

## Self and Symbolism Collage

<b>Essential Question</b>	How do artists use symbols to represent their identities?
<b>Grade</b>	1st
<b>Time</b>	30–60 minutes
<b>Art Concepts</b>	Mixed media, self-portrait, collage, drawing, symbolism
<b>Materials</b>	A medium-size piece of cardboard (at least 10 by 3 inches), copy paper, glue stick, pencil, oil pastels or crayons, scissors
<b>Artwork in Focus</b>	<p><i>Sketchbook</i>, 1970–72 by Betye Saar</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> to see a number of Saar’s sketchbooks from a previous Evenings for Educators resource packet</p>
<b>Talking about Art</b>	<p>We’re going to spend some time talking about Betye Saar’s <i>Sketchbook, 1970–72</i>. Saar is a Los Angeles–based artist who takes small sketchbooks with her when she is traveling. What we are looking at is a page from a sketchbook she used in the early 1970s, which was fifty years ago.</p> <p>Do you see anything that you recognize on this page? In the center of the page you can see part of a <b>portrait</b> of someone. A portrait is a picture of someone that shows their face. A <b>self-portrait</b> is a picture you make of your own face.</p> <p>What images or objects did Saar draw? What do you think the images represent? A lot of Saar’s artwork involves <b>symbolism</b> and explores big concepts like racism, gender</p>

roles, and spirituality. Symbolism is when an object or image represents an idea or a thought. For example, birds can symbolize freedom and apples can symbolize teachers. What symbols can you think of? What symbols would you use to represent yourself?

## **Making Art**

1. Cut a sheet of white paper in half hamburger style.
2. Using a pencil, draw yourself on one of the two halves of paper, keeping the paper horizontal. Be creative—it doesn't have to look realistic.
3. Use oil pastels to add color.
4. Cut the other half of your sheet of paper in half again, hamburger style. You should now have two smaller rectangles.
5. Keep these vertical and draw a symbol that represents you in both rectangles.
6. Add color when you're done. Try to cover all of the paper with color.
7. Using a glue stick, glue your self-portrait to the bottom of the piece of cardboard. Then, glue the **drawings** of symbols to the top of the cardboard. Bonus: decorate the border of the cardboard with string, beads, or other **collage** materials (this is called **mixed media**).

## **Reflection**

How did you feel while drawing your self-portrait? Was it difficult or easy?

Why did you choose the symbols that you did? How do they describe you?

Did you choose any symbols that were similar to Saar's? How are they different or the same?

What title would you give your artwork and why?

**Curriculum Connections** California Arts Standards for Public Schools—Visual Arts

1.VA:Re7.1: Select and describe works of art that illustrate daily life experiences of one's self and others. K.VA:Re7.2: Describe what an image represents. 1.VA:Re9: Classify artwork based on different reasons for preferences using learned art vocabulary.

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