

Inside-out portraits:
Mixed-media on canvas
Central Toronto Youth Services
Mindfulness Group
2 workshops: March 31, 2015, May 26, 2015



Wangechi Mutu, *Madam Repeateat*, 2010
Mixed media, ink, spray paint, collage on Mylar, 54 3/8 x 53 3/8 x 5/8 in 138.11 x 135.57 x 1.59 cm

By: Carolyn Ellen Beattie

Objectives:

- practice mindfulness exercises, build strategies to manage anxiety, achieve a sense of calm, and stay engaged in the present moment
- practice free-drawing without pre-planning or judgment
- develop positive strategies for dealing with anxiety, therapeutic approaches to art making that participants can continue to use
- explore drawing, and collage/ mixed media techniques using accessible materials and simple techniques
- build upon visual arts vocabulary and develop personal artistic language
- develop personal insights, self-acceptance, self-confidence, agency
- support one another and help create a safe space for art making
- build a sense of belonging- encouraging understanding, care and connectedness within the group
- reflect on experience and learning

Materials:

Session 1: newspaper for tables, books/ digital resources on artist Wangechi Mutu, art examples made by Erica and Carolyn, 'whats in your head' draw sheets, blank papers, pencils, pencil crayons, markers, oil pastels, prepared canvases 24x36", scissors, acryl medium- stiff molding paste, weldbond glue, plastic glue containers, glue brushes, various collage materials: magazines, flat or lightweight textured collage materials (fabrics, corrugated cardboards, feathers, wool, etc.) light-weight materials buttons, shells, etc., brown envelopes 1 for each participant for storing clippings and sketches throughout process,

Session 2: mindfulness exercise materials, newspaper for tables, colour wheel poster, smocks, canvases in-progress, envelopes containing collected clippings drawings materials, some collage materials, acryl medium- stiff molding paste, and weldbond glue, acrylic matte medium, large palettes (pie plate size), large yogurt containers as water cups, paper towels, acrylic paints, brushes various sizes, palette knives, plastic forks, sponges, rags

Workshop prep: get canvases or large sturdy papers, gather collage materials: magazines- a variety, avoid tabloid/ fashion mags, flat or lightweight textured collage materials (fabrics, corrugated cardboards, feathers, wool, etc.) light-weight materials buttons, shells, etc., make examples for 'whats in your head' drawings and final pieces, photocopy drawsheets, get large envelopes, collect or buy mediums and glue (stiff molding paste, matte medium, and weldbond glue)

Session 1: 2hrs

Prep: cover tables with newspaper, organize materials table: drawing materials, collage materials, scissors, medium and glue, glue pots and brushes

meet and greet: 5 mins

-go around circle and each participant shares name and colour of your mood today, perhaps also the texture, maybe even the smell and or the taste/flavour of your mood/feelings/emotions/spirit

Intro/ Inspiration: 30 mins

-briefly explain workshop “inside-out portraits”

-goal- all of us help make it a safe space to express your thoughts and feelings visually- without judgment

-mindfulness exercise/ guided visualization

-read poem- flying inside your own body- Margaret Atwood

-eyes closed take a journey inside your own mind (magic-school-bus style), observe and explore thoughts and feelings safely as if they are clouds in the sky or signs along a path- the goal is not to get lost in feelings or resolve them, but to see them and explore them as much or as little as you choose, and then keep moving along on your journey, knowing you can return again when you are ready

-find a calm place, rest there for a few minutes of breathing time

-eyes open and return to the room

respond with free-draw

-pass out draw sheets and various drawing tools-reflect on experience in drawing ‘whats in your head’ draw sheets (feel free to use a blank paper if you prefer)

-represent your thoughts and feelings using colours, textures, lines, shapes, objects or other representational images like figures, landscapes, etc, symbols, words, use both internal and external space and consider the relationship of inside to outside- inner space and outer space.

-try to free-draw without judgement, feel free to simply explore and layer materials and discover the different marks you can make

-this activity will help inspire a larger mixed media work on canvas

-inside-out portrait

-show works by Wangechi Mutu- books/ digital resources

-show our examples, finished and in-progress

-explain/ demo process

inspired by W. Mutu-cut out textures as well as objects/ full images from mags, use repetition in hair, headaddresses/hats, etc., explore relationship between inner and outer space

-outline goals for this session, for in-between time, and for final session

Action: 60 mins

- pass out canvases, pencils,
- sketch in pencil, basic silhouette- straight-on or profile (no need to get a 'likeness' as it is a portrait of your feelings, not you! don't be too concerned about the drawing, you can change it as you add collage elements)
- participants can explore and choose collage materials/magazines and scissors from the materials table when they are finished drawing, they return to seat and clip and collect and prepare collage materials
- get medium/glue and glue brush from materials table, begin gluing materials on canvas
- weldbond glue for heavier items

clean-up: 5 mins

- pass out envelopes, name on, all extra cut-outs and materials in envelope and add to collection over coming weeks
- clear collage scraps, save or trash/recycle
- leave works flat to dry
- sweep

reflection/closure: 10 mins

- look at works as a group
- present work-in-progress- volunteer basis, relation between the inside and the outside, possible directions for adding paint next time
- encourage participants to continue to collect images and materials and store in envelope, also pass out extra 'whats in your head' drawsheets to use whenever- you can draw or collage or both or whatever with them
- brainstorm-ways you can support your own art and others- seek out safe spaces for yourself and others to express, at group, at home, school, etc.
- word about GAL spring classes

Session 2: 2hrs

Prep: cover tables with newspapers, set-up materials table with some collage materials, paint and gel medium, painting materials, set up colour wheel poster and demo area

Intro/Inspiration: 20 mins

- group check-in: what colour, shape, line, texture, smell, taste, etc is your mood today?
- Mindfulness exercise
- Options
- what's in your head free-draw
- meditation on a stone
- image cards
- plan to finish inside-out portraits- breakdown process

demo- using in-progress collage, demo adding acrylic paint and glazes, show colour wheel and use questioning to teach/review colour theory mixing
-focus on colour temperature in relation to feelings
-demo glazing using medium mixture- so collage images show through
-colour mixing and a variety of application techniques using different tools and mediums to create texture

Action: 80 mins

-pass out smocks, water cups and paper towels
-participants prep palettes and gather brushes
Start by mixing colours for background washes and glazes to go over collage images, build up layers and work with, around or directly on top of collage materials

Clean-up: 10 minutes

-leave artworks flat to dry
-clear collage scraps, save or trash/recycle
-caps on paints, wash all brushes, and painting tools, palettes
-sweep

Reflection/ Closure: 10 minutes

-congratulate participants on opening up in group and helping make it a safe, supportive space
-Reflect on process and final work, individually and/or with a partner in an interview situation (consider making a set of reflective questions/ questionnaire)
-visit the artworks as a group- appreciate the variety of colours, textures, ways for showing the relationship between the inner space and outer space
manage/cope with anxiety and
-discuss importance of self-expression and also connection
-goal to continue - continue to cultivate positive spaces for yourself and others, creative practices and outlets that help with mindfulness, awareness and acceptance of feelings, and positive, creative ways to cope with life
-what are some ways you can do this?

-GAL spring classes
-Thank you so much!

sources: Wangechi Mutu Books, Atwood poem in book, plus...
http://www.saatchigallery.com/imgs/artists/mutu/wangechi_mutu_multilo.jpg
http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/wangechi_mutu.htm
<http://wvertical.com/daily-2/wangechi-mutu/>
<http://www.victoria-miro.com/artists/9-wangechi-mutu/>