



The museum of us.

THE BASICS FOR TEACHERS

Welcome!

We are excited to host you and your class at the Oakland Museum of California! You are registered to participate in the **Profile Pictures Tour**. The 45-minute docent-led tour will take place in OMCA's Gallery of California Art.

Field Trip Reminders

- Please do not bring backpacks to the Museum. There is limited storage space. Lunches can be stored in bench bins near the Koi Pond. While enclosed, these bins are not secure.
- Prepare your group for their museum experience with **Before the Trip** activities.
- Please be sure that you have a minimum of one chaperone for every ten (10) students.

Grades: 2–8

Teaching and Learning Goals

- Students examine and discuss messages that can be conveyed through a portrait.
- Students look at the theme of identity in artists' work and how different artists incorporate aspects of identity into portraits.
- Students make connections between portraits in the Gallery of California Art and their own lives and identities.
- Students will build greater awareness of their own and others' complex identities, resulting in greater respect for diversity.
- Students will create a self-portrait that represents their own personal identity.

Before and After the Trip Activities

This packet provides several in-class activities to complement the Profile Pictures Tour. We strongly recommend teachers do the After the Trip: Identity Self-Portraits activity with students. If time allows, the Before the Trip activities will strengthen student experiences.

- Before the Trip: Explore Diverse Accounts of Identity
- Before the Trip: Graffiti Wall
- After the Trip: Identity Self-Portraits

Correlations to Content Standards

California Visual & Performing Arts, Visual Arts

Strand 1.0: Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to the Visual Arts

Strand 2.0: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Visual Arts

Strand 3.0: Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of the Visual Arts

Strand 4.0: Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works in the Visual Arts

OUSD Social and Emotional Learning Competencies

Self-awareness: Identify personal, cultural, and linguistic assets

Self-awareness: Embrace diversity and take the perspectives of people different from oneself

Profile Pictures Background Information:

Identity is about how we know ourselves and provides a foundation for knowing and understanding each other. In order to have richer and more meaningful conversations and relationships, we first have to get to know ourselves, each other, and how each sees the world. Art is a tool that artists (and students) use to visually communicate about something that matters, such as identity. Students who are listened to and valued as individuals are more likely to be actively engaged in their learning. By creating self-portraits after the Profile Pictures Tour at the Museum, students and teachers develop tools to explore and discuss identity with each other.

Portraits

A portrait is a creative visual representation of an individual person and comes in many forms including paintings, photographs, drawings, sculptures, and other media. When creating a portrait, the artist tries to capture the identity (who someone is) of the subject, and often the likeness (what someone looks like) by depicting distinctive features such as the subject's face and body. A portrait can reveal many things about the subject(s) without using words. By looking at a portrait, you can often find clues from the artist that tell you about the subject.

When creating a portrait, the artist makes conscious decisions about how they want to portray the sitter. Everything included in a portrait is intentionally selected by the artist and tells a piece of the portrait's story. Throughout history, portraits have served a number of functions such as reinforcing a subject's power (e.g., pharaohs and emperors), demonstrating wealth or prestige (e.g., portraits of wealthy Italian banking families like the Medicis), communicating certain messages (e.g., presidential candidate portraits during campaign season), and capturing emotions or psychological states (e.g., Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother*).

Identity

Identity is what makes us who we are. But, how do we get to who we are? Life experiences influence how people view themselves. Group membership and experiences related to that membership can also influence our identity, including race, ethnicity, language, class, gender, ability and religion. Some group memberships can come from hobbies, such as a music group, favorite sports team, or scouts.

Vocabulary:

identity - how a person sees or thinks of her/himself, and how they represent themselves to each other

line - a path created by a dot (or point) that moves through space

portrait - a visual representation of an individual or group of individuals, rendered in any medium (painting, photograph, drawing, sculpture, collage, etc.)

subject - who or what the artwork is about

symbol - an object that has meaning more than the thing itself

Explore Diverse Accounts of Identity

Summary:

In this activity, students explore diverse people, experiences, and perspectives, making connections to their own experiences and identities.

Estimated Time: About 60 minutes

Materials:

Selection of art, books, and videos

Making Connections worksheet

Writing utensils

Preparation:

- Select art, books, and videos depicting diverse people, experiences, and perspectives. See page 5 for a sampling of potential resources.
- Make copies of the Making Connections worksheet (page 4).

Procedure

1. Provide students with a range of art, books, and videos depicting diverse people, experiences, and perspectives. You might think of diversity in regards to race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc.
2. Students will select two works to read or view, each a different medium.
3. Using the Making Connections worksheet (page 4) as a template, ask students to reflect on what they connect to and what feels similar or different from their own experience. If time allows, have students share their findings with partners or small groups.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Name: _____

Date: _____

Select passages or elements from the book, video, or artwork that are similar to or different from your own identity. Describe how the passage/element is similar to or different from your own experiences and identity.

Passage/Element	How this is similar or different from my identity?

Additional Resources for Exploring Identity & Diversity

Here is a sampling of books, videos, and artworks you might use with your students to talk about identity and diversity. You are encouraged to add your own.

Books

[Mama's Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation](#) by Edwidge Danticat

[Mango, Abuela, and Me](#) by Meg Medina

[I'm New Here](#) by Anne Sibley O'Brien

[Emmanuel's Dream: the True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah](#) by Laurie Ann Thompson

[Juna's Jar](#) by Jane Bahk

Other Books

KQED MindShift: [20 Books Featuring Diverse Characters to Inspire Connection and Empathy](#)

Videos

["We Are Still Here" --- A Documentary on Today's Young Native Americans](#)

What is life like for today's young Native Americans? What challenges are they facing? How do historical traumas impact their lives? This short documentary explores these questions through interviews with three young Native Americans from Minnesota.

[Sikh American Youth on Identity](#)

Sikhs youths in Lawrenceville, New Jersey offer their perspectives on being Sikh in America.

[Meet The Young Immigrants](#)

A series of four interviews with young immigrants.

Artwork

Slideshow of portraits (separate PowerPoint)

Graffiti Wall

Summary:

In this activity, students investigate identity in relation to community and traditions, collaborating to create a graffiti wall that visibly documents students' collective findings.

Estimated Time:

30 minutes on day 1

30 minutes on day 2

Materials:

Butcher paper and/or whiteboard

Markers (regular or dry erase)

Procedure

1. *Day 1:* Place the following questions up on the board, and invite students to choose a question to ask a family member:
 - a. What different communities do you belong to? How do they influence who you are?
 - b. What traditions have been passed down in our family?
 - c. What does identity mean to you? How has your own identity changed from when you were younger?
2. *Day 2:* Place a piece of butcher paper on the wall with each of the questions. Ask students to visually document their family members' answers using quotations, drawings, and notes. This butcher paper is the graffiti wall.
3. Once each student has contributed to the graffiti wall, invite students to verbally share their findings with the class. After students have had the option to share aloud, invite students to do a gallery walk to explore all students' contributions.
4. As a group, reflect on how our identity can be shaped by community memberships (including but not limited to race and ethnicity), familial ties and traditions, time, and experience.

Identity Self-Portraits

Summary:

In this activity, students explore identity by creating their own self-portraits inspired by the Profile Pictures Tour.

Estimated Time: 75 minutes

Background:

Inspired by the artists and artwork seen during the Profile Pictures Tour, students explore how to communicate their own identity through creating a self-portrait. Students can practice their observation skills with mirrors or copies of school portraits while drawing their own unique facial features, exploring shape, proportion, and placement. After brainstorming symbols and settings to represent their identities, students add objects, backgrounds, and other details to their portraits. Students are able to choose from a range of art materials, demonstrating how everything in a portrait (including materials) can communicate something insightful about the subject and/or artist.

Materials:

Art paper (11x17 recommended)	Scissors
Scratch paper	Magazines
Pencils	Glue sticks
Colored pencils	Rulers
Crayons	Mirrors or school pictures of students
Markers	Other art materials of your choice

Preparation:

Teacher Self-Reflection

- Before inviting students to reflect on their identities, as a teacher take some time to think about your own identity and life experiences. What aspects of your identity shape how you see the world, what you teach, and how you interact with your students? You might think about your own culture, race, gender, or class, considering how each element intersects with the others. Consider when and where you felt powerful versus powerless, and what helped you succeed and what did not.

Classroom Set-Up

- Set up the room by posting the class's graffiti wall, as well as portraits with diverse subjects. Gather and prep art materials, placing supplies on the tables.

Procedure

Group Discussion & Brainstorm

1. Share with students that today we will be making self-portraits that reflect our own identities. We will communicate our identities through our choices such as:
 - a. The colors we use
 - b. The setting/background
 - c. The symbols and objects we include

2. Begin by asking students what they know about portraits, including what they learned during the museum field trip. Document the collective classroom understanding on the board, probing for the following:
 - a. What are portraits?
 - b. Why do you think artists make portraits?
3. Introduce and discuss identity, also documenting class understanding on the board:
 - a. What is identity?
 - b. What contributes to our identity? (Influenced by our individual selves, community and groups we're a part of, family, roles and responsibilities, etc.)
 - c. How can it be represented in portraits?
4. Begin a discussion with students about portrait features that might communicate information about aspects of self identity. For example, you might have students point out and discuss examples of portraits that use:
 - a. Colors, which can be used to express mood or personality
 - b. Clothing, which can give clues about who we are
 - c. Facial expressions, which can express emotions
 - d. Setting/background, which might reveal clues about who a subject is based on the places that are important to them
 - e. Symbols and objects, which might indicate what that person values

Sample images are included after the Self-Portrait procedure outline and in the accompanying PowerPoint file.

Visual Webs of Identity

5. Based on the pre-visit activities (Exploring Diverse Accounts of Identity, and the Graffiti Wall), the museum gallery tour, and students' own knowledge, have students brainstorm aspects of their own identity, creating a visual web of identity (or, mind map) on scratch paper. You can see one sample of a web of identity on page 15.
 - a. After students have worked independently, allow several minutes for students to pair with a partner, each sharing their visual web.
 - b. Have students identify ways to symbolically represent 3–5 aspects using colors, clothing, facial expressions, setting, objects, etc.

Self-Portraits

6. Passing out the art paper, encourage students that as they work on their portrait, they should focus on what they want to communicate about themselves.
7. Using mirrors or copies of their school portraits, have students begin by observing and then drawing their face, focusing on line and shape. The educator should model their own portrait at the front of the class, talking through their own observations as they decide what to draw. Invite several students to share the shape they use to draw their face.
8. Step by step, have students look carefully at the shape, placement, and other attributes of their features. Invite a few students to share their observations on features such as:
 - a. Eyes, eyebrows, nose, mouth, ears, hair, neck, and other facial features that might make students unique

9. Once the class has completed the facial drawings, students will have time to work independently to add the aspects of their identity brainstormed in the identity web using the art materials at the tables. (35 minutes)
10. Before releasing students to conduct independent work, remind them that they will need to think about how each aspect of their portrait communicates something about them:
 - a. What background will they depict? Where do they feel most inspired or most powerful?
 - b. What colors will they use, and what do they communicate?
 - c. Incorporate the objects that were brainstormed in the identity web.
11. During student independent work, move around the classroom to discuss portrait elements with students, providing assistance where needed and encouragement to each student.
12. Once the independent work time is over and students have completed their portraits, remove art supplies and leave the portraits on students' desks for a gallery walk.

Gallery Walk

13. Start the gallery walk by reminding students that we are all individuals. We're all slightly different, and that's what makes us unique and interesting.
14. All together, we make up one of the communities students are a part of. Each of you influences each other, and each of you contributes to the whole group.
15. Give students a few minutes to look at their classmates' artwork, sharing one thing they appreciate about someone else's work.
16. After the gallery walk, portraits can be displayed in the classroom as reminders to the teacher and students of how each student defines their own identity and what each contributes to the classroom.

Sample Images & Discussion Ideas

You can use the images on the following pages during the discussion and brainstorming portion of the activity. (Additional images are also available in an accompanying PowerPoint.) As students look at the portraits, prompt them to think about what you can learn about the identity of the subject. What did the artist want you to know about the person in the portrait?

Feel free to use a photo of yourself as an example. Placing your image next to images that are displayed in art museums can help students see art everywhere and see themselves as young artists.

Portrait of Eliza Jane Steen Johnson by Charles Christian Nahl



<http://picturethis.museumca.org/pictures/portrait-eliza-jane-steen-johnson>

Students may guess her religion based on her necklace with a cross. She's rich by her gold jewelry. She's wearing lace, because she owned a successful lace store. She wanted a portrait of herself in her fine clothes and jewelry to let everyone know how rich and important she was.

Frieda and Diego Rivera by Frida Kahlo



<https://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/36.6061>

Students may notice Diego is holding paintbrushes and a palette, because he's an artist. Frida's clothing and hairstyle are traditional for Mexican women. It wasn't fashionable to wear this style of clothing or hair in the 1930s, but Frida was proud of being Mexican. She has a unibrow. This was not fashionable either, but it became part of her identity. She paints her unibrow darker than it ever was in [real life](#). They're holding hands because they're a couple, and this is their wedding portrait.

The banner reads: "Here we see us, me Frieda Kahlo, with my dearest husband Diego Rivera. I painted these pictures in the delightful city of San Francisco, California for our companion Mr. Albert Bender, and it was in the month of April of the year 1931."

Shipyard Worker by Dorothea Lange



<http://picturethis.museumca.org/pictures/shipyard-workers>

Students may notice this is a young African American woman. She's wearing a welder's mask, a shirt and jacket made of heavy material, and a badge that reads "Richmond Shipyard". She is a welder who built ships in the Kaiser shipyard in Richmond during World War II. While American men were off fighting in the war, women stepped into jobs that had normally been held by men. Dorothea Lange was interested in people, and she used her camera to create many portraits.

Sample Visual Web of Identity

