

Portraits in Paint

Goal or objective of the lesson plan:

The students will create a painted portrait with in a traditional format.

They will mix colors, demonstrate compositional balance, and visually depict the physical and emotional qualities of the woman being painted.

If it is part of a larger unit, please describe briefly:

With energy generated by our participation with Picturing Women and inspired by Judy Chicago's "Dinner Party" installation, we have designed this unit. Each of our students, Kindergarten through 8th grade, has chosen a woman to investigate. These women include mothers and grandmothers, historical female figures, characters from literature and mythology, singers and athletes. This multi-stepped project began with written research, continued with traditional portraits and will be completed with a place setting created for each of our women. We will culminate this lengthy project with an art show/luncheon party where we will symbolically celebrate our honored guests.

Projected length of time needed to complete it:

Time requirements will vary according to the age of the students. Younger children will require 4-5 class periods while older students will require 8 – 10 class periods.

Materials needed:

Finished portraits are completed on 15" x 20" primed chipboard (any type of painting surface could be substituted). Other materials include acrylic paint (tempera could be substituted), wood strips for frames, and various beads, strips of fabric, buttons, jewels, etc. for decoration.

Each student needs to provide a photograph or visual image of his or her woman from which to work.

If your school or district requires the listing of standards in your lesson plans, please include:

Pennsylvania Department of Education standards include:

Arts and Humanities—

Standard 9.1 – Production and Exhibition of Visual Arts

A. Elements and Principles of the Visual Arts

B. Vocabulary in the Visual Arts

C. Styles in the Production of the Visual Arts

Standard 9.3 – Critical Response

Standard 9.4 – Aesthetic Response

Suggested pre-lesson activities:

All students completed age appropriate research about their women. This research ranged from working with their parents on a prepared questionnaire about their woman to one-page papers written by our Junior High.

Some classes looked at reproductions of figurative paintings. We discussed how some were clearly portraits and others were less so. What were the characteristics that made a figurative painting a portrait?

Students worked on preliminary sketches and abstract color studies that began the process of visually understanding their women.

Please outline the lesson:

Using their preliminary drawings as inspiration, students sketch their women onto chipboard.

During the next several classes students applied paint to their drawn image, Students were encouraged to link the painted background to their woman. This connection could be an emotionally response or painted images and symbols.

Students cut and sanded frame pieces using wood stripping.

Prepared wood is painted and glued to portraits.

Decorative “do-dads” are added to frames as final touch. As with the portraits, students were asked to emotionally or symbolically connect their frames to their woman.

Assessment:

Class critiques, allowing students to verbally share positive responses to each other’s work and for student artists to evaluate and discuss their own work.

Teacher assessment includes evaluating finished works, both individually and collectively, for previously stated criteria of color mixing, compositional balance, and depiction of the emotional and physical essence of their woman.

Suggestions for follow-up lessons:

This lesson can be followed by the “Luncheon Party” project mentioned in the introduction above.