Developing Self

Inspired by the project **Blackbirds**, featured on the 7th edition of The FENCE, exhibited in public parks and downtowns across 8 cities in North America.

Students will slow down their image-making process and use technology that requires deliberate staging of photographs. Students will explore what it means to be the authors and subjects of artistic and historical study. This project aims to activate and inspire personal agency and self-expression.

Students will be able to:
- Articulate the difference between a self-portrait and a selfie
- Approach portraiture as a process of inquiry and self-exploration
- Create a final project (portfolio, blog, or collage) that presents a personal history for the given time period
- Write an artist statement reflecting on this process, from conception to completion

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Session 1: Intro

1. **Selfie vs. Self-Portrait**
   - Students will break up into groups and receive a collection of unlabeled images. Together, each group will sort their images into two categories: "selfies" and "self-portraits."
   - After sorting, ask the following questions:
     - What qualities did you decide made something a "selfie"?
     - What are the qualities you decided made something a "self-portrait"?
   - As a group, generate and document criteria from these questions for defining a selfie vs. a self portrait
2. **Exploring Portraiture**
   - .For each student:
     - Choose one self-portrait from the images you sorted in your group.
     - Write a one-paragraph answer to the following prompt: What do you know about this person from this image? What makes you say that? Can you pinpoint a specific element of the photo that tells

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Featuring photography by Idris Solomon

Grade Level: 6th - 12th Grade

Subjects: Visual Arts, English Language Arts

Time Required: 4 sessions (with an ongoing photo-a-day assignment for a month)

Key Images:
- *Blackbirds* Image Bank
- Examples of selfie
- Example of self-portrait

Materials Needed:
- Disposable camera + 1 roll of film per student (or a smartphone)
- Journals for each student
- Art supplies
- Computer and scanner/digital scans for blog (optional)

Additional Resources:
www.unitedphotoindustries.com/education/resources/

Standards Addressed:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.5

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you about that person (lighting/color/expression/ body language/etc)?
- Use the *Blackbirds* Image Bank to introduce and discuss key elements of portraiture and develop a vocabulary bank for composition techniques. Examples of concepts could include contrast, light/shadow, perspective, body language, warm/cool colors, expression, close up, wide shot, etc. Define these terms together from the images and discuss how they create mood and personality in a portrait.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.6
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.10
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5
VA:Cr2.1.HSI
VA:Pr4.1.HSI
VA:Cn10.1.HSI

Ongoing Sessions: Photo-A-Day for a month

1. Depending on the focus and resources available in your classroom, decide on the technology students will use to capture images. (Film, digital, cell phone or working in groups) Review photography basics with your students, including basic camera skills and composition.
   - Refer to THE FENCE 2018 Guide for an intro to photography styles and The Photoville Passport for helpful vocabulary.
2. Students will use disposable cameras to capture one image a day (a disposable camera usually has around 30 frames) based on a prompt. Select a one
   - Example prompts:
     - Who am I today?
     - What am I feeling?
     - "Behind the scenes…"
     - "If you only knew…"
3. Students will record a brief journal entry (one paragraph) based on the prompt that will correspond to their photo.
4. Plan to check in a few times throughout the process. Although students using disposable cameras will not be able to see their images until the end of the project, talk as a class about how the process is going:
   - What challenges have come up as you make your images?
   - Are some days tougher than others? Why?

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- What techniques are you using from our tool kit (color/light/expression/etc)?
- How are your ideas changing as you keep shooting?
- What new ideas can we generate/try?
- At the end of the project period, students will develop the film.
5. As the teacher, you're encouraged to follow along and create your own image-a-day as a model! Vulnerability is best as a shared experience, and participating may help students feel more comfortable using the project as self-expression.

Session 3: Reflection

1. After all images are developed, students will edit in class.
   - Lay all your images out in order in your workspace. Number them according to your journal (Entry 1, 2, 3 etc)
   - Choose your ten favorite images from the 30 photos.
   - For each image you chose, reread the journal entry you wrote. Think about:
     - How did this image relate to what I was writing/feeling that day?
     - Did it show what I wanted to show? Did it show something else?
   - Create a display of these images using poster board and glue. Images can be arranged in order or as a collage.
2. Write an artist statement that answers the following questions:
   - What was it like making pictures every day that you could not see?
   - What techniques did you use in these photographs from our tool kit? What did they help you express about yourself?
   - What changes did you document about yourself?
   - Did you learn anything new or surprising?
3. Attach your artist statement to the display.

Session 4: Gallery Walk

1. As a class, do a gallery walk or a formal presentation to share the image-a-day projects with each other. Discuss together:
   - What did we learn about ourselves through this project?
   - What might we do differently if we photographed it again?
   - How do we define self-portraiture? Is there anything we want to add now?
2. Optional Extension: Create a class blog or website showcasing these image-a-day projects to share with the wider school or community.

PhotoWings — *Photoville* —