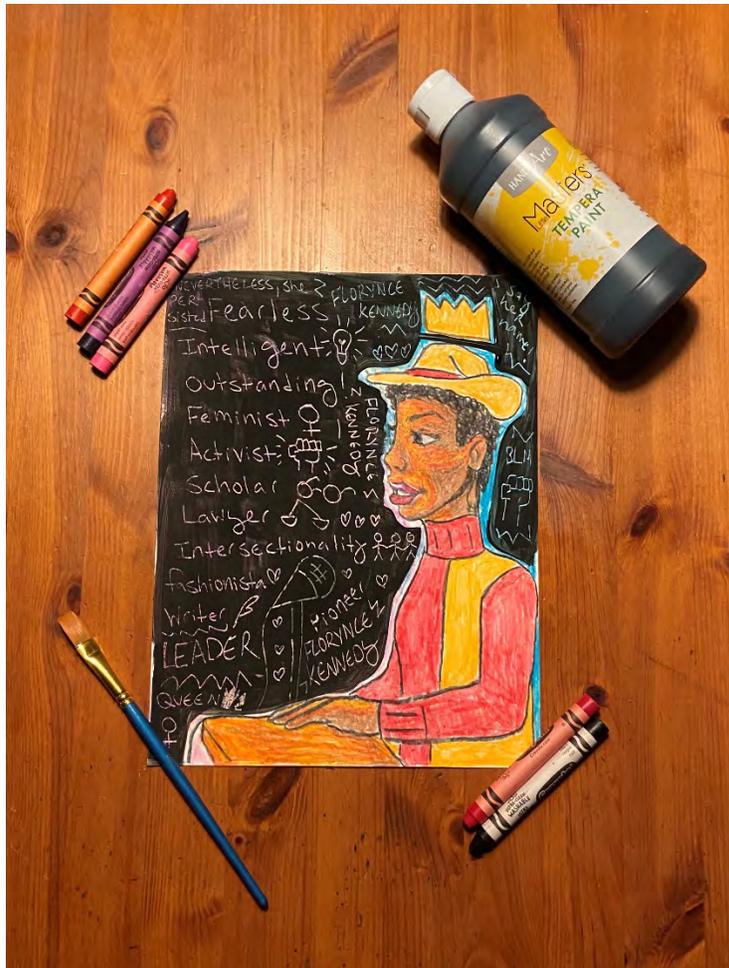


Family First Sunday: Basquiat-Inspired Expressive Portrait

February 7, 2021

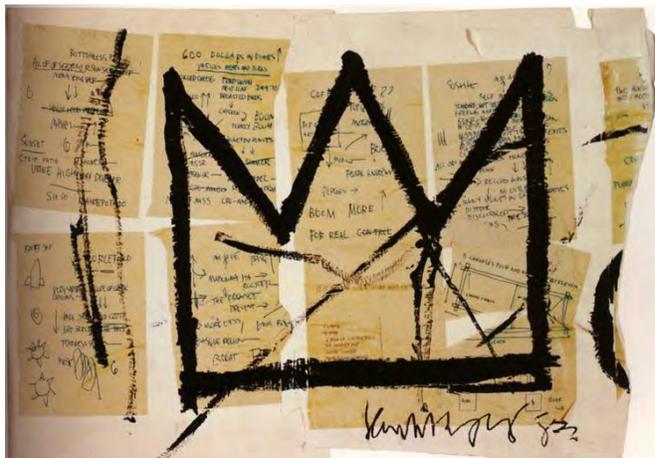


Welcome back to the Family First Sunday at UCR ARTS! Our project is inspired by Jean-Michel Basquiat's vibrant and captivating artworks. After learning about Basquiat's life and artistic influence, our step-by-step instructions will show you how to make your very own Basquiat inspired picture of your own! While Basquiat's drawings seem spontaneous and wild, he thought deeply about every stroke and word before he drew onto the canvas. Remember, this project requires you to be thoughtful, precise, and creative!

Jean-Michel Basquiat was born in Brooklyn, New York, on December 22, 1960. Basquiat had a Haitian-American father and a Puerto Rican mother, growing up he was familiar with Spanish and Haitian spiritualism. His mixed heritage was a big source of inspiration for his work. The vibrant colors and abstract portraits were inspired by Haitian spiritual artwork and African masks. Spanish and English were often incorporated into his works to celebrate his Puerto Rican side and to evoke the power of language.

Basquiat was a self-taught artist. He first began drawing on loose sheets of paper as a child. His mother encouraged his passion for art by giving him supplies and books he could reference. He continued to draw into his young adult life, selling his work on the streets of New York. A man of creativity and ingenuity, Basquiat used whatever materials he had available. In some of his pieces, he used discarded furniture as a substitute for paper or canvas. His drawings were produced using various materials such as ink, pencil, markers, and oil slick. He was also interested in poetry and language. He often wrote brief phrases or words into his art. His work talked about historical and cultural issues concerning Black Americans such as slavery, racism, and the street scene of New York in the 1980's. In much of his art, Basquiat drew crowns. The crown is a particularly important symbol in his portraits. The crown was meant to celebrate Black people as majestic royalty or saints. Today, the crown is seen as a staple of Basquiat's work.

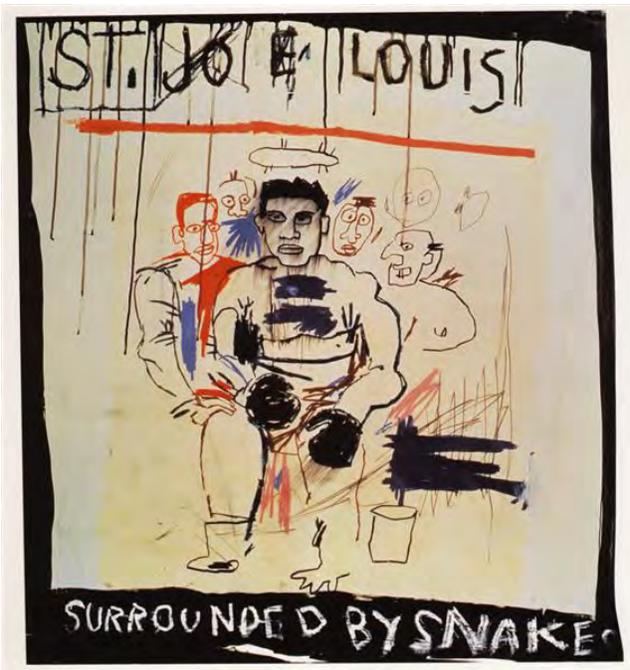
Basquiat's creativity, strong sense of self, and unique style earned him the title as the "father" of the Neo-Expressionist movement in American art history. His brief, but vibrant career fostered and inspired an entire generation of artists.



Basquiat, Crown, 1983



Basquiat, Max Roach, 1984



St. Joe Louis Surrounded by Snakes, 1982



["Meadows Museum of Art, Shreveport: Haitian voodoo flags"](#)



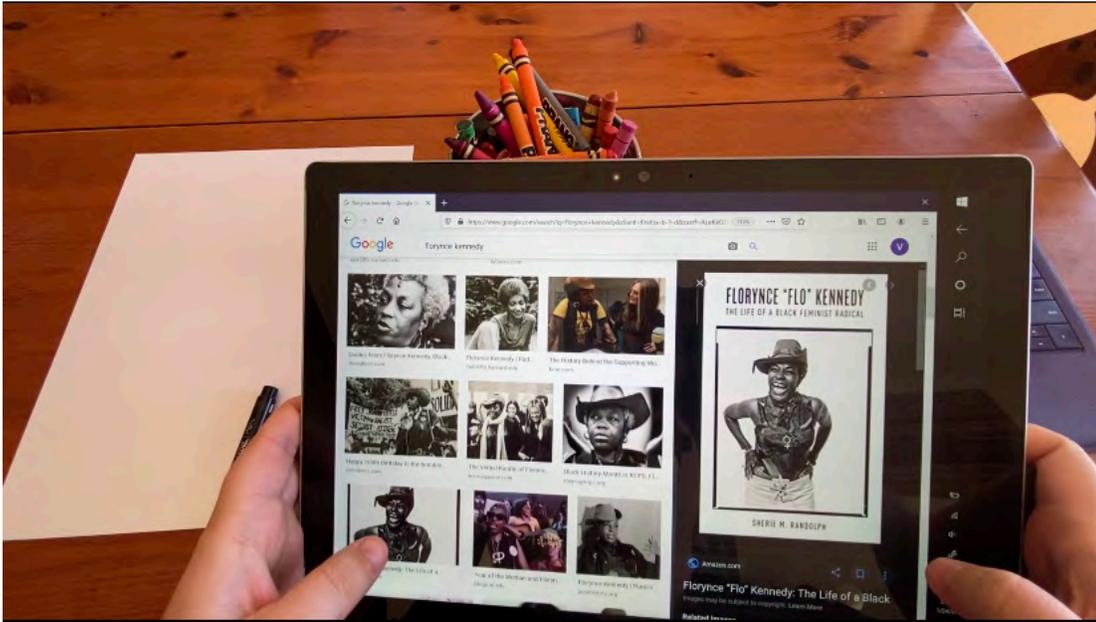
["Collection of African masks, animal sculptures wood, bone, paint, carving, faces, displays, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington, USA"](#)

Supplies for the Basquiat inspired project:

- Crayons
- A pointed scratching tool i.e. a toothpick, a mechanical pencil, etc.
- Paper
- Black Tempura paint
- A paintbrush
- A disposable cup
- An image of your favorite black historical figure or celebrity

Instructions:

- 1) Take your image of a Black historical figure or celebrity you look up to. I chose Florynce Kennedy, an important Black feminist, lawyer, writer, and activist. Think about how important they are to you, what they inspire you to be, and how you feel about them. Think of short, positive things that you think of when you see this person. Next, write down these in short phrases or single words. Example: Queen, King, cool, beautiful, strong, genius, etc. are some good examples



- 2) Next, outline your hero in black crayon.



- 3) Choosing bright and expressive colors, color your hero in. To blend colors together, try drawing over in white crayon.





- 4) Color the background. Try to choose bright and interesting colors that will show up when you etch in your descriptive words. Be sure to use lots of layers so the paint won't bind with the paper. Also, add a halo or crown Basquiat-style over your hero to symbolize their importance!





5) Paint around your hero with black tempura paint. Allow to dry.



6) Think about what your hero means to you, what they've contributed to the world. Then, scratch in some positive phrases or adjectives. You can even draw some symbols to communicate your admiration.



7) Stand back and admire your Basquiat expressive portrait!

