

Picturing You

Inspired by Frida Kahlo's *Self-Portraits*

Key Concepts

- Self-portraiture
- Symbolism
- Choices artists make

Materials

- 9" x 12" piece of construction paper in any color
- 9" x 12" piece of paper representing any skin tone you like
- Assorted paper: solid colors and patterns/prints (you can use wrapping paper, newspaper, etc.)
- Glue
- Scissors
- Optional:
 - Colored markers, pencils, or crayons
 - Assorted pictures or stickers of animals, sports equipment, jewelry, etc. (Stickers work well for this, but you can also find images in magazines, or draw your own!)
 - A mirror

Introduction

- What is going on in this work of art? What do you see that makes you say that?
- In the image that you see, who do you think is the most important figure? What makes you think that?
- Based on what you see in the painting, what kind of relationship do you think these two people had?
- There is Spanish text in the painting. A translation is:

Here you see me, Frida Kahlo, with my beloved husband, Diego Rivera. I painted these portraits in the beautiful city of San Francisco, California, for our friend Mr. Albert Bender. It was the month of April in the year 1931.

How does this information affect your understanding of the painting?

- Why do you think Kahlo included the things she did? What do these objects tell us about the people depicted in this painting?

Instructions

1. Choose a piece of color paper to represent your face and neck. Cut the paper in half so you have 2 pieces that measure 6" x 9".
2. Fold one of the 6" x 9" pieces paper in half vertically, hot dog-style, and cut a half oval. When you open the paper, you will have an oval or egg shape.
3. Fold the oval in half horizontally, hamburger-style. This crease is where you will place your eyes.
4. Using the other 6" x 9" piece of color paper, cut half ovals out of each of the long sides to make a neck. Your neck should be about half as wide as the oval shape.
5. Glue the face and neck shapes to a piece of 9" x 12" paper.
6. If you have a mirror, use it to decide what shape your eyes, nose, mouth, and ears are. Cut these shapes and glue them on the oval. Place your eyes on the horizontal fold on the oval, your nose halfway between eyes and chin, and your mouth halfway between nose and chin. Divide your oval into three equal parts and add your ears in the middle third on either side of your head.
7. Cut paper for hair, and glue in place.
8. Choose paper to represent clothing. Cut and glue that in place.
9. Add other details that say something about you. Do you have a favorite piece of jewelry? A lucky hat? A pet bird who perches on your shoulder? Add these details to your self-portrait.

Relevant Information

As a child, Frida Kahlo loved to draw. When she was 18, she was in a bus accident and had to stay in bed for months to recover. While she was in bed healing, she made many portraits of herself (self-portraits). When Kahlo was better, she showed her paintings to the famous Mexican artist Diego Rivera, who encouraged her to become an artist, and who later became her husband. This painting shows Frida Kahlo with Diego Rivera after they were married.

Discussion

- Why did you include the things you included? Do these elements say something about you? Do they show your personality?
- What colors did you choose for your self-portrait? Bright and warm, or cool and calm? How do these colors make you feel? How do they reflect your identity?
- If you made a portrait of someone other than yourself (your mother, father, or best friend, for example) how would that portrait be similar or different from your self-portrait? What things would you include, and what do these objects say about that person?