



Poster Project: Portrait of Me!
20 min GALLERY and 45-80 min CLASSROOM activities
Adaptable for different grade levels
by Hoan Tran, Gresham High School

Lesson Overview: Students will create a self-portrait (with or without an actual face) in any medium they choose (or teacher determines) that reflects their cultural identity. Students will learn to write a "Where I Am From. . ." poem inspired by George Ella Lyon, then use art to visually depict their writing.

(Note: using the poem is a powerful approach for students to have control of what aspects of themselves they want to convey in their art. But writing a complete poem is not a prerequisite to creating the portrait.)

Suggested Posters:

- *Indian Summer, from the series Four Seasons, 2006 by Wendy Red Star (American and Apsa'alooke, born 1981)*
- *Rock of Ages, 1976 by Isaka Shamsud-Din (American, born 1940)*

Materials:

- *Materials will depend on what media is being used*
- *For Collage: ready printed images (magazines), glue stick, scissors, some strong board for backing, and variety of markers/colored pencils.*
- *Traditional Drawing or Painting: the typical drawing and painting media.*
- *Photography/digital (drawing/painting program, CGI or cut-and-paste): This is a great choice, given that every student has a phone that could take pictures or be able to do some image rearrangement.*
- *For Sculpture: the most effective form is probably some type of relief (it allows for storytelling, and not just one view of an in-the-round sculpture). Clay (self-drying or fire), and balsa foam are great media for relief all ages.*
- *Assemblage: ready-made or found objects are also popular choices of materials.*

Before the Lesson:

1. *Decide what art medium/technique/process/form to use for the project.*
2. *Set up posters/digital images of the 2 works: Rock of Ages & Indian Summer.*



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3. Print out templates of "Where I Am From..." poem for students to work on. Give choice of formats (see the 2 examples provided).
4. Make sure that the art medium/media is appropriate for the age group.
5. Consider the amount of time each activity will need: studying/discussing the posters, writing the poem, and finally the art production.

Lesson Steps:

1. Start by studying the two art works (Shamsud-Din & Red Star). Analyze how each artist tells the story about the person in the piece. Examine the content/symbols of their surroundings.
2. Introduce the poem, hand out the template to write the poem.
3. Explain how they will use that writing to guide their art.
4. Follow the process of whichever art medium/form you are choosing to work with.

Related Objects in the Portland Art Museum's Collections:

- Most of Hank Willis Thomas's exhibition is quite suitable to look at for this project.
- Any images capturing a lot of symbolism that reflect the time and place where the artists lived or when/how the art was made would be useful examples to show students.

Vocabulary:

- **Collage** - artwork created by sticking layers of various different materials such as prints and pieces of paper, fabric, or anything flat onto a backing.
- **Relief sculpture** - artwork created by having the details project from a supporting background, in varying degrees of depth.
- **Assemblage** - an art process usually using ready-made or found objects to create a 3-D composition. Think of it as a 3-D collage.
- **Ready-made** - everyday, pre-manufactured objects that artists can readily incorporate into their artwork.
- **CGI** - computer generated image