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MATH, ART,
COUNSELING/
SELF-AWARENESS

Title: Self-Portrait in the Style of *Equivalent* by Joan Witek

Teacher-in-Residence: Ashley Capps

Grades: 6–8

Subjects: Math, Art, Counseling/Self-Awareness

Goals: Students will create art at the intersection of geometry and self-reflection.

Objectives:

- Students will discuss the artwork *Equivalent* by Joan Witek using math and art vocabulary.
- Students will activate prior knowledge of self-portraits to compare *Equivalent* to other self-portraits they are familiar with.
- Students will choose shapes, colors, patterns, and benchmark measurements they identify with and create their own self-portraits in the style of *Equivalent*.
- Students will participate in a counting meditation focusing either on their self-portraits or *Equivalent*.

PA Standards

- Math [CC.2.3.7.A.2](#)
- Math [CC.2.3.8.A.2](#)
- Arts & Humanities [9.1.8.C](#)
- Arts & Humanities [9.1.8.B](#)

American School Counselors Association National Standards for Students:

- [PS:A1.5](#)
- [PS:A1.8](#)
- [PS:B1.4](#)

Vocabulary:

- shape
- pattern
- contrast
- color
- texture
- space
- form
- parallel
- vertical
- horizontal
- perpendicular
- adjacent
- scale

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Artworks Used:

Equivalent, Joan Witek, 1983

<https://collection.cmoa.org/objects/3d5ee9d3-928c-4594-830d-15112bfd2ec3>

Materials Needed:

- oil pastels
- acrylic paint
- colored pencils
- markers
- large chart paper or large roll of paper
- screen/projector or handouts with Counting Meditation (<https://cmoa.org/self-care/counting-meditation/>)
- sticky notes
- graphic organizer (see attachment)
- stencils

Steps:

Introduction: Project *Equivalent* as close to actual size as possible. Introduce the silent See/Think/Wonder activity and graphic organizer. Guide discussion by asking open-ended questions, repeating responses, connecting comments, and adding information in response to “wonders.” How do you think the artist chose the measurements? Ask students to reframe responses using math language (parallel, perpendicular, adjacent, scaled, transformed, vertical, horizontal) and art language (shape, pattern, contrast, color, texture, space, form). Write vocabulary on the board or chart paper to reference while working. Wrap up discussion by explaining that the work is a self-portrait. The measurements are based on the length of the artist’s forearm, hand, and other benchmark body measurements.

Option: Have students choose a See/Think/Wonder to transfer to a sticky note to kick off guided discussion.

Main activity: Students will reflect on their interests and how they move through the world as a physical body, then choose one or two benchmark body measurements, a shape that they connect with personally, and two colors (one background color and one drawing or painting color) and record this in a graphic organizer.

Guide the discussion:

- Shape does not have to be complicated: It can just be a shape that is pleasing to you or connects directly to something you enjoy. Students should be reminded that they will be repeating the shapes they choose in the portrait, so simpler may be better.

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- Color can be connected to things students are interested in, or just something they like.
- Benchmark body measurements: Think about how you interact with the world. Are you a writer? Use the measurement of your hand. Do you play a sport or an instrument? What position does your body take while you are doing that? Can you connect a measurement from that position or stance to your self-portrait?

Once they have chosen, students will have 45 to 60 minutes to create a self-portrait in the style of *Equivalent*. Begin with one sheet of chart paper (24" x 30") and ask students if they would like to keep the original dimensions, cut down the size, or add 1 to 3 additional pieces (not more, for time's sake). Students should explain the thinking behind their choices. Introduce the other materials, including expectations for proper use and cleanup procedures. Model how to take the notes in the graphic organizer and translate this information into their artwork. Ask students to think about how they want the shapes arranged, sketch out an idea in pencil, and add color. Focus on simplicity.

Transition(s): After cleanup, ask students to find a space in the room where they are comfortable sitting and can see either their art or *Equivalent*. Lead students through the [counting meditation activity](#).

Questions: Consider these questions before reintroducing the writing assignment on the back of the graphic organizer.

Thinking about social media and selfies, especially:

- How is this like other ways you choose to represent yourself?
- How is this different from those ways?
- What would you do differently?
- What was easy about the assignment?
- What was challenging?
- Why did you choose that combination of shapes, body parts, and dimensions?

Assessment:

Vocabulary Check: Use at least five of the vocabulary words (brainstormed or connected to prior knowledge) accurately to describe your self-portrait.

Lesson Extensions/Modifications:

Challenge activity: Have students write an artist statement incorporating both math and art vocabulary, describing the relationships between the shapes, colors, and dimensions and explaining their process for creating the work.

Modification: Pre-fill the graphic organizer with options for shapes, colors, and benchmark body dimensions and instruct students to circle their choices or write in their own.

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Extension: Students can create a scaled version of their artwork on the computer in a graphic design program.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Self-Portrait in the Style of *Equivalent* by Joan Witek—Graphic Organizer

See	Think	Wonder

Draw or Write:

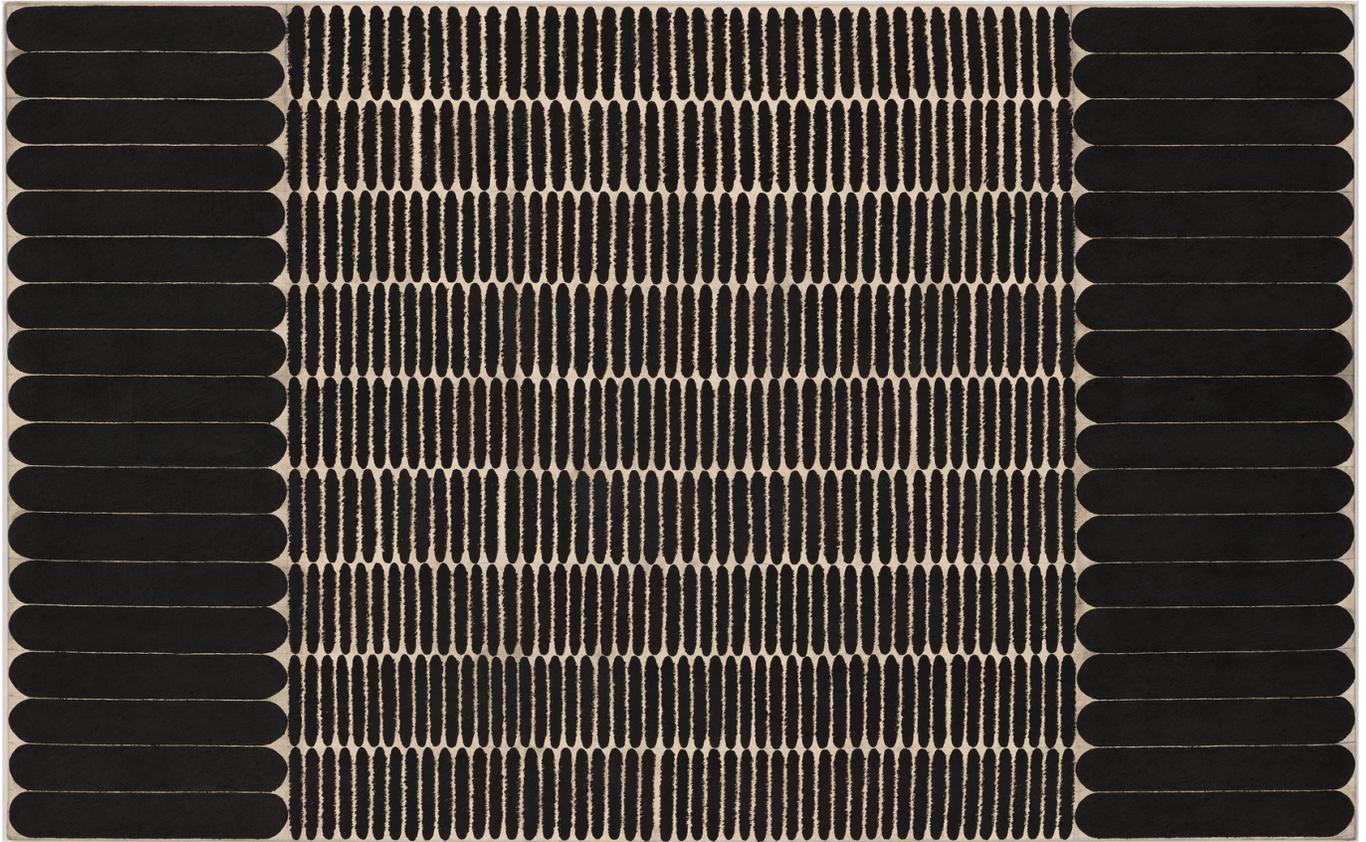
Interests:	Colors:
Shapes:	Paper Size:

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Describe your self-portrait using at least 5 art or math vocabulary words. (If you would like more space, please feel free to continue on another sheet of paper.)



Equivalent, Joan Witek, 1983