIV, the royalty and nobility of Europe, and members of their courts and considered one of the most notable French portraitists of the classical period.

He was the most important portrait painter during the reign of King Louis XIV. His instinct for impressive poses and grand presentations precisely suited the tastes of the royal personages, ambassadors, clerics, courtiers, and financiers who sat for him. Rigaud owes his celebrity to the faithful support he received from the four generations of Bourbons whose portraits he painted. He garnered the core of his clientele among the richest circles as well as among the bourgeois, financiers, nobles, industrialists and government ministers, also courting all the major ambassadors of his time and several European monarchs. His œuvre reads as a near-complete portrait gallery of the chief movers in France from 1680 to 1740. Some of that œuvre (albeit a minority) also includes those of more humble origins - Rigaud's friends, fellow artists or simple businessmen.

Rigaud is inseparable from his best-known work, a 1701 painting of Louis XIV in his coronation costume which today hangs in the Louvre in Paris, as well as the second copy also requested by Louis XIV that now hangs at the Palace of Versailles. The exact number of paintings he produced remains in dispute, since he left a highly detailed catalogue but also more than a thousand different models which specialists agree he used.[4] To these may be added the large number of copies in Rigaud's book of accounts, without even mentioning the hundreds of other paintings rediscovered since the accounts' publication in 1919.”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyacinthe_Rigaud

Hyacinthe Rigaud, French
Madame de Noailles
Oil painting
1692
Gift of Mrs. Richard A. Hudnut
UMFA1951.005

Taboo Narrative Sketch Lesson Plan

written by Jennie LaFortune

Objectives:

1. Students will practice interpreting art through examination and discussion with peers.
2. Students will explore possible narrative through art interpretation.
3. Students will use inquiry to promote ideas and exploration.
4. Students will write creatively using imagery and perspective.
5. Students will examine color and perception while listening to group ideas.

Duration:

approximately 1½ hours or two 45 minute class periods. Lesson may be stretched for greater complexity and depth.

Grade Level:

grades 6-12. Lesson may be simplified or advanced depending on grade. This lesson has a heavy focus on writing in the arts.

Materials:

- Images of portraits

(Suggested works from the UMFA collection include: Madame de Noailles by Hyacinthe Rigaud, Great Salt Lake by John Button, Portrait of a Lady by Frans Pourbus the Younger, New York 1972 by Helen Levitt. You can find these works at <http://collections.umfa.utah.edu/index.php>.)

- Paper

- Pencil or pen

- Bulletin board

- List of “taboo” words (either created by you or the students depending on activity preference below)

- Thesaurus

- Optional enhancement examples- Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs (YA novel) and The Mysteries of Harris Burdick (children’s book of illustrations, story examples of Harris Burdick found here: http://hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/davidc/6c_files/documents/mysteries/divmysteries.htm)

Concepts/Key Terms to Review or Introduce:

Imagery- language that appeals to the senses. Detailed descriptions of people or objects stated in terms of our senses (sight, touch, smell, taste, hear).

Perspective- a technique used to representing a three-dimensional world on a two-dimensional surface; the relationship of aspects of a subject to each other and to a whole.

Point of View- the perspective, attitude, or outlook of a narrator or character in a piece of art (or literature).

The Big Picture:

Students will “play the game” of Taboo using art and writing. Each picture (have all groups do the same picture, or pick six different portraits) will be assigned a number and established groups will secretly choose the picture they are to describe. Their descriptions must apply great imagery and original depth. A typed up list of “thou shalt not use” words will be next to each picture (see below). After discussion and writing has taken place, descriptions will be read. Student groups will keep track of how many pictures they can tell from the group description to add an element of competition. The class will vote on one passage for the “overall favorite” or “finest written” or best use of imagery”.

Activity:

1. Set groups up according to your liking and class needs (student choice, teacher choice, random, etc.). Ideal size is no less than three no more than four.
2. Come up with a list of “taboo” or “thou shalt not use” words (approximately 5-10) for each picture. Words should be obvious go to words or phrases that students would naturally use. For example, if a picture were of a sunset and the ocean, some “taboo” words on the list might be orange, red, sun, bright, beautiful, water, ocean, blue, beach, sunset, etc. This will force students to use layered words and phrases (imagery) in unexpected ways producing incredible writing about the portrait (see 8th grade student examples attached).
3. Pictures will be hung on a wall or bulletin board with a number next to the picture. If you are using the internet, showing the picture online and then printing it off will help students see more definition and a better resolution of the piece.
4. Instruct students that they are going to go on a gallery stroll around the room and each group will secretly choose a work of art that speaks the group (if only using one portrait, the class can view together). It is fine if more than one group chooses the same painting. It actually works better in the end contest to see how different the descriptions are for the same work of art.
5. Explain the rules and intent of the game/assignment to the students
 - a. Each group will take a good look at their chosen picture (shhhit’s a secret)
 - b. Using the brainstorm sheet, explain the goals and desired result of their description (go over concepts like imagery, perspective, and point of view). Remind the class that the goal is to make your story or character sketch sound great (full of imagery), but to not make it too easy for the class to guess either (part of the fun of the game)
 - c. Optional: read a sample of a groups description
 - d. Using the brainstorm sheet (see attached) explain how to begin writing
 - i. Give verbal samples of how the voice of perspective may be from someone looking at the picture, or someone in the picture. Maybe there’s a dog or cat that could speak from their point of view. Perhaps even the grass, house, or door might want to describe their daily life in the scenery you are looking at. Make it interesting!
6. Give students approximately 45 minutes to compose their written sketch. Have thesaurus handy.
7. When each group is finished one reader per group will stand in front of the “gallery” and read their composition. The other groups will quietly deliberate for a few seconds after the description is read and write down which picture (the picture number) they think the group described.

8. When all the groups have gone see which group has the highest number of correct guesses. To extend the competition you could vote on “overall favorite” or “finest written” or best use of imagery”.

Assessment:

Such an activity as this is more of an informal assessment. Observe group interaction as they write, and listen to the group descriptions as they read them aloud to assess. For student accountability and presentation, collect descriptions and hang them below the art work.

Self Portrait in a Velvet Cap with Plume Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, Dutch



Rembrandt is considered one of the greatest painters and print-makers in European art history, and he is immortalized in Dutch history for his contributions to the Dutch Golden Age. Although Rembrandt is known best for his paintings, he was first known for his etchings. He started to practice this medium early in his career, while he was in Leiden, a Dutch providence in South Holland. His first etching dates to 1625, while his last one was done just four years before his death in 1669.

His inspiration came from early etching masters like Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden; however, Rembrandt became a master in his own right. He was a pioneer for this medium because he explored so many aspects of it. He experimented with line thickness, texture and tone.

In all, he did about 300 etchings that include scenes of 17th century life, images of his beloved Amsterdam, landscapes, and “Histories,” which are depictions from the Bible, mythology, and ancient history. His first etchings were small self portraits. He created 20 etchings and 60 paintings of himself. Some of the reasons

Rembrandt did so many self portraits is that he didn’t have to pay for a model, and he could paint or etch anytime he wanted. An example of one of Rembrandt’s self portrait etchings is *Self Portrait in a Velvet Cap with Plume*. He did this etching in 1638, and it is an example of his creative and mature use of lines to create darkness and texture. His un-kept curly hair is an allusion to Albrecht Dürer’s own self portrait etching. The plume in his hat suggests a carefree lifestyle, while his stylish shirt and jacket showcases, at that time, a prosperous lifestyle. The copper plate of this etching still exists in Paris. It remains a fine example of Rembrandt’s profound ability to portray genuine and natural emotions, and it also shows his ability to manipulate light and shadow.

Arbitman, Kahren Jones. "Rembrandt". Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh. Home.

Web. 16 Nov. 2011. <http://www.carnegiemuseums.org/cmag/bk_issue/1997/mayjun/feat5a.htm>.

Orenstein, Nadine. "Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669): Prints". Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rembp/hd_rembp.htm>.

Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, Dutch
Self Portrait in a Velvet Cap with Plume
Etching
1638
Gift of Merrilee and Howard Douglas Clark
UMFA1996.47.1

Self-Portrait Poem & Drawing Lesson Plan

written by Richard Harmston

Objectives:

Students will share how they see themselves through writing and art.

Duration: 1-2 class sessions

Grade level:

2-4 grade

State Core Links:

Language Arts:

Standard 8: (Writing): Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.
Objective 6: Write in different forms and genres. a. Produce personal writing (e.g., journals, personal experiences, eyewitness accounts, memoirs, literature responses). b. Produce traditional and imaginative stories, narrative and formula poetry.

Visual Arts:

Standard 3 (Expressing): The student will choose and evaluate artistic subject matter, themes, symbols, ideas, meanings, and purposes.

Objective 1: Explore possible content in art prints or works of art.

Objective 2: Discuss, evaluate, and choose symbols, ideas, subject matter, meanings, and purposes for students' own artworks.

Materials:

- Materials for writing self-portrait poems (Paper, pencils, thesauruses, etc)
- Materials for self-portrait drawings (Paper, pencils, pens)

Discussion:

A photograph can reproduce the visual appearance of a person, but only exceptional photographs also portray personality. In part, personality is suggested by the clothing a person wears and the setting and circumstance in which a person is photographed. Facial expression and body posture may also contribute to revealing character.

Activity:

Have students bring in two photos of themselves—one school photograph and one photograph of them doing an activity they enjoy. Have students compare their expression, posture, clothing, etc. Although both photographs are portraits of themselves which photo tells more about who they are.

Activity:

Read aloud the student poems below and discuss how to write a self-portrait poem. (Point out how each poem is able to express the personality of its subject):

Here I am at RoundUP
Montana with by bright
Fur coat that looks like a pipe
Cleaner, someone
Told me. I am three million
Years old but I look
Like I am twelve. I am out
Feeding the cats
In the barn when the pigs
Come trampling over me
By JoEllen Hines (Nez Perce Elementary)

I'm standing in the mountains
By a glacier
My rifle
In hand, watching for bears
My backpack heavy on my shoulders,
My goose down parka waving,
Open in the wind,
By John Lundeby (Nez Perce Elementary)

Note: JoEllen introduced her poem by saying "I act like I'm older 'cause I'm the oldest in my family, but I look young. I am! I try to help when I can, but sometimes I get into trouble." John introduced his poem this way "I want to take care of myself, but I think it can be hard."

Activity:

Have students answer the following questions: 1) What clothing best expresses you? 2) In what setting do you see yourself? This setting can be real or imagined. 3) What age best expresses who you are? 4) What activities or events best represent you? (Note: further discussion of each question will likely be needed).

When each student has a few notes toward a poem, suggest that each writer start the poem with either, "Here I am..." or "I am standing..." or "I am any verbing..." Include details from the notes as the writer sees fit. New details can also be included.

Once the poems are written, share and talk about them. The next step is to use the poem as the basis for a self-portrait art project. When these are finished, display the poems and pictures together in a public space. Include a plain white sheet of poster paper for viewers to write their reaction to the art display.