

# Self Portrait vs. Selfie: A diptych of the self.

11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Photography class



self-portrait



vs.

selfie

## **Introductory Information:**

- High School (specifically made for photography, but could be manipulated for drawing, painting, printmaking, etc.)
- Class Size: 30 + Students
- Length of Class Period: 80 minutes; Quarter long class
- Lesson Topic & Description: In this lesson, the students will create their first self-portrait using their cell phone. This project will help students understand what a photographic self portrait is and will help students discover who they are. Students will differentiate between their online persona and their “true” self--creating conversation that differentiates reality from online reality. Students will also learn how to effectively use a diptych to create one fine-art image.

## **STAGE 1: DESIRED RESULTS**

### **A. ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:**

- a. Students will understand that artists reflect on themselves when creating meaningful works of art.
- b. Students will understand that artists reflect on who they are and how they portray themselves to the world.
- c. Students will understand how social media has changed the way we think of ourselves.
- d. Students will understand the difference between a “self portrait” and a “selfie.”

### **B. ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:**

- a. How do artists create a self-portrait?
- b. How do artists reflect on themselves photographically?
- c. How do artists use diptychs to create one effective fine art image.

### **C. STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSED**

- Standard 1: **Methods, Materials, and Techniques:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of the methods, materials, and techniques unique to the visual arts.
- Standard 3: **Observation, Abstraction, Invention, and Expression:** Students will demonstrate their powers of observation, abstraction, invention, and expression in a variety of media, materials, and techniques.
- Standard 5: **Critical Response:** Students will describe and analyze their own work and the work of others using appropriate visual arts vocabulary. When appropriate, students will connect their analysis to interpretation and evaluation.

#### D. ACQUISITION/ LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- The students will know how to create an expressive self-portrait.
- Students will explore “how they see themselves,” and “how they want the world to see them.”
- Students will learn what a “Diptych” is and how their photographs work as one image.
- Students will be able to differentiate their online persona from their true selves, and differentiate a fine-art self-portrait from a modern day “selfie.”
- The students will be skilled at critical dialogue and leave with a better understanding of how social media influences our lives and self-esteem.

## STAGE 2: ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

#### A. PERFORMANCE TASK OR FINAL PRODUCT:

Each student will have two self-portraits at the end of this assignment that will be created with a cell phone, but ultimately edited using Photoshop and printed as a diptych.

#### B. CONTINUUM OF ASSESSMENTS:

Students will be asked to bring in a self-portrait of a photographer that they are interested in for a discussion of the concept of a self-portrait and project ideas. Artist books, magazines, and a list of helpful websites will be brought in so that students can explore many photographers. Students will have looked at other photographer’s self-portraits and will have had a critical dialogue

that will help influence their own expressive self-portraits. Students should be able to differentiate between their online persona and their “true” self.

C. CRITERIA:

- a. Did the student look at many photographers’ work and actively participate in the dialogue discussing a self-portrait?
- b. Did the student fill out the questionnaire and engage in dialogue with their peers?
- c. Did the student attempt an original and expressive self-portrait?
- d. Did the student compare and contrast their self-portrait and selfie? Did they effectively create a portrait exploring how they see themselves and how they want the world to see them?
- e. Did the student work hard at editing and printing their photograph?

## **STAGE 3: LEARNING PLAN**

A. MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT:

- a. Cell phones, iPads, camera, etc. (Which ever the student chooses to use.)
- b. Photoshop
- c. Printer & photographic paper

B. RESOURCES: VISUALS, TEXT, MEDIA AND WEB

- a. Kim Kardashian: American reality tv show celebrity who is notorious for her Instagram selfies.  
Kimkardashian on Instagram. (n.d.). Retrieved October 6, 2014, from <http://instagram.com/kimkardashian>
- b. Rachel Perry Welty: (Born in 1962) Born in Tokyo, Japan. Contemporary artist who is represented by Yancy Richardson. She received her artist diploma from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in 2001. Her well known work involves self portraits of herself overwhelmingly covered in objects.

RACHEL PERRY WELTY. (n.d.). Retrieved October 6, 2014, from <http://www.yanceyrichardson.com/artists/rachel-perry-welty/>

- c. Francesca Woodman (1958-1981) was an American photographer known for her chilling self-portraits and images featuring young nude models. She is known for these haunting images that became famous after her suicide at the age of 22.

Francesca Woodman 1958–1981. (n.d.). Retrieved October 6, 2014, from <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/francesca-woodman-10512>

- d. Vivian Maier (1926-2009) was an American street photographer who worked as a nanny in Chicago. During her time nannying, she created over 150,000 photographs-which remained unknown until John Maloof began posting scans of her found negatives after her death in 2009.

Self-Portraits | Vivian Maier Photographer. (n.d.). Retrieved October 6, 2014, from <http://www.vivianmaier.com/gallery/self-portraits/>

- e. LaToya Ruby Fraiser (Born 1982) Fraiser received her BFA from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania and her MFA from Syracuse University. Much of LaToya Ruby Fraiser’s work revolves around Braddock, PA where she was raised and its crumbling economy juxtaposed with self portraits of her and her mother.

Photographs. (n.d.). Retrieved October 6, 2014, from <http://www.latoyarubyfrazier.com/photography/>

### C. VOCABULARY WITH DEFINITIONS:

- a. Photographic Diptych: two photographs paired together to create one image. The two images paired should change the context of either image to strengthen or contrast the bond between the two.
- b. Self Portrait: A portrait made by oneself of oneself-- but in the terms of this project and in photography, a self-portrait is often an image about how one views themselves.
- c. Selfie: An image made of how you want the (social media) world to view you.

### D. TEACHER INSTRUCTION:

- a. The teacher discusses a diptych, presenting students with two different definitions, and shows examples (preferably two self portraits.)
- b. Begins discussion by questioning students on who has a social media account and begin introducing vocabulary.
- c. Teacher defines self-portraits and shows artists' work, such as LoToya Ruby Frazier, Francesca Woodman, and Rachel Perry Welty. Students and teacher engage in a discussion using visual thinking strategies on what makes these self-portraits and what the portrait says about the photographer.
- d. Teacher defines selfie, and shows selfies--such as Kim Kardashian's selfies.
- e. Class begins to engage in discussion and think critically about social media and the "selfie."
  - i. What differentiates these two very similar types of photographs?
  - ii. How has social media changed photography?
  - iii. How has social media changed the way we think about ourselves?
- f. Teacher explains assignment and breaks lesson down by days.
  - i. Day 1: Discussion, Assignment, Questionnaire and brainstorm characteristics of both selfie and self portrait
  - ii. Day 2: Bring in a photographer's self-portrait for discussion & look at artists online and in books all day. Share brainstorm characteristics and compile class list.
  - iii. Day 3: Bring in photographs, critique/discuss and begin editing
  - iv. Day 4: Finish editing
- g. Teacher hands out questionnaire and monitors students' discussion about selfies and self-portraits.

#### E. QUESTIONS TO GENERATE DISCUSSION:

- a. Who has ever posted a selfie?
- b. What do you include in your selfie?
- c. What is a selfie? What is a self-portrait?

- d. What is a diptych?
- e. Do photographers have to be the one literally taking the picture for it to be a self-portrait?
- f. What do you see?
- g. What makes this a self-portrait?
- h. What is the artist trying to say with this image?
- i. What do you take away?
- j. What differentiates a self-portrait and selfie?
- k. Why do you think we post selfies?
- l. Are we doing it to impress people and if so, who?
- m. What are we saying by posting selfies?
- n. What will you focus on in your self-portrait? Will it be focused on your cultural identity? Your gender identity? Your class identity? Your age identity? What are signifiers that you identify with

F. LEARNING ACTIVITY:

- a. Students are assigned project.
- b. Students have discussion and fill out questionnaire.
- c. Students explore for an artist that interests them.
- d. Students bring in one artists' self-portrait and compile class list of characteristics of selfie.
- e. Students bring self-portrait and selfie in, class discusses the images brought in--unedited-- and help students choose the best diptych (if students bring in more than two images.)
- f. Students have already learned some of the basic Photoshop by this point, but students will help each other and with the teachers' help, edit the photographs the way they want. They can do "true edits" which will make the photograph look as it did in real life, or do "drastic edits" and manipulate the selfie and self portrait further.

G. . DIFFERENTIATION: Students may always ask for another student, family or friend to help them make the photograph. Students may use a variety of different "common" technology to create the photograph. If the student doesn't have a cell phone with a camera, we can find a way to loan them a point and shoot camera or another device.