



DETROIT
INSTITUTE
OF ARTS

PICTURING IDENTITY: EXPLORING PORTRAITURE AT THE DIA

Educator Resource

GRADES 8-10



James Bowdoin, 1746-47, Oil on Canvas, Joseph Badger, American, 1708-65. Founders Society Purchase, Gibbs-Williams Fund DIA NO. 58.354

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LEARNING TARGET:

Through exploration of portraiture and self-portraiture across time and cultures represented in the DIA's collection, students will understand how artists use pose, symbolism, clothing, facial expression, objects and other details to communicate information about people's identity in portraits and their place within their culture.

STUDENT OUTCOMES:

Students will:

- recognize that examining portraits throughout history is a useful tool for understanding historical information about the individuals represented as well as historical information about their culture.
- identify common elements of artistic practice in portraiture that communicate information about personal and cultural identity.
- understand the connection between history and art so that they can better use each discipline as a tool to interpret the other.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5

Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

21ST CENTURY LEARNING SKILLS ALIGNMENT:

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Use a wide range of creation techniques

Develop and communicate new ideas to others effectively

Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work and understand the real world limits to adopting new ideas

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY:

Facilitate a discussion about identity using the questions below and have the students complete the *Identity Concept Map* (included below). Review images included in the DIA *Pre-Visit Materials for Picturing Identity* and discuss how details in the images might portray something about the subject's identity and the things that may be important to that person or culture.

Questions for Identity discussion & concept mapping

- What does identity mean to you?
- What makes up one's identity?
- How might our identity be affected by the places where we live, work, play or visit?
- What parts of your identity are influenced by your family and your cultural background?
- Why might identity change over time?
- What things could transform one's identity?
- How might your view of your identity differ from how others perceive you?

GUIDED TOUR EXPLANATION & RATIONALE:

This lesson plan is designed to align with a *Shaping Identity–General Tour* at the Detroit Institute of Arts. When completing the DIA guided visit application, select *Shaping Identity–General Tour* from the drop down menu. Indicate in the application's special needs field that you're using the *Picturing Identity* DIA resource and would like your tour to include examples of portraits and self-portraits.

By studying the artistic elements of portraiture and self-portraiture, students will understand how artists develop a personal style that communicates information about themselves, their subjects, and the time and place in which they lived. The importance of both the artist's and subject's perspective will be emphasized in order to help students understand that there can be many different interpretations of a person's identity.

SELF-GUIDE:

Students must select two portraits or self-portraits from different time periods across the collection and compare/contrast them using the *Artistic Elements of Portraiture* graphic organizer (included below). For example, compare a portrait or self-portrait from the Contemporary galleries with one made before 1900.

POST-VISIT ACTIVITY:

Activity One

1. Have students create a self-portrait that utilizes elements of portraiture and self-portraiture that were studied while visiting the DIA.
 - What are you trying to convey about your identity through your self-portrait?
 - What information about your culture or time period do you want to communicate?
 - How do the symbols, objects or details you've included communicate information to the viewer about your identity?
2. Now have students team up with a classmate and create portraits of each other (instruct students not to share their self-portraits with their partners.). Be sure students include objects, symbols or details that represent key elements of their partner's personality. Once the portraits are complete, have students write a brief statement comparing and contrasting the two portraits.
 - What is different between your own representation of yourself and your classmate's?
 - How does our understanding of a person or culture change when we have the opportunity to look at that individual from the perspective of two different people?

Activity Two

1. Have students create a self-portrait as if they were living in Colonial or Revolutionary America.
 - Write an explanation of the details you included to communicate information about your identity.
 - Write a letter to a family member from the perspective of the colonial or revolutionary self you've represented in your self-portrait. Be sure to include historical information you've learned in your study of American history.

Build a concept map and explain what **IDENTITY** means to you.

NAME: _____



Artistic Elements of Portraiture

Select two portraits or self-portraits during your visit to the DIA and compare and contrast them using this graphic organizer. Describe how the artist uses each element to tell us something about the person's identity.

ARTISTIC ELEMENT	OBJECT 1	OBJECT 2
<i>Lighting</i>		
<i>Environment or Location</i>		
<i>Gesture</i>		
<i>Facial Expression and/or Pose</i>		
<i>Uses of Props</i>		
<i>Composition</i>		
<i>Symbolism</i>		