

# Art Lesson Plan

**Title:** Portraits in Tempera  
**Concept:** Portrait  
**Idea:** Students will create a portrait.

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## Tasks / Objectives

### Aesthetics & Criticism

Students will ask questions about the value of portraits. Do they have value? Are they important? Why are they important?

Students will ask questions about the purpose of portraits; do they tell us about the person portrayed? If not, what do they tell us?

Students will look at and compare portraits by artists for line, shape and color. Students will look for symmetrical balance and unity in the portraits. How do the elements of art come together to give portraits a sense of balance and unity? How do these elements give expression to the portrait? Students will talk about dominance. How does the whole convey what the artist wanted to express?

### Historical and Cultural Perspectives

Students will look at different portraits by artists. Then students will talk about the different purposes and different ways artists made the portraits. Students might talk about different approaches by each artist.

### Create, Present and Perform

Students will create a portrait using line and shape emphasizing balance and unity.

## Need to know / have ready

**Benchmarks for your grade levels determined by the educator's district or state.**

### Visual & Literary Resources

Maryhill Museum of Art Collections. Click link for images to print for classroom use.

- 1) Robert Douglas Hunter, (American, b.1928), *The Little Leaguer*, 1956. Oil on canvas, 27 1/2" x 19 1/2". Purchase gift of the Scripps Foundation.
- 2) Edwin H. Blashfield, (American, 1848-1936), *The Musician*, c.1874. Oil on canvas, 36" x 26". Gift of R.H. Ives Gammell.

Art Prints showing American portraits by artists from Gilbert Stuart to Andy Warhol.

One source of American portraits can be found online at the National Portrait Gallery's online exhibit *A Brush with History*, a <http://www.npg.si.edu/cexh/brush/index.htm>

### Vocabulary

Portrait      Color  
Line          Balance  
Shape        Unity  
Expressive

### Production Materials

heavy paper that will hold up to paint  
pencil  
tempera paint  
photograph of a person (mom, dad, brother or sister; students bring to class). Image should be three-quarter emphasizing upper body and face.



**Robert Douglas Hunter, (American, b. 1928), *The Little Leaguer*, 1956. Oil on canvas, 27 1/2" x 19 1/2". Purchase gift of the Scripps Foundation. Collection of Maryhill Museum of Art. Photo by Jerry Taylor.**

## The Lesson

### Lesson Criteria

Students will create a portrait using line, shape, and color to create balance and unity that is expressive.

### Looking at the work

Look at one selected portrait in detail.

- Ask students about how the artist used line. Is the line straight? Curved?
- Ask students about shapes. Show the oval shape of the head in the portrait: eyes, ears, nose, etc.
- Ask about colors. Where is the color? What colors? What do they think the color does to tell us about the portrait?
- Show students proportions of a human face – oval, placement of the eyes, nose, mouth, etc.

Show several other portraits. Briefly discuss some of these in light of the questions above. Ask students why they think people were presented differently by different artists at different times? Ask about the purpose of the portraits?

### Demonstration

Demonstrate drawing the face. See *Art Techniques: Drawing a Portrait*.

Demonstrate painting with tempera paint. See *Art Techniques: Tempera Paint*.

Post and Review Vocabulary.

Post and Review Criteria.

### Production

Distribute materials.

Encourage on-task working.

Oversee clean up.

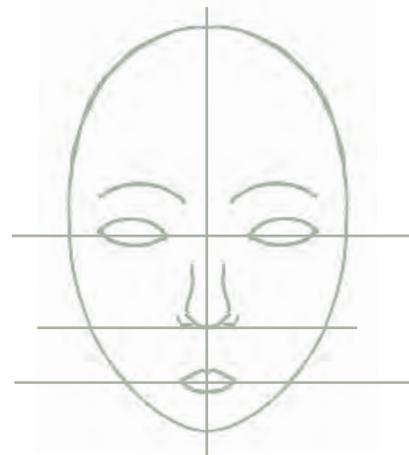
Leave student work to dry.

### Assessment

Assess student work using lesson criteria.

Appreciate the work for line, shape, color, and balance and unity.

Appreciate the expressive qualities of the work.



## Correlations, extensions, ideas

Portraits could be of famous Americans – to tie in with American history lessons in the classroom.

The National Portrait Gallery is a great place to download information and portraits of a number of people important throughout American history.

Alternatively – portraits could be famous scientists, musicians, writers, or anyone they are learning about elsewhere in their studies.

Use this lesson at the beginning of the year, and do self-portraits as a way for students to introduce themselves to the rest of the class. Have them write autobiographies to include with the portrait.

To make a self-portrait students could use school pictures, or work from small hand-held mirrors.



## Robert Douglas Hunter (1928- )

Master of the Boston School of Art

Born in Dorchester, Massachusetts March 17, 1928, Hunter served in the Marines before graduating from the Vesper George School of Art in 1949. He studied with Henry Hensche, and then intensively with R.H. Ives Gammell from 1950 to 1955. Simultaneously in 1950 he began a teaching career at the Vesper George School of Art which lasted until the school closed in 1983. He also taught at the Worcester Art Museum from 1965 to 1975.

Hunter has created a style of still life painting that is uniquely his own. He designs large, quiet arrangements and paints them at eye level and life sized, a technique he calls "the sight sized method of painting," in which the artist continually steps up to, then away from his canvas. Hunter feels painting is creating a new sense of order, saying "Whether it's an abstraction or a representational painting, you're trying to create something harmonious on a two-dimensional plane."

Hunter was the recipient of the first John Singleton Copley Award (1966), and fourteen Gold Medals at the annual exhibition of New England artists held by the Jordan Marsh Company, Boston. In recognition of his painting and teaching, he won a Citation from the Governor of Massachusetts (1979). He was the first winner of the Copley Medallion (1988) and was the 1989 winner of the Guild of Boston Artists Award.

*The Little Leaguer* was painted in 1956 at Hunter's home in Provincetown, Mass. It was Hunter's practice to hire neighborhood children to pose for paintings. *The Little Leaguer* is a painting of Hunter's neighbor, Peter Macara (age 14). Peter was a favorite model for Hunter, who enjoyed the company of the entire Portuguese-American Macara family. The families have stayed in touch through the years: Peter Macara is currently Assistant Director at Provincetown Art Association and Museum in Provincetown, Mass.

## Edwin Howland Blashfield (1848-1936 )

The “dean” of American muralist painters

Edwin Howland Blashfield is best known for his monumental murals. He rose to prominence during the period between the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago (Chicago World’s Fair) and the United States’ entry into World War I in 1917. He has had a lasting influence on public art in America.

Blashfield was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1848. Although he showed remarkable talent at drawing, his parents directed him toward a career in engineering, and Edwin studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for about a year. In 1867, when the artist Jean-Léon Gérôme convinced Edwin’s parents of his artistic talent he traveled to Paris where he received classical training in the Beaux-Arts tradition under the noted artist Léon Bonnat. He exhibited at the Paris Salons from 1874-1880.

In 1886, Blashfield was chosen as one of only eight artists to paint eight domes at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Illinois. The World’s Fair marked the beginning of the American mural movement in America, and Edwin Howland Blashfield was its leader. He created large works of a historical or symbolic nature that included the Evolution of Civilization (Library of Congress), murals for the Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa state capitols, and a large mosaic for the Church of St. Matthew in Washington D.C. Many homes of America’s wealthiest families boasted decorative work by Blashfield. He also wrote *Mural Painting in America* (1913) and, with his wife, *Italian Cities*.

*The Musician* is a gift to Maryhill Museum from the noted artist R.H. Ives Gammell who wrote, “The picture is an early work, painted, I believe, in 1874.” At that age Blashfield would have been studying in Paris under Léon Bonnat.

In the painting, the musician is strumming a psaltery. Dating from the 3rd century B.C. and popular in Europe until about the 1500s, it fell from favor at the onset of the Renaissance. The psaltery is thought to be a precursor to many modern instruments, including the zither and the dulcimer. The young musician is dressed in classical white robes with a coronet of laurel leaves encircling his head, reflecting Blashfield’s ideas of beauty and harmony.



MARYHILL MUSEUM OF ART

Robert Douglas Hunter, (American, b. 1928), *The Little Leaguer*, 1956. Oil on canvas, 27 1/2" x 19 1/2". Purchase gift of the Scripps Foundation. Collection of Maryhill Museum of Art. Photo by Jerry Taylor.

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509-773-3733 . [www.maryhillmuseum.org](http://www.maryhillmuseum.org)



Edwin H. Blasfield (American, 1848–1936), *The Musician*, c. 1874. Oil on canvas. 36" x 26". Gift of R.H. Ives Gammell. Collection of Maryhill Museum of Art. Photo by Jerry Taylor.

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