

# Hildegard Center for the Arts “Heroes Among Us”

## Torn Paper Portraits of Heroes

Adapted with permission from Blick Art Materials’ “Torn Paper Portraits” Lesson Plan

[www.dickblick.com/lessonplans/hand-colored-history](http://www.dickblick.com/lessonplans/hand-colored-history)

Please visit the website to see examples of this Art

*For Art Students Grades 9-12*

**Purpose:** The Student will create an art portrait of a hero they have identified

### **Objectives:**

- Students will look for grayscale values in a photograph of someone they consider to be a “hero” then select matching values from a limited palette of pre-painted grays on paper.
- Students will view areas of the photograph in terms of shapes, forms and planes rather than line and color.
- Students will use collage as an impressionistic painting medium.
- Students will conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques and processes they use.
- Students will create artwork that uses organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems.

### **National Standards that may be met:**

- Students describe how different materials, techniques and processes cause different responses.
- Students use different media, techniques and processes to communicate ideas, experiences and stories.
- Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner.
- Students know the differences among visual characteristics and purposes of art in order to convey ideas.
- Students describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses.
- Students explore and understand prospective content for works of art.
- Students select and use subject matter, symbols and ideas to communicate meaning.
- Students understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art.
- Students describe how people’s experiences influence the development of specific artworks.
- Students understand there are different responses to specific artworks.

In this lesson, students “paint” with torn paper using a limited number of values found in a grayscale image. Using torn paper instead of direct painting requires them to visually divide

the gray areas into separate shapes and define each shape individually. Students work directly on a piece of styrene over the image, eliminating the need for preliminary sketches and keeping the image constantly in front of them so they can “copy” the values. Any black and white image can be used, but creating portraits will give students a chance to study the placement of features, facial planes, shadows and highlights. (Grades 9-12)

### **Materials:**

- White sulphite drawing paper, 80 lb. 9x12” sheets, cut in half—need six half-sheets per student
- Acrylic paint—mars black and titanium white
- Rectangular 6-well trays
- Clear styrene sheets (8x10” —one per student or for less rigid but more economical pieces, use matte acetate sheets)
- Blick scholastic Golden Taklon
- 1/3” flat wash—one per student
- Tacky glue—one bottle per student
- 8x10” black and white, ink-jetted or laser-printed photos
- Polymer gloss medium

### **Preparation:**

- Have students choose a photo of their “Hero” to bring in and enlarge on a good quality photocopier in black and white to size 8” x 10”. Make sure the photo has multiple levels of gray.
- Distribute to each student six sheets of heavy-weight drawing paper, size 9 x 6”. Have students leave one sheet white and paint one sheet with Mars black. Instruct students to mix black and white to make 4 shades of gray for the remaining 4 sheet of paper. Students will need water on hand for rinsing brushes but should be cautioned not to thin the paint with water or it will cause too much buckling of the paper. Allow paint to dry.
- Remove protective cover from both sides of the styrene. Tape the black and white photo, face up against the styrene. Tape photo on all four sides to make sure it doesn’t move. Clean front side of styrene to remove any clinging lint.
- Students begin to tear the paper into pieces and use small amounts of glue to position the pieces directly onto the styrene. It is not necessary to make sure all edges are secure because the final “painting” will be coated. It’s difficult to decide where to begin, so you may wish to specify doing all the black areas first or doing the white first.
- As the styrene becomes covered by the paper, less light will be able to penetrate down to the photo and it will be more difficult to see the details, so it would be best to start with facial features and work on the background last.
- Remind students to try and match the gray values they see in the photo beneath. Encourage them to use a variety of sizes of torn paper swatches and to layer them over

each other rather than try to position them next to one another. If an error is made, students can either lift the paper swatches away or simply layer over them. The rough, white edge of the torn paper adds a dramatic line quality and should be used within the piece. Do NOT allow the use of scissors or cutting materials.

- When the styrene is covered, remove the photo from the back. The back of the collage is a work of art in itself. Cover the piece with a coat of gloss medium to make sure all the pieces stay in place. Pieces may be mounted and matted for a finished look.