



AT HOME WITH PORTRAITURE

New Museum Kids Menu provides families with activities to learn about contemporary art and ideas at home. For our first activity, let's explore portraiture at home! Artist Jordan Casteel's 2019 series "Practice of Freedom," in which she portrays her students at Rutgers University, inspires this Kids Menu activity.

You can see more images of Jordan Casteel's work and hear her speak about the New Museum exhibition "Within Reach" [on our website](#).

KEY WORDS

- **Portrait:** a picture of a person or group of people
- **Pose:** a way of sitting or standing
- **Expression:** communication of a feeling or emotion in the face, voice, or a work of art

START WITH ART: JORDAN CASTEEL



This is a portrait titled “Cansuela.” Cansuela is a young artist and student of the painter Jordan Casteel. Jordan Casteel discussed with Cansuela some of the details of how the portrait might best express how she wants to be seen at this time. The portrait, which Casteel painted based on photographs she took of Cansuela in her home, shows us some of the ways that painter sees Cansuela and how Cansuela expresses herself. Casteel takes many photographs then makes very large paintings based on these photos. This painting is 78 by 90 inches, or 6.5 by 7.5 feet! We would be looking up at this picture of Cansuela if we saw it at the Museum.

- What do you see in this portrait of Cansuela?
- How is she posed?
- What is her expression? How do you think she feels?
- This is Cansuela’s bedroom, where she sleeps and works making art. Are you and other people working at home? Are there rooms where you do many different activities? Where in your home do you feel most comfortable, or at home?

LOOK AROUND YOU

How many **portraits** can you find in your home?

- Did you check the walls and the shelves? Maybe check the refrigerator, inside and out? On coins, or in books? Pick a portrait or two that you found to discuss.
- How are people in them posing? What is their expression: do their faces look happy, serious, or another emotion?

- What can you guess or tell by looking at details (clothing, background, lighting, or other objects) in the portrait(s)? Can you tell where, when, and why their portrait was made? What questions do you still have?

MAKE ART

Let's create our own portraits at home, using a digital camera and crayons.

Materials

- Digital camera (a cellphone works!)
- Crayons
- Paper
- Another person to make art with you

Making

1. Ask a family member to take a photo of you. Consider where you want to be photographed, how you want to pose, and what objects or other people (if any) you would like to include.
2. Trade places: your turn to take the photo, their turn to pose for a photo.
3. Now, use crayons to draw a portrait based on your photograph. Choose any color of crayon and any size paper.
4. Spend about 15 minutes drawing. When you draw, focus on outlining your partner, especially their pose and expression. Be loose and quick with your sketches. Consider using colors that differ from the photo to emphasize what you want to express.

REFLECTION

- Do you prefer to draw or pose?
- In the portrait you made, what energy or feeling does the person express?
- How well does the portrait reflect the person?

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MUSEUM

IMAGE:

Jordan Casteel, *Cansuela*, 2019. Oil on canvas, 78 × 90 in (198.12 x 228.6 cm), The Komal Shah & Gaurav Garg Collection

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