

Mixed Media Visual Art Lessons

Symbolic Self Portrait

Summary: Students were asked to create a symbolic self-portrait using a collage technique to demonstrate their understanding of symbolism.

Objective(s):

Students will be able to learn about their own heritage as well as others through interviews and class discussions. Students will be able to understand how to take words and transform them into imagery that best symbolizes what they want to convey.

Students will be able to use Photomontage to create a composition that is cohesive and symbolic to their family's heritage. Students will create this work in response to artists who address their heritage in their art work and artists who use silhouettes in their art work.

Material: Family photos, Newspaper, Magazine, Cutouts, Personal Drawings, Scissors, Glue, Bristol Board

Grade Level: Middle - High School

Vocabulary:

Symbolism- is the practice or art of using an object or a word to represent an abstract idea.

Silhouette- an image or design in a single hue and tone, most usually the popular 18th- and 19th-century cut or painted profile portraits done in black on white or the reverse. Silhouette also is any outline or sharp shadow of an object.

Photomontage- is the process and the result of making a composite photograph by cutting, gluing, rearranging and overlapping two or more photographs into a new image.

Steps of the project:

1. Students interview a partner to gain knowledge of one another's heritage and background stories.
2. Each student presents their partner they interviewed and brainstorm as a class how to turn their answers imagery that symbolized them.
3. Students begin collecting visuals that they can use for their work: family photos, newspaper, magazine cutouts, drawings ect.
4. Students create a composition with what they collected using collage technique.

Class discussion and concluding thoughts during art critique:

Each student presents their work explaining what they created and how each part works together to create one photomontages composition about their heritage.

Related Artists and Work to Reference:

[Kara Walker](#) (notice how Walker uses the silhouette in her work to address race, gender, sexuality, violence, and identity in her work)

[Kylynn Sullivan Twotree](#) (notice how Sullivan uses photomontage in her work to address her family heritage)

Example:

