My identity 

Unit overview

Students explore their own identity in an artwork. They seek inspiration in self-portraits by Australian painters who include symbols of their identity. Students combine drawing, painting, collage and printing in a mixed media artwork, discovering how artworks can be built up through layering images.

Subject matter

People, objects.

Forms

Drawing, painting, printmaking.

Duration

3 to 4 weeks.

Resources

Enter art

* [Portrait in the mirror, Margaret Olley, image no.13](http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/454.2001/)

Beyond the frame

* Self Portrait, Kieran Hall, image no.13

Other

* screen for printing
* screen printing inks or paint
* squeegee
* litho paper
* newspaper
* scissors
* crayons
* acrylic paint or Edicol dyes
* brushes
* glue
* small personal objects

Outcomes and indicators

Making

VAS 3.1 – investigates subject matter in an attempt to represent likenesses of things in the world.

* Explores the convention of self-portraiture as a means of showing identity.

VAS 3.2 – makes artworks for different audiences assembling materials in a variety of ways.

* Experiments with layering in printing and collage.

Appreciating

VAS 3.3 – acknowledges that audiences respond in different ways to artworks and that there are different opinions about the value of artworks.

* Talks about the meaning of artworks recognising how self-portraits can be interpreted in different ways.

VAS 3.4 – communicates about the ways in which subject matter is represented in artworks.

* Discusses the artist’s intentions in regard to his or her representation of self.

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Learning experience 1

Appreciating artworks

1. Compare Portrait in the mirror by Margaret Olley and Self Portrait by Kieran Hall.
2. Identify similarities and differences in subject matter, composition, media and techniques. In these self-portraits, both artists have placed themselves with objects that are significant to them.
3. Identify these objects in the artworks.
* What do they tell us about each artist’s life and interests?
* What has each artist done that is unusual or imaginative in these self-portraits?
* What types of colours has each artist used?

Note – consider warm, cool, bright and primary colours.

* How have the artists created likeness or reality?

Note – in discussing likeness, students consider tone, size, solidness, roundness, modelling, scale, proportion and detail.

* How has each artist arranged objects and used space?
* Which portrait do you prefer and why?

Note – discuss grouping or spreading of objects, open space and focal points.

Making self-portrait drawings

1. At home, look in a mirror to study facial features and draw a self-portrait in pencil.

Learning experience 2

Making mixed media artworks about self

1. Create a mixed media composition about self-incorporating printing, painting, drawing and collage.
2. Collect small personal objects that reveal something about school life, culture or lifestyle such as a report card, sports ribbons or medallions. These objects can be photocopied.

Note – colour the photocopies of objects with diluted paint or Edicol dyes.

Making screen prints – background and shapes

1. Refer to Hall’s painting. Design a composition that employs space in a similar way.
2. Create two large horizontal areas of colour which provide the background for the composition. Where these areas meet, have them overlap by 2-4cms. The overlap area will provide a table or bench surface on which to place objects.

Note – sketch an outline of the structure of the works on the board indicating the two large areas of colour to be printed and include the overlap area.



1. Cut separate stencils for each large colour area.
2. Print the areas of colour employing overlapping.
3. Allow the work to dry between printing each colour.

Note – demonstrate cutting the stencils (allow for overlap) and using the squeegee to print.

Making drawings

1. Make line drawings of personal objects (these may be sketches or continuous line drawings) as seen from the side from eye level.

Note – the drawings might be in pencil, crayon or felt pen.

Making self-portrait paintings

1. Make a small painting from the drawn self-portrait.
2. Cut out a shaped frame from coloured paper squares.

Note – if larger self-portraits are painted, these can be photocopied and reduced, then coloured with diluted paint.

Making collages about self

1. Position the painted portrait, drawings, and drawings, or photocopies of drawings of personal objects on the printed background. Try various arrangements before fixing the images to the artwork.

Appreciating – reflecting

1. Write an account of the screen-printing process (procedure).