

# ART AUTOBIOGRAPHY

ART AND IDENTITY

GRADES: 4-12

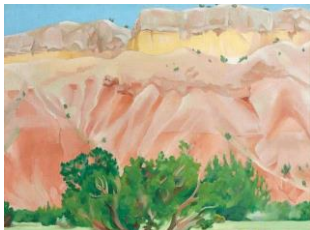
## BASED ON



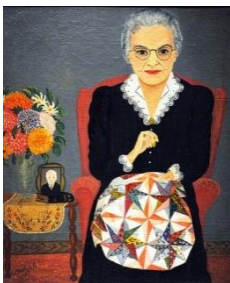
Charles Locke (1899-1983), American  
*Self-Portrait (Artist at Easel)*, n.d.  
Brush and black ink, gray wash  
Museum Purchase with funds provided by Mary R. Naish in memory of Paul W. Naish, 2002.22



Frank Duveneck (1848-1919), American  
*Self-Portrait*, c. 1877  
Oil on canvas  
Gift of the Artist, 1915.122



Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986), American  
*My Back Yard*, 1943  
Oil on canvas  
Museum Purchase: The Edwin and Virginia Irwin Memorial, Fanny Bryce Lehmer Endowment, Bequest of Mr. and Mrs. Walter J. Wichgar, John J. Emery Endowment, Mr. and Mrs. Harry S. Leyman Endowment, and Rieveschl Collection Fund, 2013.51



Nan Phelps (1904-1990), American  
*The Artist's Mother, Lula May Hinkle, Making Original Quilt*,  
oil on canvas mounted on board  
Gift of Gloria Meyer in memory of Helen and Elliot Al Meyer, 1986.1259

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will examine paintings from the Cincinnati Art Museum collection that explore the ideas of self-portraiture and autobiography.
- Students will search for clues in paintings to learn more about the lives of the artists who painted them.
- Students will create their own pictorial autobiography in the form of a Zine.

## CONCEPT

The four artworks that are included in this lesson provide us with insight into the identity and lives of the artists who made them. Explore these drawings and paintings to learn more about the people, places, and things that were important to these artists. Following your discussion, students will think about their own lives and create a project that represents their identity. These individual projects can then be combined into a Zine that represents the identity of your class.

## MATERIALS

Paper, pencils, markers, colored pencils, photocopier

## VOCABULARY

**Autobiography** – a written history of a person’s life, written by that person

**Self-Portrait** – a pictorial representation of oneself, done by oneself

**Identity** – the distinguishing character or personality of an individual

**Zine** - a small magazine that is written by people who are not professional writers and that usually has stories about a particular subject

## PROCEDURE

- Begin by looking at Charles Locke’s *Self-Portrait (Artist at Easel)*. Discuss the notion of self-portrait with your students. Who is this man? What clues is he giving us about his profession? He is shown seated at an easel, and holds a paintbrush. Ask students if they were to paint a self-portrait, what clues would they give the viewer about their life, hobbies, etc.?
- Move on to Frank Duveneck’s *Self-Portrait*. What clues does he give us about himself and his profession? Although this is another self-portrait of an artist, he does not show himself with any of the tools of his trade. Duveneck was born in Covington, Kentucky, and traveled to Germany in 1869 to study painting.
- The Cincinnati Art Museum owns several other paintings by Duveneck that do reveal the people and places that were important to him. You might discuss the following paintings with your students.
  - *Professor Ludwig Loefftz*, c. 1873. Professor Loefftz was a classmate and friend of Duveneck’s in Munich.
  - *Old Town Brook, Polling, Bavaria*, c. 1878. Polling was a favorite summer destination for Duveneck while living in Germany.
  - *Elizabeth Boott Duveneck*, 1888 and *Francis Boott*, 1881. These portraits are of Duveneck’s wife, Elizabeth, and her father. Elizabeth is shown in her wedding dress.
- Next, discuss Georgia O’Keeffe’s *My Back Yard*. This painting was inspired by the New Mexico desert found near O’Keeffe’s summer home at the Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu, New Mexico. O’Keeffe first visited New Mexico in 1929, and moved there in 1937.
  - Of her home, O’Keeffe said: “It’s the most wonderful place you can imagine. It’s so beautiful there. It’s ridiculous. At the back door are the red hills and the cliffs and the sands—the Badlands. I go out my back door and walk for 15 minutes and I am some place that I’ve never been before, where it seems that no one has ever been before me.”
  - Have students write a brief description of their back yard, or of another place that has special significance to them. How would they translate those words into a drawing?
- Finally, look at *The Artist’s Mother, Lula May Hinkle, Making Original Quilt* by Nan Phelps. Phelps was a Cincinnati artist who painted over 1,000 paintings over the course of 60 years. What things can we learn about Nan Phelps’ family, specifically her mother, from this portrait?

## CLASS EXPERIENCE

- See if students can find Phelps' father in this painting. He is shown in a framed photograph on the table. There is a Bible placed in front of the photo—he was a pastor.
- Although some of these paintings are not self-portraits in the traditional sense, each of them reveals something personal about the artists who created them. Each of these paintings is a type of autobiography of its artist.
- Now it's time for students to create their own art autobiography. Give each student a sheet of paper measuring 8-1/2 x 5-1/2 inches (or half of a standard piece of paper). Each student should think of six elements that play an important role in their lives. Students will illustrate these six elements on their sheet of paper, preferably using a variety of colors. These pages will be photocopied and bound together to create an Art Autobiography Zine for your class.
  - For younger students, you might specify the six elements to be included on their sheet. Suggested elements include favorite food, favorite book/movie/tv show, favorite place, favorite animal, person you admire, what makes you happy.
- When photocopying your Zine, place two half-sheets of paper side-by-side on the copier bed. You'll want to make your copies in color, and you should double-side your copies, as well. Once you have your full stack of pages, allow students to arrange the pages in the order they like best. They should also create a cover for their Zine.

## ASSESSMENT

- Grades 5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communications of their experiences and ideas.
- Grades 9-12 Proficient: Students apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out.
- Grades 4-12 Students participation in art-based discussion
- Grades 4-12 Students ability to work collaboratively with group to create zine. (21<sup>st</sup> Century knowledge and Skills)

## NATIONAL STANDARDS

National Art Content Standard 1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

National Art Content Standard 6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines  
Common Core State ELA Writing Standard: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research

## RESOURCES

<http://www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org/>

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>



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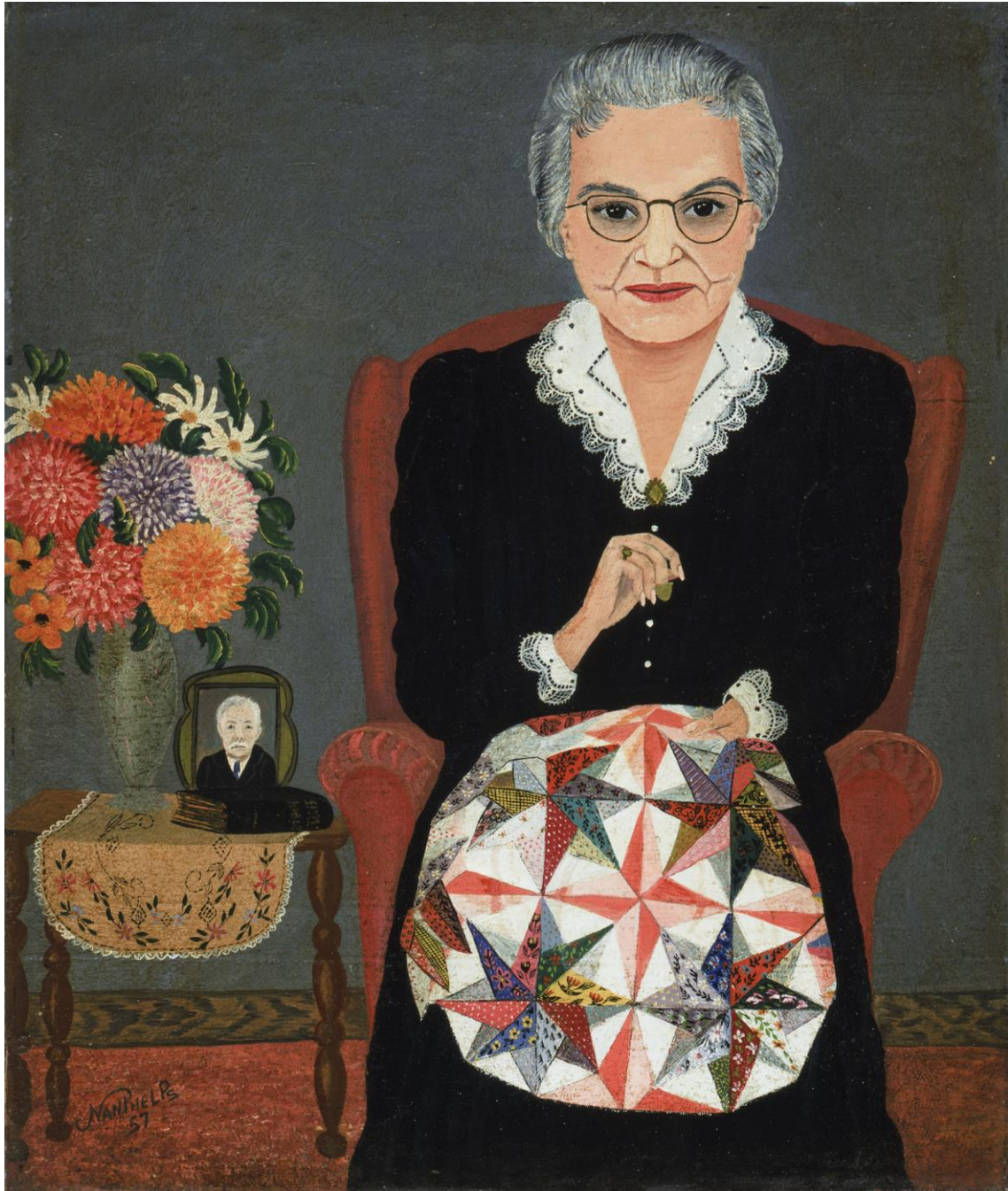


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