





The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition program Curated by Ashley Slemming

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The Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Travelling Exhibition program acknowledges that the artistic activity we support takes place on the territories of Treaties 6, 7, and 8. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit who have lived on and cared for these lands for generations, and we are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and those who have gone before us. We make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthening our relationships with Indigenous communities and growing our shared knowledge and understanding.



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Cover images

Top row, left to right. Bottom row, left to right.

Kelly Isaak
Daina, 2020
Watercolour and coloured
pencil on paper
25.4 cm x 20.32 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Kelly Isaak
Barry, 2020
Watercolour, coloured pencil,
and gouache on paper
25.4 cm x 20.32 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Kelly Isaak Megan, 2020 Watercolour, coloured pencil, and gouache on paper 25.4 cm x 20.32 cm Courtesy of the artist

Kelly Isaak
Emma, 2020
Watercolour and coloured
pencil on paper
25.4 cm x 20.32 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Image left

Kelly Isaak Leela, 2020 Watercolour and coloured pencil on paper 25.4 cm x 20.32 cm Courtesy of the artist



Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX)

Since 1980, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) has supported a provincial travelling exhibition program. The TREX program strives to ensure every Albertan is provided with an opportunity to enjoy fully developed exhibitions in schools, libraries, healthcare centres, and smaller rural institutions and galleries throughout the province.

The TREX program assists in making both the AFA's extensive art collection and the artwork of contemporary Alberta artists available to Albertans. Four regional organizations coordinate the program for the AFA:

REGION ONE – Northwest: The Art Gallery of Grande Prairie

REGION TWO – Northeast / North Central: The Art Gallery of Alberta

REGION THREE – Southwest: The Alberta Society of Artists

REGION FOUR – Southeast: The Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre

The Alberta Society of Artists (ASA)

The Alberta Society of Artists is a large part of Alberta's visual arts history, through its members, its exhibitions, and other initiatives. The ASA was founded in 1931, making it the oldest society of juried professional artists in the province.

The ASA is an active membership of professional visual artists who strive for quality and distinction. Through exhibitions, education, and communication the society increases public awareness of the visual arts.

The ASA is contracted by the AFA to develop and circulate TREX exhibitions to communities throughout southwestern Alberta.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA)

Beginning in 1972, the Alberta Art Collection was proposed as an opportunity to support and encourage Alberta artists by purchasing original works, as well as creating a legacy collection for the people of Alberta.

As a crown agency of the Government of Alberta, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Act was later established in 1991 with a mandate to support the arts in Alberta. This mandate is accomplished by providing persons and organizations with the opportunity to participate in the arts in Alberta; fostering and promoting the enjoyment of works of art by Alberta artists; collecting, preserving, and displaying works of art by Alberta artists; and encouraging artists resident in Alberta to continue their work.









Alone Together is a solo exhibition of hyperrealistic pencil-crayon portraits by Calgary artist Kelly Isaak. During one of the more severe COVID-19 lockdowns in Alberta, Isaak posted on Instagram asking if anyone would be interested in submitting photographs of themselves in isolation that she would later draw. With so many people seeking ways to connect with one another during this time, Isaak received an overwhelming number of responses from interested participants. Most of the people who engaged in the ensuing project were not people she knew, but Isaak endeavoured to capture a communal familiarity, each portrait featuring the face of someone who'd shared a similar experience of isolation with the next. The resulting portrait series is a reminder that through small acts of collaborative effort, we can connect as a community and wade through uncertainties together.

- Ashley Slemming, Curator

At the beginning of the pandemic shutdown in 2020, I couldn't imagine how much would change. Our day-to-day lives were altered in innumerable ways, and many people, including me, faced a feeling of disconnect.

I continued to work alone in my studio, thinking about what I could do to connect more with the larger community while the world was in isolation. I wanted, even in the smallest way, to use my artwork to bring people together. I posted on social media asking people to submit photos of themselves in isolation. They could submit a self-portrait or a photograph taken by someone else.

I was quickly overwhelmed by how many people wanted to participate in the project. I received images of so many interesting faces - most of them unfamiliar to me. All these people were experiencing the changes and the chaos of the world in different ways. In my studio, alone, I worked on creating a series of drawings to help bring people together. These portraits helped me face the isolation I felt, but I like to think that in a way, they served to bring people who were separated physically together as well.

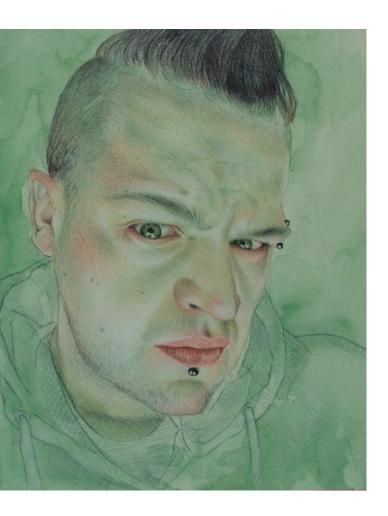
What you see in this exhibition is a selection of fifteen of the twenty-five portraits originally drawn from those photo submissions. Each is an exploration of colour and material derived from something intangible about the person themselves – my own visual interpretation of that person.

Kelly Isaak is a Calgary-born-and-raised visual artist and arts educator. Isaak graduated with her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, with a major in drawing, from Alberta University of the Arts (formerly Alberta College of Art and Design). After graduation, Isaak moved to Japan, where she developed a love for film photography. Photography led her to the study of the people around her, first through film and then through drawing.

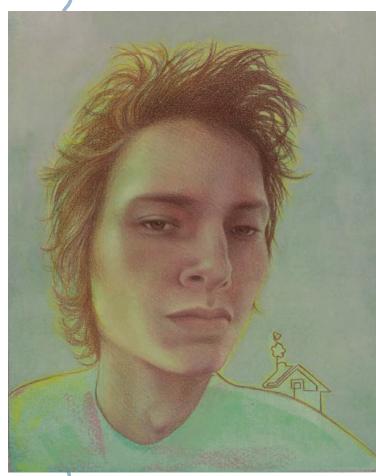
Upon moving back to Canada, Isaak completed her Bachelor of Education degree at the University of Calgary and has been teaching art in a well-respected art program in Calgary for over a decade. During that time, Isaak has been refining her technical and observational skills through drawing. She uses coloured pencils, graphite, and charcoal as her main materials to draw detailed recollections of her subjects. A variety of features and facial expressions inspires Isaak to capture her subjects' distinct personalities through her drawings.

Isaak exhibits her work both nationally and internationally and is a current artist in residence at nvrlnd art studios in Calgary.

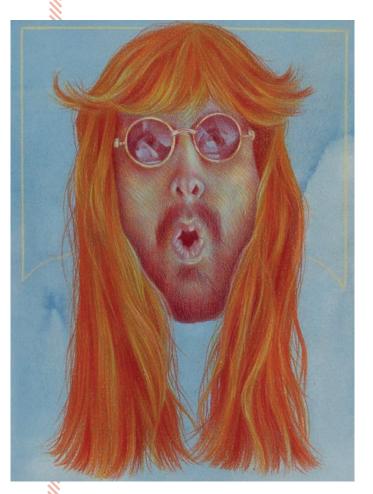




Kelly Isaak
Alain, 2020
Watercolour and coloured
pencil on paper
25.4 cm x 20.32 cm
Courtesy of the artist



Kelly Isaak
Anon, 2020
Watercolour, coloured pencil,
gouache, and chalk pastel on paper
25.4 cm x 20.32 cm
Courtesy of the artist



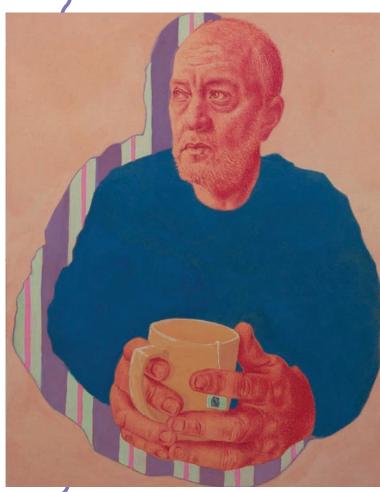


Kelly Isaak
Arnie, 2020
Watercolour and coloured
pencil on paper
25.4 cm x 20.32 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Kelly Isaak
Hannah, 2020
Watercolour, coloured pencil,
and gouache on paper
25.4 cm x 20.32 cm
Courtesy of the artist



Kelly Isaak
Megan, 2020
Watercolour, coloured pencil,
and gouache on paper
25.4 cm x 20.32 cm
Courtesy of the artist

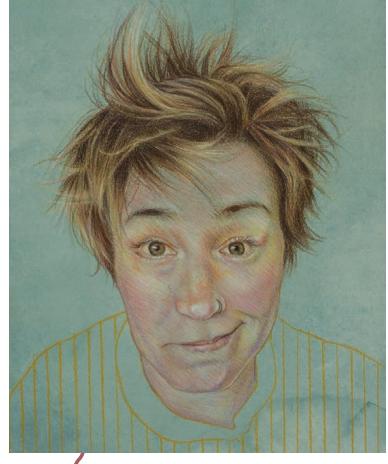


Kelly Isaak
Barry, 2020
Watercolour, coloured pencil,
and gouache on paper
25.4 cm x 20.32 cm
Courtesy of the artist



Kelly Isaak
Lauren, 2020
Watercolour and coloured
pencil on paper
20.32 x 25.4 cm
Courtesy of the artist





Kelly Isaak Leela, 2020 Watercolour and coloured pencil on paper 25.4 cm x 20.32 cm Courtesy of the artist

Kelly Isaak Sonia, 2020 Watercolour and coloured pencil on paper 25.4 cm x 20.32 cm Courtesy of the artist







Kelly Isaak
Cash and Cody, 2020
Watercolour and coloured
pencil on paper
25.4 cm x 20.32 cm
Courtesy of the artist



Kelly Isaak
Daina, 2020
Watercolour and coloured
pencil on paper
25.4 cm x 20.32 cm
Courtesy of the artist



Kelly Isaak
Emma, 2020
Watercolour and coloured
pencil on paper
25.4 cm x 20.32 cm
Courtesy of the artist



Kelly Isaak
Claire, 2020
Watercolour and coloured
pencil on paper
25.4 cm x 20.32 cm
Courtesy of the artist

This Education Guide consists of activities to move audiences through the various themes presented in *Alone Together*. The content of the exhibition and the following lesson plans have been carefully developed and designed to enhance the curriculum set by Alberta Education. The guide includes questions for discussion, activities, and vocabulary designed for the level of ability, understanding, and complexity of the participants:

Beginner - participants who are just beginning their exploration of art.

Intermediate - participants who have some experience looking at and creating art.

Advanced - participants who have much experience looking at and creating art.

Throughout the Education Guide, you will find key concepts, words, and terms emphasized that can be found in the Vocabulary section.



Below are questions intended to prompt meaningful discussion about the content presented in *Alone Together*. The questions can be selected and the vocabulary altered to suit the appropriate age level.

- During the COVID-19 lockdowns, how did you or members of your household navigate feelings of isolation or disconnectedness from other people? In what new ways did you learn to connect with others?
- What, if anything, do you know about crowdsourcing? How does the artist
 utilize this in her series about isolation? Why do you think the artist chose to draw
 strangers that she would most likely never meet?
- How can portraiture influence how someone's identity is perceived?
- When someone is *anonymous* in a portrait, what might we be able to infer about them or their personality? The word *anon* is an abbreviation of "anonymous," and in the portrait titled *Anon*, the subject chose to remain unnamed. Why might someone prefer to remain anonymous?
- How did the artist use colour, detail, and pattern to capture the various personalities of her portrait subjects?
- Which facial expression stands out to you the most? Why?
- Which portrait stands out to you the most, or which do you connect with the most? Why?
- Why do you think the artist sometimes uses colours that are not actual skin tones or representational colours? How do those colours affect the feeling of the drawing?
- Why do you think the artist chose to use abstract backgrounds in some of her drawings?
- How might some of the backgrounds represent personalities or moods?
- A few of the drawings have subtle *symbols* or images in them. Can you spot them? Why do you think the artist included these? Some examples include the little house on the tea bag in the *Barry* drawing, the line drawing of a house on the person's shoulder in *Anon*, and the clouds in the drawings *Claire* and *Lauren*.

Portrait Story Circle

Have participants create a story about the subject of one of the portraits in the exhibition *Alone Together*, instructing everyone to pick the portrait that they connect with the most. After the stories are completed, facilitate a sharing circle so everyone can tell their peers the stories they came up with.

Memory Portraits

Have participants *sketch* a member of their household or a friend from memory. Ideally, allot under ten minutes for participants to complete their drawings. Once the sketch is finished, ask participants to describe the person's personality/character in written form. Follow up with these discussion questions:

• What distinguishes this person in your memory from other people?

• How does memory affect how we identify people?

How close is your drawing to an actual image of the person?

What expression did you give to that person?

How does that expression relate to how you normally think of them?

Was the written description captured in the initial sketch?

 If you were drawing the person in a formal portrait, what would you emphasize to help portray the traits you outlined in your written description?

Variation: Discuss ways that communities might share identities, and how national or cultural identity might be presented in self-portraiture.





Instructions

- **Step 1** Brainstorm a list of five things you know about your subject. For example, you might list their favourite colours, foods, animals, cities, hobbies, books, music, etc. If your subject is with you, you could interview them.
- **Step 2** Gather papers that you feel complement each other. You can tear or cut the papers into a variety of sizes and test out how you want to arrange and layer them with your printed photo to create *balance* in the *composition*.
- **Step 3** Once you've decided on an arrangement, glue the papers down on the cardboard backing. If you have a cell phone, you could take a photo of the arrangement, so you can recreate it if something shifts. Get the glue right up to the edges of each piece of added paper so it lies flat. This will make it easier to draw on.
- **Step 4** While the glue dries, think about what images or symbols you can draw to visually highlight the things you know about your subject (the things you brainstormed in Step 1).
- **Step 5** Draw your chosen imagery on the collaged background.
- **Step 6** Share your collage portrait and what you know about your subject with your peers.











In this lesson, participants will learn how to develop a *continuous line drawing*. Line drawings are drawings that focus on the shapes and planes of a subject, rather than the *shading* that develops a three-dimensional *form*.

Continuous line drawings also focus on the shapes and planes of a subject, but the drawing tool never leaves the paper. The artist draws the subject using one continuous line. It is a challenge to not lift the pen or pencil from the drawing surface at all when composing the image, but the benefit of this is that it forces a slower approach and helps the artist work out how the pen will move from one shape or plane to another in a way that will add interest to the drawing. It allows for the creation of unexpected lines, which can add variety to an artist's work.

Continuous line drawings can also help to improve hand-eye coordination. The artist can learn to move their hand in time with their eye as it moves across the subject. With a lot of practice, the hand and eye will train themselves to work together. Using a pen adds an extra challenge for artists. It encourages them to learn to work with the lines they have set down, as they cannot be erased.

Materials

Smooth paper of any kind (smaller sizes will translate to tighter hand movements and may allow students more time to complete multiple studies - the examples shown are 6" x 8"), fineliner pen (with ink that doesn't spread, allowing for finer, smaller shapes that won't bleed together), coloured pencils, if colour is being added, and a printed-out colour wheel.

Preparation

If participants are drawing each other, they will need to face each other. One participant will draw the other and then they'll switch. This is a great opportunity for participants to get to know each other.

If participants are drawing someone in a photograph, ask them to bring in photos they've taken of friends and/or members of their households, or even a self-portrait (with or without a fun filter). Alternatively, *National Geographic* magazines have a great variety of human subjects that participants can use.

It can be helpful to pull out large photos from the magazines prior to the lesson and have participants choose from a selection.

Set a timer. For junior high students, ten minutes is often a good length to hold their attention. For high school students, fifteen to twenty minutes is recommended. Longer time limits work well when participants want to closely study the subject being drawn.

Instructions

See example images on the next two pages for clarification of activity

- **Step 1** Study your subject for a few moments before beginning. What do you want the *emphasis* of your study to be? In a portrait, the face is usually the focus, but is there something interesting about their haircut, or something they're wearing? How might you include that? What shapes do you see within the face?
- **Step 2** Start drawing. Begin slowly and add lines with purpose. Remember, you cannot pick up your pen (if you do, just set it down again where it was last used). Plan the pen's next movement. You can double back over lines that have already been drawn. If you want certain lines to be heavier and thicker, press harder. If you'd prefer a line to be softer and lighter, ease up on the pressure.
- **Step 3** Go back into the drawing and add *line weight* to areas you want to emphasize. Do so by thickening the lines and making them darker.
- **Step 4** Once the main subject is drawn, add a frame around it. Try including different shapes anywhere around the subject, but remaining within the compositional frame. This can help to fill the *negative space* around the subject as well as finish off the study. If you choose to do more than one study, complete this step after all studies have been drawn.
- Step 5 If colour is being added, refer to a colour wheel (pages 37 and 38). Use the colour wheel to help you harmonize your colours for each study. Review the terms analogous colour, complementary colour, cool colours versus warm colours, primary colour, secondary colour, split-complementary colour, and tertiary colour. We used coloured pencils in these examples. Alternatively, watercolours also work well for this activity (if drawn on watercolour paper using waterproof-ink pens).





Discussion Questions

A line is one of the *elements of art*; one of the building blocks of an image. Here are some questions to help you further explore lines in art:

- What kinds of lines do you see in the artworks around you?
- What do you notice about the lines themselves? Are they thick or thin? Are they long, short, curved, wavy?
- How would an image be different if the line quality changed?
- What areas of the lines do you appreciate in your finished drawings?
 What about in your fellow participants' drawings?
- How do lines create interesting shapes within the studies?

In this lesson, participants will learn to draw expressive portraits using coloured pencils and shading techniques. The lesson is meant to focus on emotive facial expressions.

Materials

Ruler, smooth paper* (e.g., Mayfair, Bristol, Stonehenge, Fabriano, Canson, Frosted Mylar), MDF board, pencil, coloured pencils (artist grade if possible, for better layering), and painter's tape.

* Regular poster paper is quite difficult to layer coloured pencil on, so it's a good idea to avoid it if possible.

Preparation

Print out a colour wheel and have participants either bring in or take a series of photographs of themselves exploring a wide range of facial expressions. Before the photos are taken, discuss the benefits of good lighting. The photos will need to be clear and in focus to get the best detail possible for their drawings, so encourage participants not to use app filters. The photos in the examples were taken in a classroom, next to a window on a sunny day, with a mobile-phone camera. Also encourage participants to stay away from backlighting. The image for the example drawing was chosen partly because it would be a fun expression to draw, but also because it has interesting shadows and highlights, which help to bring strong, three-dimensional form to the drawing.

Have participants select and print off one of the facial-expression photographs as an 8" x 10" image onto a piece of printer paper.

Depending on class / workshop time, it may take up to two weeks for participants to complete an $8" \times 10"$ drawing (like in the example shown).

Ask participants to keep their pencils consistently sharp and their pencil motions small, even in larger sections that need to be coloured. This will help to keep the drawing smooth. In the example, a combination of overlapped *hatching* marks and back-and-forth hand motions were used.

Instructions

- **Step 1** Grid your 8" x 10" printed photograph. The example uses a 0.5" grid. Repeat the grid on drawing paper the same size, but draw the lines as lightly as possible. This will prevent the grid from showing under the coloured pencil and will prevent the lines from indenting the paper (indents will show up as white lines when you colour over them).
- **Step 2** Using the grid on the printed photograph as a guideline, draw a light outline of your subject on the drawing paper so that the shapes and lines in each drawn grid square match the shapes and lines in the gridded photograph.
- **Step 3** Once the outline of your subject is complete, carefully erase as much of the grid as possible on your drawing without erasing the important outline shapes and lines you'll need when working with the coloured pencils to shade and build volume in the portrait. Using a small eraser tip for this step is extremely helpful, and removing the grid in the background is especially important in lighter areas of the portrait that will not require as much pencilcrayon coverage.







Step 4 Choose a colour palette for this drawing.
Reduced colour palettes can be helpful to create balanced compositions, and referring to a colour wheel can be a great reminder. The example refers to a split-complementary colour triad (various shades of purple, yellow-orange, and yellow-green). Before choosing your colour palette, consider the levels of contrast needed. Try out colours together in a sphere to see how they might work together in the rounded areas of the face.

Step 5 Once the colour palette has been chosen, lightly sketch where colours will go, leaving the lightest areas blank, allowing the white of the paper to be the brightest (do not add any colour there). In the example, orange and purple pencils were used for the initial colours. Then another layer was added, using more of the chosen colours, in the area of the right eye. Finding the darks and lights first allows for the transitional *value* levels to be more easily balanced out.





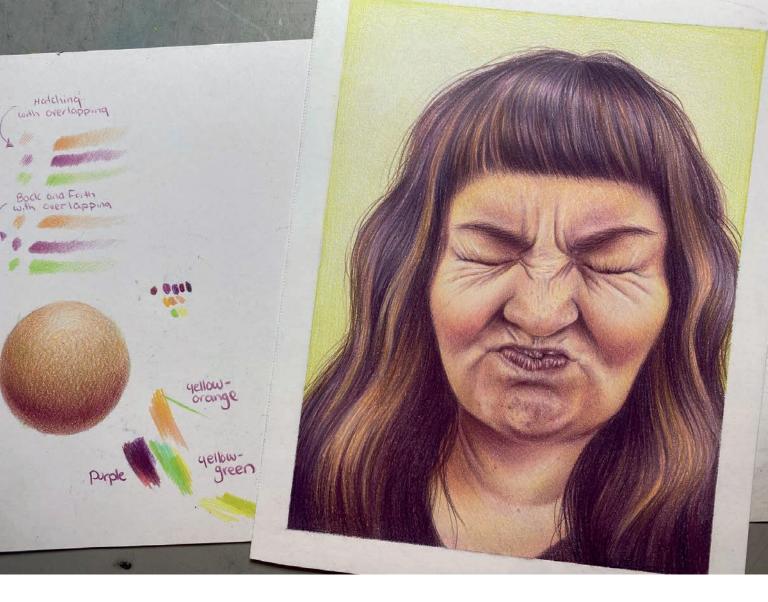


- **Step 6** Keep adding layers into the skin, working the entire face rather than trying to finish a specific area at a time. It will be easier to balance colour throughout the drawing this way. Keep the lightest areas white, or almost white, by leaving those areas of the paper uncoloured as long as possible in order to maintain that contrast. It can be challenging to try to force in a light colour at the end of a drawing.
- Step 7 Sketch out and then colour in the sections of hair, following the direction of the flow of the hair. Sectioning hair in the drawing allows for more movement in the rendering. The example started with the darkest areas as well as the lightest. Once those are sketched in, add more layers, as you did with the skin. Tape was added over the border just prior to beginning the hair, to help keep the border clean. The border is optional.
- **Step 8** Keep adding layers to the hair (following the *contours*). Pay close attention to keeping the contrast and to layering various shades in the colour families selected in your colour palette.
- **Step 9** Add the background colour (in the example, yellow-green from the split-complementary triad was used).
- **Step 10** Look over the entire drawing to make sure the colours, values, and contrast are balanced. The yellow-green of the background was added into the values of the face as well as into lighter areas of the hair to harmonize the image with the background.
- **Step 11** Once the background is finished, add little flyaway hairs to help make the hair look more realistic. Keeping the pencil sharp and gripping it loosely will also allow the hair to flow more smoothly, ensuring it looks more natural. In the example, a lighter background allowed for the flyaway hairs to be easily added.









The photos above show the initial colour planning and the final result

Variations

This activity can be completed using any of the following as prompts:

- Expressive portrait of family/friend/household member
- Snapchat selfie
- Distortion self-portraits

Traced images in place of a gridded image can be helpful for newer artists. A window or a light table can be used to trace from the original photograph.

For newer artists, a monochromatic colour palette is a good choice to develop an understanding of how to build form with a range of values and strong contrast.

See the two portrait examples below that are using monochromatic colours.





Discussion Questions

Portraits have been found in different forms for as long as humans have been creating art. Explore these questions about portraits and facial expressions with participants either before or after completing the art activity:

- What is it that intrigues people about the human face?
- How does an expression communicate a feeling or a story to the viewer?
- How can colour choice in a portrait affect its *mood*?
- How does wearing a mask affect how we read each other's emotions?
- What might the expression and colour choice in a portrait tell a viewer?
- What kinds of poses/facial expressions have you noticed in others' self-portraits?
- How can artists use self-portraits to express their individual identities?
- How have self-portraits changed over time?

Some definitions have been simplified, paraphrased, and/or slightly modified for clarity (spelling Canadianized for print purposes).

Abstract - Relating to or denoting art that does not attempt to represent external reality, but rather seeks to achieve its effect using shapes, colours, and textures.

Analogous colour - Any one of a group of related colours that are near each other on the colour wheel, a circular chart that shows gradations of colour.

Anonymous (of a person) - Not identified by name; of unknown name.

Balance - Refers to the use of artistic elements such as line, texture, colour, and form in the creation of artworks in a way that renders visual stability.

Collage - A piece of art made by sticking various materials, such as photographs and pieces of paper or fabric, on to a backing.

Colour palette - A palette of different colours of paint, especially as used by an artist; a range or selection of colours from which one can choose.

Complementary colour - One of a pair of primary or secondary colours opposed to the other member of the pair on a schematic chart or scale (colour wheel), as green opposed to red, orange opposed to blue, or violet opposed to yellow.

Composition - The arrangement or placement of visual elements in a piece of artwork.

Continuous line drawing - A drawing in which a single, unbroken line is used to develop the image.

Contour - The outline of a figure or body; the edge or line that defines or bounds a shape or object.

Contrast - The juxtaposition of difference, used to intensify the properties within the work. Exploring the arrangement of contrasting parts, such as light and dark, opposite hues of the colour wheel, texture, and size, contrast is employed to create the rhythm, or to strengthen the focus of the artwork.

Cool colours - An imaginary dividing line running through the colour wheel separates the colours into warm and cool. Blue, green, and purple are cool colours.

Crowdsourcing - The practice of obtaining information or input for a task or project by enlisting the services of a large number of people, either paid or unpaid, typically via the internet.

Elements of art - These are the building blocks of an artwork: colour, line, shape, form, value, texture, and space. They are tools artists use when creating an artwork.

Emphasis - Special importance, value, or prominence given to something.

Expression - A look on someone's face that conveys a particular emotion.

Form - This can mean several different things in art. Form is one of the seven elements of art and connotes a three-dimensional object in space. The word can also describe the physical nature of the artwork, as in metal sculpture, oil painting, etc.

Hatching (in fine art and technical drawing) - Shading with closely drawn parallel lines.

Isolation - The condition of being alone, especially when this makes you feel unhappy.

Line weight - This refers to the strength, heaviness, or darkness of a line. It describes the relative "weight" of the line against the background or support.

Monochromatic colours - Any set of colours that all have the same hue with different levels of white tinting and black shading.

Mood - The atmosphere or pervading tone of something.

Negative space - A term used in art to describe the space surrounding a subject.

Portraiture - The art of painting or taking portraits.

Primary colour - Any of a group of colours from which all other colours can be obtained by mixing. The primary colours of pigments are red, blue, and yellow.

Representational - An artistic likeness or image.

Secondary colour - A colour resulting from the mixing of two primary colours.

Shading - The use of marking made within outlines to suggest three-dimensionality, shadow, or degrees of light and dark in a picture or drawing.

Sketch - A rough drawing representing the main features of an object or scene and often made as a preliminary study.

Split-complementary - A split-complementary scheme involves the use of three colours. Using a colour wheel, you'd start with one colour, find its complement, and then use the two colours on either side of the complementary colour.

Symbol - Something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance.

Tertiary colour - A colour produced by an equal mixture of a primary colour and a secondary colour adjacent to it on the colour wheel.

Value - Value deals with the lightness or darkness of a colour.

Warm colours - An imaginary dividing line running through the colour wheel separates the colours into warm and cool. Red, orange, and yellow are warm colours.

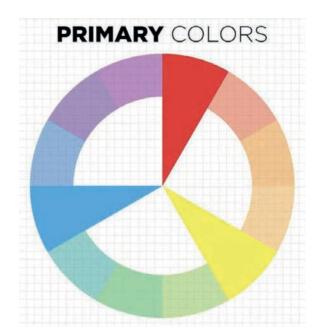
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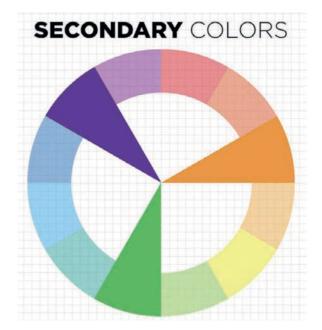
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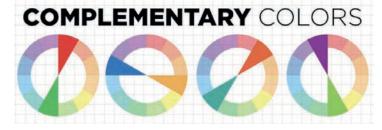
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SPLIT-COMPLEMENTARY COLORS









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