

Spirit Animal



Lesson developed by artist, Yassi Mazandi

Objective

Students will engage in a classic self-portrait and identity project with a twist. They will draw half of their face, with the other half as an animal with which they identify.

Age Kindergarten and up

Time 45-50 mins

Focus Speaking and Listening, Observation, Imagination, Social-Emotional Learning, Visual Arts (Color, Space, Shape, Line)

Material

- White Paper
- Crayons
- Mirrors (if you do not have mirrors, ask students to bring a photo of themselves)

Core Standards

- Common Core Standards: Speaking and Listening - Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly
- Social Emotional Competency: Self Awareness - Accurately recognize own strengths and limitations
- Visual Arts Standards: Connecting - Create art that tells a story about a life experience

(See below for a full list of standards.)

Opening (5 mins)

Begin the lesson by asking students what they know about “self-portraits.” You may also share examples of self-portraits with students.

- *What is a self-portrait?*
- *Have you ever drawn a self-portrait before?*

Next, explain the concept of a “spirit animal”.

- *A spirit animal is an animal you connect with. It is an animal you would want to be if it were possible to be an animal.*
- *If you were an animal, what animal would you want to be?*
- *Why do you want to be this animal?*
- *What characteristics does the animal have that you like? Do you have these same characteristics?*
- *Do you look like this animal?*

Share the lesson objective and distribute paper, mirrors, and crayon.

Instructions and Guided Practice (10 mins)

Support students in beginning their drawings through guided questions.

Step 1: *Start by drawing your own eye.*

Step 2: *Then draw the animal's eye. Is it bigger? Smaller? The same shape or different? The same color or different?*

Step 3: *Now draw one side of your nose. Then complete the nose by drawing the other side like your animal's nose. They don't need to connect perfectly. Does the animal have whiskers? Are there freckles on either of your faces?*

Step 4: *Next draw the lips. Draw half of the lips like your own, the other half like your animal's lips. Keep going like this, draw a mix of the shape of your face and the animal's face, hair, chin, teeth, etc. I'll be circulating to help.*

Work Time (25-30 mins)

Circulate throughout the room to support students.

Students should continue drawing. If they finish early, you can ask them to draw a background. Students could draw a forest, an ocean, a living room, or wherever they would like.

Closing (5 mins)

In pairs, ask students to share their drawings and explain why they chose their animal. They should also describe which characteristics they have in common with their animal.

Extension

2nd-5th Grade: Ask participants to write down 1-3 characteristics that they share with their spirit animal. Encourage students to write complete sentences. I.e. *My spirit animal is a tiger. My animal and I are both strong, fast runners, and have soft hair.*

Philosophy

Art is an essential tool for early childhood development. Studies have shown that art education helps to increase comprehension of STEM and literacy concepts as well as offering students an outlet to process trauma, develop self-discipline and self-management, and interpersonal relationship skills. Active engagement in the arts can yield positive benefits in social and emotional growth. The art lessons developed by Crayon Collection are meant to support this growth.

Standards

Common Core Standards

Speaking and Listening

6. Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

Social Emotional Competency

Self Awareness

- Label and recognize own and others' emotions
- Accurately recognize own strengths and limitations

Social Awareness

- Respect others

Visual Arts Standards

Creating

2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Create art that represents natural and constructed environments.

Connecting

10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- Create **art** that tells a story about a life experience.

California Preschool Curriculum Framework Volume 2, Dep of Ed.

Visual Arts

Notice, Respond, and Engage

- 1.2** Begin to plan art and show increasing care and persistence in completing it.

Develop Skills in Visual Art

- 2.1** Make straight and curved marks and lines; begin to draw rough circle shapes.

- 2.2** Begin to create paintings or drawings that suggest people, animals, and objects.

Create, Invent, and Express Through Visual Art

- 3.2** Draw more detailed figures or objects with more control of line and shape.

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five

Preschooler Approaches to Learning

Goals for Sub-Domain: Creativity

- Goal P-ATL 12. Child expresses creativity in thinking and communication.

- Asks questions related to tasks or activities that indicate thinking about new ways to accomplish the task or activity.
- Approaches tasks, activities, and play in ways that show creative problem solving.
- Uses multiple means of communication to creatively express thoughts, feelings, or ideas.

Preschooler Social and Emotional Development

Goals for Sub-Domain: Sense of Identity and Belonging

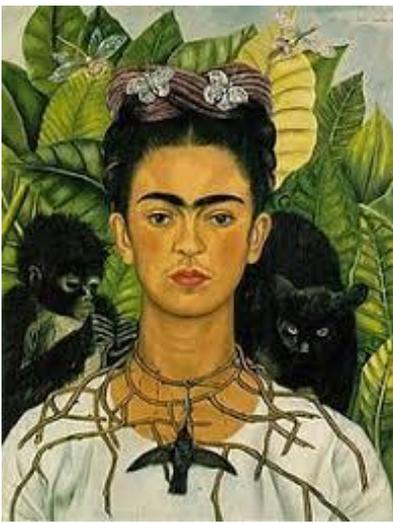
- Goal P-SE 9. Child recognizes self as a unique individual having own abilities, characteristics, emotions, and interests.
 - Describes self using several different characteristics.
 - Demonstrates knowledge of uniqueness of self, such as talents, interests, preferences, or culture
- Goal P-SE 10. Child expresses confidence in own skills and positive feelings about self.
 - Shows satisfaction or seeks acknowledgment when completing a task or solving a problem.
 - Expresses own ideas or beliefs in group contexts or in interactions with others.
 - Uses positive words to describe self, such as kind or hard-worker.

About the Artist

Yassi Mazandi was born in Tehran, Iran, raised in Great Britain and lives and works in Los Angeles. She describes nature and her reaction to it as the driving forces behind her art. She sculpts in porcelain, clay and bronze, and also creates works on paper and canvas. Her work has been the subject of a number of solo exhibitions, most recently the 2014 exhibition Yassi Mazandi: Sacred Wheel at Maloney Fine Art in Los Angeles, numerous group exhibitions, as well as a video interview with the BBC in 2013. In 2012, she was in the first group of artists selected by the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation for its Artist in Residence program on Captiva Island in Florida. Her work is in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and in other public and major private collections both in the United States and internationally.

Additional Resources

Self Portraits



Frida Kahlo



Vincent Van Gogh



Unknown

Animals



Lion



Zebra

CRAYON COLLECTION

COLLECT -> CONTRIBUTE -> CREATE



Tiger



Elephant



Dog



Fish