Learning Lenses

Tate year3 project

Selfies

Alternative Self-Portraits

This activity encourages pupils to think about how they present themselves to others and how they wish to be seen. It also opens up thinking around social media image sharing and issues of personal privacy.

What happens: Part 1

1. In groups of 3-4, pupils help each other take a photograph of themselves but without showing their face directly.

2. Ask pupils to think about how they want to be seen. Examples:

   — *a detail of their hand holding a certain object*

   — *their full body but turning away from the camera*

   — *a close-up of an ear, an elbow or a shoe*

   — *a photograph into their school bag, coat pocket, P.E. kit.*

3. Encourage them to think about the information they are happy to share with anyone and to consider what they would only share with family or friends.

4. When all images have been taken, cameras are handed back to the teacher

Reflection questions

• What did you focus on? Why?

• Can an image still be a portrait if it doesn't show the whole person?

• How does wearing (or not wearing) a uniform affect what we know about a person from their photograph?

• How much can we tell about a person from looking for clues in the image?

★ *Tip: If cameras need to be shared between groups, ask any groups not using a camera to help each other draw around a part of their body, e.g., their hand, foot, elbow or head. Within the drawn space, encourage them to add a narrative of how they would introduce themselves to someone they had never met before.*

This activity could be done in a single class period (with an activity between photographing and viewing photos) or across two lessons.

What happens: Part 2

1. Print out the alternative self-portraits; enough so that small groups of 3-4 pupils can have a wide selection of images

2. In small groups, look for clues in each image and use these to build up an idea of a person and their life.

   — *Teachers should encourage pupils not to focus, yet, on which pupils are represented in the images*

3. As a group, cut out parts of the images and stick together a collective 'individual' using different parts. For example: an elbow from one photograph, a foot from another, a rucksack from another.

4. Once a character has been created, ask the group to write a description of this new character using the clues they have put together.

5. Small group presentations of their new characters. If time allows, ask other pupils if they can identify the components of this new character.

Reflection questions (as a whole class or in small groups)

- How do our collaborative images reflect, or not reflect, the actual people represented in them? How does the new photograph tell us something new about the people represented in it?

- What aspects of you or your life might you not want to share with people you don't know? What makes something either appropriate or inappropriate to share?

- Ask pupils about the social media sites or apps they have heard of. Why do you think these sites are only for older children and adults? What might not be appropriate to share with the world? On these sites/apps?

This activity works well with

- Good Questions (Snapshots)
- Making Connections (Snapshots)

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