MANY FACES:

Modern Portraits & Identities

The Art Institute of Chicago
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Preface

We live in a time of shifting identities. This teacher manual on modern portraits and identities is intended to emphasize that human identity is as much something constructed as the result of genetics. Our own sense of “who” we are and “what” we are, and how others perceive us, is determined not only by hair color and the texture and shape of our bodies, but also by how we express ourselves through gestures and movement, through what we wear, and how and where we live. A “true-to-life” portrait, then, can be more than a detailed likeness of facial features. Artists use several elements or devices—pose, clothing, objects, surroundings—to construct, interpret, or reveal a given individual or social identity. The ten works of art included in this teacher manual were chosen to convey a broad definition of modern portraiture, in which one or more portrait elements might predominate in a given work. Vincent van Gogh’s *The Bedroom*, for example, may be seen as an effective self-portrait. Irving Penn’s photograph of a model wearing a dress designed by Issey Miyake can serve as an extreme example of the saying “clothes make the man,” or woman in this case. The ten works also were selected to represent the broad range of portrait styles chosen by artists in the modern era, ranging from the extremely precise detail of a daguerreotype photograph in the nineteenth century to an abstract, Cubist portrait in the twentieth century.

We hope that this teacher’s manual will be meaningful to students who live in a time when people are often expected to assume multiple roles in their lives, when career changes are common, when issues of race and gender are often painfully prevalent, and when the media—not to mention peer groups and street gangs—dictate standards of dress and behavior. The manual can serve in teaching across the curricula of art, history, language arts, and social studies.

Robert W. Eskridge
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"A good painter is to paint two main things, namely man and the workings of man's mind. The first is easy, the second difficult."

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)
What is a portrait? Portraits are as familiar and basic to us as those we pore over in our family album. This impulse to record and identify ourselves is as old as history, dating back to prehistoric times. The handprints on the walls of limestone caves in southwestern France made 17,000 to 15,000 years ago could be called the first self-portraits. Classical Greeks portrayed the whole person, but as an idealized type...a beautiful female goddess, muscular athlete, heroic god. In contrast, early Roman portraiture revealed, with what has been called “a mapmaker’s fidelity,” the outer persona of the individual—his wrinkles, bulging eyes, bulbous nose.

Yet, as French artist Henri Matisse (1867-1954) proclaimed: “Exactitude is not truth.” As this manual explores, there are many different kinds of truth, just as there are many different types of portraits. Strictly defined, a portrait is the likeness of an individual presented through painting, sculpture, photography, drawing, or prints.

But what is a likeness? The ancient debate between capturing a likeness and rendering an ideal conveys the very essence of portraiture. How do we portray ourselves? How does the artist perceive another? Should the artist faithfully represent the individual, or transform the sitter, making one better (or worse) than one is?

Central to the construction of an identity is the dynamic between portrayer and portrayed. Is the portrait destined to be public or private? What are the artist’s intentions? What are the sitter’s needs? What does the person who commissioned the portrait seek? Traditionally, the artist subordinated himself to the glory of the sitter. But this was not always an easy task. One of art history’s most famous portraits was considered a failure upon completion. After an alleged three years of work, the prominent Florentine merchant who commissioned Italian Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) to portray his wife (in the painting we now know as Mona Lisa, 1503; Louvre, Paris) did not like how his wife looked...and refused to pay. On the other hand, English general and statesman Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) instructed his portraitist to portray him “warts and all”; otherwise, Cromwell declared: “I will never pay a farthing for it.”

For some, an accurate likeness should reveal not only one’s physical appearance, but more subtly, who one is—one’s character, history, one’s inner and outer selves. Think of a portrait, art historian Edmund Barry Gaither said, as “a kind of visual biography.” But how can this be done?

The tools for portrayal throughout much of history have remained more or less the same. For two-dimensional portraits, they include composition, color, perspective, focus, stroke of the brush or etcher’s needle, use of light and line. Background or setting play a role, as do costume, pose, and gesture. As Leonardo declared, the best way to reveal “the workings of man’s mind” is “through ges-
tures and the movement of the limbs." Whether the sitter is alone or interacting with others is also revealing.

This action, or non-action, implies a narrative, a story, which takes place in a moment in time. Thus, the moment in the sitter's life when the portrait was created is important, as is what was happening in the world at large. The English critic William Hazlitt (1778-1830) proclaimed that a portrait is the greatest history painting because it reflects the truth of historical action in the unique and specific characteristics of the sitter's face.

With the advent of the modern era, although the tools for portrayal have stayed largely the same, the definition of a portrait began to shift. Instead of being concerned with likeness to the sitter—the criteria for traditional portraiture—artists increasingly sought to express some kind of truth—about the sitter, about the artist's perceptions of the sitter. Artistic identity vied with the charge to depict the appearance and identity of the sitter—or, to rephrase Leonardo, the emphasis switched from expressing the "workings of the subject's mind" to exploring those of the artist.

As modern artists began to probe the complex relationship between sitter, artist, and audience, they also began to question the traditional categories of art. Age-old distinctions, such as that between genre painting versus portraiture, gradually disappeared, and new types of portraits emerged. Today, there are myriad kinds of portraits—of the sitter in his or her typical environment, at leisure, or caught off guard. Portraits can serve political purposes, can celebrate brilliance, can dissect a sitter, or expose the ravages of age. They can incite yearning, as in a fashion portrait, or tender joy at the sight of youth. Settings can range from formal studios to family gardens, the public arena of the circus, unknown peasants' huts. Subjects include intimate family members, the brilliant and famous, anonymous models, and of course, the artist her- or himself. There are also portraits that contain attributes of the individual, but the individual is not portrayed.

Through the ten works selected here, this teacher's manual explores the issues discussed above and various types of portraiture. Drawn from the collections of The Art Institute of Chicago, the works include paintings and photographs that encompass almost 150 years of portraiture, from the 1850s to the 1990s. The images range from a daguerreotype, described by writer/physician Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. (1909-1894) as "the mirror with a memory," through the fragmented image of a Cubist portrait to a type of self-portrait containing no figure at all. By examining these ten portraits, we can come to understand what a truly complicated task it is to construct an identity . . . to look at ourselves, to look at others.
American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) once declared that a daguerreotype was “the true Republican style of painting,” because “the artist stands aside and lets you paint yourself.” What a perfect vehicle, then, to capture Frederick Douglass, one of the most extraordinary self-made men of his era. [See transparency 1] From the depths of slavery, Douglass rose to spectacular heights as the most important African American in the nineteenth century—not only as an abolitionist and orator, but as an author (he wrote three autobiographies), newspaper publisher and editor, human rights activist, and diplomat.

Born on the eastern shore of Maryland to a black slave mother from whom he was separated in infancy and a white father whom he never knew, Douglass spent the first twenty years of his life being passed back and forth like the property he was, from owner to owner, from various Maryland plantations to the bustling seaport city of Baltimore. Throughout his life, he bore scars on his back from repeated floggings. Yet in 1838, at around age twenty, Douglass managed to escape slavery through the Underground Railroad. He settled in New England where his stirring speeches describing his life as a slave won him fame in the anti-slavery abolitionist movement. His freedom was guaranteed during an abolitionist-sponsored stay in England from 1845 to 1847 where enough money was raised to pay off his former master.

Douglass posed for this portrait shortly thereafter, between 1847 and 1852. On
one of his lecture circuits, Douglass probably passed through Akron, Ohio, where daguerreotypist Samuel Miller had set up one of the many portrait studios that had sprung open throughout America due to the popularity of this type of photograph. Recently invented in France in 1839 (one year after Douglass’s escape from slavery), daguerreotypes were unique images produced on small, silver-coated copper plates. Renowned for their clarity and detail, they were the perfect vehicle for portraiture, particularly for the middle classes. They were affordable compared to the expense of hiring a portrait painter, and were small, and therefore portable.

Daguerreotypes also provided, as Hazlitt remarked earlier, a particularly vivid record of history. According to Art Institute curator Colin Westerbeck, the late 1840s-early 1850s were perhaps the most important period of transition in Douglass’s life, with the exception of his escape from slavery.

It was during this period that Douglass began to shake loose from white sponsorship in order to speak out on his own behalf. Having his portrait made was an affirmation of his individual identity. In the Art Institute’s daguerreotype, Douglass presents himself as a compelling hero. He poses against a plain background, throwing his handsome features into relief. With his mass of hair carefully parted and combed down, he wears a gentleman’s apparel (his embroidered waistcoat reveals the fondness for elegant clothing that Douglass acquired in England). But the scowl and furrowed brow reflect Douglass’s recent radicalization—his newfound self-assertion on behalf, solely, of blacks.

Douglass once credited his “pathway from slavery to freedom” with learning to read and write, a task he did largely on his own, practicing with a book of famous speeches called The Columbian Orator. Not only did the volume of speeches help Douglass perfect the public speaking skills for which he would later become famous, but it also taught him such tips as how to stand, how to look, how to project an image while delivering a speech. Douglass no doubt carefully orchestrated his appearance here to create the image he wanted the public to see.

The portrait does indeed feature Douglass as a powerful physical presence, as if the struggle for his people were embodied in his dignified, wise, and humane face. He looks directly out at us sternly, almost challengingly. As early feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) pronounced upon her first glimpse of Douglass: “He stood there like an African prince, majestic in his wrath.” We see that “majestic wrath” here. But it is a wrath tinged with sadness, directed at the failures of the country he most loved. When we look at Douglass’s intense and forceful image, we might wonder, as Stanton did, “that any mortal man should have ever tried to subjugate a being with such talents, intensified with the love of liberty.” A member of the Boston elite concurred: “The very look and bearing of Douglass are irresistible logic against the oppression of his race.”
Transparency 2

Sir John Herschel

JULIA MARGARET CAMERON
English, 1815-1879
Sir John Herschel, 1867; printed 1870-71
Carbon print; 12 3/4 x 10 3/4 in.
Alfred Stieglitz Collection; 1949.878

Julia Margaret Cameron possessed an “indomitable vitality,” according to her great niece, the novelist and essayist Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), “a gift of ardent speech and picturesque behavior which has impressed itself upon the calm pages of Victorian biography.” The freespirited Cameron did not take up the fledgling medium of photography until middle age—her first camera was a gift from her daughter—but she went on to become one of the most celebrated portraitists of her era. She undertook her newfound hobby with the same passion with which she raised six children or entertained some of the period’s most eminent intellectuals at Freshwater Bay, on the Isle of Wight in the English Channel, where she lived with her husband, a high-ranking government official, from 1860 to 1875.

As Woolf recalled: “The coal house was turned into a dark room; the fowl-house was turned into a glass-house. Boatmen were turned into King Arthur; village girls into Queen Guenevere; Tennyson was wrapped in rugs.”

Cameron herself proclaimed: “My aspirations are to enoble photography and to secure for it the character and uses of High Art by combining the real & Ideal and sacrificing nothing of Truth by all possible devotion to Poetry and beauty.” Although Cameron composed the staged genre scenes to which Woolf referred, the photographer’s most notable works are idealized portraits of her famous friends.

In the early years of photography, posing for a portrait sometimes required lengthy sittings. Cameron used the difficult, cumbersome, and
time-consuming wet collodion process. Such English notables as poet laureate Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892), and naturalist Charles Darwin (1809-1882), along with American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), were required to sit under the converted chicken coop’s hot skylight and before Cameron’s uncompromising lens for anywhere from three to seven minutes. As Tennyson supposedly warned Longfellow, who was to pose next: “Longfellow, you will have to do whatever she tells you. I shall return soon and see what is left of you.”

For her part, Cameron declared: “When I have had these men before my camera my whole soul has endeavored to do its duty towards them in recording faithfully the greatness of the inner as well as the features of the outer man.” She claimed to feel this “most devoutly” when photographing astronomer and scientist Sir John Herschel (1792-1871) in 1867, whom she called “my teacher and high priest.” [See transparency 2] A friend for thirty-one years, Herschel was indeed indispensable to Cameron, for it was he who discovered the chemical solution that enabled her to fix the very photograph she was taking. He also coined the photographic terms “positive” (print of a photographic image) and “negative” (film or plate holding image to be printed). From a family of distinguished astronomers, he was a prominent astronomer as well; the revised edition of his survey of the heavens still serves as a standard reference guide.

Here, Herschel’s head seems to emerge from darkness, his face illuminated by a bright raking light. In contrast to the mirror-like clarity of the daguerreotype portrait of another nineteenth-century trailblazer, Frederick Douglass (see transparency 1), Cameron’s image reveals her use of a soft-focus effect. “My out-of-focus pictures were a fluke,” the impetuous, often haphazard, artist proclaimed. “That is to say, that when focusing and coming to something which, to my eye, was very beautiful, I stopped there instead of screwing on the lens to the more definite focus which all other photographers insist upon.” She even allegedly had a lens specially made to give poor definition. This created an effect similar to a loosely brushed painting which, to Cameron, gave her photograph “the character... of High Art.”

Herschel wears a costume—a dark hat and cloak—that enhances the photographic presentation of the sitter as an evocation of spirit. The sharp contrast of light and darkness, coupled with the blur of Herschel’s wise and wistful face convey the energy and movement of the great man’s mind. The light of his brilliance seems to emanate from within. As one of Tennyson’s friend’s wrote to Cameron: “Had we such portraits of [English playwright William] Shakespeare and of [English poet John] Milton, we should know more of their own selves. We should have had better commentaries on [Shakespeare’s play] Hamlet and on [Milton’s drama] Comus than we now possess.”
In this engaging 1879 picture, Pierre Auguste Renoir bridges the categories of genre painting and portraiture. Both a scene from modern everyday life, and a portrait of children at work, the painting depicts Francisca and Angelina Wartenberg, daughters of a travelling German family of acrobats who performed at the famed Circus Fernando in Paris in 1879. [See transparency 3] Recently opened, the Montmartre circus held evening performances that were favorite pastimes and subjects for Renoir, Edgar Degas (1834-1917), Claude Monet (1840-1926), Alfred Sisley (1839-1899) and other friends in their ongoing quest to depict contemporary life.

Of the artists dubbed Impressionists, Renoir was celebrated for his portraits, particularly of women and children. Here, the artist depicts the two sisters just as they have finished their act.

Although identically dressed, the girls reveal entirely different personalities as they make their transition from center stage celebrity to the obscurity of their life offstage. Holding her pose, the sister on the left turns to the crowd, acknowledging its applause, while the other sister turns away, almost dreamily. She faces us holding an armful of oranges, a rare treat thrown to performers as tribute by a pleased audience. Tissue still wraps an orange by her feet. We look at her, but her eyes—and thoughts—are elsewhere.

The painting epitomizes concerns of Impressionist artists in both subject matter and
style. To render this scene from modern life, Renoir uses bright colors applied with his characteristic brushstroke. As a reviewer proclaimed at the time: "There is no sense of arrangement whatsoever. [Renoir] has captured the two children's movements with unbelievable subtlety and immediacy. This is exactly how they walked, bowed, and smiled in the circus ring."

In actuality, the sisters posed in costume in Renoir's studio. The light in the circus, he insisted, "turns faces into grimaces." But because he had been charmed by their performance, he brought them to his studio so that he could paint them as if *en plein air*—in the bright daylight—that was so important to the Impressionists. Renoir took other liberties as well in order to present them as *types*—as young, innocent circus performers—rather than as individuals with inner lives. In reality fourteen and seventeen years old in 1879, these sisters appear around ten and twelve in the Art Institute's painting.

As Renoir once declared: "For me a picture ... should be something likeable, joyous, and pretty—yes pretty." From working class origins, Renoir originally trained as a porcelain painter before turning to fine art. His preferred worldview was an ideal one, a mythical reality. "There are enough ugly things in life for us not to add to them," he insisted. In the Art Institute portrait, he has all but excluded the circus's unsavory elements. He envelops the sisters in a virtual halo of pinks, oranges, yellows, and whites, while he pushes to the edges of the composition the partially seen, darkly clothed (mainly male) spectators who composed the less wholesome nocturnal *demi-monde* of the nineteenth-century circus in which these two sisters were growing up. Calm, unsullied, these girls seem to exist in a splendid, trouble-free zone far removed from the shady din of the circus.

This vision of the pure, innocent world of childhood did not appeal just to Renoir. The famed Chicago collector Mrs. Potter Palmer purchased *Acrobats at the Cirque Fernando* in 1892, and for the thirty years prior to her death, was so enamored of Renoir's portrayal of these two circus girls that she kept the picture with her at all times, even during her travels abroad.

The actual lives of Francisca and Angelina Wartenberg, however, were not as glamorous. Unlike, for example, Frederick Douglass, who became one of the most photographed men of the nineteenth century (see transparency 1), these girls lived the remainder of their lives in relative obscurity. They continued to perform with their family, moving to San Francisco as of 1889. By 1893, Francisca, the older sister who continued to play to the audience in Renoir's portrayal, was performing on her own and married. Of the younger, more pensive Angelina, all that is known is that she was still alive, ostensibly in San Francisco, as of the early 1940s.
Like her colleague Pierre Auguste Renoir (see transparency 3), Mary Cassatt blurs the distinction between portraiture and genre painting in this intimate outdoor scene. [See transparency 4] Less an exploration of the sitter’s character or state of mind, Woman Reading in a Garden is as its title states—a depiction of a person in her everyday surroundings, specifically a new type of woman as the modern era dawned.

This naturalistic expression of contemporary life was the goal of the Impressionists. Those such as Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), Monet, and Sisley who painted landscape wanted to capture the quickly changing world around them, to seize the fleeting moods of nature, its weather and light. Those depicting the figure such as Edouard Manet, Gustave Caillebotte (1848-1894), and Berthe Morisot (1841-1895) presented individuals and types in the midst of their daily activities and in the surroundings of contemporary Paris. At the invitation of her friend and mentor Edgar Degas, Cassatt joined the Impressionists’ endeavor in 1878, painting this portrait the following year. She was the only American artist—and one of only three women (Berthe Morisot and Marie Bracquemond were the other two)—to exhibit regularly with the avant-garde French group.

Consistent with the Impressionists’ intent to capture the moment, we seem to have just happened upon this woman in a garden setting as she reads a newspaper. Continuing to concentrate on
her paper, she is oblivious to the viewer, so unposed that her finger seems ready to flip to the next page. Her casual, off-center positioning reinforces this sense of immediacy, as does Cassatt's loose handling of the paint, particularly in the background. Using bright colors, Cassatt conveys the flickering qualities of light observed en plein air.

Cassatt has also placed the sitter very close to the viewer, suggesting an intimacy appropriate for this outdoor domestic scene. As a woman, Cassatt did not have access to the public spaces of the male Impressionists—to their circuses, bars, racetracks, or cafés. During these early years with the Impressionists, she therefore painted the world she knew best—women at the theater, on balconies, in domestic interiors, or in gardens like this. With its lawn furniture and cultivated flowers, it is a circumscribed environment in which nature has been tamed. The enclosed garden symbolizes the gender-based limits of the sitter's—and artist's—world.

Cassatt's subject expresses the Impressionists' quest for modernity through apparel and occupation as well. With the confidence of someone entirely at ease, the woman wears a bright blossom as decorative accent over her delicately patterned dress. This fashionable attire reflects the comfortable status of the new middle classes. As one of its members, she also has the leisure to relax in the garden and the interest to peruse the daily news. During the period that Cassatt painted this pleasing and harmonious portrait, the number of Parisian newspapers had jumped from six in the 1860s to dozens, and this woman was obviously interested in keeping abreast of current events. Thus, although we do not know her identity—who she is, what she feels—this interest in the world around her is entirely consistent with the Impressionists' goal of presenting contemporary sitters in modern settings engaged in activities of everyday life.
VINCENT VAN GOGH
Dutch, 1853-1890
The Bedroom, 1888
Oil on canvas: 29 x 36 ¾ in.
(73.6 x 92.3 cm)
Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection:
1926.417

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, artists increasingly explored how an artwork’s formal qualities, such as brushwork, color, and line, could display the painter’s subjective response to the subject. In traditional portraiture, the setting and attributes often offered clues to the sitter’s identity. With Vincent van Gogh’s The Bedroom, the artist’s use of line, brushstroke, color and setting serve as surrogates for the sitter, telling us as much about van Gogh as if the artist had painted a conventional self-portrait. [See transparency 5]

This bedroom scene was part of a decorating scheme for van Gogh’s new house in Arles, where he had moved from Paris in 1888. The Dutch artist dubbed his new home “The Studio of the South,” with the hope that friends and artists would join him there in southern France. “I enormously enjoyed doing this interior of nothing at all,” he wrote to his colleague Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) upon the painting’s completion. Although there are no people in the room, it is hardly empty.

Instead van Gogh has placed in the space that he considered one of the most important rooms in the house, and certainly its most intimate, those few treasured objects in his possession. Reflecting his love of art are the landscape and portraits of friends hanging on the walls. Beneath them are Japanese prints, a source of great inspiration. The wooden double bed, he felt, conveyed “a feeling of solidarity, of permanence, of tranquility.” A few simple pieces of clothing hang behind the bed suggesting his poverty. The still life on the table holds his wash basin and pitcher, with mirror and towel on the wall.

It is also a room that features the vibrant color so important to van Gogh. “Color is to do everything,” he wrote to his brother, Theo (1857-1891), an art dealer in Paris. “The walls are pale violet. . . . The wood of the bed and chairs is the yellow of fresh butter, the sheets and pillows very light greenish citron. The coverlet scarlet. The window green.”

In fact, the entire space con-
veys an overwhelming sense of the artist’s presence, communicated in large part through the artist’s paint application—in his words, “brushed on roughly, with a thick impasto.” Each object seems palpable, as solid as sculpture, though modeled in paint. His line is adamant and broad. The dramatic perspective of the floor, bed, and walls creates immediacy, putting the viewer in the room. The floor rushes up; the bed looms; pictures tilt off the wall.

“Looking at the picture ought to rest the brain, or rather the imagination,” declared van Gogh, and the work does reveal the artist’s attempts to depict thought and feeling through pictorial elements. The Bedroom is a self-portrait without literally including the artist. Through its setting, rendered with his uniquely expressive technique, we sense van Gogh’s outer persona and inner self as well.

Van Gogh’s artists’ colony never materialized, with the exception of a tumultuous two-month visit by Gauguin. Nonetheless, during van Gogh’s fifteen-month stay in Arles (from February 1888 to May 1889), he created a prodigious body of work—some two hundred landscapes, still lifes, portraits, and interiors, including the bedroom scene. He was so fond of this image that he painted several versions. He did the first, which is now in the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh, Amsterdam, in October 1888, just days before Gauguin’s visit. In May 1889, after suffering a series of physical and emotional breakdowns, van Gogh voluntarily checked himself into an asylum at nearby Saint-Rémy, where he remained for a year.

“When I saw my canvases again after my illnesses,” he wrote Theo, “the one that seemed the best to me was the bedroom.” Wanting to recreate one of the happiest periods of his life, his hopeful first months in Arles, van Gogh painted the Art Institute’s version of this bedroom scene in September 1889. At the same time, he also made a smaller copy, now in the Musée d’Orsay, Paris, for his mother and sister. In a sense, he was sending them a portrait of his happier self. He died less than a year later, in July 1890.
The remarkable artistic career of Pablo Picasso spanned more than seven decades and influenced nearly every major trend in the first half of the twentieth century. When he painted this portrait in 1910, the Spaniard had just developed with his colleague Georges Braque (1882-1963) a manner of painting dubbed Cubism, which involved a radical restructuring of the way a work of art is constructed and perceived. [See transparency 6] The culmination of a series of Cubist portraits, the Art Institute's picture depicts Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (1884-1979), Picasso's friend and dealer who championed Cubist artists in his Parisian art gallery. The German-born Kahnweiler was also a publisher and writer, and his texts provided a theoretical framework for the movement. Picasso's relationship with Kahnweiler lasted—with its ups-and-downs—sixty-six years, until Picasso's death in 1973.

Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, 1910, took twenty to thirty sittings to complete, plus a photographic session. Nevertheless, to find the impresario of Cubism within the context of Picasso's remarkable new style is indeed a challenge. As New York Times art critic Michael Kimmelman recently observed, viewers at Cubist exhibitions, even today, “wear the expression of first-time Gorgonzola eaters, a pinched look that betrays bafflement at the taste of some people for such unpalatable stuff.” At first glance, all we see are a network of flickering, semitransparent planes of brown, gray, black, and white that seem to dissolve into space or merge with each other. Picasso himself confessed that the portrait looked “as though it were about to go up in smoke.” Picasso then explained: "So I added the attributes... of certain details that [the viewer]
understands immediately in order to . . . buoy him up for the difficult part.”

Toward the top of the painting, off to the right, is a shock of Kahnweiler’s slicked down, wavy hair. Beneath is his fragmented face, with eyes, nose, and crescent-shaped mouth. Clothing and body language signal Kahnweiler’s fastidious nature, which made him the butt of frequent jokes by Picasso and his friends. He wears a dark suit, accessorized in the middle of the picture with the double loop of a watch chain—“that badge of ironclad respectability,” according to Picasso’s biographer John Richardson. At the bottom of the picture, in the center, Kahnweiler clasps his gloved hands.

Further identifying attributes emerge in the setting. In the portrait’s upper lefthand corner is an oval form with a topknot representing an African mask from Gabon. Not only does the representation of an artwork refer to Kahnweiler’s profession and his own private collection, but the geometric simplification of African art was a vital influence on the new visual vocabulary of Cubism. Propped on a table below is another work of art, a small landscape. On the right side of the portrait, near Kahnweiler’s neck, is a shape resembling a businessman’s briefcase, but may be a lamp shining on the right side of the dealer’s face.

With Cubist portraits like Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, 1910, Picasso uses age-old devices—light, shadow, and line—to make a convincing illusion of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface, but they are not coordinated with one another. The line does not define objects, nor do the light and shadow illuminate them, giving them depth. Instead, it almost seems as if Picasso had taken apart all the elements of a painting and then put them back together arbitrarily. “I paint forms as I think them, not as I see them,” Picasso once said. This early phase from 1908 to 1911 of analyzing an object into a framework of fragmentary signs and marks is called Analytical Cubism.

Picasso uses muted colors to depict Kahnweiler, once described as “the dean of European art dealers, the first impresario of Cubism, and Picasso’s personal ambassador to the world.” This dark palette reflects Picasso’s and the other Cubists’ reaction against the Impressionists’ pleasing hues and preoccupation with the effects of light, which the younger artists felt distracted the viewer.

Although Picasso inserts signs to identify his art dealer, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler resembles more the artist’s portraits of other people done during this period, even other still lifes, than it resembles the art dealer himself. As art historian and curator William Rubin remarked about Picasso’s portrait in general, which constitutes approximately one fifth of the artist’s total body of work: it is a portrait transformed “from a purportedly objective document into a frankly subjective one.” Likeness has been largely jettisoned in favor of Picasso’s personal artistic quest. Unlike Julia Margaret Cameron’s reverential portrait of her muse, Sir John Herschel (see transparency 2), Kahnweiler has been consumed by Picasso’s voracious talent, subsumed in his innovative style, and finally reconstituted according to the artist’s groundbreaking vision. Art mirrors life—and vice versa. Upon Kahnweiler’s death in 1979, an obituary declared: “With Kahnweiler, it is Picasso we have lost once more.”
“The history of the image of blacks in American art is a troubled history,” art historian and curator Edmund Barry Gaither stated in 1997. Decades before, Chicago artist Archibald J. Motley, Jr. had said something even more specific: “For years many artists have depicted the Negro as the ignorant southern ‘darky,’ . . . gulping a large piece of watermelon . . . or [as] a cotton picker or a chicken thief.” Motley continued: “This material is obsolete. . . . Progress has changed all of this. In my paintings I have tried to paint the Negro as I have seen him and as I feel him, in myself, without adding or detracting, just being frankly honest.”

Part of the Great Migration, Motley’s family moved from New Orleans to Chicago when the artist was two. This massive resettlement from the rural South to the industrial North led to the creative flourishing during the 1920s known as the Harlem Renaissance, also called the New Negro Movement. Centered in the New York City neighborhood of Harlem, this celebration of black culture and heritage spread to other cities as well, including Chicago, just as Motley was embarking upon his artistic career. As one of the leaders of this vibrant artistic period, Alain Locke (1886-1954), proclaimed: “Nothing is more galvanizing to a people than a sense of their cultural past.” Motley’s Self-Portrait, 1920, reflects this cultural pride and flourishing. [See transparency 7]
Portraiture was extremely important in Motley's early career. His first works were a group of dignified, sensitive portraits done just after his graduation from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago in 1918. In addition to this example, other works included a series of—almost a scientific inquiry into—women of mixed racial identity. As a young and struggling artist, he also turned to members of his family, who would pose for free. Motley did not utilize portraiture as a means to earn money, as Renoir and many other artists sometimes did. Rather, Motley used these various types of portraits—of himself, of his family, of anonymous models—as a search for racial identity, and as a vehicle to expose Americans to nonstereotypic views of blacks.

Motley presents himself here as a painter of enormous dignity, more the artist as a gentleman than a craftsman. His gaze is direct and unflinching, almost confrontational. The background is an undetermined space. He wears an elegant dark suit and a tie studded with a horseshoe-shaped diamond stick pin.

His hair is carefully parted, his mustache waxed and pointed. The tools of the artist's trade are in the foreground of the painting, tilted forward, almost like an offering. Motley's right hand is poised, as if to paint the next stroke. In contrast to the finished technique of the artist's head and upper body, the palette he holds contains thickly applied daubs of paint, resembling Motley's actual palette.

The somber colors of the background and figure contrast with the vivid colors of the artist's palette, the colors he would use in his celebrated icons of black Jazz Age culture, which he would begin to paint the following year, 1921. These depictions of black life in the city would bring Motley fame in a career that spanned almost fifty years. Like the forceful daguerreotype of Frederick Douglass as he was about to establish himself (see transparency 1), this early portrait may be intended to convince the world—and perhaps Motley himself—of his role in life, as an artist and a man.
In 1929, Chicago artist Ivan Albright placed an advertisement for a model answered by Ida Rogers, not yet twenty years old. The artist painted the young wife and mother—"a very decent, nice girl," claimed Albright—throughout the next two years, metamorphosing her on canvas into a stereotype of the piteous older woman we see in this early masterpiece of 1929-1930. [See transparency 8] Her puckered, drooping flesh squeezed into tawdry clothing sizes too small, the doleful woman sits alone at her dressing table, surrounded by a collection of objects as wasted and worn as she is. She gazes at a mirror held at such an angle that it could reflect either her sorrowful image or the empty void behind her. As if the powder puff could ward off the ravages of time, she dabs at her gray, lumpen flesh in vain. To render this haunting portrait of aging and decay, Albright used lurid, dark colors, illuminated by a harsh, raking light that accentuates each blemish, each stray hair.

The son of a painter, Albright turned to painting after serving in the medical corps during World War I (1914-1918) where he made medical drawings which certainly contributed to the extremely detailed style of his paintings. His creative process was painstaking. Rogers posed in Albright’s light-controlled studio in which the artist had created an elaborate dressing room stage set, complete with such decrepit props as a frayed rug, crocheted doily, smoldering cigarette stub, even a comb with wisps of hair between the teeth. He often made diagrammatic plans for color and on occasion used a brush with only
three hairs to depict obsessively precise details. A painting could take years to complete. As Rogers recalled: “[Albright] had a little platform, a dais, and he put me on it and walked around... He had little whatnots he put on the table... He'd spend days and days on a little bit... He was very slow.”

Like Picasso’s portrayal of Kahnweiler (see transparency 6), Albright has transformed his subject according to his personal artistic vision. He was interested in manipulating the appearance of his sitter and setting. Thus the **perspective** of the rug and dresser tilt perilously to the right in the picture, while the checkered handkerchief seems to hover in midair. But whereas Picasso’s investigation involved structure and space, Albright’s simultaneous presentation of different vantage points not only increases the viewer’s discomfort, it also underscores Albright’s central theme and lifelong fascination: the precariousness of life and death and decay’s inevitability. In *Ida*, Albright has portrayed a modern-day *vanitas* figure surrounded by objects symbolizing this very impermanence—a mirror, flowers, money, an extinguished match. “The tomorrow of death is what appeals to me,” declared Albright in one of his many notebooks. “It is greater than life—stronger than any human ties.”

As for the real Ida Rogers, the painting reveals little. In front of the left chair leg is a peanut shell. Rogers munched peanuts during sittings, perhaps to relieve the tedium, a habit that infuriated the artist. Behind the chair is a burnt scrap of paper. Although scrolls are often found in traditional *vanitas* paintings, this signed sheet may refer to a poem the single artist (he did not marry until 1946) had written during the intense painting sessions. “Tis Ida the holy maiden I dream of/ Too perfect her face for the eyes of man,” it began, and concluded with the lines: “I dare not look at her for fear I portray/ The emotion within me—will lead me astray.” Albright gave Rogers the poem. “I looked at it and started to giggle,” Rogers later said, “and he took it and tore it up.”

Portraits depict one moment in a sitter’s existence, crystallizing that moment for perpetuity. Albright continued to exam-
“Land and liberty!” proclaimed Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata (c. 1879-1919), a cry echoed by his army of rebel followers in their fight against the country’s wealthy landowners and dictatorial government during the Mexican Revolution of 1911 to 1920. Illiterate and in charge of illiterate men, the charismatic leader sought to seize and disburse the landowners’ enormous holdings to Mexico’s peasant class. In his crusade, Zapata became a legend throughout his native land, holding the capital of Mexico City three times between 1914 and 1915. Tales and ballads celebrated him, even before he was ambushed and assassinated by an emissary of the federal government in 1919.

That same year, 1919, José Clemente Orozco returned from his first trip to the United States, and within three years, the largely self-taught artist embarked upon his first major mural at Mexico City’s National Preparatory College. Among those joining him were fellow artists Diego Rivera (1886-1957) and David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974), who with Orozco, became the leaders of the new Mexican Mural Movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Calling for a new nationalist art that was “of the people and for the people,” the movement used the public medium of murals to portray the history and long struggle of working-class
Mexicans. One of the movement's most revered icons was the recently killed Zapata.

In this dramatic political portrait of 1930, Orozco places the celebrated liberator in the open doorway of a peasant's hut, silhouetting his specter-like figure against the pale sky. [See transparency 9] Rebel soldiers stand by his side and below him, with bullet-filled leather bandoliers flung across their shoulders. Crouching at the bottom of the picture are the oppressed and terrified peasants for whom Zapata fought. Framing the leader are sharp intersecting diagonals formed by the rebels' pointed sombreros and the peasants' outstretched arms.

Orozco painted the posthumous portrait during a self-imposed exile from Mexico, where his frescoes depicting revolution and upheaval had been heavily attacked by conservative critics. In 1927, he had moved to the United States, where he remained through 1934. Although more than a decade had passed since Zapata's death, times were still unsettled in Mexico, and Orozco's portrait reflects this unrest. Menacing details abound: bullets, sharp angles, agitated gestures, and especially the dagger aimed at Zapata's eye—a forceful intimation of his impending violent death. The somber palette reinforces the danger of the revolutionary conflict; its earth tones also evoke the peasants' lost land.

Despite the drama before him, Zapata seems curiously detached and unmoved. For his portrayal, Orozco drew on innumerable prints produced during the revolution, using the attributes traditionally ascribed to Zapata—a drooping mustache and large sombrero, or hat—to help the viewer identify the revolutionary leader. Yet Orozco's depiction almost defies heroic portrayal. He relegates the political icon, mute and somber, to the rear of the composition where we can barely discern his facial features. Instead, with their leader literally behind them, the artist gives prominence to the peasants in the foreground, for whom Zapata dedicated his life.

Like Frederick Douglass (see transparency 1), Zapata was a hero for his people. But whereas the image of Douglass represents the spe-
“Nature, of course, ordains that human beings be completed by clothing, not left bare in their own insufficient skins,” declared art historian Anne Hollander. Culture has played an even larger hand, producing a thriving fashion industry. Fashion is not about such purely practical purposes as keeping warm. Fashion is optional, the delicious icing on the cake. It is about creating an identity, a persona, or, according to Hollander, looking “right—at any given place or time.” A fashion portrait, then, does not tell us who we are; it shows us who we want to be.

Soft-spoken, polite, and unpretentious, Irving Penn seemed an unlikely candidate to become one of the foremost photographers in the high-gloss world of fashion when he first began his career at Vogue magazine in 1943. His own working outfit consisted of sneakers and jeans. But his steely perfectionism led to photographs of unerring formal elegance, characterized by a beauty of line and often radically minimal settings. In a career that has spanned more than fifty years, his photographs have graced over one hundred covers for Vogue alone. In addition, he has photographed some of the twentieth-century’s leading celebrities—writers, dancers, artists, socialites, actresses. His photographs of still lifes and people from different cultures have also won acclaim.

Penn’s fashion images had long been a source of inspiration to Issey Miyake, whose avant-garde designs had, as critic Mark Holborn declared, “challenged all concepts of catwalk couture.” But when
Penn began to photograph the Japanese-born designer’s collections in the 1980s. Miyake declared that the photographer provided even greater influence: Penn “interprets the clothes, gives them new breadth, and presents them to me from a new vantage point, one that I may not have been aware of, but had been subconsciously trying to capture.” Thus began a mutually fruitful collaboration that has produced more than two hundred fashion photographs and some of Miyake’s most inventive designs.

In particular, Miyake credits Penn with the breakthrough garment-pleated clothing that he first began to make in 1989, which evolved into one of his futuristic designs of 1994 shown here. [See transparency 10] If portraiture is the depiction of an individual, then we have multiple identities captured here. The first is Penn who, using the platinum palladium process with its richness and depth of tone, creates an image that conveys the still, sculptural elegance for which the photographer is celebrated. Penn arranges the poses of his subjects as carefully and detachedly as he positions the objects in his distinguished still lifes. Here, the model’s stylized shiva-like stance recalls Asian deity statuary, perhaps in keeping with the ancient tradition of pleating fabric. But the striking, provocative shot is anything but traditional. With his characteristically severe composition, Penn photographs the model against a stark, plain background that accentuates the photograph’s striking silhouette.

This blank setting also throws into relief the wiry translucence of the lively garment created by Miyake—whose artwork is the subject of this multi-layered image. Then there is the model herself—a prop for a portrait of Miyake’s lively and innovative designs. Covered from the top of her head to the tip of her toes, the outfit’s airy accordion-like pleats sheath the model’s body. As photographed by Penn, the image highlights certain features—eyes, nose, mouth, the tips of her breasts—while hiding others. If portraiture’s underlying goal is to reveal the sitter, then this contemporary portrait exposes practically nothing of the subject while, paradoxically, it bares a great deal.

What the fashion portrait truly reveals, however, is the identity of Penn in his representation of the model, as well as Miyake’s identity in the artwork that the model is presenting. As for the model herself, we see her identity completely cloaked by the clothes she wears. Although both Albright’s Ida and this portrait explore vanity, (see transparency 8), Penn’s model has been transformed into a glamorous idealization. Blank and anonymous, she is all outer persona, the type of sleek, exotic creature we might like to be—which is, of course, fashion portraiture’s ultimate objective. As Shakespeare proclaimed in Hamlet: “For the apparel oft proclaim the man.”
Elements to consider when viewing any portrait

Consider the **point of view** from which the artist has depicted the sitter. Does the sitter look directly at the viewer. In other words, is the sitter aware of the spectator? Or does the sitter look to one side, or gaze at something else in the picture? Is the sitter seen from above or below? How do these choices affect our understanding of the person?

How would you characterize the individual’s **facial expression**? Does the artist show the person frozen in time or in the midst of a fleeting emotion or thought?

Describe the sitter’s **pose** and **gestures**. What attitudes do they project to the viewer? Is the sitter engaged in a revealing activity or consciously posing for the portrait?

If the sitter is consciously posing, do you think the pose was determined by the person or by the artist?

Consider the **clothing** worn by the sitter. Is it formal or casual? What does it reveal about the person’s social class, era, and self-image? Are **attributes** or accessories included? If so, toward what end?

What is the **setting**? Does it reveal anything about the sitter?

Does the portrait feature an equal **balance between the figure and the setting**? Is one element more prominent? If so, what might the artist be saying about the subject? Is the sitter’s inner state stressed over his or her social position in the world?

If the portrait depicts more than one person, examine the **relationship between the figures**. Are they linked together by pose, gesture, clothing, or setting? Are they presented as separate or divided? How does the artist convey this relationship and how does it affect our understanding of the portrait?
Questions for Discussion

1. A daguerreotype is a type of photograph, yet Ralph Waldo Emerson said that daguerreotypes allowed the sitter to "paint" him—or herself. What does that mean? How does Douglass "paint himself"? What visual clues in the daguerreotype reveal Douglass's temperament?

Classroom Activities

Language Arts

1. Ask students to consider how they would convey their personality in a photographic portrait; what objects would they hold? What would they wear? If cameras are available, have students photograph one another keeping these ideas in mind.

Social Studies

1. Frederick Douglass was a captivating speaker, delivering impassioned speeches about the injustices of slavery and racism to audiences around the country. Share some of his speeches with your students and discuss why they are effective. Have students pick an issue today about which they are impassioned to serve as the subject of a speech that each can write and present to the class.

2. Frederick Douglass was not alone in his fight against slavery. Ask students to research and make a list of other abolitionists who lived at the same time as Frederick Douglass and document their individual contributions to the abolition of slavery.

Science

1. Research and compare the technical process of a daguerreotype photograph like this one to the wet collodion process of Julia Margaret Cameron's *Sir John Herschel*. What kinds of chemicals were used? How were the chemicals applied and on what kinds of materials? What were some of the difficulties involved in each technique?

Alternative: If you have access to a darkroom or can construct a temporary one, have students experiment with different photography techniques. Which ones are the most difficult to use? Which ones require the most patience and skill?
Questions for Discussion

1. Sir John Herschel and Julia Margaret Cameron were close friends for many years. She greatly admired his scientific accomplishments as an astronomer and chemist. Sir John in turn must have enjoyed Cameron’s company a great deal by agreeing to pose for her. Ask students to imagine a conversation between these two people during one of their portrait sessions and create a short dialogue or one-act play. What kinds of things might an amateur photographer and mother of twelve discuss with a famous scientist?

Classroom Activities

Language Arts

1. Cameron’s goal was to capture “the greatness of the inner as well as the features of the outer man.” Have students look closely at this photograph. Ask the classroom to come up with a character profile of the “inner” and “outer” qualities of Sir John based on what they see in this portrait.

2. Cameron photographed many of her male sitters, like Sir John Herschel, as themselves but added a costume or prop to enhance the mood. She liked to photograph her female models as goddesses, saints, or heroines of classic literature. (Examples of this can be found in Sylvia Wolf’s book for children, Focus: Five Women Photographers, see bibliography). Students can try their hand at taking “theatrical portraits” by using a camera from home or a disposable camera. Ask students to pick a favorite character in a book they are reading for class and come up with ideas for costumes and a setting for the portrait. Students can experience first-hand the role of the model and the artist in portraiture.

Science

1. In the early years of photography, taking pictures and developing film was an extremely complicated and awkward process. Cameras were big and heavy, the chemicals used to develop the film were messy, dangerous, and had a strong overpowering odor. Compare the process of taking pictures today to that of Julia Margaret Cameron’s time. How has the equipment changed? Ask students to research the history of photography and the evolution of cameras.

Alternative: Ask students to research the different processes of film development and the types of chemicals used. How do these materials and techniques compare to today?
Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think Renoir focused more on the girls’ appearance than on their emotions?

Classroom Activities

Language Arts

1. Circus troupes often travel extensively. Have students chart a circus’s fictional itinerary to six European cities and write postcards to friends describing the sights they would have seen and things they would have done in each locale.

2. Have each student compose a short story using this painting as a starting point or a finishing point. Have students share their stories with the entire class.

Social Studies

1. Although this painting presents a charming image of youth, it is also an image of two girls at work. Have students research the use of children in the work force from the 19th century to the present. How have the circumstances under which children work changed during this period?

2. Have students discuss how clothing helps us identify ourselves and others. Have students consider how clothing indicates social affiliation, profession, or religion. Are there any kinds of clothing or ornamentation in our culture that derive from other cultures? Is there anything we identify as “American” that is worn in other places? Have students look through newspapers or magazines and discuss what we know about people from looking at their clothing.

3. As a class, discuss other kinds of performances seen in a circus. Have students work in small groups and create a performance. Students can make their own props (hats, makeup, etc.). Use items like balls, hula hoops, bean bags, stuffed animals, etc. Invite another class to the circus performance. Have students sell tickets and make snacks to sell.

Alternate: Have students research the origins of the circus. At what point did this become a popular entertainment?
Questions for Discussion

1. Because of the social mores of the day, women artists in 19th-century France were limited as to the public places they could visit. How is the public realm different from the private confines of home in terms of how an individual dresses and behaves?

2. Cassatt presents her sitter as a modern woman. What elements contribute to the sense that someone is "modern" or of the moment?

Classroom Activities

Language Arts

1. Cassatt depicted her sitters engaged in a variety of solitary occupations, such as reading newspapers or writing letters. She herself wrote numerous letters to her relatives back in the United States. Ask students to write a letter to a fictional cousin in another country. What news of their life in America would they include in their letter?

Alternate: Have students research life in late nineteenth-century Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, home of many of Cassatt’s relatives. Then have them create fictional letters to the artist, asking Cassatt about her life and telling her about theirs.

Social Studies

1. Cassatt’s painting features a woman reading a newspaper, an increasingly popular form of communication in the 19th century. Have students research the history of newspapers in their city or community. When were they established? If possible, have students tour the local newspaper offices to learn how papers are produced. Students could be divided into groups and interview editors, writers, photographers, designers, and production staff. Then have the different groups report their findings to the entire class.

2. Have students read excerpts from the letters of Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot, to learn more about the lives of women artists in the 19th century. Then have them read letters of 20th-century artists like Georgia O’Keeffe or the diary of Frida Kahlo. Conduct a class discussion about changes in society that affected the lives of these artists.

Alternate: Have students research the life of a typical woman in 19th-century Paris from childhood to death. Students may either work in groups or individually, reporting to the class on such topics as schooling, marriage, home, hobbies, etc.
Questions for Discussion

1. In a letter to his brother Theo, van Gogh stated that he wished to convey "absolute restfulness" in this painting by means of color. Do you think that this is a restful scene? Why or why not?

2. Why do we show off our bedrooms to friends visiting our houses? What do our bedrooms reveal about us, our interests, our values?

Classroom Activities

Language Arts

1. Since this work is a kind of self-portrait, ask students to compose a description of their room that tells others something about who they are and where their interests lie.

2. Projecting the transparency against a screen or classroom wall, use van Gogh's The Bedroom as the stage set for a play written and performed by the students.

Social Studies

1. Van Gogh left Paris for the south of France to escape the increasing industrialization of northern France. Have students research how industrialization changed European culture and society in the 19th century.

Alternate: In his letters to his brother in Paris, van Gogh remarks on the strong winds of southern France. Have students research the climate and culture of this region. Why might this locale have appealed to van Gogh?
Questions for Discussion

1. Picasso's Cubist portrait of Kahnweiler is radically different from Mary Cassatt's portrait of a woman reading (transparency 4). Have students compare the two paintings. How does each artist depict human features and use color and line? Which painting gives us a clearer understanding of the personality of the model? The artist? Discuss how an artist's own personality might come through his or her portrait of someone else.

Classroom Activities

Language Arts

1. At first glance this painting does not look like a person at all, but upon closer examination we see that Picasso included recognizable details. The whole image seems like a distortion of reality, but clues are scattered throughout the painting. Have students examine the painting and make a list of all the recognizable objects and human features they can find. What do these details tell us about the man sitting for the portrait? Ask students to write a character sketch of the man in the painting based on the clues Picasso gives the viewer.

Math and Art

1. Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler had to sit twenty to thirty times before Picasso finished this portrait. The complex process of creating this painting required a base of painted angular geometric shapes and overlapping planes as the foundation, adding recognizable features and objects last. Have students create their own Cubist portrait.

* Ask them to list all of the angular shapes they see in this painting. Discuss how Picasso illustrates different body parts with these shapes.

* Have them draw one of their classmates using the list of geometric shapes as a guide. Students should piece together these shapes to form a structure of their model. (They can divide their classmate's features any way they want. A cheek or chin can be several shapes. Students might also want to walk around the "sitter" for their portrait and see how face shapes appear from different points of view.)

* Next, have students add a few of the most significant physical features of their classmate (curly hair, freckles, a piece of jewelry, etc.)

* Hang the finished portraits in the classroom and see if students can guess who is the model for each one.

Social Science

1. Cubism is arguably recognized as one of the greatest revolutions in painting. Why might that be so? What about "revolutions" in music? Have students discuss and create a time line of "revolutions" in music history. Who pioneered these changes? What historic, political, or technological events might have influenced these "revolutions"?
Questions for Discussion

1. How would you describe Motley’s character? Look at his gaze, posture, gestures, grooming, and clothing. Does the artist see himself as important or ordinary? What are the clues?

2. Define the mood of this portrait. What effect does the background have? What does Motley put between the viewer and himself? What value does he place on being an artist?

Classroom Activities

Science

1. Motley painted this self portrait while looking at himself in a mirror. Have the students look for clues that demonstrate his portrait is a mirror image. For example, what side is the button on his suit coat? Does he paint his hand while using his hand to paint? Have students look at Motley’s right hand and discuss. Have students pose in front of a mirror and sketch themselves. What happens when they draw from a reflection?

Language Arts

1. Have students change the mood of the painting by finding pastels or paints that match the colors on his palette. Using these colors, have students alter Motley’s portrait. For instance, change the background by including abstract patterns, indoor or outdoor locations, specific rooms, or redesigning his clothes. Hang the students’ works around the room and discuss what affects our impressions of a person’s character.

Alternative: Using the slide of Motley’s painting Nightlife from the Art Institute’s African American manual (see bibliography), have students compare and contrast the symbolism of colors in these two images by Motley. This activity can also be done in the galleries at The Art Institute of Chicago.

2. Motley uses the palette as a symbol of being an artist. He chose subdued browns, tans, and blacks, to convey dignity. Have students arrange a still life using their own personal symbols, such as favorite possessions, photos, awards, etc. Then have students paint or take their own picture surrounded by the objects. Keep in mind the symbolic use of color when choosing objects and creating a background.

Social Science

1. Why was it important to Motley to create portraits of African Americans in the early part of the 20th century? What negative stereotypes does this portrait challenge? Have students bring in visual arts, music, literature etc., that serve as an expression of their own culture. Include food and have a cultural arts day inviting other classes.
Questions for Discussion

1. This painting represents an aging woman. Discuss how Albright conveys this through color, lighting, texture, gesture, and setting.

Classroom Activities

Science

1. Have students collect objects with a variety of textures and place them in a paper bag. Include objects seen in the painting such as a doily, wicker, decorative glass, flowers, rug fragment, wood, dollar bill, mirror, etc. Pass the bag around and have students feel the textures with their hands and write a description of the textures they feel. Have students identify through touch any objects they see in the painting. Discuss feeling texture with your hands versus imagining it from a visual representation.

Social Science

1. Have students collect photographs of someone in their family. Choose photographs that reveal the person at a variety of ages from childhood through adulthood. Have students arrange the photographs in chronological order and write captions for each one.

Alternate: Have students bring in their own baby pictures and display them around the room. Have students try to identify their classmates as infants. Discuss how certain characteristics remain the same and which ones change as we mature.

Language Arts

1. Have students collect a photograph of someone they know and cut out objects or images from magazines that reflect this person’s life, personality, and interests. Then create a collage portrait of this individual.

2. Based on Albright’s painting, have students write an entry in Ida’s journal for the day of the portrait. What is she thinking and what is she getting ready for?
Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss how the painting's earthy colors suggest Mexico's geography, and, along with the artist's use of space, create a mood. Where does the artist place us, the viewers, and how does that add to the tone?

2. Discuss how a visual rhythm is created by repeating shapes, colors, and lines. How does the artist use shadows to add to the mood?

Classroom Activities

Math

1. Orozco creates depth in this painting by using size and overlapping placement of figures. Have students recreate the position of these figures by posing in a doorway. If clothing and props such as hats are available include those too. Are the figure's proportions and placement realistic?

2. The geometric shapes and sharp angled lines add to impending danger in this picture. Turn the transparency upside down and have students look for shapes such as the triangles around Zapata's hat as formed in the blue sky outside the doorway. Have students look for diagonal lines created by a variety of objects. On a vertical sheet of paper have students draw the shapes and diagonal lines in outline form.

Language Arts

1. Imagine how the other characters feel and think about this event. Choose one person (not including Zapata) and write a letter to a family member describing what happened to him or her the day Zapata arrived.

2. Is Zapata here to harm or save the two peasants in the foreground? Do his hat and sky imply a "halo" or does the sword pointing at him tell of his danger? Is Zapata more connected to the heavens, or is he more confined to the muddied-clay earth? Have students make a list of clues in the painting to support the two different ideas of who Zapata is in this painting. Choose students to debate the issue.

Social Studies

1. Have the students become reporters and write an article that tells the story of the revolutionary Zapata. Have some students write for the wealthy landowners' newspaper and other students write for the underground peasant newspaper. The revolution was over the economic ownership of land. Discuss the different points of view.

2. Artists often use colors that reflect the region they live in. Look at van Gogh's The Bedroom. [See transparency 5] These colors reflect the South of France where he lived at the time. Look at Orozco's Zapata; these colors reflect the regions of Mexico. Have students research and compare the climate, geography, and agriculture of these two different regions.
Young Woman in a Net, 1953
Irving Penn

Questions for Discussion

1. Portraits like this one present several identities, the designer’s, the photographer’s, and the model’s. Ask students to look closely at this photograph and discuss how it portrays these identities. What elements of the photograph can be attributed to each identity? Can individual identity and style exist in a collaborative effort such as this fashion portrait? Why or why not?

2. Look closely at the pose of the model. Why do students think Penn asked the model to pose like this? What if the model were sitting down or standing straight with arms at her sides? What if the model were a man? How would that change the effect of the photograph?

Classroom Activities

Language Arts

1. Ask students how long they think it took for the model to get ready for this photograph. How many people would have to assist her with her hair, make-up, and clothing? Ask them to imagine being the model in this photograph and returning home from a long day of modeling for this particular fashion shoot. What was it like to pose on one foot wrapped in transparent fabric? What kind of thoughts were going through her mind during the photo shoot? Have them write a journal entry from the model’s point of view.

2. Ask students what the phrase “we are what we wear” means. How would they describe the persona behind the outfit in this portrait? Ask students to bring in a photograph of themselves or a family member that illustrates this idea. They can present the photograph to the rest of the class and describe how the person’s outfit is an extension or symbol of his or her personal identity.

3. Do fashion advertisements try to sell ideas as well as clothing? How so? What themes exist in fashion media today? How does the media influence the way we define and see ourselves? Have students bring in pictures from fashion magazines or newspapers of clothing by designers or name-brand chain stores that suggest underlying messages to consumers. Ask students to present and discuss some of these themes using their magazine clippings to illustrate their point.

Social Studies

1. This photograph makes reference to several ethnic identities: a model wears an outfit designed by a Japanese designer, and she stands like an Indian goddess to be photographed by a white male. Discuss the presence of ethnicity in this photograph and in the fashion industry today. Select a few fashion magazines and ask students to look for evidence of ethnic influence in clothing, posture, and setting. Have students cut out fashion shots that suggest other cultures and tape them to a large map of the world. Can they fill each continent? How many countries were represented in their search?
Attributes: Characteristic of a person or thing; sometimes an object always associated with a person such as the witch’s broomstick.

Avant-Garde: Artists, works of art, or movements—visual, literary, or musical—considered to be unconventional or experimental and thus ahead of their time.

Bust: Sculpted portrait consisting of the head and part of the shoulders.

Collage: Derived from the French verb *coller*, to gum, that describes works of art made by sticking pieces of paper, or other materials, or other forms onto a flat backing, often in combination with painted passages. First used extensively by Cubists, collage extended the boundaries of art by combining painted surfaces and other materials.

Commission: To order and to pay for the creation of a work of art.

Cubism: Art movement (c. 1908-1920) led by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and Georges Braque (1882-1963) that took the pictorial elements of line, shading, light, and composition traditionally used to make a convincing illusion of three-dimensional (with depth) space on a two-dimensional (flat) surface and arranged them arbitrarily to call attention to their function as representational devices as well as to create images that did not attempt to recreate the appearance of the world.

Daguerreotype: Unveiled in France in 1839, one of the two original forms in which photography was invented. Produced on photo-sensitized, silver coated copper plates that are reactive to light, daguerreotypes were unique objects of extraordinary clarity and detail, which made them the perfect vehicle for portraiture. Inventor was Louis Daguerre.

Demi-monde: People on the fringes of respectable society; from the French word literally meaning “half-world.”

En plein air: French term meaning “in the open air,” in daylight, usually used in reference to painting in the outdoors.

Fix: The use of hyposulfite of soda (or hypo, as it is known today) to stop the continuing action of light on a negative and thus make a photographic image permanent.

Genre: Indoor and outdoor scenes of everyday life; also a type of painting, such as a portrait or still-life.

Great Migration: The massive migration of over six million African Americans from the rural South to the industrial North in search of jobs and freedom, spanning the decades from 1910 to 1970.
Harlem Renaissance: The creative outburst during the 1920s of African American literature, music, dance, and art centered in the New York City neighborhood of Harlem, which spread to other cities as well, including Chicago. Also known as the New Negro Movement, the renaissance encouraged blacks to reclaim their ancestral heritage as a means of strengthening and enriching their own creative expression.

Icon: An important symbol, object, or work of art that represents a style, a movement, a period, etc.

Idealization: The creation of a standard or model of perfection, beauty, and excellence.

Impasto: Thick, paste-like, heavy application of paint.

Impresario: One who promotes, sponsors, or manages entertainments, such as operas, concerts, art exhibitions, or sports events.

Impressionism: Avant-garde art movement originating in France in the latter part of the 19th century, regarded as the culmination of Realism; sought to capture the rapidly changing modern world as well as the fleeting moods of nature. To seize the impression of light at a given moment, Impressionist painters used visible brushstrokes and pure color.

Italian Renaissance: From the French word meaning “rebirth.” A revival of learning, literature, art, and architecture that initially emphasized the classical models of Greek and Roman antiquity. Began in Italy in the late thirteenth century, then spread to other parts of Europe; lasted throughout the sixteenth century.

Mentor: A wise and trusted counselor; a role model.

Metamorphosis: Transformation from one physical state to another.

Mexican Mural Movement: Inspired by the Mexican Revolution that began in 1911, a group of artists such as José Clemente Orozco (1883-1948) and Diego Rivera (1886-1957) developed a national narrative style incorporating their native heritage of folk traditions and pre-Columbian art in order to create a new nationalist art that was “of the people and for the people.” Using the public medium of murals, they portrayed during the 1920s and 1930s the history and struggles of working class Mexicans.

Montmartre: Artistic quarter of Paris and major entertainment center during the Impressionist era.
Narrative: A story or description of real or imaginary events.

Palette: The board or tablet held by a painter on which he mixes his paints; also refers to a scheme of colors used in a painting.

Persona: One's identity, especially the way in which one presents oneself to the world.

Perspective: Scientific method used by artists since the Italian Renaissance to create the illusion of three-dimensional objects and space on two-dimensional surfaces, so that they seem to appear as in nature.

Platinum Palladium Process: Photographic process in which paper is coated with platinum solution to produce a print known for its permanence, wide tonal range, and fineness of detail.

Realism: General term to describe an intent to depict the actual world accurately and objectively. Also refers to a movement in 19th-century France that concentrated on the unidealized representation of, as one of its leaders declared, "real and existing things."

Republican: Relating to a form of government whose head is not a monarch but in general elected by the citizens.

Shiva: One of the two most important Hindu deities embodying the inscrutable, ever-changing life force.

Stereotype: An oversimplified image that denies originality or individuality.

Still life: Depiction of a group of inanimate objects (flowers; fruit; etc) carefully arranged by an artist; from the French term, nature morte, meaning "dead nature."

Type: From the Greek word meaning "model," referring to strong and clearly marked similarities that are typical of a group.

Vanitas: From the Latin word meaning "emptiness," referring to the emptiness and transience of earthly possessions and the inevitability of death. Often depicted in an allegorical still life, in which objects and/or figures symbolize an abstract quality or idea, such as vanity.

Wet Collodion Process: Photographic process invented in 1851 that used a glass plate coated with a photo-sensitive emulsion (a mixture of liquids including collodion) which was exposed to light and developed while still wet. Known for its subtlety of tone.


Hutton, John. “‘If I am to die tomorrow’—Roots and Meanings of Orozoo’s Zapata Entering a Peasant’s Hut.” *Museum Studies*, 11, no. 1 (Fall 1984): 40-51.


