



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY  
OF THE FINE ARTS

**LESSON:** Portrayal: How we are seen

**GRADES:** 3-8 adaptable

**Length:** 1 Class Sessions

### INTRODUCTION

In *Three Wise Men Greeting Entry Into Lagos*, Kehinde Wiley depicts three black men as strong, wise, and proud of their cultural background. These figures have a beautiful sense of realism which is contrasted by the ornamental background enveloping the three men. Wiley's goal is to address the media's frequently menacing portrayal of the black community. Artists, Wiley believes, can change this narrative, "What is portraiture? It's choice... It's the ability to position your body in the world for the world to celebrate you on your own terms" (Mick Krever). For this lesson, students will use poetry and art to consider their personal narrative and how they wish to be portrayed.

Mick Krever, CNN. "Kehinde Wiley Redoes Classic Art With Modern Twist". CNN. N.p., 2016. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.



Kehinde Wiley, *Three Wise Men Greeting Entry Into Lagos*, 2008, Oil on canvas, 71 3/4 x 95 3/4 in., Frances & Joseph Nash Field Fund.

## OBJECTIVES/LEARNING GOALS

- To discuss the purpose of portraiture.
- To consider personal narrative in the development of artwork and poetry.
- To create a piece of artwork and poetry based on themselves.
- To discuss their own artwork and creative process as well as that of their peers.

## MATERIALS:

- Paper (watercolor and composition)
- Pencils
- Fine tip sharpies
- Watercolor paint
- Brushes
- Water buckets

## Examples:



## DIRECTIONS:

1. Discuss Kehinde Wiley's *Three Wise Men Greeting Entry Into Lagos* with students. The teacher should also discuss with students the concept behind Wiley's art.
2. Wiley wants the media to perceive the black community not as menacing but as strong and beautiful. Students will discuss misconceptions people place on them and how they would prefer to be perceived with the "I am not... I am" poetry exercise.
  - I am not \_\_\_\_\_ I am \_\_\_\_\_
  - I am not \_\_\_\_\_ I am \_\_\_\_\_
  - I am not \_\_\_\_\_ I am \_\_\_\_\_For example:
  - I am not too petite I am strong and have value
  - I am not antisocial I am dedicated to spending time creating
  - I am not just a sibling I am an individual
3. Students will share their poetry and discuss how it can inform their portrait. For example, the poem above speaks about being petite. How can being petite be visually contrasted? For example, the artist may make sure the page is filled with the portrait to give the person a greater presence.
4. Students can now use a mirror (or photograph), pencil, and paper to sketch a plan for their portrait. This may or may not include lines from their poem.
5. Students will then use watercolor paint to create their portrait.
6. Students will come together in order to share and critique their work.

## EVALUATION:

- Students discovered the art of portraiture and watercolor painting.
- Students composed an original piece of poetry.
- Students successfully created a painting based on how they want to be seen.
- Students presented and discussed their completed works of art.

## Common Core Standards, English Language Arts

**CSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well structured even sequences.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7:** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners, building on other's ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4:** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style, are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

## Pennsylvania Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities

**9.1.3.B:** Recognize, know, use and demonstrate a variety of appropriate arts elements and principles to produce, review and revise original works in the arts.