Animals & Art Curriculum
The Story Behind a Portrait

Overview

Animals & Art: The Story Behind a Portrait engages students in learning about the lives of sanctuary animals and representing them as individuals through the creation of original animal portraits.

- Students will create art based on an individual animal’s story to which they feel a personal connection.
- Students will explore animal stories as a basis for art-making and create artist statements to explain their personal artwork.
- Students will analyze components in visual imagery and the power of art to convey messages and shape ideas.
Lesson Resources
Click on the following links:
Video: What is Farm Sanctuary? Youth Edition
PowerPoint presentation: An Exploration of Animal Portraiture
Student Resource: The Animal Stories
Student Resource: Write an Artist's Statement

Materials
Art materials such as crayons, markers, colored pencils, or paint
Paper
Writing utensil

Environmental Sustainability
For tips on increasing environmental sustainability in art projects, check out this article from the Art of Education University:

National Art Standards

VA:Re.7.2.3a Determine messages communicated by an image.
VA:Re8.1.3a Interpret art by analyzing use of media to create subject matter, characteristics of form, and mood.
VA:Re.7.2.4a Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages.
VA:Re8.1.4a Interpret art by referring to contextual information and analyzing relevant subject matter, characteristics of form, and use of media.
VA:CR3.1.5a Create artist statements using art vocabulary to describe personal choices in art-making.
VA:Re8.1.5a Interpret art by analyzing characteristics of form and structure, contextual information, subject matter, visual elements, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed.
VA:Cn11.1.5a Identify how art is used to inform or change beliefs, values, or behaviors of an individual or society.

ELA Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.3-5.4.A Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
SECTION 1: Introduction

Farm Sanctuary video
Show students the “What is Farm Sanctuary? Youth Edition” introductory video and inform students that they will later be given the assignment of creating a portrait of a farm animal who lives at Farm Sanctuary.

An Exploration of Animal Portraiture
The PowerPoint presentation, An Exploration of Animal Portraiture, introduces students to the concept of portraiture and asks students to reflect upon what it means to include animals as subjects of portraiture. As a class, present the PowerPoint and facilitate a discussion.

Within the PowerPoint, in the notes for slides 25-32, you will find optional information to reference for discussion. For additional information, please visit https://www.farmsanctuary.org.
SECTION 2: The Story

Biographies of the Farm Sanctuary residents

Students should choose which farm animal they would like to create a portrait of by reading about at least three Farm Sanctuary residents in the student resource document, *The Animal Stories*. Each story includes a photograph of the individual farm animal and their background story. After reading the stories, students should choose the farm animal whose story impacted them the most and create visual artwork of that individual using materials available to them such as crayons, markers, colored pencils, or paint.

The stories in this lesson include animals who are current Farm Sanctuary residents and animals who lived at Farm Sanctuary but have since passed away.

The farm animals included in this lesson are:

- **Goat**: Benedict
- **Pig**: Lola, Nikki
- **Sheep**: Sophie
- **Turkey**: Cecelia
- **Chicken**: Aria, Bonnie
- **Cow**: Jay, Stanton
- **Duck**: Monet
SECTION 3: The Portrait

Create a portrait

Once students have chosen who will be the subject of their portraits, students should gather their art materials and create a portrait inspired by the animal’s story and photograph. Students should consider the message they would like to convey in their portraits and how they want people to feel about the animal in their portraits.

Lesson Extension: Animal Story Videos

Students may watch short videos about some of the animals included in this lesson:

Lola the Pig: How I Was Rescued by Lola Pig. (3:33)
https://youtu.be/Wp4lxWA9rY

Sophie the Lamb: This Little Lamb’s First Steps Will Melt Your Heart. (0:59)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRb42RC6_BI

Stanton the Cow: Better Together: Stanton. (1:46)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03DEgur-Da4
Write an artist’s statement

To accompany their artwork, students should compose an artist’s statement using the student resource document, Write an Artist’s Statement. Statements can be neatly handwritten or typed. If the portrait is two-dimensional, students should affix the statement to the back of their artwork. The statement might be one to three concise paragraphs.

Prompts for students to consider when creating their artist’s statement:

1. What is this animal’s name and why did you choose this animal?
2. What do you find inspiring about this animal?
3. What did you as an artist hope to convey about this animal through your artwork?
Share your artwork with Farm Sanctuary!

We would love to see the artwork and artist’s statements created by your students! If you would like to share their portraits and writing with Farm Sanctuary, please email photos to education@farmsanctuary.org.

Sample Artwork

Thank you to the following sanctuaries whose resident animals are featured in Farm Sanctuary’s Animals & Art Curriculum

Iowa Farm Sanctuary
SAINTS Rescue
SASHA Farm Animal Sanctuary

FEATURED ARTISTS

Dana Ellyn
Danaellyn.com
IG: @danaellyn

Twyla Francois
Twylafrancois.com
FB: @twylafrancoisart

Denise Hof
Denisehofart.de
IG: @denise_hof

Lindsay Leigh Lewis
Lindsayleighart.com
IG: @lindsayleighart

Nicola McLean
Artbynicolamclean.com
IG: @art.by.nicola.mclean

Jane O’Hara
Janeohara.com
IG: @janeoharaprojects

Jordan Rae
Etsy.com/shop/myrainbowveins/
IG: @jordn_rae

Photograph of Sophie at Farm Sanctuary
Julia P., age 9

Artist: Jordan Rae