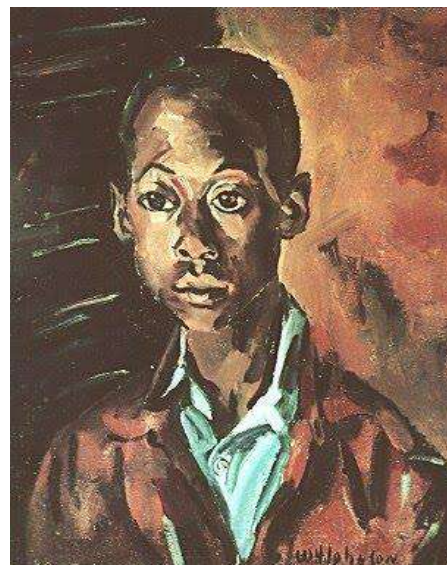

Art Masterpiece: "Jim" William Henry Johnson



Keywords: Portrait, Gestural, Shades and Tints

Grade: 4th

Activity: Self Portrait Collage

Meet The Artist:

William Henry Johnson knew as a child that he wanted to become an artist. He was born in 1901 in rural South Carolina and the eldest child of 4 other siblings. His love for drawing first came from copying pictures of the daily comics. At 17 he moved to New York and worked as a cook, bellhop and even unloaded ships until he saved up enough money to enroll in the National Academy of Design, where he became an outstanding student. After graduating he moved to Paris to further his education and knowledge of Art. His teacher at the Academy raised money for him to travel there, where he could study the best artists of the time and in a place with better race relations. He lived, painted and traveled around Europe and North Africa. He met several different Artists in Europe and fell in love with, and married, a potter from Denmark named Holcha Krake. In 1938 he returned to the U.S. with his wife before World War II started and found work in Harlem, New York. He met many African-American artists in Harlem and started painting memories from his life growing up in the South. Johnson tried to show the soul and emotions of his subjects, not just what they looked like. He also enjoyed teaching Art at the Harlem Community Center. His Art is exhibited in many Museums throughout the world

About the Art:

Jim is a **portrait** of William Henry Johnson's brother. It is a **gestural** portrait (Gestural: using movement or position to show emotion, opinion or ideas). Here Mr. Johnson is trying to communicate a shyness or anxiety in his brother by making the eyes larger than normal. By painting him in clothes that are casual, also communicates an everyday life experience for Jim.

Johnson also uses **shades** and **tints** of brown, blue & orange, to convey a mood or tone in his brother and in the setting. (**Shade:** produced when black is added to a color) (**Tint:** produced when white is added to a color.)

Activity: Self Portrait Collage

Materials:

- ① 9x12 Various Colors (4-5) of Construction Paper
- ① Pencils
- ① 9x12 Multi-Cultural Construction Paper
- ① Construction paper scraps (for blue/green eye color, clothes, accessories, etc.)
- ① Scissors
- ① White Glue or Glue Sticks

Process: Students will create a gestural portrait of themselves. The portrait should include their head, neck and possibly the upper body (no more.)

- ① Before they start, ask students to think about the emotion or idea they want to express in their self portrait. How will they show it? What colors, shapes and textures will they use?
- ① Allow students to choose a sheet of construction paper (from 4-5 colors), that they will glue their portrait onto, also instruct them to sign the back
- ① Allow students to choose the multi-cultural paper that best matches their skin and possibly their hair color, and instruct them to tear/cut a large oval (for their head), using as much of the sheet as possible
- ① Place scraps of paper at a "work" station for students to use for eye, hair, lip and/or clothing/accessories
- ① Have them orient their paper (the one they signed) in a vertical position before gluing on head
- ① Encourage a lot of detail. Use scissors, tearing, crinkling and twisting to show different textures and shapes

If time allows, it may be fun to see if others can identify the idea or emotion the student/artist was trying to convey. 😊

Samples of Self-Portrait Collages

