

“Smashing Faces”



Objective: Focusing on value, students will create untraditional portraits based on the work of Ana Mendieta.

Materials

- Digital Cameras
- Printer
- Drawing Materials

Motivation

- Introduce the artist [Ana Mendieta](#). Her interesting life and her smashed face self-portraits will draw in any high school student!
- Let students play around with smashing their faces against the glass to see how distorted they can make them.

Step 1: Take Photos

Break the ice by smashing your own face against the glass and having your picture taken first. Then, have students try it. There's not really a right way to do this, just make sure their faces are pressed hard enough against the glass so that their features are distorted. You can even let students bring in guest models after school.

Step 2: Edit and Print Photos

Have students edit their photos, making decisions about cropping and composition. Guide students toward closely cropped images, as they work best for the drawings.

Step 3: Do Some Drawing!

Using a grid or working freehand, have students draw their edited photos. The drawing aspect works really well because of the way it recontextualizes facial features and keeps kids from trying to make things perfect. When you distort features, change proportions, and alter visual cues, there's not a lot of 'perfect' left; you can only draw what's there. These changes can take away the mental block that often holds kids back while they're working on portraits. They can work on softening shading, using and blending values, sharpening details, and whatever other drawing techniques you (or they) may see fit.

Tip: Teenagers are kinda gross. Find some Windex and paper towels and make sure they clean the window after each photo is taken.