

Boundless Sheros mural:

Acrylic painting on canvas

Central Toronto Youth Services

Boundless group

2 sessions: session 1-March 25, 2015. session 2-April 1, 2015

Number of participants: 10-11





By: Carolyn Ellen Beattie

Objectives:

- build a sense of belonging, community, group pride- appreciate individual strengths, differences and similarities and realize the power of the group as a whole
- develop critical thinking skills - look critically at cultural constructions and assumptions (concepts of hero, ideas and expectations about gender),
- develop sense of personal and collective agency- engage with, question and challenge cultural assumptions and stereotypes, participate actively by constructing images that reflect personal and group experiences
- learn about artists Jean-Michel Basquiat (current featured exhibition at AGO) and Maya Angelou
- experiment with and explore various drawing and painting materials and techniques
- build personal insight and self-confidence through self-expression and self-representation within the group
- strengthen cooperative skills, build strategies for effective collaboration and a unified result
- reflect on process and learning

Materials: session 1: Maya Angelou/ JM Basquiat book *Life Doesn't Frighten Me*, other Basquiat books, whiteboard or paper/marker for group brainstorming, colour wheel poster (could be a good GAL investment), black papers, pencils, chinks/conté, pencil crayons, oil pastels, super-large rectangular canvas primed

black, plastic tarps to go under canvas/protect undersurfaces, newspaper for covering tables. For work on canvas: school chalks/contes

Session 2: same Basquiat books, colour wheel poster, smocks, canvas in-progress, plastic tarps, newspapers, sketches from last week, white and coloured chalks/contes, large palettes (pie plate size), large yogurt containers as water cups, paper towels, acrylic paints various colours, brushes various sizes, palette knives, plastic forks, sponges, rollers, rags

Pre-workshop prep:

Get canvas, prime/paint canvas black, get colour wheel poster, Basquiat book-mark pages, gather materials and containers for drawing materials, etc.

Session 1: 2hrs

meet and greet: 10 mins

- do a circle name game –share a colour or a symbol that represents your spirit, or your mood today, and why

Introduction/ Inspiration: 15 mins

-Boundless experience- themes of bravery and courage, taking on the challenges that will come with this whole experience, you will see that you are all uniquely powerful as individuals and super-powerful when you work together as a team.

-together we will create a mural that celebrates your super *shero* selves- inspired by some artwork by JM Basquiat and a poem about courage and bravery by Maya Angelou

-gather in a circle- Introduce book, a word about Maya Angelou and JM Basquiat

-read book in a circle- everyone takes a turn

-what are some themes/ messages you get from the book? – bravery, courage, facing your fears, power of imagination to transform, and affect attitude and self-confidence

-what do you notice about the images? Figures and Faces- expressions, body language of figures, types of marks (rough, bold, full of life and energy, powerful, use of lines), materials (collage, drawing , paint, found surfaces, etc.) colours (vibrant, bold, luminous, fantastic/imaginary), use of symbols, “visual signatures”, use of text- numbers, letters, words, repetition of symbols and marks, inside/outside theme (represents internal space inside figures and also exterior, the figure’s surroundings)

-show other Basquiat books, participants can look at them for inspiration throughout process

-explain mural- first invent a character to represent your inner super *Shero* fantasy character (inspired by Basquiat- style and content), then you will

collaborate on a mural that represents the whole group-a *Shero* squad, working together on composition, working on your personal character but also in the shared space- negotiating personal space and shared space

-today we are going to use a variety of drawing tools to do individual sketches, and begin the mural, and next week we will complete the mural using paint

guiding questions:

-perhaps list on whiteboard or paper

-name some celebrated heroic/sheroic figures celebrated in western popular culture? other cultural traditions and historical periods? what qualities do we celebrate in them? What do you notice about these lists? How do our ideas of heroes relate to our ideas and expectations about gender? Who are some of your personal heroes from public or personal life or fantasy/ movies/ pop culture and why? Can we expand on the lists of heroes/ heroic/sheroic qualities to include others and special qualities that may not be traditionally associated with the hero archetype?

What is a super power you wish you had and why? What is one superpower you already have?

-explain drawing activity- *Shero* character

Action: 60 minutes

Pass out black papers, containers of pencils, conte chalks, pencil crayons and oil pastels

-start in pencil or light conte drawing, then work in bolder oil pastels, pencil crayon for smaller details

-as participants draw, encourage imagination, exaggerated shapes and colours, use of symbols and numbers, letters, words, working inside and outside figure to surrounding space

-if there is time, work as a group on mural composition

-as participants finish drawing, they can move to the mural to begin sketching in their character with chalk

-if everyone finishes with time to spare, gather at the mural canvas and work on composition as a group

clean-up: 5 mins

-return drawing materials to containers, gather drawings in a folder and keep folder and drawing materials accessible for working more throughout the week, roll up canvas

Reflection/closure: 15 mins

-great work, introduce your character to the group, maybe give a name?

-over the next week feel free to work more on your character drawing

-brainstorm theme for mural- possible text: name of team/squad, slogan, title?

-next week we will finish sketching in chalk and painting the mural!

Session 2: 2hrs

Prep: unroll canvas onto tabletops with tarps, prepare painting materials table covered with newspaper, pallettes, watercups, painting tools, paint with plastic spoons/palette knives, paper towels, smocks

Intro/Motivation: 10 mins

- breakdown of process for today- mural- planning composition, sketch in chalk, and then painting!
- finish up from last week- each participant introduces *Shero* character
- go to canvas rolled out on tabletop- finish mapping out composition on canvas using portraits, brainstorm theme- text, symbols
- brief into colour wheel and painting process
- use questioning to teach/review colour mixing with acryl paint, show tools (brushes, palette knives, sponges, rollers, rags) and discuss different marks you can make (do continued teaching thru demo in painting process, highlighting different mark-making strategies)

Action: 1hr, 20 mins

- finish sketching out using characters and surroundings using chalk
- prep pallettes, mix colours on palette and also directly on canvas
- negotiate with neighbours about personal and shared space/ what to put in shared space
- help each other- you may invite others to work on your character
- share paint, share tools, share space, move around mural
- take breaks when necessary to gather group to re-direct and make decisions to help unify mural

Clean-up: 5 mins

- caps on paints, wash all water cups, brushes, tools, and pallettes, return smocks

Reflection/Closure: 15 mins

- Discuss process- were there any challenges along the way? How did you deal with the challenges? What was it like to co-operate/ collaborate? What did you learn about working together that you can bring to your Boundless weekend?
- Appreciation of the mural as a whole- Are you proud of this mural? what is the overall message, theme, mood? What elements help unify the mural?

What *Sheroic* qualities are represented and celebrated in this mural? In what ways does the mural reflect the attitude you will bring to Boundless?

Info about GAL classes
Thank you so much!!!!