

SONIA VALLE

ART TEACHER ALDO LEOPOLD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Lesson: Self- Portrait With Favorite Things

This lesson can be taught to children in grades 2-5

In this class children are drawing a self-portrait and adding their favorite things in the background. This project will last two and a half to three weeks.

WEEK 1

Children will learn about the life of the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. The teacher will do an introduction and a drawing demonstration so children will have an idea of how the portrait is done. Frida Kahlo's "Self- Portrait with thorn Necklace and Hummingbird painted in 1940" will be shown as an example.

Children will look at portrait and describe what they see. Teacher will ask children questions about the painting, for example, What do you like about the picture? What do you not like about it? What are some of the colors Frida used? Would you use those colors too? Do you think Frida put some of her favorite plants and flowers in the background? Would you put wings on your flowers? Does Frida look happy or sad? Would you wear a thorn necklace and real looking butterflies in your hair? Do you think the monkey and the cat stayed on Frida's shoulder while she painted? Give Children enough time to talk about the portrait and if they have questions about the directions.

After teacher's introduction and demonstration, children will use a mirror to look at themselves and draw with chalk pastels their self-portraits.

Introduction

The life of Frida Kahlo:

Frida Kahlo was born in Mexico City in 1907 and died in 1954. Frida is regarded as one of the most important Twentieth -Century woman artist in the Americas. Her paintings are confessional and full of symbols of physical pain.

Frida's family was a mixture of Mexican Indian and European. Her father Guillermo Kahlo was a Hungarian Jew and a photographer who came to Mexico when he was 18 years old. After he was widowed he put his children in an orphanage. He married Frida's mother who was a mixture of Creole, Indian and Spanish. Frida was close to her father and helped him in his studio. She was sickly child and Frida had polio, which caused one of her leg to be smaller than the other. She had also wanted to study medicine. At age 18 she had a freak accident in a trolley as she was going home, that caused her to become a semi invalid. She was not expected to live.

The Artist Frida :

Frida became an artist through her accident. She first painted with the pigment that her father used for touching up his photography. After she was bed ridden her father nailed a mirror on a door and placed it above her bed so Frida could see herself as she painted her self-portraits. Frida painted her body cast that she wore for months after her many operations. In 1929, when Frida was 19 years old, she married Diego Rivera a very famous Mexican muralist. Frida is considered a Surrealist Artist because she her work represented her life both imaginary and real. Because her husband was famous muralist he was invited to the United States to paint murals so Frida went with him. She visited places like San Francisco, Detroit and New York. Frida did not like to leave Mexico.

Frida's Clothing:

Tehuana dresses and jewelry. She wore long dresses to hide her leg and to shoe her cultural heritage.

Cultural Influence:

Many of Frida's paintings have images of skeletons and that signifies "The Day of the Dead" celebrations that are celebrated in October throughout Mexico to honour their dead. In addition some of Frida's paintings also show herself as a martyr just like images of Christ in their Catholic churches. "Self- Portrait with Monkey and Hummingbird, 1940"

Materials Needed:

18x24 tan construction paper
Chalk pastels assortment of colors including white, red, yellow, black, brown, blue gray and any other colors applicable
Paper towel
Mirror

Method:

WEEK 1

For tan use white chalk to make the shape of the face and neck, color them in then add a small amount of brown and red chalk. Use a light color to draw your chin off your neck. Then use paper towel to mix/blend color till it becomes tan. Add the eyes noting that the shapes are like two curved lines. Encourage children to take time and look at the shape and color of their eyes, their eyelashes, eyebrows and hair. After children have worked with their faces they can work on adding a shoulder. Other areas should be left for when class meets again. Because there are children with different color skin teacher will show children how to mix the pastels to get the color they want.

WEEK 2

Teacher will review the drawing lesson. Teacher will add background and encourage children not to blend colors because background should be bright. Encourage children to work freely.

BOOKS READ:

The Color of Us

By Karen Katz

Scholastic Inc

For distribution only through School Market

0-439-221161

Frida Kahlo

By Frank Milner

1990

PRC Publishing Ltd reprinted 2004