



## Activity sheet 2: SELF-PORTRAIT FOCUS



**Catherine Browne**  
Cathculator

The title for this painting comes from a costume that Catherine's dad made for her when she was in primary school. Catherine has always really loved maths and her costume was a large cardboard calculator. You can see the maths equations in the background.

Self-portraits often include some special characteristic or interest of the artist. Many self-portraits include the artist with all their painting equipment in their studio.

Catherine's painting is made with visible brushstrokes, has a textured surface and broad areas of colour. She has not tried to blend her colours. This makes her painting seem very energetic and spontaneous.

## Vocabulary

<i>Self-portrait</i>	a picture of the artist
<i>Texture</i>	what you can feel on a surface (rough, smooth, sandy)
<i>Visible brushstrokes</i>	the marks made by the brush in the paint as it is applied to the canvas or board

## Creating Arts Ideas - invention, perception/communication

- Create a self-portrait diary. Set aside a half hour each day for ten days and complete ten self-portraits. Use a single media or a different one each day. Use a single word to describe how you felt on that day – sad, happy, hungry, angry, bored? Do your self-portraits show different emotions?
- Look at some portraits of very old people, draw a picture of yourself as a very old person
- Draw a picture of yourself as a baby – perhaps use photos as reference
- Draw a contour (line drawing) of yourself. Divide your drawing into two parts. Use warm colours and calm lines and patterns on one side and hot colours and agitated lines and patterns on the other. Oil pastels are a suitable media for this activity.
- Create a collage self-portrait using images from magazines. Only use pictures which are about one of your hobbies or interests. For example – if you like bike riding, cut out bikes from magazines and use these to create a self-portrait.
- Use two mirrors to look at yourself from a different angle – place the mirrors at right angles to each other and look in one of the mirrors to see your image in the other – did you think you'd look like that in profile?
- Paint a picture of yourself but include the edges of the mirror and everything around the edges of the mirror.
- Use ink (or watery black paint) and a soft brush to draw different sorts of hair.
- Make a tile out of clay; press into or scratch tile with seeds, gumnuts, leaves, twigs to create a self-portrait. Fire in kiln. Use oxides to define marks. Fire.
- Paint a small rectangle of cardboard with pva glue, sprinkle sand, small pebbles, sawdust etc over. Alternatively hessian or other rough cloth can be adhered to the surface. Leave to dry overnight. Paint with white acrylic paint and use as a surface for painting.

## Arts Skills and Processes

- Colour wheel. Use Catherine's painting as a reference and make a skin colour wheel. Make an ocean or desert colour wheel. Can you think of any others?
- Follow the ratio conventions for creating a portrait. (There are many booklets and online resources which are useful for this exercise.)
  1. A convention of portrait painting and drawing is that the picture is usually longer than it is wide. Your paper should have its narrowest edge closest to you.
  2. Lightly pencil in an eggshape that is about 20cms long and about 16cms at its widest point, draw a line down the centre of the eggshape and another across the middle. The horizontal line is where you will draw your eyes and the vertical line is where you will draw your nose.
  3. Your main features will fit in an equilateral triangle created by the horizontal and vertical lines. Keep your pencil lines very light – you will rub them out when you have finished.
  4. Have a close look in your mirror and look at (or measure) the distance between the edge of your eyes and your ears, the distance between the base of your nose and your top lip, the width of the base of your nose and the width of your mouth, the length of your eyes, the length from your bottom lip to the curve of your chin. How far your hair is from your eyebrows

## Arts Responses and Analysis

### *Talking about artworks in the exhibition*

What can you see in the artwork? Make a list.

Is it 2 or 3 dimensional?

What do you think the artwork is about?

What is it made out of?

How has the artwork been made?

What do you like about the artwork?

## **Reference material**

### **Self-portraits**

A resource developed by the Art Gallery of NSW for their exhibition “**Self-Portrait: Renaissance to Contemporary**”. The exhibition was designed around eight key themes, each of which is addressed in the download-able booklet from the site [http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/ed/resources/ed\\_kits/self\\_portrait](http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/ed/resources/ed_kits/self_portrait)

**William Robinson** is a well-known Australian artist whose whimsical artworks appeal to adults and children alike. He has won several significant portrait prizes. This website was developed by the Queensland Art Gallery and includes a section for children.

[http://svc034.wic029p.server-web.com/content/robinson\\_standard.asp?name=Robinson\\_Self\\_Portraits](http://svc034.wic029p.server-web.com/content/robinson_standard.asp?name=Robinson_Self_Portraits)

University of Queensland news page featuring self portrait by **Ben Quilty** and link to the university collection of portraits

<http://www.uq.edu.au/news/index.html?article=13248>

National Portrait Gallery – includes a section for educators. Some resources can be downloaded from the website including

**Portraits in the History Classroom**

**Portrait 26, summer 2007-2008** (includes a section about the portrait of famous Papunya Tula artist, George Tjungarrayi)

<http://www.portrait.gov.au/site/portraitstories.php>