

Abstract Personality Portrait: Mixed Media Collage

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TOPICS: Using found imagery; Using colour and shape to represent personal identity; Creating abstract imagery

SUBJECT(S): Visual Arts **GRADE(S):** 4-7

UNIT DURATION: 4 lessons

OVERVIEW & CULMINATING TASK: In this unit students will explore the paper cut collage works of Canadian artist Tiko Kerr. In his collages, Kerr investigates the ways in which memory, emotion, and personal narrative influence perception. Kerr creates minimal narrative spaces through blending, fragmenting, and abstracting a variety of source materials. He makes use of humour as well as imagery from popular culture.



Tiko Kerr, *Walt Disney Contemplating Francis Bacon*, 2016, paper cut collage, 17.25 x 17.25 inches framed. Image courtesy of the artist.

Students will collect paper or other light 2D artifacts that represent themselves. They will develop personally meaningful shapes and colour palettes in order to create an abstract collage portrait representing their own personality. Students will explore processes of stencilling and layering.

BIG IDEAS (What students will understand):

- Creative expression is a means to explore and share one's identity within a community (Arts Education 4)
- Engaging in creative expression and experiences expands people's sense of

identity and belonging (Arts Education 5)

- Through art making, one's sense of identity and community continually evolves (Arts Education 7)

CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES (What students will do):

- Explore identity, place, culture, and belonging through arts experiences
- Develop and refine ideas, processes, and technical skills in a variety of art forms to improve the quality of artistic creations

CONCEPTS & CONTENT (What students will know):

- Image development strategies
- Elements of visual art; principles of design
- Symbolism and metaphor to explore ideas and perspective

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S) (What students will keep considering):

- How can you make use of shapes and colour to reflect your own personality in an abstract collage?
- How do artists use symbolism to explore and represent ideas?

FIRST PEOPLES' PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING:

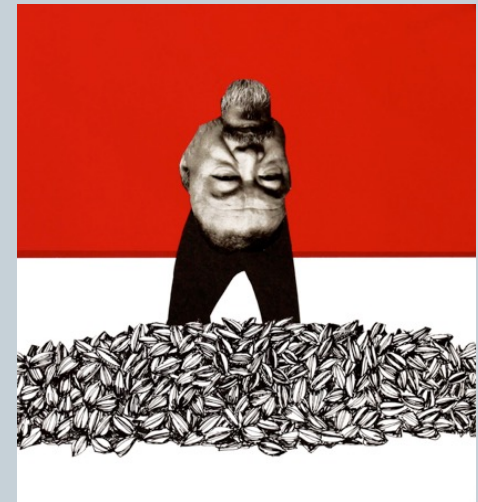
Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

MATERIALS & TECHNOLOGIES:

- digital Images of collages by Tiko Kerr (see end of document)
- digital projector/computer
- 11.5"x15" pre-cut thick white paper (i.e. cardstock or opaque vellum) (1 per student)
- oil pastels
- paint brushes
- scotch tape
- 8.5"x14" white printer paper (3 per student)
- glue sticks
- scissors
- magazines
- sharpies
- pencils
- 5-6 paint colours (acrylic or tempera)

VOCABULARY:

collage, abstraction, stencil, identity, portrait, self-portrait, silhouette, colour palette, symbolism



Tiko Kerr, *Seeds of Change (after Ai Weiwei)*, 2016, paper cut collage, 17.25 x 17.25 inches framed. Image courtesy of the artist.

RESOURCES & REFERENCES:

- <https://www.saatchiart.com/tikokerr>
- <http://www.tikokerr.com/>
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/>

ADAPTATIONS & MODIFICATIONS:

Students with difficulties using scissors may carry out the assignment using a computer and design software such as Adobe Photoshop or MS Paint.

DISCUSSION & ACTIVITIES (Teacher Action/Student Action):

LESSON #1 (intro to Tiko Kerr and shape creation):

- Introduce students to the artwork of Tiko Kerr. View examples of Kerr's collages (see large images at end of document) and pose questions for discussion: Describe the shapes and silhouettes Kerr has used in his collages. How has Kerr designed his collages to draw attention to images or relationships between images? Describe the colours that Kerr has included in his collages.



Artist Tiko Kerr and secondary students.

- Ask the group: How might shapes represent personality (i.e. round, smooth shapes vs. pointy, angular shapes)? How might colour represent personality?
- Give each student 2 sheets of 8.5"x14" white printer paper and have them divide each sheet in half width-wise into 2 equal 8.5"x7" sections (folding in half and drawing a line).
- Project images of Tiko Kerr's artworks and ask students to observe and sketch 4 simple shapes in

the 4 boxes on their sheets of paper. The drawn shapes should touch at least 3 sides of the box (1 shape per box).

- Have the students choose 2 of their sketched shapes that best represent their own personality. Have the students cut these 2 shapes out and

tape them together to create 1 new larger shape.

LESSON #2 (personal colour palettes and painting):

- Review the discussion from the previous lesson about how colour can reflect personality.
- Have students choose a personal colour palette of 3 colours choosing from 5-6 paint colours.
- Revisit Tiko Kerr's collages and discuss ways that he has divided his compositions into large sections of colour.
- Brainstorm with students ways that they might divide up their 11.5"x15" thick white paper into 3 large sections. Each of the 3 sections will correspond to a colour from the students' personal colour palettes. Instruct students to create large, simple sections rather than small, complex details. Each section should take up approximately one-third of the space.
- Have students paint each of their 3 sections using their personal colour palettes – using 1 colour per section.

LESSON #3 (personality collages):

- Have students bring to school a small collection of paper or other light 2D artifacts that represent themselves. These artifacts should represent students' personalities, strengths, passions, interests, relationships, fears, etc. Explain to students that the artifacts will be cut up and used to create a collage.
- Have the students look through magazines to find and tear out 3 pages that include their personal colour palettes – 1 page for each colour (i.e. 1 blue page, 1 yellow page, and 1 pink page).
- Have the students create a collage using sections of the magazine pages and their 2D artifacts on a 8.5"x14" sheet of white printer paper. Students should cut and overlap their artifacts. There should be no white space showing on the paper.
- When the collages are complete, have the students use their shapes created in Lesson #1 to isolate a section of their collage. Have the students move the shape around until they make a selection that is appealing to them. Have them draw an outline around the shape using a sharpie and then cut the shape out of their collage. Have the students outline and cut out smaller portions of their Lesson #1 shape from the left over portions of their collage.
- Optionally, photograph each student's face and print the photographs so that each face measures approximately 6cm x 6cm. Have the students cut out their faces and add them onto their large shapes.

LESSON #4 (final compositions and reflection):

- Have the students arrange the shape(s) they cut out from their personality collages on their painted sheets of paper. Ask students to carefully consider the placement of the shape(s) within the larger composition. Once students have experimented with the placement of their collaged shape(s) they will glue them down.
- As an optional way for students to further develop their collages, ask them to use pastels (only the 3 colours from their personal palettes) to highlight details within their composition. For example, students might accentuate or shade in parts of their collaged shapes or create simple patterns (i.e. using lines and dots) in the painted space around their collaged shapes.
- Have students place their finished collages on table tops and walk around the classroom to view each other's work. Lay a long narrow piece of paper next to each artwork. In groups of 6-8, have students write one word in response to each collage on the narrow sheet of paper and then fold the paper over so that the word cannot be read by the next student (in advance, review protocols for respectfully responding to peers' artwork and brainstorm examples of appropriate response words). Students will then unfold the sheet of paper next to their artwork and be presented with a 'found poem' that is a response to their collage.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:

After creating their shapes in Lesson #1, have the students write in their sketchbooks about how their new large shape reflects their personality. After selecting their personal colour palettes in Lesson #2, have students write in their sketchbooks about how each of their 3 colours reflects their personality.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT:

After students complete their collages, have them reflect in writing on the following questions: How does your finished collage reflect your personality? What are the 2 most successful parts of your composition? What 2 parts of your composition could use more work?

EXTENSIONS & POSSIBLE CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS:

Have students brainstorm 6-8 of their own words that relate to their Abstract Personality Portraits in addition to the words their peers wrote in the 'found poems'. Have students use these words to compose original poems to accompany their Abstract Personality Portraits when displayed.

AFK RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS:

Looking for more art lesson ideas? Looking for ways to connect art to other areas of the curriculum? Visit the AFK Resources page to find lesson plans for all grade levels!

<http://tiny.cc/AFKResources>



Teacher Sample, AFK



Grade 5 Student Artwork, AFK Gallery Program



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Tiko Kerr, *Walt Disney Contemplating Francis Bacon*, 2016, paper cut collage, 17.25 x 17.25 inches framed. Image courtesy of the artist.



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