

## **All Things Inside the Box: Self Portrait Collage and Pastel Drawing**

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Photography wasn't originally thought of as a fine art medium, but as time and technology progressed, it was included with other media as a useful tool for artistic expression. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, students are exposed to visual images on a level that has never before occurred. Individuals can view media, such as magazines, film, television, and radio, through monitors placed in items such as phones, games, and watches. One can now copy, modify, and propagate images using these same devices with relative ease. Students in my classes play with such media daily, but seldom do these students consider how the images they see might have been edited to manipulate their thinking and refocus their attention. They are even less likely to realize that the ultimate purpose of this propaganda is to get them to respond in a manner that will probably benefit someone else's bank account. It follows that students viewing media often do not understand how and what techniques were used to create the images that captivate them. People tend to passively view this barrage of media without any concern or thought to the consequences. It made me think that something should be done to at least make the willing victims of this onslaught aware of their trackers. I wanted to find a way to make students more aware of the social implications of the media that engulfs them. Given the opportunities available to me for such a goal, I decided to enter into the Photography Seminar at the Houston Teachers Institute, dreaming that somehow and in some small way I might not only be able to increase the social conscience of young adults, but also improve the artwork produced in my own classes by developing and increasing the level of dialogue about media in my classroom.

I teach at Reagan High School in the center of Houston, Texas. Students in my classes are all 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade art students. The school has different labels; we are Title One, Project Grad, and Academically Acceptable, all designations of a school that is underachieving. I teach Art I and Art II, including an advanced class that focuses on painting. The school is one of the oldest schools in Houston, built before air conditioning and electricity where standard issue in homes. Given its outdated facilities, it is currently undergoing an extensive renovation. Despite the inevitable inconveniences, school is still being taught. In my three years at Reagan High School, I have moved rooms twice. I now teach art in a small room with no water and only two electrical outlets. These two outlets provide the power for everything in the class: computers, monitors printers, sharpener, and various other pieces of audio-visual equipment. I've had this room for two years, likely because no one else wants it. There is a positive perspective to this. At least I'm not pushing around a cart with my things, like the person to whom I have to give my room during my off period every other day. Floater, they call her. Next year I will be granted more space when they begin the remodeling of my current classroom and move me into a practice gym until the renovations are completed.

However small and backward the current arrangement, I do teach in my room. We truck in buckets of water and reshuffle plugs and appliances daily. My curriculum includes the traditional and the modern. I teach classic art history and the standard studio works, like painting, drawing, printing, and sculpture. All these activities are completed without a sink. My goal is to present a comprehensive introductory program of art in which students can learn a variety of artistic media

and their relevant histories. My intent is to produce a student who is well grounded in the basic artistic techniques used in visual arts.

Each year, I teach art history from the beginning of the first semester. My art lessons consist of notes and PowerPoint lectures, which review art movements and styles, everything from the classical Greek to the most recent contemporary art. Every year, I hope to finish the school year with Postmodernism. Art history lectures get mixed reviews from their audiences. The use of the slide presentations is an attempt to meet students in their own territory with digital tools to which they can relate in the hope that the computer presentation and the varied visuals will help to stoke their collective and individual interests (Jones 65). At Reagan, we aim to improve and reinforce the learner's general knowledge of art, its history and its techniques and processes, by combining art history with relevant studio projects. Therefore, I am constantly seeking additional tools to accomplish this goal, which brings me to my impetus for my involvement in the Houston Teacher Institute.

When I first saw the HTI Lectures on Photography program, I could not pass up the chance to enter into the program. In early April I begin teaching the beginnings of modernism. It is in modernism that photography begins to take on significant importance in the history of images. Despite their broad exposure to the media and the vast array of images it provides, my students are less than knowledgeable about the history of images in general. For example, they can identify the *Mona Lisa* at the start of the year, but few know who painted it. For this reason I begin the art history program at my school by focusing on general historical styles and genres. This is precisely where training in visual literacy could be useful. I believe that the best way to predict the future is to look at the past. While the students always seem interested in what is new, they have little awareness of the events and influences that have led up to the contemporary yield of imagery. Photographs have played an influential role in the art world since their invention around 1839 and later their mass production around World War II. Their introduction into the mainstream provided the public an alternative medium with which to view the world. Society no longer needed to visualize that which they read; people could see for themselves through the lens of the photographer. Suddenly there was much ado about a picture being worth a thousand words. But each picture was more than just a picture. It was an image captured by a prejudiced eye. It could burnish or blemish a reputation, a program, or an entire country. The history surrounding images affects what people create and why they create it (O'Brien and Silbley 11-17). Of additional importance is determining which technologies provide a seminal influence for the innovations artists develop in order to create new forms and techniques, and ultimately, art. I intended to not only show students a history of images, but to focus on the evolution of the changes that alter the philosophy of culture. Photography, as well being a relatively new media in the creating of art works, is one of those developments that has changed how and why we make pictures.

For the last few years I've been teaching portraiture focusing on the artist Chuck Close. Chuck Close is a contemporary artist who creates large-scale portraits using a drawing method that involves the use of grids (Ragans 248). Close's grid method works well for copying anything and literally turns kids into inspired copyists with the success that the use of a grid lends students in drawing. What I like about this project is not the copying of portrait photos, but rather what the grid does to make students focus on discrete details in an organized methodical way when creating a work of art. The process makes the artist a machine. Inevitably one student will always shout out, "But, I can't draw," to which I always respond, "You are not drawing, just mapping points." In fact, that is what is happening; students are simply mapping points using the Chuck Close grid method. Map enough points correctly and the drawing looks like the original photo. While this project goes with out a hitch year after year, I've become bored with the banal photographs which model themselves after the Chuck Close style. What is the old saying?

Boredom is the mother of invention? Perhaps it's not verbatim, but I'm going with it because this is the boredom that gave me the idea for this project.

I've been taking pictures of students throughout my last ten or so years of teaching. It provides an interesting insight into students' psyches. Some people play to the camera, modeling, acting, and playing as if they are walking a high fashion catwalk or posing for a *Vogue* cover. Unfortunately the opposite is also true. Some students position themselves and pretend they just don't see or care how the camera sees them. It made me think that if they could see and, perhaps, understand what the camera is seeing, they might position themselves differently. This was the seminal point in my idea for the project as it has evolved. I thought about the qualities that went into making a star and, moreover, what those who do not succeed might be lacking. This clearly showed that student models don't seem to perceive themselves in terms of the camera seeing them. In short, they don't have a frame of reference, and they cannot mentally create one that allows them to envision how they look for the eye of camera. My solution was to build a frame to be hung in front of the model allowing models a better vision of how they might appear in the photograph. The cameraman focuses on the frame and the model moves behind the frame. With this visual tool, the students are compelled to think about how they might look to the camera. The frame used was roughly similar to the 7:5 proportional arrangement of the *Mona Lisa*, specifically in this case, 28 by 20 inches (Janson and Janson 457). The 7 to 5 proportion creates a window in which the students can "see" themselves. This "window" is built with one inch by two inch pieces of wood, four wood screws and some glue. I cut the one-by-twos in the appropriate ratio and attached them with the screws and glue to create the empty frame. I hung it with fishing line and paper clips in about five or ten minutes. This "window" has several advantages. As the photographer, you can give clear commands like "close on the window" to direct your model what to do. But better than that, the window, ironically, allows, even encourages, the students to get outside of the box that identifies whom they believe they are. People get a little crazy and feel less inhibited because of the "window." Finally, all of my students were later required to crop out the box. There will be further explanation of this process below (O'Brien and Sibley 181-208).

Tandem to taking the picture was getting the students to involve themselves in their portrait by both modeling creatively and bringing props to use in their shots. So, step one was to inform students in advance to bring props or decorations for their photo shot – I did supply some props but felt that I should reward students who were creative and brought their own stuff. To clarify this part of the assignment, I created a short Power Point lecture to show students the process and what was required of them. In the lecture, I displayed a rubric that showed how students would be rewarded for bringing their own materials. This rubric is provided in the lesson section of this unit. The second step was to take the pictures. Over the course of two class days, I took three digital shots of each student in my classes; this resulted in around 450 photos. A word of warning, bring extra batteries, as you will run out. My process for the photo shoots went roughly as follows. First, I asked for volunteers. Once the pool of volunteers was exhausted, I moved down the roll checking off student after student. As I took the pictures, I gave directorial advice as to how they might improve the next shot. Immediately after the pictures were taken, I showed the pictures to the individual students by allowing them to see the viewer on the back of the camera. I then asked them to choose one for future editing. I saved whichever shot they preferred, irrelevant of my own opinion of the shots. Students often chose pictures that I would not have chosen as a good, editable shot, but I deferred to their judgment. I also allowed them to come in during lunch for retakes if they were really unhappy with the initial three shots. Ultimately, everyone had an acceptable shot with which to work.

Once the pictures were taken, I could have just printed copies of each photo and started the same old same old project. Students could have just taken their headshot and placed a grid on the image. Instead, I wanted the students to take a more critical look at their pictures and make

creative choices through edits, crops and collage. But there was an impediment to this plan, namely a lack of adequate equipment. I have one Windows 98 computer and an old HP printer that sometimes works. I had over 150 students, and to have students edit their photos on this one computer was clearly impractical. While center-based learning works well for some assignments, it could not successfully meet the expectations I had set for this project. All students needed to learn and be exposed to the same series of objectives at the same time. To complete the required work with this volume of students and one computer would have taken the entire school year and perhaps a month into the summer. I wanted to teach everyone the same photo editing and collage techniques at the same time. This meant that I needed access to a computer lab with XP based computers that all had the same version of Microsoft Office Suite on them. Fortunately for me, this was not as difficult to find as it might be for some teachers. Reagan High School happens to be the Computer Magnet School in HISD, so I had a few labs at my potential disposal. Initially, I found that a number of those labs had varied versions of Windows platforms (Windows 98, 2000, or XP), which limited my choices. I needed a uniformly equipped lab. After a thorough search, I discovered that the library, with its twenty-four computers identically equipped with XP and Word, all connected to working printers, would nicely fit my needs. I could teach photo editing in this lab. But, of course, it was not as easy as that.

It has been my understanding and experience that the visual arts have long been on the cutting edges of technology and philosophy. Yet, it seems that school systems, particularly those publicly dedicated to primary and secondary education, do not generally see artists and art teachers as technophiles. Students and administration rarely imagine how very technical and process-driven the visual arts are. Most just think that students will have fun creating things. The general expectation is that art is Paper Mache and finger painting. So when I wanted to use the computers in the library for a photographic editing project, I did not immediately gain pole position in the library usage line. I had to sign up twice before they deigned to allow me one library period per class. As a teacher, one should note that it is not about what you might teach but what you generally teach and how that is valued. For example, an English teacher might have greater ease getting students access to library computers than an art teacher because that is where the books are kept and English deals with books, while art deals with Paper Mache. Granted, with the right amount of paperwork and requests, anything can be obtained in a bureaucracy, but the point needs to be made that an art teacher should be prepared to begin the process of acquiring computer space and time (if you are not so fortunate to have them at your immediate disposal) well in advance of the scheduled time for the project. So, I had acquired the necessary equipment.

The next step was to figure out how to get the pictures from my computer to the library computers in a way that the students could find and edit them with the least amount of difficulty. There was no way that I was going to load each computer with picture after picture; this could have been done, but it would have been highly time consuming, and I did not have that kind of time. Another method was needed to allow students access to their pictures on the library computers. And I knew what it was! I would use the school's Local Area Network (LAN). Finally, technology was working in my favor. To transfer all the pictures to the appropriate locations, I uploaded them to my school's intranet. The "intranet" is the school wide computer network. It is different from the "internet" in that, unlike the universal availability of the World Wide Web, it is only available to a specified area, in this case, Reagan High School. From my computer desktop at the school, I loaded the photos into my teacher folder. This folder is sort of a central school hard drive for use by teachers only at the school. The drive has security and students cannot use it without appropriate pass codes. From my teacher folder I placed the photos into Front Page (a Web application) and put them onto the school's intranet home page as a Gallery link. Students were then able to go to any school computer and, by typing the correct prompts in the address bar of the intranet explorer, gain access to their photos. It should be noted that the pictures were saved by class but not by names. Pictures were identifiable only by a photo

file number, which was assigned by the camera that took the picture; students were given this number to locate their photos. Finally, all data and machinery were in place to allow easy access to identical machines with identical software. All my students could now gain access to their photos in the Library lab, where I was prepared to teach them, en masse, how to edit them.

Throughout history, artists have sought to produce images either of themselves or others. The history of portraiture is long, and we have a host of techniques developed by great artists and technicians in the creation of portraiture. Here is where history lends itself to the study of the arts. In my art history lessons, I'd been discussing approaches to portraiture as a way of talking about changes in technique that affect the styles of art. This list of changes and styles had grown long in my class. We had been talking about stylistic differences in art since the beginning of the year. We had begun with classical Greek art and we were approaching modernism by early April. My lectures had focused on changes in media: for example, the advent of and use of oil paint verses tempera during the Renaissance (Hartt and McIntire 602). But I had also talked about the changes in subject and subject matter best described by a contrast between Ingles and Gericault, two artists of the early 1800s who each painted in a different style, neoclassicism and romanticism respectively (Hartt and McIntire 781-800). Ingles, a neoclassical painter, creates lush portraits of the aristocracy which relate their images to classical godlike origins, while Gericault, a romantic artist, paints the poor and insane by illustrating the intense, mad drama exuding from his sitters. As my art history lessons continued forward, I saw a chance to merge process to history by relating the works of Dadaist artists Hannah Hoch's and John Heartfield's methods of photomontage to the computer work that students would soon be doing ("Cut and Past").

I wanted students to see and hear about the history of photomontage and the artistic styles of Dadaism and surrealism. We talked about the new media of photography and its impact on the visual arts. I talked about the innovations in photography and visual images that artists in the past did not have: technology, computers, and digital media to create and explore. In the past, if some one wanted to create an image, they had to render it with the tools that were available to them. This may have been sticks, blood, brushes, egg mixed with colored rock, pigment suspended in oil, silver nitrate or collodion wet plate, but time and processes for representation have advanced (Janson and Janson 712).

Technology has created a new dimension in which the artist has the option to work. We no longer need to produce an object to see a representation of ourselves. Instead, we can now work and arrange in a purely digital realm. This has several advantages. First and foremost it's the "NEW"; it is state of the art. Whatever is new brings an odd sense of enthusiasm. One need only look down the soap aisle at the super market to see how advertisers hope to capitalize on the "New and Improved" concept to sell their wares. A second factor, and a decidedly more important one, is it is relatively cheap. No materials other than those that already exist in most schools are required. Computer labs and printers are widespread in schools. Finally, it's quick and students get immediate feedback. A teacher never needs to say, "You need to let that dry to see how it will look," or "you'll see how that shot looks after we process it." Most computer work is "wysiwyg" from the Windows 95 platform forward. To all non-technophiles, this is an acronym for "what you see is what you get." Pronounced /wiz'ee-wig/, it describes a user interface (computer screen) under which "What You See Is What You Get," as opposed to one that uses more-or-less obscure commands that do not result in immediate visual feedback (Dictionary.com). The bottom line is no more stockpiles of chemicals, no more dry times, no more cut and paste with scissors and glue, glue that ultimately seems to stick to everything but that which you want held together. And no more messes to clean up. Sounds great, doesn't it? In fact, it is great. The requirements are minimal: learn how to use the technology and find instructive and creative ways to teach it appropriately.

While I was designing this computer project, I talked to my students about what they knew about photo editing software. I showed them pictures and asked them what they thought about different images. Many students had never used a computer to edit a photo; once you took a photo, it was what it was. No editing allowed. To me this makes photographs, not art. Further, when I showed various photographic works to students, they would often say, “You have to have Photoshop to do that,” or “We can’t do that on the school computers. They’re too old.” One thing that should clearly be noted: all HISD schools have libraries with computers or labs with a number of PC computers in them. Almost all HISD schools are PC based. This means that you will not find a set of Macs in most HISD situations. Without a Mac, it is necessary to have Photoshop –the Mac platform includes a photo editor. The next problem was how to get this Photoshop program on every computer in the lab. After a few seconds of pointed contemplation (hmm, Photoshop licensing is not cheap, not in my budget and not likely to be in any future budgets), I concluded Photoshop was out.

I say to Photoshop, who needs you anyway?! It is a great program, but most people don’t know how to use it, and the others have the creativity of a cement block when using it – everyone has to justify their decisions. I also realized that most techniques in photo editing can be undertaken with a simple program that almost all PC’s have. That program is Microsoft Word. This program can crop, resize, change value and contrast, float text, alter and control color, and layer and rotate images and text. Most people aren’t even aware of Word’s powerful capabilities, but, indeed, it is an excellent photo editor.

My teaching strategy for this editing project was twofold. I wanted students to learn how to crop and resize images altering their value and contrast, if needed. Further, I was very interested in teaching students to add text and clip art in a digital collage manner. This is why it was important to have a homogenous grouping of computers and applications. Uniformity of platform and program allows for clarity of direction when teaching large classes.

I had the lab only for one day with each class, so students had one hour and twenty-five minutes to complete a varied list of instructions. First they had to log on to a computer, find their picture on the intranet, and save it to their desktop. Once they had access to their picture, they had to crop away the window and resize the image to seven inches by five inches. Next, they were required to add at least one piece of clip art, which could be found and pasted in using the picture editor. Most students had never done any of this before. Fortunately, I facilitated this activity right around Valentine’s Day, so there was extra incentive to learn how to add text and clip art to the photos, which at this time was totally digital information. Furthermore, students were required to add Word art to the photo. Word art is a feature that allows one to create interesting type arrangements on the computer. These text arrangements, like all objects in Word, can be floated on top of one another, as if they were on clear glass, so the picture appears behind the object. I felt I had taught something valuable after doing this digital exercise for one day with students. Students were not playing games on web sites, a common occurrence while teachers are attempting to get students to do research in the library; rather students were playing with their images, importing text and images. At the end of the class, students were required to print out their digital photomontage and turn it in. Once again, students worked outside of class, turning in improvements or making up work without me present – something that is very untraditional at Reagan. I now had roughly 150 photomontage self-portraits that were printed out and ready to be illustrated using the Chuck Close method.

As any good English teacher can relate, students really like their first drafts. Attitudes were no different when it came to the idea of doing any further work with their perfectly composed images. Rebellion was in the air. Many students said, “Why do we need to redraw this picture? We already have a wonderful image that can be printed.” My response to students was, “I think

it's great that you like your photomontage; why don't you email yourself a copy of it?" End of conversation, but not the end of the lesson.

This rather curt response does not address the question of what the Chuck Close method of redrawing photos does for students. Let me describe in greater detail who Chuck Close is and what his drawing method entails. Chuck Close has been a leading figure in American contemporary art since the early 1970s. Best known for the monumental heads he paints in thousands of tiny airbrush bursts, thumbprints, or looping multi-color brushstrokes, Close has developed a formal analysis and methodological reconfiguration of the human face that have radically changed the definition of modern portraiture. Close places grids on banal photographic images of portraits, photos that he takes. Next, he places a proportional sized grid on his canvas, which is usually much larger. He then paints in each cell of the grid on the canvas matching it to the corresponding cell on the photo (Ragans 247). When students work through this process, it forces them to focus on and pinpoint parts of the drawing that they are attempting to copy. Furthermore, the grid provides students a more objective method of evaluating images.

The grid method offers advantages to teaching and communication when talking about artwork. First, it is easy to explain what in the pictures differ and precisely where these differences occur by looking at the grid. This clarity provides a springboard from which to discuss potential creative choices and the consequences and effects of such choices. I begin this project by teaching several developmental lessons that take one class period each. The first lesson shows students a drawing that consists of a simple small magazine cut with a grid already drawn over the photo. I give the students a handout sheet that has an equal sized rectangle drawn on the paper right beside the picture. Students are instructed to redraw the grid on the blank rectangle to the right of the photo. Then students are instructed how to use the grid to copy the image. The work sheet in the second lesson has a slightly more complicated face with a rectangle beside it. The blank rectangle is intended to be a 100% enlargement of the size of the photo. In this lesson, students are shown how to redraw to enlarge the original. At this time, students are also instructed how to color the portrait with oil pastels. Prior to this project, students have already been instructed on color theory and how to render values using pencils. Additionally, students have had a limited amount of work with oil pastels. For the final portrait drawing, students are asked to color in their portrait using oil pastels. I ask students to make the portrait three different skin tones on the second practice portrait. I want students to have the chance to learn how to render all skin pigments. After these initial lessons, students are ready to complete a large full-scale image in pastel using the Close grid method.

Often students asked if they could use colored pencils or just markers to complete their portrait. I always refused them this option for the following reasons. First, pastels are a step toward painting allowing for greater color mixing and blending. As a developmental step, pastels are far superior to pencils. Furthermore, the pastels are an introduction of a new media rather than a repetition of previously learned objectives. I want my students' abilities to progress. Ultimately, they can use what they want if they choose to pursue their own projects, but I want them to have as many tools as possible. Finally, pastels are cheap; a large set of 24 different colors can go for as little as \$3.00 and can be used by approximately three sets of students for up to three projects.

What are students to learn from this portrait project? Students will be exposed to a real world experience of image creation. They will apply text to images and gain experience in composition. Students will critically discuss what their self-portrait portrays about them through oral discussion and written critique forms. Finally, students will apply technical skills in an imaginative production of art. Ultimately, students will gain exposure to a host of different historical, technical, and creative methodologies used in the creation of art (TEA).

What will teachers and students need to create this artwork? Students will need, at minimum, some exposure to art before they begin this project. Additionally, they should have an open mind and be prepared for something new and more challenging. Teachers need to plan well for the many tasks necessary to initiate the unit and execute the project's series of objectives in an efficient and timely manner.

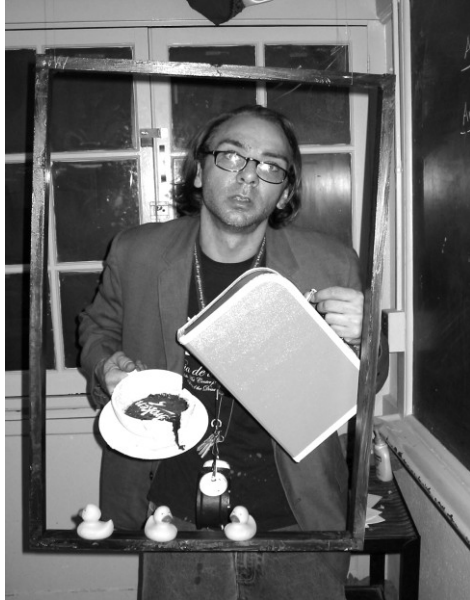
To summarize, the teacher begins by teaching art and art history. Students will need to be exposed to some art history dealing with portraiture and photography in order to understand the value of this artistic endeavor and to give context to their own works. Students should also have some experience with Microsoft Word and its tools. While the lessons include instruction for these skills, it is helpful for the students to have a working knowledge of the application before beginning. It is likely that most students will have worked with Word, but it would be wise to investigate ahead of time. The information can be easily gained by scheduling an earlier session in the library, during which students must use Word to write a brief essay on a piece of art that you have instructed them to research. This would also less offend the library goddesses as it involves books. (This might also give you an "in" for the project's scheduled time –librarians thinking, "What a responsible book-loving young art teacher!") This is not a required component of this unit, but simply a possible addendum to make sure students have primary skills in the target computer application. Students will also need to have experience with oil pastels. As this is a component of the standard curriculum, it is most likely that this will have been taught early in the year. If for some reason, it is an objective taught on a different timeline, it would be wise to teach it prior to the teaching of this unit. Teachers must also have some prior skills in order to teach this unit. In addition to the planning and scheduling, teachers must gather several different sets of materials. They need the materials required for the frame (as explained above), and they need the equipment required for taking the pictures. They need the standard materials: handouts, pencils, pastels. And, of course, they need access to a homogeneous computer lab with working color printers. At the execution of this unit, teachers will also need to provide directions on how to crop, edit, and add text and images in the lab, how to use the Close method and how to appropriately use all media, including oil pastels. Directions for how to do this are found in the lesson plans section of this document. Provided with this unit will be a bibliography, a set of Power Point lecture notes lending information to class lectures on portraiture photography and photographic manipulation. Finally, teachers will find a direction set on how to edit pictures using Microsoft Word and several lesson plans detailing how to teach this component of the unit.

This unit addresses several issues pertaining to visual literacy. Students will have a chance to edit pictures, making creative choices about what they want to crop away and add to their own image inside the box. By applying text and images to their own photos, students will gain knowledge about how media is created and manipulated to project ideas. The unit will also teach students a simple method for transferring, manipulating, and recreating images through digital rendering. As a teacher, it is my goal to make students aware of their choices and to teach them to critically view works of their own and others. This project not only fulfills a variety of TEKS objectives, it also allows students a chance to create something personal for themselves and expressive to others. With a little luck teachers and students will be able to create something meaningful, personal, and artistic inside and outside of the box that contains our lives in the public education system.

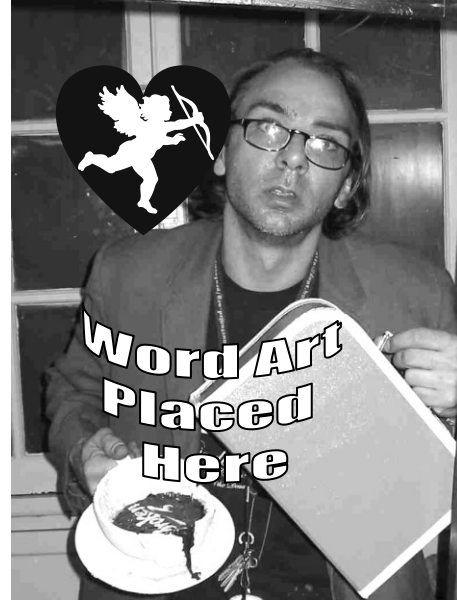
What would I like to see happen through my endeavors in visual literacy, photo manipulation and Chuck Close portraiture units? Students will create self-portraits. Students will manipulate these digital portraits using the Microsoft Word program to alter and collage their photos. Students will use the photo editor to crop, add text, and add additional images to their portrait photos. Students will print out these edited self-portraits and illustrate the images on to paper using the Chuck Close grid method. Students will then color their redrawn portrait using oil



pastels. This self-portrait image and exploration of portraiture will take place over the course of several different lessons, utilizing standard lecture practices, computer lab time, and in class studio time. The unit will unfold over a semester as students learn appropriate media use, manipulate images in the lab, and complete works in the studio while receiving lectures on photographic history and media techniques.



*This is an example picture of me behind the frame with props.*



*This is an example edit of me with frame cut out and word art and clip art added.*

## **LESSON PLANS**

Provided below are three lessons detailing activities and methods used in my portraiture unit. The lessons include one introductory lesson on how to use the Chuck Close grid method on portraiture, a lesson on photo editing in Microsoft Word, and finally a lesson working finished self-portrait.

### **Lesson One: Introduction to the Chuck Close Grid Method**

As an introduction to the grid drawing methods, students will be asked to complete to drawings demonstrating their mastery of the Chuck Close grid method. The first drawing will be completed with three values drawn in pencil using the first handout for this project. The scale of the drawing will be one to one and no enlargement or reduction of the grid will be needed. As the project moves forward students will be expected to enlarge, reduce and alter their images while using the Close method.

#### ***Materials***

Handout: one to one portrait sheet  
Pencils, erasers and rulers (provided by students)  
Examples of Chuck Close's work  
Posters, Power Point of Chuck Close's work.

#### ***Objectives***

Students will measure out and draw grids on their handout. Students will use the grid to aid them in drawing the portrait provided. Students will shade their drawings, creating a minimum of three values in their work.

### ***Activity***

Students will see Chuck Close's work and discuss his method of using the grids. Make sure that students are aware that the grid method has been used since the Renaissance as a way of copying images. Get students to talk about why the method works. Then go step by step through the process of creating a grid on the handout. Check student work. Discuss the importance of accuracy. Check student work again; students who have inaccurate grids must start over. All grids must be one inch by one inch with parallel lines. Once the grid is complete, go over with students how to use the grid to their advantage. Have students look for points on the picture that are on the intersection of grid lines. Then review with students what value is and how these works need to be shaded. Finally talk about the creative use of text in the picture.

### ***Evaluation***

The grid must be accurate +/- 1/8 of an inch on all lines. All lines must be parallel or perpendicular to each other. Drawings must reflect the use of a grid. Thus eyes, ears, mouth and other distinguishing features must correspond to the grid. Students must have dark black, white, and grey tone values shaded through out their work. Bonus points should be given to students who add extra creative flare to their work in following the directions explained at the bottom of the handout.

### **Lesson Two: Photo Editing and Portrait Creation on the Computer**

In this lesson, students will import their rough photo cuts from the school's Intranet onto their workstation in the computer lab. Students will then crop, resize, and edit their portrait photo digitally, using Microsoft Word. Students will add text and clip art to their work, print it out on the school's library printers, and turn them in for a grade at the end of class. Students will also see a brief Power Point presentation on photo editing and artists who use collage, text and images in their work.

### ***Materials***

Computer lab with 24 XP PC computers  
Work printer  
Hand out for Microsoft Word editing.  
Photo of student  
Paper for printers  
LCD Projector so you can demonstrate how to do work  
Projection screen

### ***Objective***

Students will download picture from Intranet. Students will crop and resize portrait images to 5" x 7". Students will add text using Word Art to their photo. Students will add clip art to their work using the Microsoft Word program. Students will print out a 5-inch by 7-inch copy of their work to be turned in at the end of class. Students will see how artists have used text and image in portraiture.

### ***Activity***

Place a sign on the door to announce that class will be in Library computer lab on the scheduled day. Have all students sit down at a computer work station. Allow students to double up only if there are no other spots open and the pairs seem amenable to working cooperatively. Go over the rules with students: students will not be allowed to play games or email their friends. Make it clear that such activities will not be allowed. Show Power Point presentation on artists with text and self-portraiture. Focus on the style of art known as Dada but include others such as Barbara Kruger and Frida Kahlo. Go over how they used text and image. Make sure everyone has the

Microsoft editing handout. Then demonstrate moving step-by-step move through the process. Check work and help students as problems arise. Have students print out image and turn in at the end of class.

### ***Evaluation***

Did students hand in a printed copy of their portrait? Was the portrait roughly 5"x 7"? Was the portrait cropped so the portrait frame was removed from the picture? Was the image resized correctly? Did the student add text and clip art to the portrait? The student must have mastery of all of the above tasks otherwise they must complete the work over on their own time. Students must then turn it in for approval before they can start the final project.

### **Lesson Three: Transferring Edited Photo to Paper and Coloring with Oil Pastels**

This is the final lesson in the portrait lesson series. Students have already completed two practice portraits, one of which asks students to use oil pastels and change the size of the image. Students have cropped, edited, and resized an image of themselves on Microsoft Word and printed it out for grading. At this time all printouts should be handed back to students. From here student will need to redraw the portrait onto a larger sheet of quality drawing paper and color it in with oil pastels.

### ***Materials***

Quality 18" x 12" paper  
Pencils, ruler, and erasers (student provided)  
Oil pastels  
Paper towels  
Print out of self portrait.  
Example of completed work

### ***Activity***

Hand out materials and return all printouts to students. Each student needs to have a ruler, pencil, and a 12" x 18" sheet of paper. Students will need to take their print out and place a 1" x 1" inch grid on it. Tell the students to be very careful as they have only one copy of this work. Once students have completed making a grid on their photos, students will need to draw an enlarged grid on their 12" x 18" sheet of paper. Students will find it easiest to create a grid that is twice as large as the 5"x 7" inch photo grid. Thus, their portrait will be 10" x 14" in size. Next students should draw their 10" x 14" portrait rectangle on their paper. Students should try to place the rectangle neatly on the paper. Instruct them to put a 1" space on both sides of the grid, a 1½" space at the top and a 2½" space at the bottom. Next, have students determine what size each square should be. (Let students do this.) Once students have completed their grids, they should begin to draw lightly. After students have completed their drawings (a process that should take at least two to three class periods), instruct them to start coloring with oil pastels. Students may request oil pastels only after showing a completed drawing. Students should be instructed to not use dark colors on oil pastels until the very end. (I sometimes take the black out of these kits just to avoid this problem.) Have students color their work. Help students individually as the work progresses and problems arise. Have students turn in finished work and fill out critique for work.

### ***Evaluation***

Were students able to place an accurate grid on both their photo and final drawings? Did student's drawing accurately reflect his/her photo? Was student coloring appropriate and did it utilize multiple colors and values within those colors? Did the student's work reflect mastery of Chuck Close's grid drawing method and photo editing skills? Was the work creative? ☺



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Redraw the object above using the Chuck close grid method shown in class. Shade adding at least 3 Per: \_\_\_\_\_ different values. Note step one is to redraw the grid in the rectangle to the right. Change the text at the bottom if you like adding your own bit of creativity to this project. Due at the start of next class.

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