
5th Grade LWSD Art Docent Project: Self-Portrait Paintings

Focus on Portraiture

Objective: to create a simple and well-proportioned self-portrait painting.

Artistic Influence: Local artist, Barry Johnson



Materials:

- **90# white sulphite or other stiff paper (9"x 12")**
- **Sharp pencil & a good, clean eraser, (hi-polymer type if possible)**
- **Paintbrushes (one medium-large and one small)**
- **Palette or paper plate**
- **Water cups**
- **Paper towels and baby wipes**
- **Acrylic paint (the student example was painted with acrylic paint; watercolor or tempera can be substituted)**

Instructions and notes:

1. You will need help during this lesson. Try to find a few volunteers to assist the lead docent for this lesson.
2. Some students may prefer to paint their portrait from memory (less stressful). Others might want to bring a mirror or a photo. If they do bring a photo of themselves, please make sure that the photo is facing forward.
3. Give the students time to absorb Barry Johnson's colorful portraits and ask how they feel about them. Try to watch the clock during this discussion, though. Students are often impressed by the fact Johnson uses house paint for his portraits and that his paintings are often 4 to 6 feet tall (taller than most 5th graders).
4. Make sure that students all have sharp pencils, access to good erasers, and at least 45 minutes to work.
5. Go through the slides for Steps 1-8 slowly, having students work through each step at the same pace. This will take some confusion out of drawing a portrait and help them keep proper proportions. It is important for students to work quietly for this part. If you have to take much time to get the class's attention between each step, the total lesson will take more than an hour.
6. **Important:** As the lead docent walks students through Steps 1-8, have assistants serve up a small amount of brown & white with a tiny amount of black, red & yellow paint on palettes or paper plates. See palette example above. It is better to serve the paint at the last minute, because acrylic paint dries quickly.
7. Quickly show the slides with steps 9-13 to suggest how students should go about painting.
8. As students finish painting their faces and hair, they can request their clothing & background paint colors.
9. Page 3 of this document contains a printable "Portrait Progression Cheat Sheet" that may be helpful printed large and posted in front of the room or printed small and distributed one per table group.
10. Students should be given at least 20 minutes to work on the painting.
11. Invite students to share their art and talk about the process if time allows.
12. Distribute parent information page for students to take home, and print an extra page to post on your bulletin board with the finished art. See following page.
13. Please complete the brief [LWSD Art Docent Program Feedback Survey](#) for this lesson.
14. Thank you for supporting our elementary students' visual arts education.

LWSD Art Docent Project: Portraits of Emotion

The goal of this 5th grade lesson was to create a simple and well-proportioned self-portrait painting.



Untitled 109, Barry Johnson

WA State Visual Arts Standard

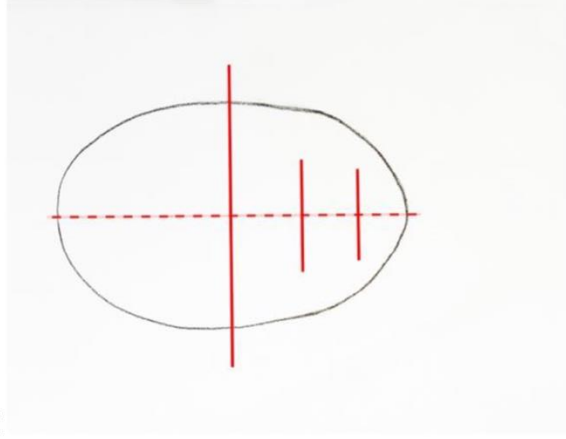
Compare one's own interpretation of a work of art with the interpretation of others.
(VA: Re7.1.5)

In this art lesson taught by volunteer art docents, students studied the proportions commonly seen in a human face and applied this knowledge to creating a simple self-portrait painting.

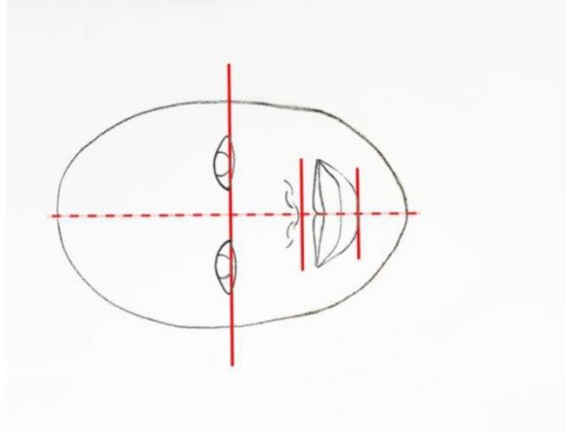
The inspiration for this lesson came from local artist Barry Johnson who uses color brilliantly in his compelling portraits.

Portrait Progression Cheat Sheet

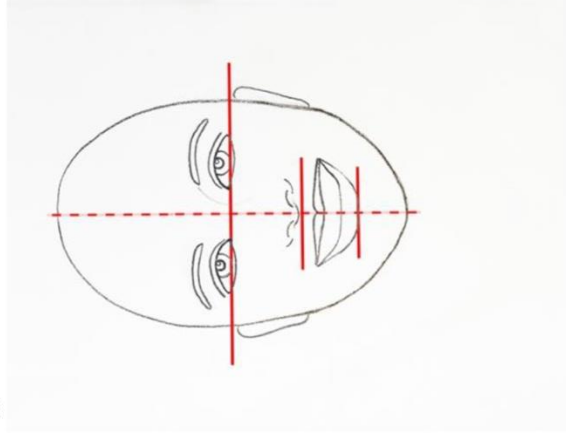
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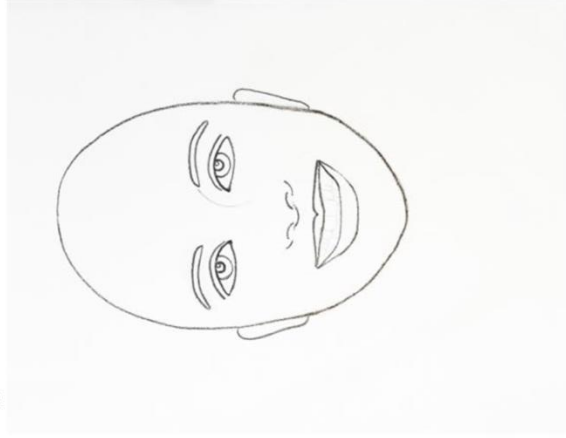
2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.

