

Reflections of the Self (The Ultimate Selfie)

Grades

● 11–12

Teacher-In-Residence

● Kelcey Rounsville

Subjects

● Art, Language Arts, Social
and Emotional Learning

Carnegie
Museum of Art

Goal

The goal of this lesson is for students to use self-portraits as a prompt to inspire self-reflection for college essay writing

Objectives

- For students to learn the difference between portrait and self-portrait, and the different ways 'self' is portrayed in art and writing
- For students to create a self-portrait/selfie and reflect on what their art says about their lived experience
- For students to draft and write something about themselves that can be used as the basis for a personal statement essay
- For students to practice public speaking through presenting their self-portrait (photographed self, art piece selfie) and written ideas

Standards

National Core Art Standards:

• **(Creating) Anchor Standard 1**

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

• **(Performing/Presenting/Producing) Anchor Standard 6**

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

• **(Responding) Anchor Standard 7**

Perceive and analyze artistic work

• **(Connecting) Anchor Standard 10**

Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experience to make art

• **(Connecting) Anchor Standard 11**

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding

English Language Arts:

• **CC.1.4.11–12.A** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately.

• **CC.1.4.11–12.B** Write with a sharp, distinct focus identifying topic, task, and audience.

• **CC.1.4.11–12.C** Develop and analyze the topic thoroughly by

selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic; include graphics and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

• **CC.1.4.11–12.D** Organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a whole; use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text; provide a concluding statement or section that supports the information presented; include formatting when useful to aiding comprehension.

World Language Standards (optional lesson modification):

• ACTFL World Language Standards: Communication and Connection

Materials

- Projector/AV
- Images of *Untitled (Gallery)*, *Heart Pavilion*
- Photograph of someone and a selfie of yourself
- Writing utensils
- Paper
- Collage materials
- Scissors
- Glue

Optional Materials for Making Space:

- Mirrors to take selfies in (à la *Heart Pavilion*).
- Collaged Dream Self: Using the template, invite students to collage their future self and fill the dream cloud with whatever they want

Vocabulary

- Portrait
- Self-portrait
- Perspective
- Reflection

Artworks



Kerry James Marshall, *Untitled (Gallery)*, 2016, The Henry L. Hillman Fund, 2016.52



Dan Graham, *Heart Pavilion*, 1991, A. W. Mellon Acquisition Endowment Fund and Carnegie International Acquisition Fund, 92.5

Lesson

1. Introduction—20 minutes

- Share a photograph of someone and then a selfie and ask: what's the difference here? Then, share Kerry James Marshall's work next to *Heart Pavilion*. Feel free to share other portraits and self-portraits to show the difference of who is 'making' the presentation of Self. (Frida Kahlo, Mac Miller Mural, local artists of your choice!)

- On Graham's *Heart Pavilion*—is this a selfie/self-portrait? Who is the artist suggesting the subject is in the way they designed this artwork? Who is in charge of what is seen?

- We are in an age of selfies. What can selfies say about us? How do we show who we are in the images we make of ourselves? What does the world see? What do you want the world to see? How you see and understand yourself, your values, and your purpose is what matters most.

- How do we engage in self-exploration and self-knowledge? How do we express ourselves with social media? How can we express ourselves in other creative ways? Express the idea that selfies are a type of self-portrait.

- A personal statement essay is another type of self-portrait. A selfie is a self-portrait too. Let your personal statement be your ultimate selfie.

2. Main Art-Making Activity—20 minutes

- Option 1: Mirror Selfie
Is there a mirror in your classroom? Can you build a framed mirror? A series of reflective windows nearby? Be creative – if time permits, allow your students to find a reflective surface to take a selfie.

- Option 2: Dream Self
Collage using attached template. Feel free to build off this—the goal is a space for students to design and decorate the portrait space as well as the dream cloud.

3. Main Writing Activity—20 minutes

- The art students made is to be used alongside these prompts to give students a space to write about themselves

- Prompt 1 (If students did a Mirror Selfie or any photography): Reflect on your selfie. Are you smiling or do you look serious? What do your

Lesson

surroundings say about you? What is a strength of yours that you see in your photo? Write about what you see, and what you love about it. What do you think you give to the world? What do you want to give to the world?

- Prompt 2 (If students did a Dream Self Collage): Reflect on your collage. What do you dream of for yourself in the future? What does that future look like? What do you look like in the future?

4. Share Out Space

- Students are invited to present their self-portraits and talk about their response to the prompt.
- For students who took photos, you can have them email you photos so they can be projected.

Transitions:

- Heart Pavilion and self-portraits to show value of a selfie
- Explain options for self-portrait stations after intro
- Explain writing prompt associated with each self-portrait style

- Workshop with students as they work on their writing
- Explain the value of public speaking when you invite students to share their artwork and writing

Additional Questions

- What is the difference between a portrait and a self-portrait?
- What is special about self-portraits?
- Who do you think Graham sees as the subject in his work?
- If you could have a selfie/self-portrait of yourself displayed in a gallery, what would be unique about it? What is unique about you?
- What stands out to you in the self-portrait/selfie you made?
- In your personal statement, what do you want to tell the world about who you are?

Lesson Extensions/Modifications (for Autistic/IEP learning support):

- World Languages: writing exercise can be a mini autobiography in target language to practice adjectives and I/ be verbs.

Assessment

1. Students are engaged and open to exploring differences between portraits and self-portraits
2. Students take selfies or create self-portraits
3. Students write on their strengths
4. Students practice public speaking and share out about what they've created

Dream Selfie Template

