

aperture On Sight

Lesson 14:

Mind Maps

Form + Content + Context = Meaning

Materials needed:

Computer
Digital projector
Cameras or smartphones
Selection of photobooks from lesson 11
Chart paper or whiteboard
Markers
Sample mind map
Index cards
Paper

Reference work:

Sample mind map

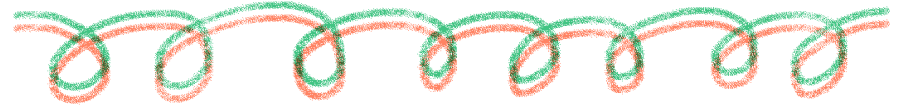
Students will

- ➔ **Know:** Photobooks may contain a theme.
- ➔ **Understand:** Photographers may choose themes to help them tell a larger story.
- ➔ **Do:** Draw a mind map of their own thematic idea.

Lesson plan

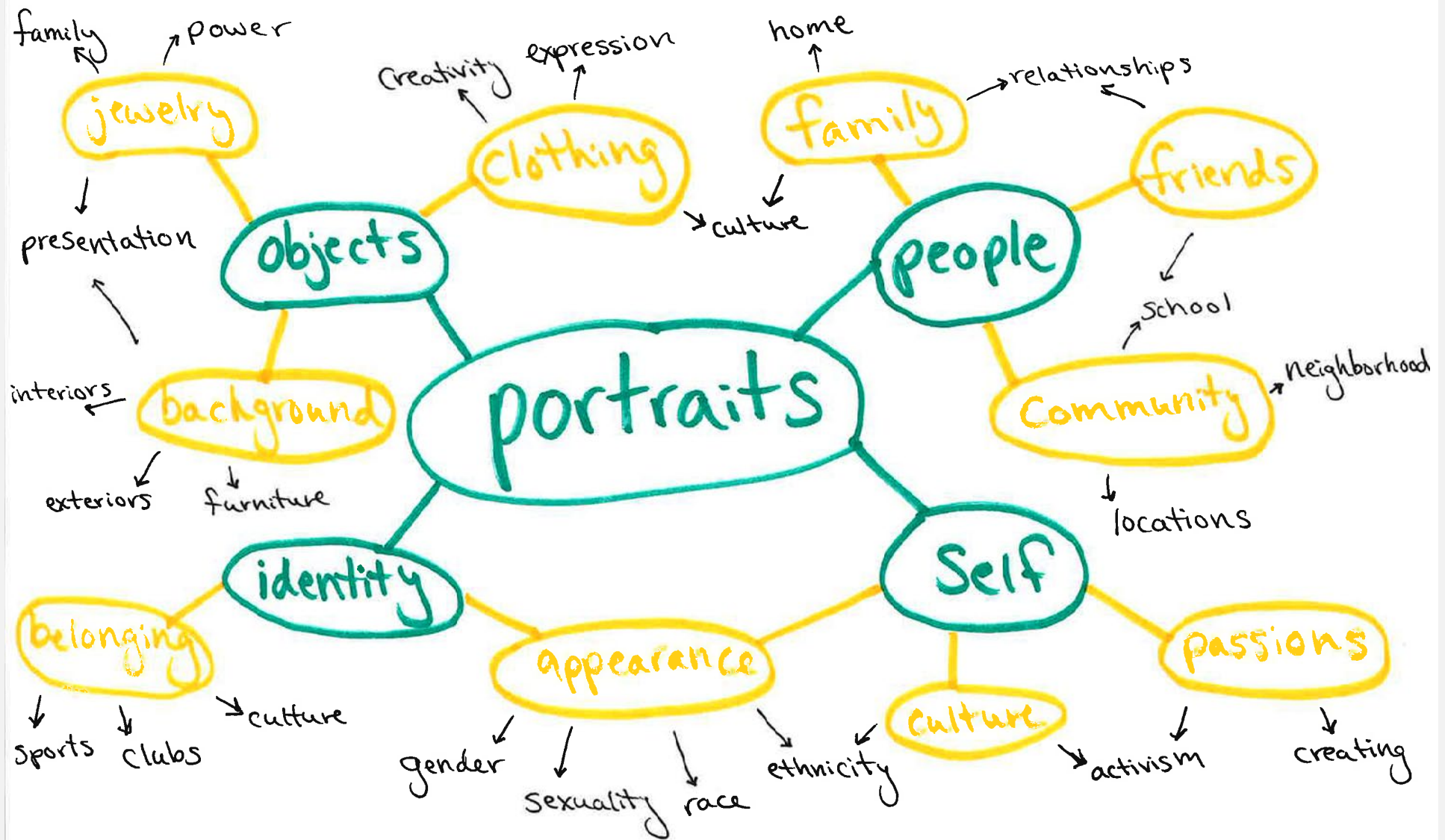
- **Warm-up discussion:** Based on the answers students gave at the end of lesson 13, show your class photobooks or projects that relate to and expand on the themes that students have responded to. (Common student project themes may include family, culture, friendship, nature, animals, gender, expectations, or beauty.)
- **Return to mind maps:** Students will need to choose the theme for their projects during this class. To invite them to think about their own theme, bring out the mind maps the students made last class using their photographs that emerged from lessons 1–10 of the curriculum. Remind students that the goal of a mind map is to help them clarify what they want to say about a theme that interests them.
 - * Invite students to think about their many weeks of studying photography techniques, and how valuable the process of learning is to the overall artistic process. Recognize learning as a significant method of creation and note how photos made during experimenting with techniques can sometimes be selected for final presentations.
 - * Invite students to think about the artistic process of the photographers that the previous lessons have referenced. Note how many of these artists' photobooks begin by building off previous or existing photographs, expanding the ideas presented in them. Consider: How did these artists pull together images for their photobooks based on a common theme? Why was this theme important to them? Was it personally impactful, culturally meaningful, socially significant? Are the images similar visually, by their technique, or by their content?
- **Activity:** Ask each student to make a mind map about their photo project (with their chosen theme written in the middle). Students may utilize their mind maps from the previous week and expand on the ideas related to their theme or create a completely new mind map. If they are stuck, ask them to think about their favorite photograph they've made, a work they saw that inspired them, a previous lesson that was interesting, or even what makes them angry or what they love.

- * This mind map should include the main theme in the center and secondary themes around. Words that help the students define their themes, feelings they may express, image and content ideas (what will their pictures look like? What will be in them?), formal elements they may use, inspiration references, and drawings are welcome.
- * Try to use the mind-mapping process to move more deeply into the broad themes. For example, an initial idea about culture might turn out to be about cultural ideas about family structure, gender, or time. A project about friends might end up looking at identity formation, chosen family, or place. Get past what the pictures will be of and into what they are about. Is there a larger question each student is asking about their theme? How might students visualize these questions and potential answers?
- Ask students to make a list of what they will need to do in order to create the project. Is this realistic? Will they need to schedule photoshoots with other people? Locate costumes? Make or bring props?
- Share ideas with the group.



Going further

Read: “Kyoko Hamada: Grocery List,” from ***The Photographers’ Playbook: 307 Assignments and Ideas*** (Aperture, 2014), 136



Aperture On Sight was conceived by Sarah Anne McNear, former deputy director for external affairs and public programs. The 2023–24 edition has been written and led by Alice Proujansky, teaching artist; Frances Dorenbaum, content editor and curatorial advisor; Alex Schlechter, education and public programs manager; Virginia Cannella, education and public programs work scholar; and Sarah Meister, executive director, with contributions from work scholars Seth Fields and Sofia Turner. Graphic design: Karina Eckmeier. Illustration assistance: Lu Gan. Copyeditors: Susan Ciccotti, Freddy Martinez, and Claire Voon. The first edition, in 2015, was written by Sarah Anne McNear and Alice Proujansky, with contributions by Zalika Azim, Frances Dorenbaum, Schuyler Duffy, Adair Ewin, Becca Imrich, Alexis Lambrou, Christopher Lopez, Pete Pin, Nancy Schneider, José Soto, Emily Stewart, and Ashley Strazzinski.

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