ALL HAIL!

Roman emperors became very familiar to their subjects through the circulation of their portraits throughout the Roman Empire in the form of coins and portraits. Two examples of imperial portraiture are featured in the Art Institute's *Portrait Head of the Emperor Hadrian* (image 16) and the *Coin Showing the Emperor Nero* (image 15).

Emperor Hadrian's portrait displays a degree of heroization whereas Emperor Nero's is realistic without glorification. Together, both imperial portraits reveal that portraiture can improve one's image or be brutally honest. In today's society, how do people use their "image" to project how they want to be seen? How do leaders want to be perceived? As courageous, strong, competent, successful? How do they get across their messages? Through TV, magazines, billboards? Are the images realistic (true to life) or idealized (to show as perfect or more nearly perfect than is true)? How do fashion trends start? Do popular figures, such as movie stars, musicians, or sports figures, influence what is in style? How?

Instruct students to make two portraits of one person. Make the first portrait "realistic" to show how the subject really looks. Next give the subject a profession or occupation. Create a second portrait by making an "idealized" image of how a person who does that particular job might want people to see him or her. Use hairstyles, hats, and jewelry to indicate the role or status of the person.

**Objective:**
Explore the uses and effects of portraiture in ancient Rome and contemporary society.