

Mastering the Art of Portraits with Zara the Zebra

Learning objective: To understand the core techniques and vocabulary associated with portraiture, including facial proportions, expression, and media.

Use these flashcards to test your knowledge of portraiture techniques. Zara the Zebra believes that every face tells a unique story—can you identify the artistic elements that bring these stories to life?

What is a portrait?

A work of art that represents a specific person or a group of people, focusing on their face and expression.

Define 'proportion' in the context of a portrait.

The relationship in size and position between different facial features, such as the eyes, nose, and mouth.

What is a self-portrait?

A portrait that an artist creates of themselves, often exploring their own identity or mood.

Explain the term 'medium' in art.

The materials used by an artist to create their work, such as charcoal, oil paint, pencils, or watercolours.

What does it mean to draw a profile view?

A portrait showing the side of a person's face, rather than looking directly at the viewer.

Define 'composition' regarding a portrait.

The way in which the subject is arranged within the frame, including their pose and the background elements.

What is the purpose of shading?

Using varying tones of light and dark to create the illusion of three-dimensional form and depth on a flat surface.

Describe 'symmetry' in facial features.

The quality of being made up of exactly similar parts facing each other, often used as a starting point for mapping out a face.

Why do artists focus on facial expression?

To convey the subject's emotions, personality, or the 'story' behind the portrait to the viewer.

What are the 'features' of a face?

The distinct parts of the face, specifically the eyes, eyebrows, nose, mouth, ears, and chin.

Contrast a realistic portrait with an abstract portrait.

A realistic portrait aims to look exactly like the subject, whereas an abstract portrait uses shapes, colours, and lines to interpret the subject rather than copying their appearance.

Justify why an artist might choose a 'close-up' composition for a portrait.

An artist might choose this to eliminate distractions and force the viewer to focus entirely on the subject's gaze and intricate facial expressions.