Expressive Portraits

Subject Area: Visual Arts
Grade Level: High School
Topics/Themes: Portraiture
Duration: 3 hours

Overview

Marie Laurencin created many self-portraits throughout her career. In these works, she explored her identity and experimented with her self-expression. In this lesson, students will look closely at Laurencin’s self-portraits and explore their own expression of identity. Students will learn about different periods of painting and various styles and create a self-portrait that draws inspiration from the creativity and execution of Marie Laurencin.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Create works of art with various media to demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in that chosen art form.
- Express aspects of their own identities through visual artworks.
Materials

- Supports (drawing paper, construction paper, canvas)
- Pencils/pens/paintbrushes
- Coloring art supplies (colored pencils, markers, crayons)
- Paint (acrylic, watercolor, oil)
- Computers (for digital art classes)

Discussion Questions

- What makes you special/unique?
- What influences your idea of self?
- How would you describe your culture?
- How would you describe your cultural influences?
- Who inspires you and why?

Learning Activities

1. Discuss media options and supports with students.
   a. Give options based on supplies available and review differences between media.

2. Discuss compositional options in portraits.
   a. Posing
   b. Proportions

3. Look at self-portraits created by Marie Laurencin.

4. Have students record five things about themselves that express who they are.

5. Prompt students to consider what they would want to see in a portrait of themselves painted by their favorite artist or in their favorite style.

6. Create smaller, simplified versions of the larger works students will work on individually.
   a. Allow students to experiment with the range of media available.

Performance Task
1. Create expressive self-portraits.
   a. Record five descriptive details about yourself.
   b. Record five cultural influences on how you express yourself.
   c. Consider various media and supports to create artwork.
   d. Brainstorm pose and proportion options for artworks (full body, bust, profile, seated, standing).
   e. Brainstorm background options for artworks (blurred color, solid, nature, indoor).
   f. Sketch subject and background.
   g. Add details to subject (eye shape, hair styles, clothing, accessories).
   h. Add color to your portrait, considering light values.
      i. Midtones
      ii. Shadows
      iii. Highlights
   i. Continue to add details to portraits until they are complete.

2. Create writeups about artworks.
   a. Title and sign artwork.
   b. Write a short paragraph explaining choice of subject and background (cultural references, clothing, hairstyle, body proportions, memories).

Related Objects


Common Core Standards

(Visual Arts) VA:Cr2.1.IIa - Through experimentation, practice, and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form.