

My Story Portrait

Inspired by the Art of Mary Cassatt

Mary Cassatt was an expert in showing the relationships and the stories of the real people in her paintings. Look at the details. What is the person wearing? What are they doing and who is included in the painting? All of these details tell us so much more than just what a person looks like on the outside. With the inspiration of Cassatt's portraits, and the idea of storytelling in mind, we will create our own original self-portrait drawings.



Schedule: 2016-2017, Grades K-5, one class period of approximately 60 min.

Materials & Space: PowerPoint Presentation: *Mary Cassatt Extraordinary Impressionist Painter* by Barbara Herkert, Pencils and Erasers, 12 x 18 white drawing paper, Mirrors, Assorted colored drawing media

Big Idea: The Artist is a Storyteller

Student Learning Assessment

Learning Objectives <i>What I want my students to know and be able to do</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>What I will observe in my students - traits that can be seen and/or heard</i>
1. Observe the portraits of Mary Cassatt to get to know more about the artist and her style of artmaking	<input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes key concepts in portraits created by Mary Cassatt including Impressionist style, real-life scenes, and portraits of family and friends
3. Practices portrait drawing by creating a self-portrait	<input type="checkbox"/> Develops age-appropriate skills with drawing media by using materials safely and with thoughtful consideration <input type="checkbox"/> Practices drawing and placement of key facial features in a portrait drawing Identifies the difference between a self-portrait and a portrait

4. Creates an original, detailed portrait artwork in order to tell a story about the artist

- Details and elaboration develop and enhance the original portrait sketch
- Choice of art materials for drawing supports the artist's ideas

Vocabulary

Portrait: *an artwork about a person*

Self-Portrait: *an artwork about one's self*

Impressionism: a style of artwork popular in the late 1800's that shows a loose, painterly, interpreted "impression" of a scene rather than a strict, realistic view

"en plein air" term with impressionist beginnings meaning a work that is painted outside quickly to capture emotion and feeling of a scene

Elements and Principles to consider with this lesson:

Shape: Shapes are both geometric and organic - Small shapes placed together can help create a bigger drawing. For example, what shapes can be seen in a drawing of an eye?

Texture: how something feels, real or implied - Texture is a key feature of Impressionist paintings because the painters are more interested in capturing a quick impression or interpretation of the scene, and the realistic details aren't as prominent as the overall feeling so they let their brushstrokes be quick and loose.

Lesson Procedures for Creating a Story Portrait (60 minutes)

Prior to the beginning of the lesson, organize and prepare studio art materials and classroom environment for students, consider distribution of materials and clean up area, display visual reproductions of Mary Cassatt's artwork if available and set up the PowerPoint presentation: *Mary Cassatt (for 2016-2017)*

Opener: Have the students gather in carpet area or at assigned desks in preparation for observing the PowerPoint presentation. To begin, gather information by asking the students some opening questions. (5 minutes)

What is a portrait? What is a self-portrait?

What do you need to draw a portrait? (An idea, a person, a pencil...)

A portrait is a drawing of a person that tells us much more than what a person looks like. Let's look at some portraits created by Mary Cassatt, a famous American Impressionist painter to learn a little bit more about this.

PowerPoint Presentation: Mary Cassatt 2016-2017

Present presentation using PowerPoint (10 minutes)

Introduce the artist and share background info about her life. Introduce *Impressionism*, a style of painting that was popular in the late 1800's and shows an overall "impression" or artist's interpretation of a scene rather than just the facts. Provide opportunities for students to observe and discuss the artwork at their own pace through an age-appropriate guided discussion.

Studio Project: Story Portrait (40 minutes)

Students will create a self-portrait drawing that also tells a story about themselves. The details tell the story about that person, show how each person is unique, show them doing something they love to do, or show them someplace they love to be.

How to Draw a Portrait (Step-by-Step) and (Shape-by-Shape)

Reminder: Convey a positive attitude about your own work, here. Note that for some of us (teachers **and** students) this is not something we have a lot of practice in: hardly anyone is good at something the first time they do it! **Say:** *How many of you were good at riding a bike the first time you tried it? How many of you were you good at writing in cursive the first time you tried it?*

Explain that first you are going to show them how to draw the proportions of a face. Then tell them that once they have their face drawn in pencil, they are going to "tell the story" of their portrait by adding color and details. Where are they? What are they wearing? What details will "tell the story."

Now model drawing your own face using the document camera in the classroom, or with charcoal and an eraser. Model using a mirror to look at your own face, talk about the shapes you notice in your own face.

1. Begin by drawing an oval with your pencil. For K-2 students, have them trace an oval in the air, first. Draw it large on the paper. Look at your chin is it round, pointy? Draw what you see. Draw a faint guideline down the center of the oval, vertically, then draw another guideline across the middle of your oval.

2. Add two eyes. Your eyes will typically be about halfway down from the top of your head where your 2nd guideline is. That is where the eyes go. Look at the shape of your eyes. Now, draw the colored part and the pupil. Add your eyebrows. Your eyebrows start at the corners of your eyes.
3. Add one nose. The sides of the nose are aligned with the insides of the eyebrows and the eyes. Go ahead, feel your face. Think about drawing a nose that connects to your forehead. It's a triangle shape. Add nostrils at the bottom of your nose. A lot of times, nostrils are just small u or c shapes put together to make a bigger shape.
4. Add one mouth. Start with the line where the lips meet and draw that line first. Now draw the shape of lips from that line.
5. Add ears. They are as long as the space between your eyes and your mouth corners. Go ahead, feel your face again.
6. Add a neck and shoulders and more of the body if you can see it.
7. Add your hair. Draw your hair as one big shape and then add more smaller shapes in the big shape to create your style.
8. Add lots of details. Add your clothing, jewelry, glasses, and anything else that is going to make your drawing really look like you and tell your story.
9. Make sure to model erasing any lines that you don't care for, showing that an artist doesn't get everything right the first time.

SKETCH - Direct students to lightly sketch in pencil a self-portrait following demonstrated guidelines and using last PowerPoint slide for reference. Remind them to use the mirrors for reference. The point of the exercise is to help students work slowly to identify key features and proportions of the face to create a likeness of themselves in their self-portrait drawings. (15 minutes)

PREPARE- Now that they have their basic sketch in place have the students think of some details that will tell the story of the portrait. Picture your portrait drawing in your mind. Where are you? What are you wearing? What details can you add that show that this is "YOU"? Talk to the person next to you and tell them the story of your self-portrait.

ELABORATE - Now that a basic sketch for the portrait is in place, use pencil or colored drawing media to add these details. The finished portrait can show the artist's style and does not have to copy the impressionist style of Mary Cassatt. Consider props and clothing, facial expressions, and other unique details to add interest to the finished work. Should a background be added? Encourage students to think of thoughtful details and use drawing media in a considerate and careful way to enhance their original sketch. (25 minutes)

Keep it fun. Keep it interesting. The exciting part is in adding all the details to create the characters in the portraits. Add as much detail as possible to tell the story. (zoom into the moment)

For K-2: Crayons are most likely to be the most effective media choice.

For Grade 3: You may introduce chalk pastels if you think the students are capable, otherwise offer crayons and colored pencils.

For 4-5: Give the students the choice of colored pencils and chalk pastels. Let them know they can use either, or both.

About chalk pastels: let them know that they should use the lightest colors of chalk pastels first, and the darkest last. The chalk pastels can be blended with their fingertips and can be erased with the white "Non-PVC" erasers included in the box. Spray the completed chalk pastel portraits with hairspray as a fixative.

Whatever they choose, encourage them to experiment with whatever media is best going to be able to help them "tell their story."

Conclusion of lesson (5 minutes)

Allow time for students to gather as a whole group, perhaps on the carpet area once again, to share thoughts and ideas and respond to the art-making process. These opportunities to reflect and share with others are important in recognizing, appreciating and communicating our efforts in artmaking.

Some reflective questions...

What is the most important part of drawing a self-portrait?

How do details in your artwork tell us the story of your drawing?

*What art material did you chose and why did that work well for your drawing?
What do you think Mary Cassatt was thinking about when she was painting?
What types of paintings do you think Mary Cassatt would create if she was
creating a painting in 2016?*

CLEAN UP - Allow time for students to clean up their studio space and return materials. Attach Take Home Info Sheets to the back of the portraits. (5 minutes)

Extension

- 1) Allow students to work individually or in small groups to make up a fictional story about a portrait or group portrait created by a famous artist.
- 2) Consider animal portraits.
- 3) Try drawing a portrait from a different point of view. Instead of drawing the front of the face, try drawing a face from the side, or even the back.

References

<https://www.nga.gov/kids/scoop-cassatt.pdf> - From the National Gallery of Art: biography of the artist, study questions for *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair*, 1878

Formative Assessment Checkpoint for Objectives 1 & 2:

Objective: Observe the portraits of Mary Cassatt to get to know more about the artist and her style of artmaking, WA Arts Standards Learning Component 1.1, 4.4

Objective: Identify connections between artists from different countries and cultures WA Arts Standards Learning Component 4.4

Criteria: Students can recognize works of art by Cassatt or point out distinctive qualities of the Impressionist style such as loose, textural paintings of real people and places.

Process: Observed during the commentary connected to PowerPoint discussions and through teacher-directed questions about with the art and artist throughout the presentation

Formative Assessment Checkpoint for Objective 2:

Objective: Practices portrait drawing by creating a self-portrait and a portrait drawing WA Arts Standards Learning Component 1.1,1.2, 3.2

Criteria: Students practice drawing self-portraits and portraits and can identify the difference between them. Students use beginning observational drawing skills to accurately draw a face in an age-appropriate manner.

Process: Observed in studio methods and in the final drawings.

Formative Assessment Checkpoint for Objective 3:

Objective: Creates an original, detailed portrait artwork in order to tell a story about the artist and an important person in their life WA Arts Standards Learning Component 2.1, 3.1, 3.3

Criteria: Students carefully choose their own drawing media and design an original composition to complete their portrait drawings. Their artwork draws on inspiration in their own lives.

Process: Observed during the studio time when students are planning and choosing art materials and in how they are utilizing their time and working space. The drawing communicates a clear message and details support this idea.

With each self-portrait drawing, I learn more about myself and more about drawing portraits. I get better at drawing portraits and I learn more. It is this understanding and the connection between my brain and my hand that makes me want to try it again and again.

Washington State Visual Arts Standards connected to the lesson

Component 1.1: Understands and applies arts concepts and vocabulary.

- Creates and experiences artworks and/or performances in visual arts using arts concepts and vocabulary.

Component 1.2: Develops arts skills and techniques.

- Applies, experiences, and practices basic arts skills and techniques in visual arts.

Component 2.1: Applies a creative process to the visual arts

- Uses ideas, foundations, skills, and techniques to develop visual arts.
- Implements choices of the elements, principles, foundations, skills, and techniques of the arts in a creative work.

Component 3.1: Uses the arts to express feelings and present ideas.

- Presents ideas and expresses feelings at beginning levels using appropriate artistic symbols in a variety of genres and styles in visual arts.

Component 3.2: Uses the arts to communicate for a specific purpose.

- Creates and/or performs an artwork to communicate for a given purpose in visual arts.

Component 3.3: Develops personal aesthetic criteria to communicate artistic choices.

- Shares and demonstrates how individual and personal aesthetic criteria are reflected in artworks and/or performances in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.

Component 4.4: Understands how the arts influence and reflect cultures/civilization, place, and time.

- Compares and shares how the specific attributes of artworks, presentations, and performances reflect cultures and traditions