



eva

ELEMENTARY VISUAL ARTS

Park City Education Foundation • Kimball Art Center

LESSON

8

Basquiat

Portraits

Verbal Directions

LESSON OVERVIEW

Jean- Michel Basquiat (1960-88) is an American artist known for his use of graffiti and words in his art. He had a great influence on the art world of the late 20th century. Students will learn about his life and experiment with new art processes to create layers and use lines to create a self portrait.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Learn about Basquiat.
- Learn about Graffiti art, street art and symbols.
- Use various materials to make a painting.
- Create a self-portrait.

GUSTAV KLIMT



Jean-Michel Basquiat, born in 1960 in Brooklyn, New York, emerged as a visionary artist whose work transformed the art world. Beginning with graffiti in the streets of New York City, Basquiat's talent quickly garnered attention. His paintings, filled with vibrant colors, bold lines, and enigmatic symbols, reflected his keen observations on society, race, and culture. Rising from humble beginnings to art stardom in the 1980s, Basquiat's unique blend of street art, neo-expressionism, and social commentary captured global admiration. His art, interweaving vibrant colors, bold strokes, and symbolic imagery like crowns, figures, and cryptic phrases, encouraged viewers to decode hidden messages while employing diverse mediums like acrylic paint, oil sticks, and found objects. His tragically short but prolific career left an indelible mark, showcasing the raw energy and creative brilliance that made him an icon of contemporary art. [Learn More.](#)



SUPPLIES

- Images of Basquiat artwork.
- Rollers (foam or rubber)
- Stamps (with various designs)
- Ink pads or acrylic paint for stamping
- Paints
- Paint stick/markers
- Mirrors
- Canvas or heavy duty cardstock/board

LESSON PLAN

1. Introduce Jean-Michel Basquiat, highlighting his unique style and use of graffiti, words, and expressive lines in his artwork. Showcase examples of Basquiat's layered and expressive paintings, emphasizing his use of different textures and elements.

- What do you see in this artwork? How does it make you feel? Why do you think the artist made it this way?
- How are the lines and colors used in this artwork? What makes it different or special to you?
- Do you notice any special words or symbols in the painting? What do you think they mean? Why do you think the artist used them?
- How does the artwork tell a story or make you imagine something?

Discuss how Basquiat's artwork reflects personal identity and encourages individual expression.

2. Let students know that they will embark on an artistic exploration by creating a self-portrait, drawing inspiration from Basquiat's distinctive style and techniques.

- **Background Creation:** Start by using a roller to apply textured backgrounds. Show students how to roll acrylic paint onto paper or canvas to create a base layer for their self-portraits.
- **Self-Portrait Sketching:** Guide students to sketch their self-portraits using bold lines and exaggerated features, drawing inspiration from Basquiat's style.
- **Stamping and Symbolism:** Introduce stamps featuring Basquiat's motifs or other symbols (crowns, symbols, words). Demonstrate how to use ink pads or paint with stamps to add intricate details or patterns to their self-portraits.
- **Layering and Detailing:** Encourage students to add layers by incorporating graffiti-like text, symbols, and abstract shapes using paintsticks or markers. Emphasize Basquiat's technique of layering for depth.
- **Experimentation:** Guide students to experiment with different rollers and stamps to create diverse textures, mirroring Basquiat's use of multiple layers in his artworks.

3. Display the Basquiat-inspired self-portraits created by students around the classroom. Lead a discussion, allowing students to share their experiences using rollers and stamps in their artwork and how it added depth and complexity to their self-portraits. Encourage students to reflect on how the added layers and textures contributed to their portrayal of personal identity in their artwork.

Eva + : Explore Basquiat's use of mixed media in his art, and encourage students to incorporate collage materials or found objects to further enrich their self-portraits. Discuss Basquiat's influence on contemporary art movements, particularly in bridging street art and fine art, to deepen students' understanding of his artistic impact.





KEY IDEAS THAT CONNECT TO NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS:
Based on National Core Arts Standards visual Arts Requirements (2nd Grade).

[VA:Cr1.2.2a](#)

Make art or design with various materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity.

[VA:Re8.1.2a](#)

Interpret art by identifying the mood suggested by a work of art and describing relevant subject matter and characteristics of form.



ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Click on links to learn more.

- <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Jean-Michel-Basquiat/633700>
- <https://www.arthistorykids.com/blog/318>
- <https://www.thebroad.org/art/jean-michel-basquiat>
- <https://nmaahc.si.edu/latinx/jean-michel-basquiat>

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