



Artists' Connections

A VISUAL ARTS INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS



DUNDAS VALLEY
SCHOOL OF ART

Elizabeth A. Sharp*
November 2021



CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Artists at a Glance	4
Artist Biographies	5
Recycled Art Supplies.....	19
Tips to Get Started	19
Overview: Sense of Self.....	20
Popular Topics on Ministry of Education	21

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Introduction

Welcome to DVSA's Artists' Connections 7: *Sense of Self*. This guide offers teachers different ways to engage with the original artworks and to gain a better appreciation and understanding of the art and the artists. Our theme this year is *Sense of Self*, an adaptable overall concept that connects directly to visual art - when is the work of the artist NOT a "self-portrait" of personal aesthetics or strongly held personal convictions? We think that you will find that this broad theme helps to deliver many areas of integrated curriculum other than visual arts, and have made suggestions in several of the projects for collaboration with your colleagues who teach other subject areas.

The projects in this handbook have been designed to adapt easily to online teaching if necessary. We suggest using recycled or found materials whenever possible to cut down on material costs and waste. Also, generic supplies have been identified that are easily available at reasonable cost. We hope to support your valuable use of preparatory time as a teacher by providing you with quick, specific, and self-contained activities and selected reference materials for extended discussion. We thank you for all your countless extra hours of work to make visual art curriculum possible, and hope that you will find DVSA's AC7 an invaluable resource.

In order to facilitate simple and time-sensitive lesson planning, we have included an Artists at a Glance list. This allows you to quickly identify an artist's typical subject matter, medium, and interests that form the basis of the artist's overall body of work that relate to our overall *Sense of Self* theme. Instead of having to read through all the artists' biographies (which we hope that you will do eventually!), you can quickly navigate to find an artist whose work and interests fit into your lesson plans and existing curriculum requirements.

The *Sense of Self* theme may inspire students to explore personal identities, heritage, and family background. We have anticipated that the many "bad news" stories surrounding these issues can overwhelm the discussion and make the creation of meaningful art activities in the classroom seem daunting. Students and teachers alike bring these emotions and experiences to the classroom when preparing for the introspection necessary to move towards a greater sense of self. In the creation of the guide, we have opted to create a "safe space" for the students, with ample comfort level and choice built into the activities, and have focused on outcomes of greater awareness, appreciation, and education of these sensitive personal issues. Students are in control of what they choose to disclose within their projects, and teachers are always welcome to adapt the projects included in our guide so that they too feel comfortable within their work environment and role.

We are also aware that perusing the Ministry's curriculum requirements is sometimes an exhausting exercise for educators, and with a broad theme like this, there is no specific mention of the *Sense of Self* as a topic. So, to facilitate easy connection to curriculum, we have applied a *Sense of Self* inventory of concepts and have connected each project to the artists who create related artwork. If you are looking for an art activity that connects to issues such as mental health, Indigenous education, or disabilities, you will be able to find it here in the guide with the use of the Artists at a Glance list.

We hope that you will enjoy using DVSA Artists' Connection 7 and that you will take advantage of our artists' work that is available for use in your school. It's a great opportunity to celebrate "local", as all of our artists live and work nearby. We hope, in some small way, that we've made your very challenging job just a little bit easier. The Ministry of Education in Ontario is always interested in hearing about the positive experiences of students and their teachers, and we have provided the link to their feedback portal called "*Tell Us What You Did*" in our section on Curriculum Guidelines. We would be delighted to hear about your excellent work in the classroom, so please keep us informed of your successes. Best wishes,

Elizabeth Sharp
DVSA Artist Connection 7, Writing and Research

Sense of Self

ARTISTS AT A GLANCE

Looking for a particular focus on the *Sense of Self* theme to drive the art activity in your classroom?

Here are our featured artists' individualized interests that relate to *Sense of Self* as emphasized in their work. For more detail, please refer to the artists' biographies included in the AC7.

OLIVIA BROUWER

- creates artwork that reflects her experience with **blindness, adaptation, and perception**
- artwork explores a **multi-sensory experience** that is accessible to both visual impaired and sighted viewers
- inspired by **organic shapes** and the **abstraction of nature**
- works in **oil, acrylic, watercolour, collage, mixed media**

ERNA DE VRIES

- creates artwork that reflects the **contrast between the urban environment and nature**, includes graffiti, grids, maps, and other **manmade constructions**, and contrasts these with natural **cycles of life**
- works in a wide range of media including **photography, graffiti, and welding**; specializes in **encaustic**

DERON DOUGLAS

- creates artwork that reflects his background as an **Indigenous artist, traditional oral storyteller, and cultural speaker**
- works in **paint**, specializing in **portraiture** and **figure painting**

LORRIE GALLANT

- creates artwork that reflects her background as an **Indigenous artist, expressive arts practitioner, and storyteller**
- artwork expresses **Indigenous spirituality** and **social justice issues**
- **writer and illustrator of children's books** about growing up on the Reserve
- works in **paint** and **ink**

DAVE HIND

- creates artwork that utilizes locally **scavenged materials** and repurposes them, expressing strongly-held beliefs in **environmental responsibility, social justice, and community collaboration**
- creates artwork that focuses on **local Canadian history and heritage**
- works in **metal** and other manufactured materials such as coloured aluminum siding

APRIL MANSILLA

- creates artwork that reflects **work as an art therapist** and focuses on **mental health issues** such as self-esteem, self-respect, perfectionism, acceptance of self and others, and proactive self-help
- works in paint and specializes in **mural painting**

CLARENCE PORTER

- creates artwork that reflects the **local landscape**, both urban and natural subject matter
- promotes a sense of self through personal **connection to place**
- specializes in **pastels**

DIONNE SIMPSON

- creates artwork that incorporates both traditional materials such as **oil paint** with **weaving**, layering and other **fabric arts**, with an emphasis on **cultural patterns**
- expresses a connection to the influence of various cultures and the influence that **geographical location** exerts on the artist

HEATHER VOLLANS

- creates artwork that utilizes locally **salvaged materials** and repurposes them with a particular focus on everyday materials
- creates artwork that expresses strongly held beliefs in the **value of reusing, recycling, and repurposing**
- works and specializes in **mosaics**

LEAH WALKER

- creates artwork that reflects background as a **non-binary/queer artist**
- works and specializes in **painting, ceramics, fibre arts, curating and community outreach**

TOM WILSON

- creates artwork that reflects background as a **local Indigenous artist, writer, and musician**
- specializes in **painting** that reflects the **Kahnawà:ke beadwork tradition**

Olivia Brouwer (she/her)

Olivia Brouwer holds an Honours Bachelor degree of Fine Arts from the University of Toronto (Mississauga) and an Advanced Diploma in Art and Art History from Sheridan College in Oakville, Ontario. While attending Sheridan College, she was the recipient of the Faculty Award in Painting and Printmaking, in addition to the Roger Jowett Memorial Award, the Above Ground Award, and the Open Studio Award. She was also named as the Emerging Artist for the Magnotta Winery Art Competition. Since graduation, Olivia has maintained a prolific and ongoing schedule of exhibitions in Hamilton and surrounding area, including four solo exhibitions.

Olivia Brouwer is an emerging artist with vision impairment and her work is inspired by blindness, adaptation, and perception. Being partially blind, Olivia feels a responsibility to create artwork that reflects her experience with blindness and to provide a voice for the blind community in the visual art world, but one that is also invitational and accessible to sighted viewers. It is this strong sense of self as a partially blind artist that permeates her work and offers sighted viewers an opportunity to “see” through her unique eyes, and to experience her perceptions. Her early work began out of a need to embrace her identity as a blind artist and to overcome self-consciousness from what would initially have been identified as a “disability” but may also be described as “differently abled”.

Olivia is primarily a painter, working in oil, acrylic, and watercolour with added collaged elements that create abstraction and lend a variety of textures and layers. Her work is often tactile and multi-sensory, to facilitate those who are non-sighted and to create art that is accessible and inclusive. Olivia’s work challenges reliance on sight to understand visual art and encourages the creation of artwork that is inclusive and invitational to both sighted and visually impaired viewers.



Artist Biographies

Erna De Vries (she/her)

Erna De Vries holds undergraduate degrees in Visual Art and Art History from York University and McMaster University. She continued her academic training in teaching visual arts with a Bachelor of Education from Queens University and an Art for Educator's certificate from the Art Institute of Pittsburg. As her art education progressed, Erna began to specialize in encaustics, an unusual and technically challenging form of painting in which pigments are mixed with hot wax and resin and then solidified by the application of heat. Her work is now shown in the collection of the Encaustic Art Institute of New Mexico, and she has participated in exhibitions at the Museum of Encaustic Art in Santa Fe and the Encaustic Institute of Cerrillos. Here in Canada, her encaustics have been shown at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre, the Art Gallery of Burlington, and Redeemer University College Art Gallery. Locally, Erna has continued her work as an art instructor at Redeemer University in Ancaster, Hamilton District Christian High School, and the Hamilton Board of Education, and has recently participated in Zoom presentations online with the Propellor Gallery of Toronto.

Erna's submission to the Artists Connection 7 shows a strong sense of self that is connected to the local landscape of Hamilton. Her encaustic work depicts a lone tree against a familiar industrial skyline in a textured grid format, showing the stark contrast between the natural and manufactured landscape. In her own words, Erna asserts, "I aim to portray a balance between nature and industry while striving to maintain a reverence for the relationship between our created and manufactured worlds....Nature is majestic, powerful, yet vulnerable and broken...a cycle of life as nature struggles to survive." Erna's encaustics are layered with patterns and striations, and she employs a grid format in her composition with a specific purpose, to represent "stability in an ever-changing world." A neutral and monochromatic colour scheme depicts Hamilton winter landscapes in this piece, and Erna includes text that is intended to extend meaning and encourage engagement with the viewer. The vertical caption "Living in Harmony" is positioned below the lone tree trunk, a component of this local landscape that is intended to provoke interpretation and discussion.

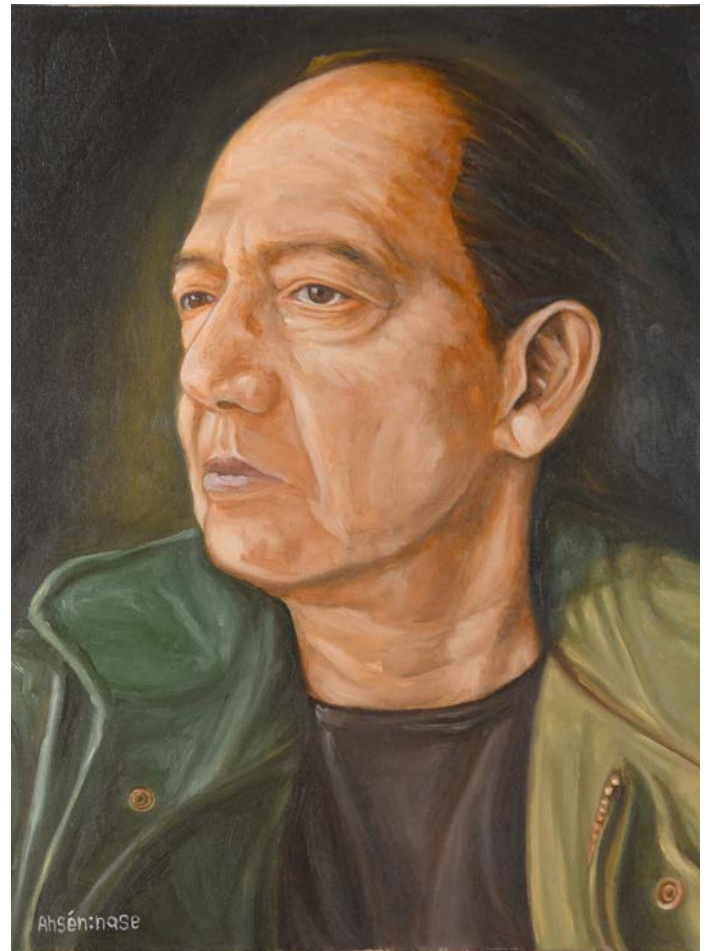


D. Ahsen:Nase Douglas (he/him)

D. Ahsen:Nase Douglas, or Deron Douglas, was educated at both York University and Humber College of Applied Arts and Technology. Deron holds a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art and Sociology and a Bachelor of Education (both from York University) and obtained two diploma certificates from Humber College in Design and Photography and in Computer Programming. He is an accomplished artist who specializes in portraiture and has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards from the Ontario Arts Council. In addition to his own creative work, Deron has an extensive background as an Indigenous cultural speaker at many elementary and secondary schools throughout the York region, north of Toronto. He is currently the Indigenous Artist in Residence with the York Region School Board, a position that he has held since 2015, and has directed the creation and installation of mural projects within the schools.

Deron's work in portraiture delves into layers of intention that can be peeled back to reveal his sense of self. His self-portrait *Before the Siege of 1990* shows a contemplative expression, well-modelled facial features, and simple details of clothing. Deron states that "the artist's self-portrait was considered a 'calling card' attesting to the artist's skills but that it also curated a view of how they wished to be 'seen' by the world, much like the modern selfie of today." This curated and projected sense of self will strike a chord with student viewers and will spark great engagement with discussion of social media. Deron also states, "It is up to the viewer to decipher the intent and circumstance and to determine if it is a curated view that the artist wishes to project or a true representation of the artist's sense of self," which emphasizes the importance of research to discover the possible intentions of the artist.

Self-portraits often capture the artist at a particular moment in life, and upon close examination, can reveal insights into self-identity, personality, circumstances, and even states of mind. Self-portraits by artists such as Vincent Van Gogh and Frida Kahlo may be familiar to students and can spark discussion of how the artist's sense of self can be observed to change over time as circumstances shift.



Lorrie Gallant

(she/her)

Lorrie Gallant was born and raised on the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and was employed as the Museum Education Coordinator for the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario for 11 years. This centre is located at the former Mohawk Institute Indian Residential School. Lorrie became immersed in the history of residential schools, and she developed her sense of self as an Expressive Arts Practitioner, artist, storyteller, and educator during her time working in this poignant and culturally rich environment. Her training as an Expressive Arts Practitioner became helpful in teaching others about the trauma of residential schools and in bearing witness to the experiences and healing of survivors and their families. As a generational survivor herself, Lorrie is aware of the importance of utilizing art as a tool to healing and facilitating reconnections to culture and spirituality.

Lorrie has generously offered her expertise on Indigenous spiritual healing and reconciliation in many ways in Southern Ontario. She has been a board member for the Ontario Expressive Arts Therapy Association and currently sits on the Indigenous Education Advisory Circles for the Royal Ontario Museum, the Peel District Board of Education, and the Toronto Museums and Heritage Services. Lorrie is also an Assistant Clinical Professor for the Department of Family Medicine at McMaster University and a part-time Professor for Mohawk College in the Liberal Arts Studies department, teaching Indigenous representation in media and art in addition to the impacts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). In addition to these professional responsibilities, Lorrie also creates her own art and has written and illustrated a series of children's books which tell her story of growing up on the reserve.

Lorrie's work, entitled, *Ago:gweh (ah-goon-gway)* is a neurographic self-portrait painted in watercolour and ink. The title is a word in the Haudenosaunee Cayuga language meaning "female person." In her own words, Lorrie states: "in Indigenous teaching, it is important to know our place in the world...We have come from the sky and to the sky we will return. We are rooted to the earth and draw our life from her, as she provides us with all that we need. It is our life in-between that connects us to the sky, connects us to the earth." Additionally, she emphasizes that the land occupies great spiritual importance in Indigenous culture, that "place is more than physical location. Place is multidimensional, and place is more than a physical location, it is spiritual." Both of these important Indigenous concepts are clearly seen in Lorrie's self-portrait. This work is emphatic, self-evident, and invitational.

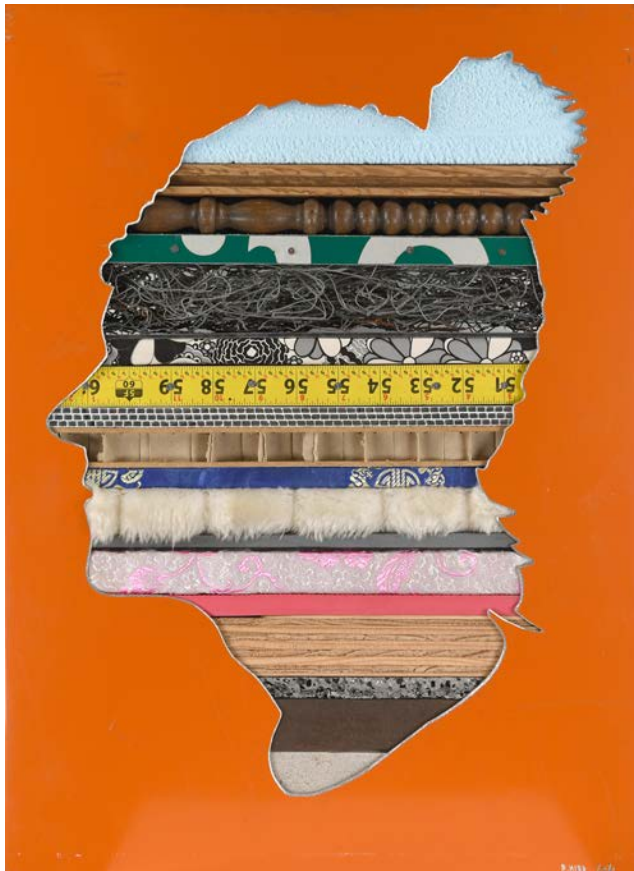


Neurography: the branch of neurology concerned with description of the nerves and nervous system.

Artist Biographies

Dave Hind (he/him)

Dave Hind holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree (BFA) from Western University and was the recipient of the university's Medal of Excellence: Fine Arts in 1992. A Hamiltonian born and raised on the edge of the escarpment, he is, in his own words, a passionate scavenger and an "ingenious thing maker." These two interests form the basis of his art practice: gathering waste metals and industrial bioproducts from local industries and then creating art objects from these materials. Dave holds strong beliefs in environmental responsibility, social justice, and community collaboration, and he has a well-developed sense of self that is derived from his chosen identity as a "thing maker", a designation that allows him greater artistic latitude in creating functional objects, sculptures, two-dimensional works, and even musical instruments.



One of Dave's most innovative uses of discarded industrial materials is his inclusion of aluminum siding, which is cut, carved, and layered into a mosaic of texture and colour. The multi-coloured siding is manufactured to withstand the elements, so it is an ideal material for public art installations. Dave's sculptures and aluminum paintings are displayed prominently in outdoor settings at the City of Brantford, the City of Hamilton, Laurier University in Brantford, the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton, the Evergreen Brickworks in Toronto, and the Cambridge Sculpture Garden. In her HGTV segment entitled, "28 Amazing Public Art Installations All Canadians

Should Know About", journalist Iris Benaroya describes Hind's outdoor sculptures as pure Canadiana, illuminating historical events in an appealingly modern and graphic style.

Dave's piece entitled *Thingmaker* is an effective self-portrait. It incorporates many horizontally-layered, salvaged materials into a shadow box format, held in place with a top layer of his signature material, sheet aluminum. His interest in history is reflected in his use of a profile format, channelling 19th-century silhouette portraits; he has added a modern-day twist, depicting himself in his toque with a pom-pom. Dave has explained that many of the layers in the piece, particularly the fabrics, have familial significance and trigger personal memories for him. Many of the materials are in their "third life" of repurposing, which is a significant part of his artistic practice.

April Mansilla (she/her)

April Mansilla is an established professional artist from Hamilton, Ontario who has a strong focus on mental health issues. This recurring theme appears in many aspects of her work in the visual arts, and she is a vocal advocate for mental health awareness and wellbeing, most recently giving talks on the subject with the International Bipolar Foundation and at ArcelorMittal Dofasco. She also works as an Art Therapy Assistant at the St. Joseph Healthcare Hospital in Hamilton with clients who are living with a wide array of mental health issues and disorders, including autism. The ultimate goals of April's therapeutic work for her clients are to attain proactive strategies to self-help through art production, and to use art-making as an accessible creative process with mental health benefits.

In addition to her work at St. Joseph Healthcare as an art therapist assistant, she has also completed a variety of large murals in public areas of the hospital, which provide visual stimulation to staff and visitors as they pass through the hallways. She has worked on notable teaching projects at McMaster University and Brock University, as well as large-scale mental health awareness projects such as Bell Let's Talk 2015 and the Glenn Close Bring Change 2 Mind Organization.

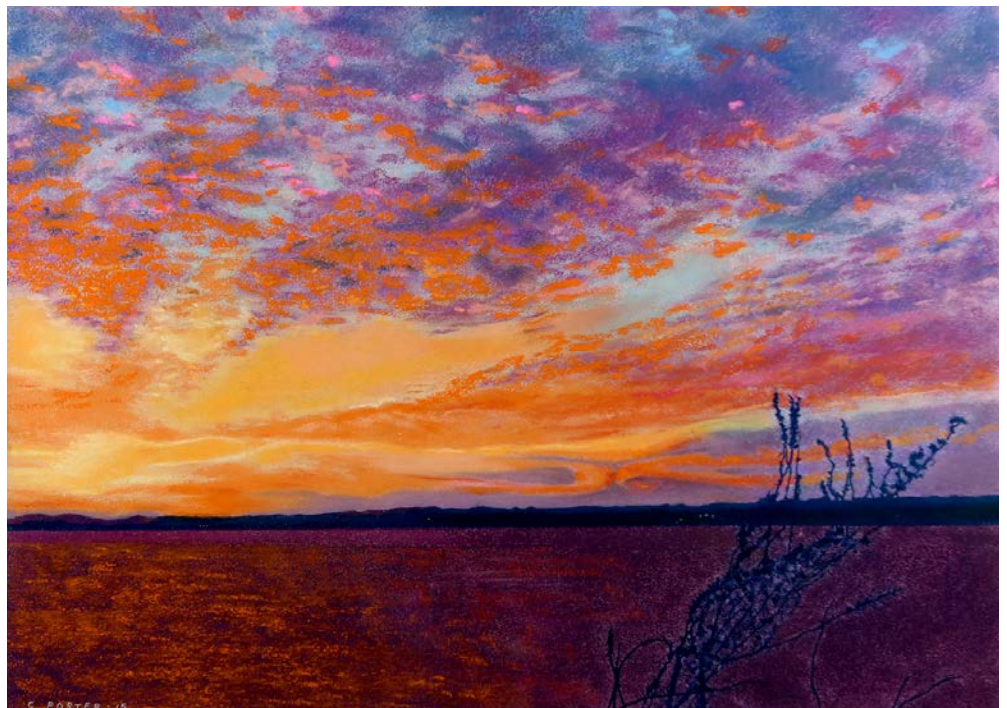
April's own art practice is wide-ranging and includes self-portraiture, figurative work, expressive landscapes, art journaling and photography. She often includes text in her pieces to make her intentions of meaning clear. April strives to make a strong, emotive connection with the viewer's own life journey, thematically extending the work that she does as an art therapist. She writes: "In a beautiful narrative of the human condition, I create my art, a visual representation of what many of us struggle against and the unbelievable levels we reach in overcoming the hardships life throws our way."



Clarence Porter (he/him)

Clarence Porter began his career as a commercial artist in Toronto, first working as an advertising agency art director and then for many years as a commercial illustrator using a broad range of media. After relocating to Hamilton, Clarence started working with pastels for his own enjoyment and quickly discovered that this was his preferred art medium. In 2006, Clarence's entry was accepted to the juried 15th Annual Purely Pastels Exhibition at the Art Gallery of Hamilton and he began to teach pastel courses and workshops locally at the Dundas Valley School of Art, the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Sheridan College, and the Aurora Cultural Centre. Recently, Clarence has received international acclaim when one of his works was used as the cover art for the Winter 2021 International Association of Pastel Societies publication. A six-page spread of his art was featured in the French magazine *Pratique des Arts*. Clarence received his Master Pastel Artist of Canada (MPAC) from Pastel Artists Canada in 2014 and was elected a Signature Member of the Pastel Society of America (PSA) in 2016.

Clarence derives a strong sense of self from his local landscapes of the Hamilton area and intends for his work to be immersive and recognizable to Hamiltonians. He states, "I believe that my art is both objective and subjective: objective in its original intent and execution and subjective in its interaction with the viewer. I hope my art gives the viewer pause to reflect on an intimate moment that I cherished, frozen in soft pastels." His local landscapes often combine urban and natural elements, such as plumes of softly billowing smoke contrasted against the angularity of steel factory stacks or shadows racing away from street signs, trees, or gas meters. Clarence feels that there is beauty to be found not only in the natural but also the industrial aspects of the Hamilton environment and that his art is a strong personal reflection on local time and place. Clarence's pastel, *Sunsets and Shadow Things - "Bayview"* offers a stunning view that is instantly recognizable to Hamiltonians: Cootes Paradise. He has added the following caption to his work which clarifies his intention for the viewer: "Just before the light of day has fallen behind the farthest horizon, there is that magical time of Sunsets and Shadow Things: a time when the clouds are illuminated and the earth's things fall back into shadows." For Clarence, the emotions and experiences tied to landscapes – and the way he depicts these through his art – contribute to his sense of personal identity.



Artist Biographies

Dionne Simpson (she/her)

Dionne Simpson holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) from the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD), Toronto. Her dual interests in teaching visual art and contributing to the overall good of the community are evident in her employment history. As a visual arts instructor at the City of Toronto for over five years, Dionne has taught courses in drawing and painting,



advanced painting, and professional development for practising artists. Prior to this, she was the Arts and Culture Programmer for the Second Base Youth Shelter in Scarborough, providing a creative and nurturing studio environment for at-risk youth. Dionne has been the recipient of a variety of professional grants from the Ontario Art Council, the Toronto Art Council and the Canada Council for the Arts. She has also received significant recognition for her painting from the Royal Bank of Canada, receiving both the RBC Financial Group First Place Award and the RBC New Canadian Painting Competition as the National Winner. As part of giving back within the health care sector of her home city, Dionne has generously donated her time to such high-profile charities as Casey House and the Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto.

Dionne's current multimedia work demonstrates a skillful literal "interweaving" of traditional and modern styles. Dionne explains that her works have multiple layers, emphasizing the "opacity and transparency which is apparent in human behaviour." She uses a traditional African technique, removing threads from large canvases and then interweaving new materials to fill in the spaces where these threads have been removed. Adding colour with found pigments, Dionne then proceeds to add and subtract from the original canvas and the work begins to take shape as a contemporary piece that is embedded in tradition. The resulting rewoven and "reinvented" canvas can perhaps be seen as a metaphor for Canadian society, in which the contributions of many cultures are welcomed, celebrated, and ultimately integrated into the "fabric" of society. This is a topic of great interest to educators as it is pertinent to many areas of the Ontario Curriculum, and could encourage cross-curricular collaboration with colleagues at your school. Dionne's AC7 piece is a self-portrait titled "*Under Construction sketch 1*", and the colour combinations in the background grid are a reference to Dionne's interest in patterns found in different cultures and how these cultures influence our development as humans. In her own words, "Humans meander through life and become shaped by their surroundings." Dionne's work is highly original and displays a very strong sense of self that honours her immigrant background while establishing her place in current Canadian society, a theme that will resonate with many newcomers to Canada.



Heather Vollans (she/her)

Heather Vollans has taught mosaics at numerous schools in Southern Ontario for many years: Dundas Valley School of Art, the Haliburton School of Art, Mohawk College in Hamilton, the Halton District Board of Education, the Grand Erie District School Board, and the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. She has also served as an Artist in Residence locally at both the Region of Waterloo Libraries in 2017 and Wilfred Laurier University Brantford Arts Block in 2011, in addition to participating in a wide variety of community art projects in Southern Ontario. A professional member of the Society of American Mosaic Artists (SAMA), the Mosaic Association of Australia and New Zealand (MAANZ), and the British Association of Modern Mosaics (BAMM), Heather has extended her artistic reach to international projects such as the upcoming juried group show at La Maison de la Mosaïque Contemporaine in France.

Heather's artistic investigation into mosaics as a mixed media has become deeply ingrained in her sense of self for a number of years. Her use of materials has become more diverse and her experimentation with methods and techniques continues to unfold. Her interest in this art form is purely about the materials and how they coexist, either harmoniously or disparately. Heather's art practice utilizes salvaged materials which allow her to question the material's initial use, why it was discarded, and how it can be re-purposed into a mosaic. The salvaged materials become "upcycled" to art supplies, a step forward in a transient journey towards reinvention as an art piece that Heather has facilitated.

Heather's teaching methods always focus on the value of using everyday materials, whether that is material in the home, by the roadside, or on the construction site. Students are encouraged to see objects not as items that have a specific recognizable function but purely as textural, tactile, or visual materials to be manipulated in some ways to create art. Sometimes items become unrecognizable in the mosaic; sometimes, they're completely recognizable. Whichever way, she hopes a dialogue will begin about material's purpose and journey, and the value of repurposing what we can. Heather derives a strong sense of self and social responsibility by recycling salvaged materials to facilitate art creation and encourages her students to do the same.

Leah Walker

(they/them)

Leah Walker identifies as a queer interdisciplinary artist and curator from Hamilton. Leah holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Nova Scotia College of Arts and Design (NSCAD) University in Halifax, and now works to provide creative arts programming in Hamilton including painting, ceramics, fibre arts, curating, and community outreach. In 2013, they were the recipient of the Hamilton Arts Council's Emerging Community Artist Award. Walker has been employed as a faculty member and ceramics instructor for NSCAD, as well as creating arts programming for individuals with visual impairment at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB).



Leah's portrait *Soft and Bright* is a remarkable achievement in the craft of felting. They have managed to render considerable detail in their facial modelling, which is very difficult to achieve in this inherently soft-focused medium. The multicoloured approach has added an extra layer of difficulty, as both hue and value are carefully calibrated to achieve the three-dimensional forms. Leah describes their purpose in their own words: "I intended the felted self-portrait aspect to be an expression of the Pride rainbow. I used felted wool as an alternative to paint because of this softness and link to craft and by doing so, queer the norms of painting... The painted surface is hard and stark while the colourful felt is soft and bright. I hoped the felt would convey a message of being soft and gentle with oneself in the process of figuring out who we are or coming out....that identity is the catalyst for this work." Leah's self-portrait will easily lend itself to an in-class discussion about societal issues including LGBTQ+ community and technical art production issues, such as the importance of intentional background to support subject matter, and how these two aspects of design can be considered to strengthen the overall composition.



Tom Wilson (he/him)

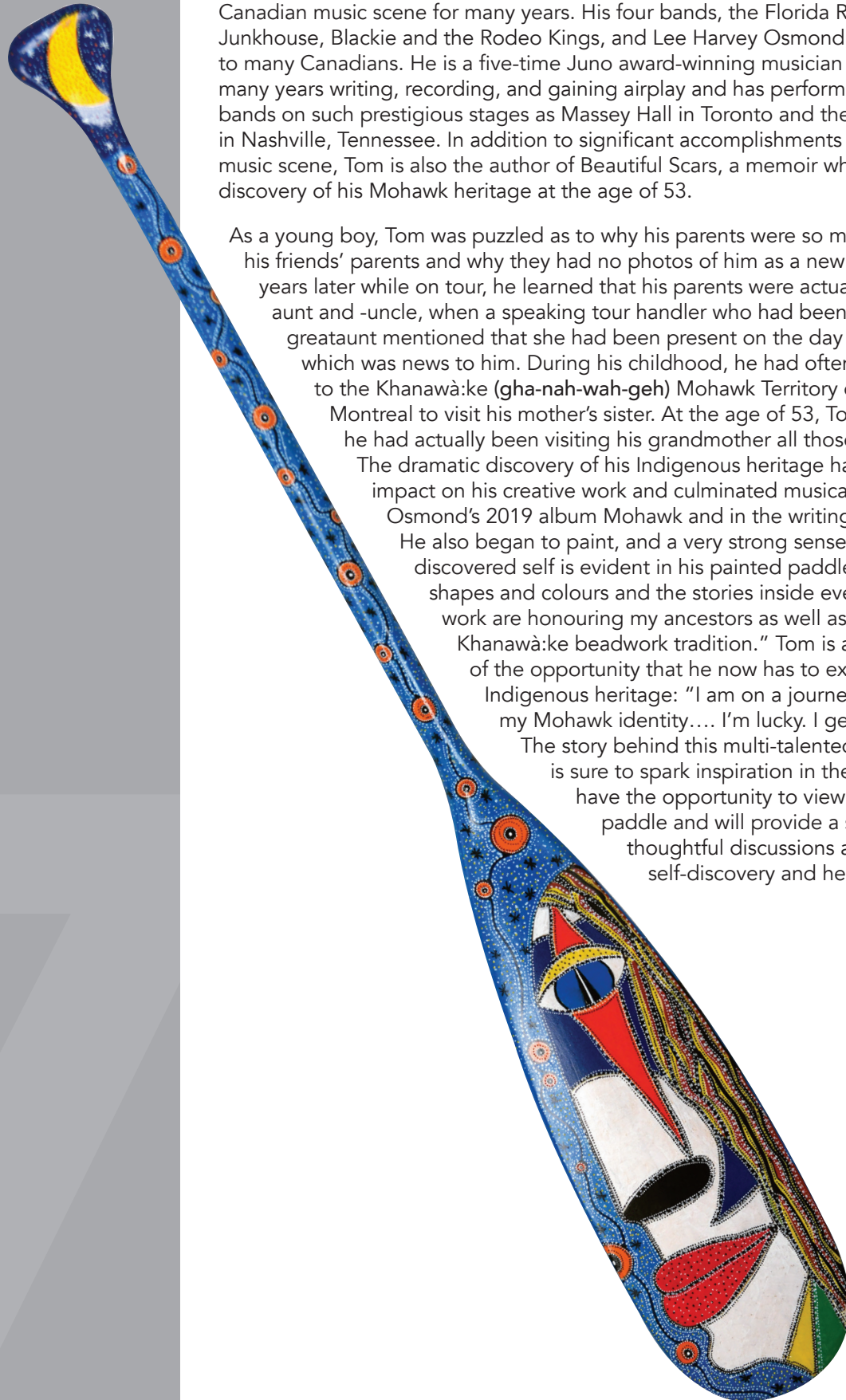
Tom Wilson is a rock musician from Hamilton who has been a veteran of the Canadian music scene for many years. His four bands, the Florida Razors, Junkhouse, Blackie and the Rodeo Kings, and Lee Harvey Osmond, will be familiar to many Canadians. He is a five-time Juno award-winning musician and has spent many years writing, recording, and gaining airplay and has performed with his bands on such prestigious stages as Massey Hall in Toronto and the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee. In addition to significant accomplishments in the Canadian music scene, Tom is also the author of *Beautiful Scars*, a memoir which addresses his discovery of his Mohawk heritage at the age of 53.

As a young boy, Tom was puzzled as to why his parents were so much older than his friends' parents and why they had no photos of him as a newborn. Many years later while on tour, he learned that his parents were actually his great-aunt and -uncle, when a speaking tour handler who had been a friend of his great-aunt mentioned that she had been present on the day he was adopted, which was news to him. During his childhood, he had often been taken to the Khanawà:ke (gha-nah-wah-geh) Mohawk Territory outside of Montreal to visit his mother's sister. At the age of 53, Tom realized that he had actually been visiting his grandmother all those years ago.

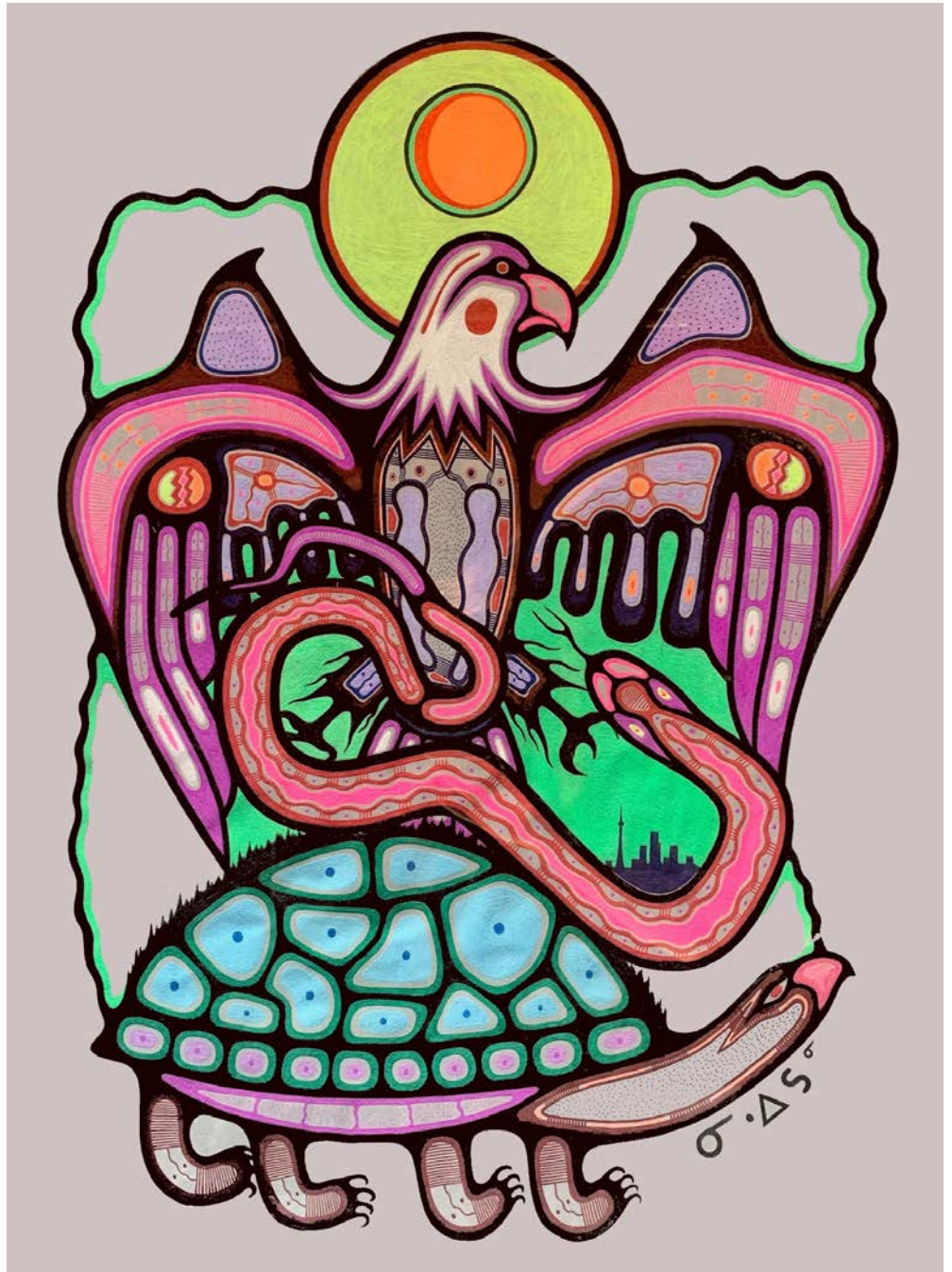
The dramatic discovery of his Indigenous heritage had a significant impact on his creative work and culminated musically in Lee Harvey Osmond's 2019 album *Mohawk* and in the writing of his memoir.

He also began to paint, and a very strong sense of his newly discovered self is evident in his painted paddle: "my simple shapes and colours and the stories inside every piece of my work are honouring my ancestors as well as respecting the Khanawà:ke beadwork tradition." Tom is appreciative of the opportunity that he now has to explore his Indigenous heritage: "I am on a journey in search of my Mohawk identity.... I'm lucky. I get to dream."

The story behind this multi-talented Canadian artist is sure to spark inspiration in the students who have the opportunity to view his painted paddle and will provide a springboard for thoughtful discussions about identity, self-discovery and heritage.



Anonymous - *Turtle Island*



This piece is unique in DVSA's Artists' Connection program, as the artist is unknown. Art with no known creator presents an opportunity to solve a mystery with the clues at our disposal - we have to work with what information we have, finding visual clues that move us a little closer to an understanding of the artist. We may never achieve a definitive answer, but the lack of a specific identity forces us to delve deeply into what we DO know about the piece and what we can PERCEIVE within it upon close inspection. This creates the classic "teachable moment" in the classroom: an opportunity to emphasize the power of research to unlock meaning in artwork and to underline the value of careful observation in the art itself. This piece was purchased through a social service agency in Brampton that helps to transition men coming out of prison into the community. When possible, they supported art therapy programs in jails. Many of the artworks produced through these programs

Artist Biographies

were purchased as a way of providing some financial support for the artists, and this piece was part of an exhibition of prison art which was held at the Peel Art Gallery, Museum + Archives.

We know that the artist was an Indigenous man who was jailed for murder who began to create artwork as part of his rehabilitation, using ordinary office supplies as no traditional art supplies were available to him. The drawing is therefore made with Sharpies, Whiteout, highlighters, and pens. We know that he was pleased enough with his work to sign it - there is a signature in the lower right-hand corner in Cree syllabics, but it cannot be translated into a specific name or identity.

We can identify several creatures which are stacked vertically in the composition, starting at the bottom with a turtle, then a snake, followed by an eagle and then topped with perhaps a sun in the sky. The turtle, supporting all the other creatures on its back, suggests that this is the artist's interpretation of the Turtle Island story, a legend with regional variations that is common to many Indigenous peoples of North America. The name is derived from Indigenous oral histories that tell an origin tale of a turtle who holds the world on its back.

Many Algonquian and Iroquoian speaking peoples who originate in the north-eastern part of North America use the name Turtle Island to refer to the North American continent. The creation story of Turtle Island varies among Indigenous communities, but there are some general commonalities that resurface in regional tellings of the tale - the story begins with a flooded earth, which rid the world of feuding peoples in order to begin life anew. Some water-dwelling animals survived the flood, such as the loon, muskrat and turtle. The creator then asked these remaining animals to swim deep beneath the flood water and collect soil that would be used to create the new world by piling in onto the willing turtle's back. The only animal who was successful in retrieving soil was the muskrat, and this soil, piled onto the turtle's shell, became the centre of creation. Scholars tend to describe legends like Turtle Island as "earth-diver myths", in which the origin of the world can be attributed to beings, often animals, who dove into ancient waters to retrieve soil used to create the world as we know it.

For more creation stories told by Indigenous storytellers, listen here:
<https://www.historymuseum.ca/history-hall/traditional-and-creation-stories/>

Placed on top of the turtle in this composition, we see a snake. In some cultures, snakes can be associated with violence and revenge. In some Indigenous oral storytelling and artwork, however, snakes are depicted as guides, protectors, and heroes, and are one of the most common representations seen in ancient petroglyphs, petro-forms and sacred birch bark scrolls. They may be associated with rivers, as the twisted, winding nature of the waters is like the oscillating movement of snakes, and in Ojibwe culture, the snake often appears as the Great Serpent, a powerful and beneficent force.

If we look at the right curve of the snake's body, we recognize the skyline of Toronto right away, with the iconic CN tower, providing another locational clue in the story.

In addition to the symbolic elements in this composition, we can also approach our discussion of the piece from a stylistic standpoint. Students may recognize the vibrant pictographic Woodlands School of art, typified by the spiritual work of the Indigenous artist Norval Morrisseau, who gained prominence in the 1970s and 1980s. A bold visual style using vibrant and contrasting colours, the subject matter reflects oral storytelling, legends, and world views. The Woodlands School characteristics are easily recognizable: forms are developed in a predominant black line, backgrounds are undifferentiated and flat, and a system of interconnecting lines known as linear determinatives that indicate sacred power and often unusual

Artist Biographies

perspectives are included, such as the X-ray views inside animals. The overall stylistic effect of these characteristics is not dissimilar to stained glass windows, which often also depict creation stories and related narratives. Although most Canadians have seen examples of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit art, most people aren't able to name more than a few Indigenous artists. We need to consider why we prioritize knowing the names of European and North American artists when work by Indigenous artists has much to offer the viewer as well. Many galleries and museums are now aiming to "decolonize" their collections by prioritizing Indigenous perspectives and giving equal significance to anonymous artwork by providing contextual information. As we learn more about the cultures and creators of these pieces, we can confer the appropriate respect these artworks are due.

Finally, we can also direct our inquiry into this piece by considering the nature of anonymous art itself, a fascinating discussion that can lead in a multitude of directions. Museums are full of unattributed artworks that still provide a rich and valuable experience for the viewer once examined closely, as this piece does. However, attribution seems to bestow additional importance on works that anonymity cannot convey. This concept dates back to the Renaissance when Vasari published his *Lives of the Great Painters, Sculptors and Architects* in 1550, and the cult of "artist personality" took hold, supplanting the unique opportunities for discussion of content and methodology that anonymous art provides. The idea of authorship remains the central pillar of modern and contemporary art, and while anonymous art is represented in museums, it has not occupied the same prominence in galleries, where the absence of attribution is seen as awkward. In modern day culture though, we are infinitely more familiar and at ease with anonymous art than we would think. For example, most photographic content in electronic and social media is anonymous.

Anonymous works give us the opportunity to reflect on what constitutes our identities and our sense of self. Try asking students the following questions:

In what ways can you reveal your identity through the artwork you make?

Do people experiencing your art need to know your name or your history before they can understand what you are trying to convey?

How do we reflect on and build our own senses of self through other artists' work, regardless of whether we know who the artist was?

Ontario Curriculum Documents: *Sense of Self*

OVERVIEW - A Definition of *Sense of Self*

The Ontario Curriculum documents do not contain a description of the sense of self as a concept. In the documents, it is a broad and wide-ranging concept that is used interchangeably with other terms such as self-esteem and self-concept and applies as an overarching principle in many areas of curriculum in Ontario, both primary and secondary. It is helpful to define exactly what we at DVSA mean by this term in order to link it directly to our proposed art projects.

A sense of self can be defined as the way a person thinks about and views one's own traits, beliefs, and purpose in life. A strong sense of self may be identified through the articulation of one's goals, values, and ideals. Although many students will not yet have a clear sense of direction for their future, the more that they pose and answer the question, "Who am I?", the clearer their future path will become.

As students pose this question to themselves, their answers may fall into a variety of categories:

- physical attributes (height, eye colour, etc.)
- social relationships (friends, acquaintances, etc.)
- familiar relationships (sister, daughter, brother, son, etc.)
- abilities considering both strengths and weaknesses (artistic, athletic, etc.)
- spirituality
- affiliations (club or team participation, memberships, etc.)
- salient attributes, both complementary and otherwise (attributes that others have conferred and that they have internalized) such as honest versus dishonest, hardworking versus lazy, etc.
- avocations such as artist, athlete, musician, etc.
Avocation: a hobby or minor occupation.

One's self-concept develops and changes over time as it gathers feedback from a variety of sources, such as the life experiences and interactions that we receive from family, friends, teachers, cultural heritage, and society at large. Childhood before the onset of puberty is an especially significant time for the development of our foundational sense of self but it is not set in stone; it can change and flourish throughout our lives.

Self-esteem is often mentioned in curriculum documents and used interchangeably with *sense of self*, although it does not overlap fully. Self-esteem can be defined as the extent to which we like, accept, or approve of ourselves. High self-esteem can be correlated with a sense of self that is fully understood by the individual, and people with high self-esteem have a clear idea of who they are and who they are not and understand their strengths as well as their limitations. To bolster self-esteem, we need to be able to articulate what our values are, as these provide an aspirational framework for our actions. The question of "Who am I?" is reflected in "What I Do" or "What I Did."

As an educator, whatever you can do to facilitate your students' reflections into their sense of self could provide far reaching benefits into their futures, long after specific curriculum is forgotten. Erik Erikson, a well-known expert on human development, noted that an important life task for individuals is to achieve a stable and well-defined sense of self that will serve as a framework for consistency and stability in their lives as they cope with inevitable change.

Reference: <https://livingwellcounselling.ca/who-am-i-developing-a-strong-sense-of-self/>

Popular Topics on Ministry of Education as related to *Sense of Self*

The following selected topics are pertinent to the *Sense of Self* theme in DVSA Artists' Connection 7.

As you create or adapt curriculum for visual art projects in the classroom or online, these links may help ensure that your work is fulfilling ministry expectations.

Please visit the website to read the documents in full.

Also, please note the final entry here: the ministry feedback portal, **"Tell Us What Your School Did"**. We would be very pleased to hear about your excellent work in the classroom using the DVSA AC7. Please keep us informed of your success!

EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION STRATEGY

Ontario's diversity is one of its greatest assets. It is the Ministry of Education's responsibility to respect and value the full range of differences we find in our students, staff and the entire community. We know that to create safe, inclusive, and engaging learning environments within our publicly funded education system, we must be committed to equity and inclusion for all students.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.pdf>

THE GOAL OF EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, first launched in 2009, aims to help educators across the province better identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to support the achievement and well-being of all students. These barriers — related to racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination — may prevent some students from reaching their full potential. (PDF, 2.39 MB)

Ensuring equity is a necessary foundation for improving student achievement, promoting student and staff well-being, and it's a critical component of the student experience. The Ontario government is committed to the success of every child and student across the province, and it will ensure that linking student achievement, well-being and equity is the top priority in all Ontario schools.

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/education_equity_plan_en.pdf

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION STRATEGY

Ontario's Indigenous Education Strategy is supporting First Nation, Métis and Inuit students to achieve their full potential. The Ministry of Education is committed to improving Indigenous education in Ontario, improving student achievement and wellbeing, and closing the achievement gap between Indigenous students and all students.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/indigenous/>

ELEMENTARY RESOURCES

[Scope and Sequence related to Treaties and Land Claims \(Elementary\)](#) (PDF, 868 Kb)

[Instructional Activities for Treaties Recognition Week: Educator's Guide for History, Grades 7 and 8](#) (PDF, 1.23 Mb)

[Accommodations for delivery in the Virtual Classroom](#) (PDF, 96 Kb)

SECONDARY RESOURCES

[Scope and Sequence related to Treaties and Land Claims \(Secondary\) \(PDF, 867 Kb\)](#)

[Instructional Activities for Treaties Recognition Week: Educator's Guide for History and Civics and Citizenship, Grade 10 \(PDF, 1.26 Mb\)](#)

[Accommodations for delivery in the Virtual Classroom \(PDF, 96 Kb\)](#)

SAFE AND ACCEPTING SCHOOLS STRATEGY

Ontario schools should be a place where everyone – children, students, staff, parents and the community – feels welcome, safe and respected. A safe, inclusive and accepting school environment is essential for student well-being and achievement.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/climate.html>

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION DOCUMENTS AS RELATED TO SENSE OF SELF

The following sections were extracted from the Ministry of Education documents as related to Sense of Self.

4.4 Self-Regulation and Well-Being - Ministry of Education

demonstrate self-reliance and a sense of responsibility (e.g., make choices and decisions on their own; take care of ... sand table, water table, visual arts area) and when using a variety of materials or equipment (e.g., using salt trays, stringing beads, painting with paintbrushes, drawing, cutting paper, using a keyboard, using bug viewers, using a mouse, writing with a crayon or pencil) 8 ...

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/wellbeing.html

Full-Day Kindergarten

Engaging in socio-dramatic play, dance, music, and visual arts fosters children's imagination, helps develop empathy, builds self-esteem, and promotes the development of relationships, all while enabling children to experience a sense of accomplishment. See the Professional Learning Conversation following the chart.

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/belonging.html

The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: The Arts, 2010

Experiences in the arts – dance, drama, media arts, music, and the visual arts – play a valuable role in the education of all students. Through participation in the arts, students can develop their creativity, learn about their own identity, and develop self-awareness, self-confidence, and a sense of well-being. Since artistic activities ...

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/arts1112curr2010.pdf

Overall Expectations with Related Specific Expectations

using drama, visual arts, non-verbal communication, and representations; in a conversation) x x 1.11 demonstrate an awareness that words can rhyme, can begin or end with the same sound, and are composed of phonemes that can be manipulated to create new words x 2. demonstrate independence, self-regulation, and a willingness to take responsibility in learning and other activities x 2.1 ...

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/AppendixOESE.pdf

Social Sciences Humanities - The Ontario Curriculum Grades ...

changing) core" – a sense of self, or spirit – that connects the different aspects of development and experience (p. 17). Self/Spirit Cognitive Emotional Social Physical Environment / Context Source: Stepping Stones: A Resource on Youth Development, p.17 Educators who have an awareness of a student's development take each component into account, with an understanding of and ...

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/ssciences9to122013.pdf

2018 REVISED The Ontario Curriculum - Ministry of Education

and physical development, and to their sense of self and spirit, is critical to their success in school. A number of research-based frameworks, including those described in *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings* (2007), *On My Way: A Guide to Support Middle Years Child Development* (2017), and *Stepping Stones: A Resource on Youth Development* (2012) ...

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/social-studies-history-geography-2018.pdf

Full-Day Kindergarten

Through interacting with various works of dance, drama, music, and visual arts, including multimedia art works, we deepen our awareness and appreciation of diverse perspectives. The arts have symbols that are rooted in a particular social, historical, and cultural context and therefore may have meanings that are different from what we know from our own culture and time.

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/literacy.html

The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: The Arts, 2009 (revised)

and visual arts, students develop the ability to think creatively and critically. The arts nourish and stimulate the imagination, and provide students with an expanded range of tools, techniques, and skills to help them gain insights into the world around them and to represent their understandings in various ways. Study of the arts also provides opportunities for differentiation of both ...

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/arts18b09curr.pdf

Expressions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Cultures

demonstrate awareness of and appreciation for the importance of Indigenous dance, drama, media arts, music, and visual arts in society; demonstrate appreciation appropriately as audience members in formal and informal settings, including settings focused on Indigenous art works/productions (e.g., at peer performances and in community spaces, arts institutions, galleries, concert halls, and ...

<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/secondary-first-nations-metis-and-inuit-studies/courses/nac1o/strands>

Foundations for a Healthy School: A companion resource to ...

arts creativity inspire leadership A COMPANION RESOURCE TO THE K–12 SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS FRAMEWORK Foundations for a Healthy School Promoting well-being is part of Ontario's Achieving Excellence vision. The Ontario Public Service endeavours to demonstrate leadership with respect to accessibility in Ontario. Our goal is to ensure that Ontario government services, products, and facilities ...

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/resourceF4HS.pdf

2013 REVISED The Ontario Curriculum - Ministry of Education

core" – a sense of self, or spirit – that connects the different aspects of development and experience (p. 17). Source: *Stepping Stones: A Resource on Youth Development*, p. 17. Educators who have an awareness of a student's development take each component into account, with an understanding of and focus on the following elements: • cognitive development. – brain development...

<http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/sshg18curr2013.pdf>



ART PROJECTS

1.1.

ART PROJECT: SIGNET RING / LOCKET / PERSONALIZED JEWELLERY

DESCRIPTION: For this project, students will complete a detailed drawing of a proposed design for a signet ring or locket.

A little historical background - please see the references below for additional reading.

A signet ring is usually a flat-faced ring without a stone that has initials or a symbol cast into precious metal, or a ring that is set with an intaglio.

Signet – a small seal.

Intaglio – pronounced *in-tahl-yo*; Italian for “to engrave” or “to cut into”.

In art, an intaglio is a design carved onto a material – in the case of jewellery it usually refers to a carved stone set into a ring. These rings are a traditional gift or a family heirloom that is passed down throughout the generations, often on the 21st birthday of the recipient. Although still a British tradition today, they have an extensive multicultural and historical background that stretches all the way back to ancient Mesopotamia, when cylindrical seals were used to imprint marks of authenticity, the forerunner of the signature. By the time of ancient Egypt, the seals had developed into rings that were worn by the Pharaoh or other significant members of the society to show status. Ancient examples of signet rings have been found in many Mediterranean countries, including Greece, Italy, and Sudan. In the Middle Ages, any person of influence wore a signet ring, and they were used to sign all letters and legal documents with the wax seal. There are very few examples of signet rings dating from this time period, as they were destroyed when the owner died to avoid the possibility of forged documents and claims appearing after the owner’s death. Even when more people became literate and could read documents and add signatures, signet rings retained their popularity as precious family jewellery.

A locket can be defined as a small pendant on a necklace that can be opened to reveal photographs, a lock of hair, or other contents. The locket itself came into existence in the 16th century for a variety of purposes and enjoyed widespread popularity in the late 19th century as the general population emulated Queen Victoria and her mourning jewellery, but multicultural examples of “container” jewellery can be traced back to examples from Ancient Egypt, in addition to many nomadic cultures in the Middle East and India. Container jewellery could hold a wide variety of items - scent, relics, and even poison. Lockets also enjoyed great popularity in the 20th century during World War I and II: soldiers and their sweethearts wore images of their beloveds, hoping to be reunited after returning home from battle.

SENSE OF SELF CONCEPTS:

- physical attributes
- social relationships
- familial relationships
- spirituality
- affiliations
- salient attributes
- abilities
- avocations
- values
- “Who Am I?”, “What I Did”

ARTIST CONNECTIONS:

- Olivia Brouwer
- Deron Douglas
- Lorrie Gallant
- April Mansilla
- Dionne Simpson
- Leah Walker
- Tom Wilson

MATERIALS & SOURCES:

- pencil crayons, fine line markers, pencils, watercolour or gouache paint (any stick media available in class/at home)
- cartridge paper or sketchbook paper that is reasonable quality available in class/at home

SIMPLIFY FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS: Require a simple single drawing of either the ring or the locket, enlarged to show detail.

ENRICH FOR OLDER STUDENTS: Require several views (front, side, and reverse) of the ring or locket, so that they have to consider three dimensional aspects of this object. You could also require them to demonstrate their research on symbolism through explanatory captions, which deconstruct the meaning behind design decisions.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULING: 1-3 periods for younger students, 3 - 5 periods for older students to allow for research and the added requirements.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS / TIPS:

For younger students, you could focus on a single aspect of the sense of self concepts to keep the design simple; for older students, you could require that they include several references to the sense of self concepts that will be blended into the design. For the signet ring option, some elements of the design to consider are whether the symbols, initials, or crest will face towards or away from the wearer, and whether the imprinted marks will be reversed, as they were in the times of the ancient wax seals.

For the locket, the students should not only consider the form that the outside will take, but also the contents, as the historical background offers many fascinating options. For the older students, they should include some text (point form or paragraph) in which they identify the sense of self concepts that they included in their design, and how they interpreted those concepts in their design. A basic layered illustration method will suit this subject matter.

1. Complete a fine line drawing in pencil.
2. Use watercolour, gouache paint or markers to add colour and depth.
3. Use a fine line marker to sharpen and define all contours, and to add fine detail on top of colour.

RESOURCES ON SIGNET RINGS, LOCKETS, AND PERSONALIZED JEWELRY:

The History Behind ... Signet Rings | National Jeweler

<https://www.nationaljeweler.com/articles/9513-the-history-behind-signet-rings>

The History and Etiquette of Signet Rings - Habitually Chic®

<https://habituallychic.luxury/2021/08/the-history-and-etiquette-of-signet-rings/>

The Ugly History of Beautiful Things: Locketts - Longreads

<https://longreads.com/2020/07/16/ugly-history-beautiful-things-lockets/#:~:text=In%20The%20Ugly%20History%20of,pearls%2C%20mirrors%2C%20and%20orchids.&text=He%20wasn't%20even%20t-wo,really%2C%20hardly%20even%20a%20person.>

A Sentimental History of Locketts - The Artyologist

<https://www.theartyologist.com/sentimental-history-of-lockets/>

ART PROJECT: "HOW TO": STEP BY STEP CULTURAL RITUAL AS WORD-FREE CARTOON

DESCRIPTION: We use step-by-step instructions frequently for a variety of purposes, but usually these are verbal, or a mixture of verbal and illustrated instructions. The challenge in this project is to create step-by-step instructions WITHOUT WORDS that explains a cultural ritual that the student associates with sense of self.

The cartoon might depict...

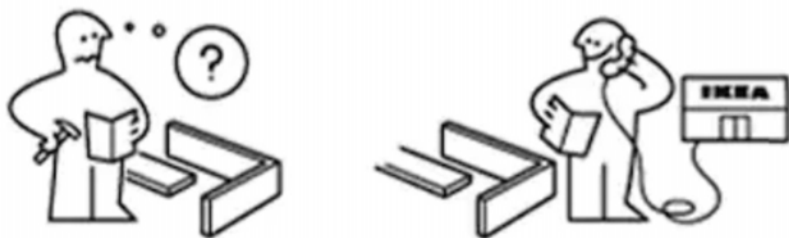
- a recipe for a traditional food that reminds one of "home", whether home is Canada or in the student's country of origin
- a dance with sequenced steps, either from popular culture or traditional culture
- a costume, special occasion outfit, or traditional garments that are donned in a certain order
- a ritual or ceremony that has a series of sequential parts

As with a verbal step-by-step set of instructions, usually a list of ingredients or "parts and pieces" precedes the actual instructions, and these should also be presented without words. This is an exercise in very specific visual illustrations that are presented sequentially and with a specific purpose. A great format for this that will be familiar to students is the narrative cartoon, which tells a sequenced story and presents visual information in a simple graphic illustration style. Most cartoons, however, have both speech and thought "bubbles" and this advances the narrative and action effectively. The challenge here is to do this without the benefit of the text bubbles so your students must think and communicate VISUALLY.

Our initial impression of cartoons may be that they are a source of light entertainment, but they have also been used to tell heart-breaking narratives in the form of graphic novels. If you are teaching older students, they may be familiar with *Secret Path*, a collaborative effort of Canadian musician Gord Downie and comic artist Jeff Lemire. The two joined forces to create an 88-page graphic novel telling the story of Chanie Wenjack and his tragic attempt to escape a residential school by walking home along a railroad track. Although this example uses thought and speech bubbles to tell the story, it creates an introduction to begin discussion of, in Downie's words, "the long-suppressed mistreatment of Indigenous children and families by the residential school system - with the hope of starting our country on a road to reconciliation." If you choose to use this example of a graphic novel in your classroom, you will have to prepare students adequately beforehand and to allow for decompressing discussion afterwards, as it is an upsetting and potentially triggering story. You know your students best, and which groups would find this material emotionally challenging.

Graphic novels offer several benefits for ELLs (English Language Learners), identified Special Education students, and reluctant readers, as these groups may have different levels of understanding of the English language. The illustrations can provide contextual clues to the written parts of the story line, can aid in acquiring new vocabulary, and may even increase English proficiency.

A great resource to show as an example of "how-to" visual instructions without words is an Ikea product that requires assembly. Ikea is a huge company with locations in more than 30 countries, and to simplify the publication of instructions, they are presented as visual step-by-step cartoon boxes without language. The illustrations are simple, clear, appealing, and sequential. No matter what language is spoken, anyone in any of those 30 countries can use the same set of instructions to successfully assemble an Ikea product.



SENSE OF SELF CONCEPTS

- social relationships
- familial relationships
- spirituality
- affiliations
- avocations
- values
- "Who Am I", "What I Did"

ARTIST CONNECTIONS:

- Deron Douglas
- Lorrie Gallant
- Dave Hind
- Dionne Simpson
- Leah Walker
- Tom Wilson
- Anonymous

MATERIALS & SOURCES:

- stick media appropriate to cartooning: thin and thick markers, highlighters, pens, pencils
- cartridge paper or sketchbook paper
- coloured markers, coloured pencils, watercolour, or gouache paint for colour

SIMPLIFY FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS: Limit the amounts of steps - e.g., "how-to" in four easy steps to keep the project simple and doable for younger students.

ENRICH FOR OLDER STUDENTS: Collaborate with one of your colleagues who teaches history, geography, or sociology to address the residential schools subject matter in detail and place the Chanie Wenjack graphic novel within a wider historical context. Provide other examples of graphic novels in different illustration style and subject matter to demonstrate a more in-depth view of this literary genre. Require that older students develop the "how-to" in more depth and detail by breaking the process down into smaller parts - this will result in a greater number of illustrations to fill the cartoon panels.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULING:

- 1 to 2 periods for younger students; up to 5 periods for older students

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Creation of notes to break down the "how-to" process into steps and sketch to create the sequence of cartoon panels.
2. Complete pencil outlines for each of the cartoon panels.
3. Add colour and shading with stick media or paint.
4. Sharpen all outlines and define all contours with large and small markers in typical graphic cartoon style.

SOME GREAT RESOURCES RELATED TO THIS PROJECT:

Secret Path by Jeff Lemire, Simon & Schuster, Canada, 2016.

A Guide to Using Graphic Novels with Children and Teens:

https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/teachers/lesson-plans/migrated-featured-files/guide_to_using_graphic_novels_new_2015_0.pdf

19 Wordless Comics ideas – Pinterest:

<https://www.pinterest.ca/jlschwind/wordless-comics/>

ART PROJECT: LOST IN THE LANDSCAPE

DESCRIPTION: Using recycled cardboard boxes broken down into flat surfaces, students will create three-dimensional cardboard structures to represent a streetscape. As an extra benefit, after being photographed or displayed, the finished product can be recycled! This project will use no glue, tape, or adhesives - it will assemble and disassemble easily and can be fully recycled. The photos of the assembled project will remain as the final product.

Students should choose a photo of a streetscape to work with for this project. This may be a photo of a street they have taken, one cut out of a book/magazine, or an image printed from the Internet, but should represent a place that is meaningful to them. For example: a location that reminds students of home, somewhere they have travelled, or a dream destination. Using the photos as a guide, they can create silhouettes for these features of the urban landscape, cutting them out of cardboard. They should indicate visual and emotional importance to these by increasing or decreasing sizes - the parts of the local streetscape that are more important and figure more strongly in their depiction of "home" should be larger and can include more detail; others that are less personally significant can be smaller and simpler. Details may be added by cutting out additional parts of the cardboard (such as windows) or by adding details in marker, pens, or paint. Construction of the streetscape will be simple, with a flat cardboard base, and buildings, trees, etc. added by poking a skewer through the cardboard base and carefully threading the vertical skewer into the open corrugated "tunnels" inside the cardboard.

The result can be photographed up close to get a sense of specifics of the locale, and to "place" the viewer in the streetscape, and will become the final product of the project, lasting after the actual materials have been recycled.

SENSE OF SELF CONCEPTS

- social relationships
- familial relationships
- avocations
- values
- "Who Am I", "What I Did"

ARTIST CONNECTIONS:

- Olivia Brouwer
- Erna De Vries
- Dave Hind
- Dionne Simpson
- Clarence Porter
- Heather Vollans
- Tom Wilson

MATERIALS & SOURCES:

- lots of cardboard boxes, broken down into flat surfaces (notify the custodian that you will be using a large amount of recycled cardboard so that boxes from orders may be saved for your class)
- rulers, metre sticks
- set square, T-square
- barbecue skewers
- sewing needles
- markers, pencils, paint
- scissors (or X-Acto knives for older students, if used with teacher supervision)
- pencils

SIMPLIFY FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS: Make sure students use safety scissors or ask the teacher for help with cutting as needed. If your students are old enough to handle X-Acto knives safely, these tools will be invaluable in cutting out shapes easily and adding negative space for "see-through" details such as windows and gaps in foliage. If they are younger and you have safety concerns, have them simplify the shapes of buildings with eliminating details OR you can have them add details and colour using markers and/or paint.

ENRICH FOR OLDER STUDENTS: Consider additional "layers" of urban landscape that are seen in the background of adjacent streets and in the distance to add complexity and overall urban context, incorporating the greater sense of neighbourhood.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULING: 2 - 4 periods for younger students, up to 5 periods for older students who are creating a streetscape of greater complexity.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Cut open a piece of cardboard to show students the corrugations inside, as this will be where the skewers will be inserted so that buildings etc. can stand upright. They may also be interested in splitting open the cardboard and utilizing the inner corrugations as a texture on the outside of the building.
2. **IMPORTANT:** cut out buildings etc. with the corrugations of the cardboard running **VERTICALLY**. This will allow you to use skewers inserted into the corrugation to make the buildings **STAND UP**.
3. Discuss how to simplify and suggest architectural details so that the eye will provide what is missing, such as indicating some but not all windows in a building and draw this onto the flattened cardboard. Cut out the perimeter and then make little individual cuts to create smaller negative space details such as the windows. Poke out the excess cardboard to create the negative space of the windows.
4. Once all the buildings have been cut out, consider adding colour, texture, and details in pens, markers, or paint.
5. Mark out the street onto the cardboard base. Using a skewer or sewing needle, poke through the cardboard where the buildings and other features will be placed. Then flip the cardboard base over and poke through the skewer so that it stands upright. Push the cardboard buildings onto the base, wiggling the skewer into the corrugation tunnels. For the older students, they will progressively add the background features using the same method in a layer behind the immediate street to create the impression of depth and of overall neighbourhood.
6. Once assembled, take close-up photos of the resulting streetscape from various angles to give the impression of being there. Students can also create a few descriptive notes about what they have enlarged in their streetscapes to indicate emotional importance and personal significance, and how their streetscape contributes to their sense of self.
7. Once photographed, presented, and evaluated, the streetscapes can be recycled - the cardboard into the blue box and the skewers into the compost.

SOME GREAT RESOURCES RELATED TO THIS PROJECT:

Get On Their Level: Viewing the Streetscape from 95 Centimeters:

<https://globaldesigningcities.org/2018/12/04/get-on-their-level-viewing-the-streetscape-from-95-centimeters/>

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/jul2015/sense-of-place-human-geography>

Children construct a sense of place in urban public space:

<https://research.childrenandnature.org/research/children-construct-a-sense-of-place-in-urban-public-space/>

1.4.

ART PROJECT: Your Personal Stamp Design

DESCRIPTION: This is a graphic design project in miniature – students will design a stamp that includes a personal hero as the main feature in the design that reflects their sense of self. The design will incorporate a portrait or pictorial representation of the hero’s accomplishments (can include both), a denomination, and a country name. Shape and size can vary from the usual rectangle - there are examples of additional shapes that have been used in stamp designs, including triangles, rhombuses, octagons, circles, or freeform shapes.

To diversify their options, students could opt to design a coin or medal rather than a stamp.

The design process for stamps, coins, and medals restricts the artist to work in a very small picture plane, so important details must be strongly emphasized, and superfluous ones eliminated.

Both younger and older students can add some text to this project explaining who the hero is, what their accomplishments are and why they deserve to be celebrated. It is a great opportunity to discuss what values we admire in others and would like to model through our own behaviour.

In November 2021, Canada Post announced they would be releasing stamps to celebrate the career of Indigenous singer-songwriter, visual artist, and activist Buffy Sainte-Marie – this would be a great example to show your students!

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/music/2021/11/12/canada-post-to-recognize-buffy-sainte-marie-with-commemorative-stamp.html?rf>

NOTE: Canada Post actively solicits the APPLICATION OF DESIGNS for postage stamps. What a great finish to your class project - to mail them off to Canada Post!

<https://www.canadapost-postescanada.ca/cpc/en/support/kb/general-inquiries/general-information/suggest-a-stamp-subject-or-apply-to-design-a-stamp>

SENSE OF SELF CONCEPTS

- social relationships
- familial relationships
- spirituality
- affiliations
- avocations
- values
- “Who Am I”, “What I Did”

ARTIST CONNECTIONS:

- Olivia Brouwer
- Deron Douglas
- Lorrie Gallant
- Dave Hind
- April Mansilla
- Leah Walker
- Tom Wilson

MATERIALS & SOURCES:

- pencils and / or pencil crayons
- fine-tip marker or pen, for outlining
- cartridge paper or sketch pad paper

SIMPLIFY FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS: Have younger students use a simpler cartoon style if they include a portrait or facial representation in their design. They may also find a pictorial representation of the accomplishments of the hero to be a more achievable goal. If choosing a stamp design, you can suggest they use an unusual stamp shape which may be related to their hero’s story.

ENRICH FOR OLDER STUDENTS: Before beginning their designs, ask older students to research some of the individuals who have been commemorated on Canadian postage stamps or coinage. What were their achievements? What values did they model? Have them choose a personal hero to feature on their stamp and provide a brief write-up on their choice.

Have older students include both a facial representation AND pictorial representation as part of the overall design. This adds an extra challenge – students will need to produce a clean yet detailed design in a small space.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULING: 1 - 2 periods for younger students, 3 - 5 periods for older students.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Choose a shape format for the stamp, coin, or medal design.
2. The finished drawing will be small, but not actual size - a good size that allows for the expression of detail could be about 5" square.
3. Initial contours can be in pencil, finishing in full-value pencil or one colour of pencil crayon for a monochromatic design (for coins, medals, or older stamp designs). Older students may want to add full colour with pencil crayons, as well as outlines and details with a fine-tip marker or pen.

SOME GREAT RESOURCES RELATED TO THIS PROJECT:

Please note that there are some web sites offering custom coin design from templates - and be on the lookout for student designs that look suspiciously professional!

Stamps – What an Idea! – Smithsonian Magazine

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/stamps-what-an-idea-148588334/>

Postage stamp design - Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postage_stamp_design

How to Design Your Own Postage Stamps - The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/25/technology/personaltech/how-to-design-your-own-postage-stamps.html#:~:text=website%2C%20custom%20stamps%20can%20be,from%20PhotoStamps%2C%20PictureItPostage%20and%20Zazzle.&text=Pick%20the%20vendor%20you%20like,the%20option%20to%20create%20stamps>

Royal Canadian Mint:

https://www.mint.ca/store/template/home.jsp?lang=en_CA&rcmeid=Agency_PBM_SEM_71700000024754315_58700002709384867_p23278379479&gclid=Cj0KCOiAanaeNBhCUARIsABEee8VHv77pdhSZN-bls13lucY6oCWRFSmhfPMXR_XVHqmKYaAUIhldKyMaAkp9EALw_wcB&gclid=aw.ds

History of Olympic Medals:

<https://olympics.com/en/olympic-games/olympic-medals>



This 2005 stamp of the Faroe Islands is a typical example of modern stamp design: minimal text, intense color, artistic rendering of a country-specific subject.



Nov. 18, 2021 - Today, Canada Post unveiled a stamp paying tribute to one of Canada's most successful singer-songwriters – Buffy Sainte-Marie, C.C.

ART PROJECT: Seed packaging design for native plants

DESCRIPTION: This is a small design project that can be adapted for students of all ages: a paper construction prepared flat and then folded to create an envelope for seed packaging. It is suggested that you visit a garden centre and purchase a few seed packages to demonstrate what goes on the front and what goes on the back, and to show how this format is consistent across various companies. You may also open up the package and flatten it out to demonstrate overall size needed, where the fold lines will go, and how to orient text, so that when the flat paper is folded up, it produces an actual envelope with the text and images in the correct places! This is also a great exercise in researching and then editing information down to its most succinct form to fit onto the small package. If you can, plan to gather seeds from some of these native plants to go in the package! You could also plan to hold a seed sale in the spring and donate the money to a charity chosen by your class or pair up with another class and plant them in beds at the school itself.

This project is ideal for cocurricular collaboration with your colleagues and can link up with science and geography curriculum – in particular, ecology, botany, and environmental studies. It is an ideal activity to discuss pollinators and how they connect so profoundly to food supply issues. Many native plants also have traditional, medicinal, and cultural uses which can be researched individually and can connect to Indigenous education and awareness.

Several of our AC7 artists articulate their sense of self not just through their own being, but in the way that they relate to other places, people, and things. This project gives students a chance to learn about and connect with the natural world around them, enriching their understanding of home and belonging. For an added layer of meaning, have students research flower or plant symbolism and select a native plant that represents a specific attribute they would like to embody! For example: patience, love, or humility. See resources below for some examples.

SENSE OF SELF CONCEPTS

- social relationships
- familial relationships
- spirituality
- affiliations
- avocations
- values
- “Who Am I”, “What I Did”

ARTIST CONNECTIONS:

- Olivia Brouwer
- Deron Douglas
- Lorrie Gallant
- Dave Hind
- April Mansilla
- Clarence Porter
- Tom Wilson

MATERIALS & SOURCES:

- pencils and/or pencil crayons, watercolour or gouache
- cartridge paper or sketch pad paper

SIMPLIFY FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS: Simplify requirements for the seed package, perhaps concentrating on the name of the plant, illustration and simplified planting instructions. Younger students would enjoy the planting activity that is suggested in the description above.

ENRICH FOR OLDER STUDENTS: Require detailed botanical illustration for the package and investigate descriptive botanical art as preparation for this. Pair up an older class with a younger class, and have them organize a planting afternoon on the school grounds, where native plants are put into existing beds. The older class can organize into teams, brainstorm equipment required and bring all needed gardening tools from home.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULING: For creation of the seed package, probably 1 - 2 periods for younger students, perhaps 3 - 5 periods for older students. Additional time will be needed to plan and deploy the seed sale or planting afternoon.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Using an actual flattened out seed package as a model, measure out dimensions and fold lines of the package onto cartridge paper or sketch pad paper. Draw in all lines in pencil. Pay attention to the orientation of text on the flaps, so that it will all eventually be right side up once constructed.
2. Add text, illustrations, information, and planting instructions in pencil. They can also include any information about traditional, medicinal or cultural uses that research reveals about the native plant.
3. Once all text is in position and checked for accuracy and orientation, add fine marker on top to make it more legible. Add illustration in choice of pencil crayon, watercolour or both, with final contour lines emphasized in fine marker.
4. Fold up to make the package and glue flaps down. Add actual seeds, if possible!

SOME GREAT RESOURCES RELATED TO THIS PROJECT:

<https://ontarionature.org/>

Margaret Best, Botanical Artist

<https://bestbotanical.com/>

Healthy Landscapes Plant List – Native and Drought-Tolerant ...

<https://guelph.ca/wp-content/uploads/droughtTolerant-NativePlants.pdf>

Native Plants of Ontario You Should Grow in Your Garden

<https://atouchofdutchlandscaping.com/choosing-native-ontario-plants-for-your-garden/#:~:text=Among%20our%20native%20deciduous%20tree,both%20Black%20and%20White%20Spruce.&text=Our%20region%20offers%20some%20beautiful,and%20texture%20to%20any%20landscape.>

Pollinator Plant Guide - Toronto Zoo

https://www.torontozoo.com/pollinators/Pollinator%20Plant%20Guide.pdf?__cf_chl_jschl_tk__=NGQtidn9_2U8hV3jyOgM3Y4nxaP4qps_4azJO2bp0rA-1638215764-0-gaNycGzNCJE

Plant Symbolism – Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plant_symbolism

Flower Meanings – Almanac.com

<https://www.almanac.com/flower-meanings-language-flowers>



Native Plants of Ontario

ART PROJECT: The Cultural Cardboard Crown

DESCRIPTION: Using recycled cardboard, newspaper, twist ties, toothpicks and tape, students will create a three-dimensional crown or headpiece, which will then be painted and decorated with found materials. The headpiece is constructed with the quick dry method of strip papier maché, which allows for overnight drying and moves the project along quickly, without the usual problems associated with papier maché. The headpiece is a simply constructed headband with added parts and is achievable without too much difficulty for both younger and older students. Students can make a choice in terms of decoration and intention once the initial construction is complete. The crown or headpiece reflects a sense of self that can be connected to any of the concepts listed below, in addition to reflecting their family background, culture, or even aspects of popular culture that they identify with. This range of choice ensures that they are in control of what they would like to disclose with regards to sense of self. A quick deconstruction of the crown by the student will help to explain their choices with regards to decoration and sense of self.

SENSE OF SELF CONCEPTS

- physical attributes
- social relationships
- familial relationships
- abilities, strengths plus weaknesses
- spirituality
- affiliations
- salient attributes
- avocations
- values
- "Who Am I", "What I Did"

ARTIST CONNECTIONS:

- Olivia Brouwer
- Deron Douglas
- Lorrie Gallant
- Dave Hind
- April Mansilla
- Dionne Simpson
- Leah Walker
- Tom Wilson

MATERIALS & SOURCES:

- newspapers
- corrugated cardboard (Your custodian can bring you cardboard boxes as they arrive at the school. Flatten to store. You will need probably 5 - 10 large boxes for a typical class of 30 students.)
- box cutters, safety scissors or X-Acto knife (to be used with teacher supervision)
- pliers (to be used with teacher supervision)
- twist ties (with wire inside)
- wire snips or pliers with wire cutting function
- cheap masking tape, green painter's tape, tape measures, toothpicks
- papier maché non toxic glue powder (check ingredients for the necessary fungicide), low melt glue guns, glue sticks, canvas primer, acrylic paint
- recycled buttons, beads, sequins, fake flowers, feathers, ribbons, trims, etc.
- a box fan
- canvas primer
- acrylic paint or craft paint
- metallic markers/paints
- disposable food containers or trays, rinsed and recycled from home
- head forms, from the dollar store

SIMPLIFY FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS: Eliminate the use of sharp tools and hot glue guns, as this equipment is where injury is most likely to occur. Replace with safety scissors and use white glue with the additional support of cheap masking tape or green painter's tape that can be added while the glue dries and then slowly removed. The only challenging parts of the construction are joining the "band" of the crown so it will form a continuous circle and adding other pieces of cardboard to build up the design of the headpiece. Once this stage is complete, the project moves along without difficulty.

ENRICH FOR OLDER STUDENTS: A safety demonstration on the use of scissors or X-Acto knives will be needed before construction begins. For X-Acto knives, emphasize that the blade should be extended only to one or two segments as needed, not fully extended to avoid snapping it off. Also, all cutting should be done AWAY from the body. Older students will still need to have specific reminders about the use of glue guns (even low melt glue guns) in addition to making sure that it is unplugged and left to cool after use. When showing the resources below, direct their attention to the more challenging headpieces that will require some thought and planning of the construction.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULING:

3-5 periods for younger students, 5 - 7 periods for older students. This project uses the quick drying strip method of papier maché which will dry overnight, eliminating the problems usually associated with traditional papier maché, as the glue powder now includes a fungicide, eliminating the previous problem of mould growth.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Have students help each other with the tape measures to get a circumference measurement of their heads. An average size head is 22". Cut an appropriate length of cardboard with the internal corrugations going VERTICALLY, not horizontally. This will allow you to bend along the corrugations, creating curves around the head. Join at the back with masking tape, wrapping securely around the join.
2. Have the students look at a wide variety of potential headpieces that are shown in the resources below and have them consider what designs are FEASIBLE to construct with the materials available.
3. Build up the basic ring of the cardboard crown with additional pieces of cardboard needed for the design, again cutting out pieces with the internal corrugations going VERTICALLY to create curvature. Attach to the crown with toothpicks inserted into the corrugations and then add a little tape to secure it at the join. You can also use the twist ties taped onto the back of the cardboard to attach pieces. The wire inside the twist ties offers an additional opportunity to attach the cardboard pieces at various angles.
4. You are now ready to move on to the papier maché. Your goal here is to create the illusion that the crown is NOT made of cardboard by covering all the joins and evidence of the corrugations. The newsprint should be ripped into small strips, probably no more than about 1" or 2 cm wide and no more than 4" or 10 cm long. Put a little papier maché glue into a food tray; using fingers, massage the glue into the paper strip until it changes colour to grey, indicating that it is fully saturated. Adhere the strips to the cardboard to cover all surfaces, being careful to smooth down all edges. Overlap previous strips with new ones, gradually covering the entire surface of the crown. To strive for the illusion of a real crown, encourage your students to disguise all the construction materials by covering all tell-tale corrugations and smoothing down all paper edges. Surprisingly, since you have only added a thin layer of papier maché, it should be dry by the next day. In very humid conditions, add a box fan at the end of the day and leave it running in order to ensure that you can continue to work on it the next day.
5. Once a consistent thin layer of papier maché is dry, you are now ready to apply the primer. Cover all surfaces with a thick, even coat of primer and leave to dry. This will remove all patterned surfaces of the newspaper. Again, in humid conditions, leave the box fan running to ensure that you can continue work in the next class.
6. Once the primer is fully dry, you are now ready for the painted finish in acrylic or craft paint, which will dry in less than an hour.
7. Once the paint is dry, you are now ready to attach any embellishments desired for finishing touches on the crown: beads, sequins, studs, buttons, fake flowers, feathers, ribbons, trims, etc. Encourage your students to search around at home for unique embellishments for their crowns. Emphasize that the finishing touches are important to the overall look of the crown, as it adds detail and interest to the final design and further moves the materials away from their humble, recycled beginnings.
8. Once completed, the students should write a brief point-form deconstruction that explains how different elements of the crown reflects their sense of self.

This project produces quite spectacular results. You can purchase head forms at the dollar store which can be re-used for years to come to show these off to the school.

SOME GREAT RESOURCES RELATED TO THIS PROJECT:

11 traditional hats from around the world and their stories – Matador Network
<https://matadornetwork.com/read/11-traditional-hats-around-world-stories/>

The Global Language of Headwear – Arts and Artists
<https://www.artsandartists.org/exhibitions/global-language-of-headwear/>

Around the World in 80 Hats - Cool Infographics
<https://coolinfographics.com/blog/2014/7/30/around-the-world-in-80-hats.html>

The 50 Most Remarkable Hats of All Time - The Cut
<https://www.thecut.com/2013/11/50-most-remarkable-hats-of-all-time.html>

Famous European Crowns - UsefulCharts
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONPjSy2HWeY>

The Crown Jewels of Major Countries - Business Insider
<https://www.businessinsider.com/the-crown-jewels-from-countries-around-the-world-2011-11>



The 50 Most Remarkable Hats of All Time



Albania Crown Jewels



Around the World in 80 Hats >>

ART PROJECT: Still Life as Self-Portrait

DESCRIPTION: This project combines two traditional visual art forms: the self-portrait and the still life arrangement. The student will select their most significant and personally important objects to create a still life arrangement that reflects their sense of self. It can be drawn or painted according to what materials you have on hand in your classroom. These objects may be chosen by the student to represent any of the sense of self concepts listed below, and can also include objects from their family background, cultural heritage, or even popular culture that are exemplified in the objects. This range of choice ensures that they are in control of what they would like to disclose with regards to sense of self. Students can opt to bring the items into the classroom or leave them at home and bring a picture to work from instead. These images can be printed out for extended observation.

Preparation will involve examining some examples of still life work, with particular attention given to composition and arrangement. Still life paintings contain inanimate subject matter, with commonplace objects that are either natural or synthetic. The origins of this genre stretch all the way back to prehistoric cultures with depictions of animals and plants, and progress with the ornamentation of manuscripts in the Middle Ages as well as East Asian depictions of still life from as early as the 11th century. However, still life painting certainly came into its own with the Dutch paintings of the 16th and 17th centuries. Another resurgence came in the early 20th century with Cubist artists such as Picasso and Braque, and as the resources below will demonstrate, the genre has continued to endure in surprising and ground-breaking examples into the 21st century.

Students should choose their objects with care for both compositional value and personal importance, and should complete a brief write-up of how each object is personally significant and contributes to their overall sense of self.

SENSE OF SELF CONCEPTS

- physical attributes
- social relationships
- familial relationships
- abilities, strengths plus weaknesses
- spirituality
- affiliations
- salient attributes
- avocations
- values
- "Who Am I", "What I Did"

ARTIST CONNECTIONS:

- Olivia Brouwer
- Deron Douglas
- Lorrie Gallant
- Dave Hind
- April Mansilla
- Dionne Simpson
- Leah Walker
- Tom Wilson

MATERIALS & SOURCES:

- any stick media, acrylic, gouache, or watercolour
- cartridge paper or sketch book paper, canvas boards or stretched canvases
- printed copies of photos for extended observation

SIMPLIFY FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS: Concentrate on learning about classic examples of still life paintings, with a few carefully selected examples that are contemporary, as some current work is quite shocking. Consider providing them with a "shopping list" of objects to include in their still life, such as one from childhood, one from family, one from current interests and one representing imagination of their future.

ENRICH FOR OLDER STUDENTS: Begin learning about classic examples of still life paintings, as many students will be familiar with these. Then, progress throughout the wide range of current work being done in this genre as shown in the resources below, as they will be fascinated with the connection to tradition and the re-imagination of this genre today. Require a minimum of 5 objects to be included in their own still life as self-portrait and also require a planned background that also refers to the sense of self.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULING: 1 - 3 periods for younger students, 5 - 7 periods for older students.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS:

This is a flexible project that will allow you to create drawings and use whatever stick materials and paper you have on hand in your classroom. It can also be a painting in watercolour or acrylic and utilize paper, canvas boards, or stretched canvas.

SOME GREAT RESOURCES RELATED TO THIS PROJECT:

Still Life Painting – Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com/art/painting/Still-life>

17 Contemporary Artists Reimagining the Still Life - Artsy

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-17-contemporary-artists-reimagining-life>

Best Still Life Paintings - The Art Wolf

<https://theartwolf.com/art-essays/still-life-paintings/>

The 10 best contemporary still lifes | Culture | The Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/gallery/2013/oct/19/10-best-contemporary-still-lifes>

Still Life Painting And How It's Survived Thousands Of Years

<https://mymodernmet.com/what-is-still-life-painting-definition/>



Alexandre-François Desportes: Still Life with Dressed Game, Meat, and Fruit



Holly Coulis, Small Cup and Steam, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Klaus von Nichts-sagend Gallery.



Pieter Claesz, 'Vanitas – Still Life' (1625) (Photo: Memory of the Netherlands via Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain)



William Harnett: "Violin (the old violin)">>

ART PROJECT: A Sense of 'Selfie'

DESCRIPTION: The concept of a selfie is probably universally understood by your students. Whether taken on a smart phone or webcam, selfies usually find their way onto some form of social media. While the first-ever "selfie" was taken in 1839 by Robert Cornelius, an American amateur chemist and photography enthusiast, it was not termed as such until 2002, when it coined by an Australian, Nathan Hope, who posted an unfocused birthday shot on his 21st birthday. Hope gave the image the caption: "Sorry about the focus, it was a selfie." By 2013, the term 'selfie' was formally added to the Oxford Dictionary, and it went on to become the Word of the Year in the following year. Selfies are posted publicly to social media, and they project an image of how we would like to be seen and perceived.

This will be a multimedia project, which will begin with a small printed-out selfie. (If students have limited access to smart phones or cameras, the photos can be taken during class time with a camera/phone/tablet belonging to the school or a faculty member). The project encourages students to explore aspects of their own self-identity in relation to the elements of design.

The elements of design consist of seven formal qualities that are often considered when creating artwork.

- line,
- form
- value
- space
- shape
- colour
- texture

The unique treatment of these elements in a work of art can communicate mood, meaning, and personality. Encourage your students to look carefully at each element of design and utilize some or all to express aspects of their own self-identity. It is suggested that you begin with a brief introduction to the elements of design and discuss examples of how the treatment of each element can impact meaning. Using line as an example, discuss with the class what jagged lines could communicate and in contrast, what organic curvilinear lines might imply. When discussing colour, you may wish to focus on the moods/feelings that each colour can communicate. It is important to remember that the interpretations of these elements can vary from student to student, and there are not necessarily correct or incorrect answers. After introducing and discussing the elements of design you can introduce Leah Walker's self-portrait contribution to Artists' Connection 7, *Soft and Bright*, encouraging the class to interpret the key elements in their work. You can close the discussion by reading Leah's artists statement which discusses their use of colour and material in relation to their own identity.

Offering a variety of mediums to choose from will allow your students the opportunity to select the tools which best suit their message. Encourage the students to draw their own likeness using their own memory, a mirror, or a photo reference. Guide the students as they work, reminding them to consider the messages they wish to communicate about themselves through their self-portrait and the associations each element of design has the capacity to produce. For younger students, choices can be as simple as "my favourite colour is yellow so that is why I'm using it" while more advanced students may be able to dive deeper into the symbolism behind colours, marks, and forms. Ask your students to consider the treatment of the space surrounding the portrait. As an extension of this, students may wish to add symbols, scenery, patterns, or animals as background elements.

SENSE OF SELF CONCEPTS

- self-expression
- values
- self-advocation
- symbols of self
- values
- "Who Am I", "What I Did"

ARTIST CONNECTIONS:

- Deron Douglas
- Dave Hind
- Leah Walker

MATERIALS & SOURCES:

- pencils and pencil crayons
- additional drawing materials can include markers, charcoal, and pastels
- cartridge paper, sketch pad paper, cardstock, or construction paper
- photo reference or mirror (optional)

SIMPLIFY FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS: Simplify requirements for the portrait by focusing on isolating one element of design such as colour. Allow students to use their favourite colours to create their portraits and encourage them to put into words why their chosen colours are meaningful to them.

ENRICH FOR OLDER STUDENTS: Require students to consider their choices regarding each element of design and how they reflect their self-identity. Students can also be encouraged to research symbolism and may choose to incorporate flowers, colours, animals, and objects based on their symbolic meaning. As an extension to this project, you may also have your older students complete an artist statement about their self-portrait outlining their choices of medium, elements of design, and symbolic content.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULING: For creation of the self-portrait, probably 1 period for younger students, and perhaps 1 - 2 periods for older students. Additional time will be needed for students to complete their artist statement.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Have students take time taking and choosing an image of themselves that they feel best represents them. They should be in control of how the image is taken – what location they are in, what other elements might be included in the background, etc.
2. As students begin their drawing, prompt them to think about some key characteristics they would like to capture in their drawings. Have them begin by drawing in some basic outlines that will guide your self-portrait. Students should pay attention to their own likeness as it translates in their photo but also consider the way they see themselves on the inside.

Have a class discussion about the elements of design:

- line
- form
- value
- space
- shape
- colour
- texture

What is communicated with jagged lines versus curved lines, cool colours versus warm colours, open spaces versus a visually cluttered page, etc.? You can experiment with mark making, colours and placement on a scrap piece of paper or jump into creating with an intuitive approach. Let your students' personality drive the process of creation.

3. Once the work is completed, students can write an artist statement sharing why they chose to use the elements of design the way they did and how those choices reflect aspects of their identities. What about their personalities were they able to capture in taking a selfie? What other, more internal characteristics did they capture in turning the selfie into a work of art?

Hang up the original selfies side-by-side with the finished interpretations!

***SOME GREAT RESOURCES RELATED TO THIS PROJECT:**

Who Took the First Ever Selfie? Times Now

<https://www.timesnownews.com/the-buzz/article/world-photography-day-2021-selfies-are-older-than-you-think-the-first-one-was-taken-in/801133#:~:text=of%20the%20camera-,lt%20is%20said%20the%20first%2Dever%20selfie%20was%20taken%20by,invented%20by%20Louis%20Jacques%20Daguerre.>

Elements of Design - Masterclass

<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/elements-of-design-explained#the-elements-of-design>

Famous Self Portraits – My Modern Met

<https://mymodernmet.com/famous-self-portraits/>



ART PROJECT: Note to (Future) Self Book

DESCRIPTION: We are all familiar with writing practical, no-nonsense “notes to self”: for shopping, for errands, and for work tasks. We don’t usually write notes to ourselves that are encouraging and supportive...and maybe we should! And certainly, we should encourage this kind of active self-reflection in our students, since being encouraging and supportive is EXACTLY what we do as teachers, all day, every day. This is the work that goes beyond curriculum and can have far reaching effects into the future. The project will focus on the students’ future selves, as imagined by reflecting on the sense of self concepts. The format will be a small, illustrated book, ideally a small spiral bound sketchbook, likely purchased at the dollar store. Students will be asked to review the sense of self concepts and choose which ones they consider to be the most important and enduring for their future sense of self. For each, they will then create a small illustration that “anticipates” how they hope and expect that this concept will unfold for themselves in the future. The cover of the book can likely have its outer layer peeled back to reveal the blank pressed cardboard underneath, which can then be primed and receive any combination of stick media or paint as a new cover. Finding the appropriate little sketchbooks for this project at the dollar store will be time well spent and this more “permanent” format will encourage them to keep it as a record of their hopes and dreams for their future sense of self.

For alternative ways to make your own booklets out of cardstock, scrapbook paper, or even regular printer paper, check out the videos linked below!

SENSE OF SELF CONCEPTS	ARTIST CONNECTIONS:	MATERIALS & SOURCES:
- physical attributes	- Olivia Brouwer	- pencils, pencil crayons, markers, watercolour, gouache, acrylic or craft paint
- social relationships	- Deron Douglas	- X-Acto knife or scissors
- familial relationships	- Lorrie Gallant	- acrylic primer
- abilities such as strengths and weaknesses	- Dave Hind	- small notebook with spiral binding and pressed cardboard cover from the dollar store
- spirituality	- April Mansilla	
- affiliations	- Dionne Simpson	
- salient attributes	- Leah Walker	
- avocations	- Tom Wilson	
- values		
- “Who Am I”, “What I Did”		

SIMPLIFY FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS: Have them choose a maximum of 5 sense of self concepts to illustrate in their book. They can also provide small captions for each of their illustrations, using a two-page spread format. Assist them with the use of scissors to cut into the pressed cardboard cover of the little books.

ENRICH FOR OLDER STUDENTS: Have them choose a maximum of 7 – 10 of the sense of self concepts to illustrate in their book. Writing a letter to their future self is a typical assignment for middle school or early secondary students, so they will likely be familiar with the idea.

If you can devote the additional time, have older students view some of Michael Apted’s classic documentary series, *Up*, which follows the lives of ten men and four women in Britain, beginning in 1964 when the subjects were 7 years old. The first film in the series was called *Seven Up*, and later titles in the series were adjusted to reflect the ages of the participants in that episode. You can view clips or episodes of the show on YouTube (the first episode is linked below).

A similar example that may be familiar to older students is Billie Eilish’s “Same Interview, The ____ Year” video series, or Ed Sheeran’s “The Same Questions – 10 Years Later”. These videos give celebrities the opportunity to listen directly to their younger selves, showcasing how a person’s goals, attitudes, and expectations can shift or remain consistent over time.

Investing the time in viewing a few episodes of the series will underline the connection to their little books, and may ensure that they keep them into the future.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULING: 3 - 5 periods for younger students; 5 - 7 periods for older students including time for viewing the documentaries if possible.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Purchase a class set of little sketchbooks at the dollar store. They do not all have to be identical, as you will be covering or removing the top layer of the existing covers. They do need to have a spiral binding so the pages can lay flat for illustration.
2. Using scissors or an X-Acto knife, slice into the cover along the spiral binding, taking care to not cut all the way through. Then peel back the current cover to reveal the pressed cardboard inside. Apply a thin coat of primer and let dry.
Alternative: help students make their own notebooks using video tutorials such as the one linked below.
3. For the cover, illustration can be any combination of stick media or wet media that you have on hand. For the inside, stick media is best, as wet media may soak through and make the pages stick together.
4. Consider each of the sense of self illustrations a 2-page spread, with illustration on one side and explanatory captions on the other.

RESOURCES RELATED TO THIS PROJECT:

How to make your own booklets – alternatives to buying notebooks:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brHofEENIs8>

A Letter to my Future Self – CBC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTCP0O-Llyc>

Michael Apted’s Up Series

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHXVsQfw4AE>

Does Who You Are at 7 Determine Who You Are at 63? – The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/27/magazine/63-up-michael-aped.html>

Nov. 27, 2019

Ed Sheeran – “The Same Questions – 10 Years Later”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Btnjo1le0lg>

Billie Eilish – “The Same Interview – The Fifth Year”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wNsZEqKUA

Write an Email to your Future Self - The Self Club

<https://theself.club/future-self/>

A Letter to My Future Self – The Teen Magazine

<https://www.theteenmagazine.com/a-letter-to-my-future-self-e8f8cb24-c109-4a63-896e-3030e5828d32>



6.10:

ART PROJECT: Build-Your-Own “Familiar”

DESCRIPTION: The concept of a “familiar” is common in much European folklore as well as modern pagan or Wiccan practices. Around the 17th century, familiars were thought to be small demons that witches could send to do their bidding, sometimes taking the form of a black cat or other animal. Some Scandinavian cultures held beliefs that beings such as fairies and dwarves could inhabit the bodies of animals. More recently, the word has come to symbolize a special companionship between a person and an animal.

The familiars of European legend are only one cultural example of the unique ways in which animal and human relationships have been venerated and mythologized throughout history. Students may also be familiar with the Chinese zodiac, linking people born in different years to an animal. There are 12 animals total, with each one being represented every 12 years:

- Ox – 1997, 2009, 2021
- Rat – 1996, 2008, 2020
- Tiger – 1998, 2010, 2022
- Rabbit – 1999, 2011, 2023
- Dragon – 2000, 2012, 2024
- Snake – 2001, 2013, 2025
- Horse – 2002, 2014, 2026
- Goat – 2003, 2015, 2027
- Monkey – 2004, 2016
- Rooster – 2005, 2017, 2029
- Dog – 2006, 2018, 2030
- Pig – 2007, 2019, 2031

There are some resources below if you have time to delve into the history of the Zodiac and the meaning behind each animal. In short, the animals assigned by year represent how you are perceived by others more than your innate qualities or characteristics, which may instead be represented by other animals associated with specific months, days, and even hours, according to Chinese tradition. This may be worth talking about with your students – which animal represents how you feel on the inside versus which animal might represent how you are perceived by others or how you wish to present yourself.

A great way to introduce this project is to talk about the concept of familiars and magical animals within J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series. The novels outline several different types of special relationships between characters and animals: patronuses, animagi, and the familiars that students can bring to Hogwarts (cats, toads, and owls). Dumbledore’s phoenix, Fawkes, has a series of traits and magical abilities that strengthen his connection to Dumbledore: he is incredibly loyal; he can carry heavy loads; his tears have healing powers; and, when it is time for him to die, he is engulfed in flames and reborn from the ashes.

This project asks students to pick an animal – real or fictional – which they feel represents aspects of their sense of self and bestow it with symbolic powers or characteristics. It is an especially fun project for younger students, who may choose a real-life pet on which to base the project, but can also be great for older students who may be better versed in the fantasy worlds of movies, books, video games, or graphic novels. It will emphasize the use of natural and found objects in artmaking, a subtheme of the Artists’ Connection 7 program.

For context, show students examples by artist Julian Schnabel (website linked below), who paints overtop of three-dimensional objects such as broken plates.

Note: *The only Artists’ Connection 7 piece which features animal imagery is the anonymously created Turtle Island drawing. While it is a great idea to discuss Indigenous cultures’ relationships to the animal world through topics like clan and kinship systems or totems (doodems, in Ojibwe) we ask that you avoid using the phrase “spirit animal” to refer to this project. The phrase has been inappropriately used to refer to anyone or anything with which an individual feels they can “identify,” resulting in a problematic stereotype of Indigenous culture and spirituality. Actual animal symbolism and relationships within Indigenous culture are closely intertwined with location, specific environments, familial/clan/tribal relationships, and/or respect for animal life.*

SENSE OF SELF CONCEPTS

- self-expression
- values

ARTIST CONNECTIONS:

- Anonymous (Turtle Island)
- Dave Hind
- Heather Vollans

MATERIALS & SOURCES:

- pencils and erasers
- low melt glue gun
- acrylic or tempera paint, brushes, and cups for water
- 8.5" x 11" pieces of cardboard, matte board, or foam core
- small, collected nature objects or other craft materials (i.e. small rocks, leaves, twigs, pinecones, beads, string)

SIMPLIFY FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS: This project can be simplified for younger students by removing the component of the project that involves using found objects and the warm glue gun to create a textural surface. Instead, with younger groups, the idea of texture can be introduced through the application of paint. Have the class experiment with thick dots of paint, or thin swirls of watered-down paint, you can even introduce unconventional painting tools such as forks, spatulas, cotton balls, and Q-tips. Encourage students to choose one special personality trait and one magical power for their animal. Is it loyal, loving, or brave? Can it speak to them? Does it change colours? Ask them to reflect on why this might be a helpful or fun power to have.

ENRICH FOR OLDER STUDENTS: To enrich this project for older students, encourage your class to dive deeper into why they identify with that animal. What personality traits or physical characteristics (like eye colour) does the student share with it? If the animals have magical powers, what are they, and why would it enrich the relationship between the student and their animal? Have them research some real-life myths and legends OR fantasy lore that relate to their familiar. The result will be a synthesis of traits that the student admires about themselves (for example "strength," "courage", "bravery") and magical traits that create a fun story dynamic between the student and the animal.

If you opt to include a written component, have students write an origin story for their familiar.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULING: 1 period for collecting materials; 1-3 periods for the creation of the artwork.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS:

1. After discussing these concepts with the class, ask the students to brainstorm some of their own personal characteristics, encourage them to think about their areas of strength, interests, and preferences. Then, ask your students to link these self-observations with a creature they feel their characteristics most align with: this will be the starting point for the project.
2. With their animals in mind, and if time allows, take the class outdoors to explore the premises of the school and collect some small natural objects:

- small rocks
- leaves
- twigs
- pinecones

Remind the class to consider the animal they will be depicting as they collect materials. Once you return to the classroom you may choose to supplement these found objects with other craft materials the school has on hand or that students have brought from home:

- beads
- newspapers
- string
- feathers

3. Begin the activity by having each student sketch out their animal in pencil on the cardboard support.

4. Supply students with a warm glue gun and instruct them to arrange and glue their objects onto the page in a way that creates a textured surface. Ask your students to consider the placement of the objects in the context of their initial sketch. Which objects could provide texture for fur, feathers, or scales?
5. Once the textural elements are affixed to the support students can then layer paint on top of the textured surface using the objects and initial animal sketch as their guide. Instruct students to fill in the basic shapes of their creature and background with colour first and then move to the finer detail. If possible, students should try to depict any magical abilities their animal might have (breathing fire, flying, etc.) in their artwork!

SOME GREAT RESOURCES RELATED TO THIS PROJECT:

Julian Schnabel – Plate Paintings

<https://www.julianschnabel.com/paintings/plate-paintings>

What is a Patronus? – Wizarding World

<https://www.wizardingworld.com/features/what-is-a-patronus>

Familiar Spirits and Devilish Imps – Liverpool Museums

<https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/stories/familiar-spirits-and-devilish-imps>

A Brief History of the Chinese Zodiac – Time Magazine

<http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1873900,00.html>

Please Stop Using the Term “Spirit Animal” – Discover Magazine

<https://www.discovermagazine.com/planet-earth/please-stop-using-the-term-spirit-animal>

Native American Relationships to Animals – Not Your “Spirit Animal”

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/native-american-spirit-animal>



The Devil in Britain and America, 1896. Credit: Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)



The Patronus: Harry Potter

CONCLUSION

We hope that the projects in this guidebook offer you the chance to connect with your students in new ways and help open doors for students to connect with themselves. Now more than ever, we are seeing an emphasis on the importance of mental health, self-care, and introspection, and are beginning to understand the therapeutic and meditative powers of art creation. The pieces included in Artists’ Connection 7 offer just a few examples of the ways in which artists are exploring their own senses of self and the way that they relate to the world around them; if you let students’ intuition lead, you may also discover that they will bring wonderfully unique approaches to the concepts in this program.

Sincerely,

Claire Lougheed (she/her)
Executive Director, DVSA

Lisa Jefferies (she/her)
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