

## SELF-PORTRAITS A SIGN OF THEIR TIMES

### ART AND SOCIAL STUDIES

#### GRADE LEVEL: 7–12

#### BASED ON

Oskar Kokoschka, *Duchess of Montesquiou-Ferenzac*, 1910, Bequest of Paul E. Geier, 1983.64

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#### OBJECTIVES

Understand the social climate that created the terms Degenerative Art and Fascist Aesthetic.

Understand how and why certain artists' artwork fell into these categories.

Recognize and discuss the Expressionist styles and techniques of Kokoschka and his contemporaries.

Study Kokoschka's aesthetic and artistic approach to portraiture.

Create a self-portrait based on both Kokoschka's artistic and aesthetic goals and the stylistic techniques of Expressionism.

#### MATERIALS

digital camera  
digital photograph of each student in clothes, setting, pose, and lighting of their choice  
illustration boards, cardboard, stretched canvas, or canvas Panels in sizes from 9 x 12 to 18 x 24 in.  
soft pencils for initial sketches  
oil, acrylic, or watercolor paints; oil pastels; or collage (even crayons and chalk would work)  
appropriate paintbrushes, glue, and varnishes  
matte board or frames as appropriate

#### CONCEPT

Expressive self-portraits in any medium are invaluable for teaching young artists that art is more than a realistic depiction of something. Kokoschka's artwork and his writings serve as invaluable teaching tools for inspiring young artists to become introspective in determining what legacy their own artworks might leave.

#### VOCABULARY

**artist statement:** accompanying written statement that hangs beside the artwork and offers the artist's clarification of his/her expressive intentions in creating the work.

**collage:** application of 2-D elements (paper, magazine or photo images, etc.) to a 2-D surface with a glue-like medium.

**Degenerative Art:** (as determined by Nazi leadership) art that was determined to be Modern and represented "negativity and the incomprehensibility of the world."

Cubism, Surrealism, Expressionism, Dadaism, and Modernism were all styles vilified by Nazi leadership and, therefore, fell into the category of Degenerative Art.

**dry brush:** a painting technique using paint applied thickly, but with the paint bristles spread to show off the brush texture or brush shape to depict certain textures.

**Expressionism:** artistic style that represents an artist's inner vision of the subject rather than a realistic or idealistic rendered representation.

**Fascism:** a totalitarian philosophy of government that glorifies the state and nation and assigns to the state control over every aspect of national life.

**Fascist aesthetic:** art, design, and propaganda presented in idealized realist styles as seen in Fascist Nazi Germany, Mussolini's Italy, and Franco's Spain from the 1930s to the mid-1940s.

**self-portraits:** opportunity for artists to realistically flatter themselves or provide a penetrating revelation of their character.

**wet-on-wet:** painting technique mixing one paint color into another while it is still wet.

#### PROCEDURE

After initial discussion of Kokoschka's portrait and the social and culture implications of Degenerative Art and the Fascist aesthetic, students will be proceed to the following:

1. Either write or sketch their ideas for their self-portraits. Include the following:
  - o Composition: How much of themselves or what parts are they showing?
  - o Back or foreground setting and/or props
  - o Lighting: natural and/or artificial

# CLASS EXPERIENCE

- o Expressionistic styling: colors, lines, textures, proportions, balance, emphasis
  - o Painting mediums of choice based on their previous design decisions
2. With teacher's or peer's assistance, take digital images of your ideas and print them.
  3. On chosen background surface, draw initial light sketch based on cross between your photos and your sketches/ideas.
  4. Go over your initial sketch with strong, bold, varied Expressionistic strokes to establish your form.
  5. Using your painting medium, lay in your large color areas first.
  6. Add collage elements, (optional)
  7. Add your smaller color areas and details (including cast shadows and highlights).
  8. Finish work with a painted edge, matte, or frame.
  9. Write and display with self-portrait artist statement.

## ASSESSMENT

Rubrics	Student	Peer
1) Composition (included previously named areas (i.e. lighting, props, arrangement)	25 points _____	_____
2) Expressionism (shows inner vision more than a realistic image)	25 points _____	_____
3) Craftsmanship (demonstrates a appropriate professionalism in execution for grade level)	25 points _____	_____
4) Artist Statement (demonstrates a appropriate oral understanding/rational for grade level)	25 points _____	_____
Total	100 points _____	_____

## NATIONAL STANDARDS

### ART

1. Content Standard: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes. = Rubric 1) - 3)
2. Content Standard: Using knowledge of structures and functions. = Rubric 1) - 3)
3. Content Standard: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas. = Rubric 1) - 4)
4. Content Standard: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history. = Rubric 2) and 4)
5. Content Standard: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others= Completing Written Rubrics and Oral Class Critique
6. Content Standard: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines. = Prior motivational discussion and instructions

### SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Describe the political and social characteristics of early civilizations and their enduring impact on later civilizations. = Prior motivational discussion and instructions
2. Connect developments related to World War I with the onset of World War II. = Prior motivational discussion and instructions