Lesson Plan Assignment

Senior, Media Arts AQ Course

Kathy Kovosi, Maria Maletta, Nicolas Juretic

June 21, 2025

Expressive Digital Self-Portraits, Analysis & Artist Statement

Media Arts 11 (ASM 3M)

Length of Lesson: 8-10 hours

(and broken down into minutes throughout the lesson)

Enduring Understanding(s) or Big Idea(s):

(Use a statement(s) to describe what the students should understand at the end of the lesson.)

- Art and media making involve the process of learning about artistic expression, design (composition), techniques, and tools.
- Painting **TECHNIQUE** is the art of 'picture-making' to some people, but to professionals, it is the study of colour which is extremely valuable in all forms or art and media making. In this lesson, you will experiment with colour. Painters' **MATERIALS** include watercolour, acrylic, oils, or gouache; but we will be exploring colour through the use of a computer program. Painters' **TOOLS** include brushes, palette knives, sponges; basically, anything that will hold and be used to apply paint.
- In this lesson, your camera & computer, computer tools and if available, a digital drawing tablet will be your tools to create 3 expressive self-portraits!

LEARNING GOALS:

By the end of the lesson/task, you should be able to...

- Experiment with colour and symbols to create 3 digital portrait studies that express your mood, feelings, and ideas.
- Experiment with layering, opacity and transparency of colours, textures, and filters over a photographic image with an emphasis on colour.
- Experiment using a computer paint & drawing program such as Photoshop or Procreate.

- Analyse the work of professional artists, their own artwork, and the work of their peers, through discussion and writing.
- Write an analysis/reflection about the work of professional artists, peer work, and your own artwork.
- Develop a level of comfort with using a digital drawing tablet and/or program drawing/painting tools.

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Creating & Presenting

Overall Expectations:

A1. The Creative Process: apply the creative process to create media art works, individually and/or collaboratively;

A2. The Principles of Media Arts: design and produce media art works, applying the principles of media arts and using various elements from contributing arts (dance, drama, music, visual arts);

A3. Using Technologies, Tools, and Techniques: apply traditional and emerging technologies, tools, and techniques to produce and present media art works for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Specific Expectations:

A1.1 Use a variety of strategies (e.g., brainstorming, concept webs, mind maps, group discussions, research using sources such as case studies) to investigate creative challenges and generate innovative ideas, individually and/or collaboratively, for addressing them;

A1.3 Produce and refine media art works, using research, exploration, input, and reflection;

A2.1 Analyse how media artists use the principle of hybridization, and apply that principle in the design and production of media art works that explore elements from contributing arts

A2.4 Analyse how media artists use the principle of point of view and apply that principle in the design and production of media art works that explore elements from contributing arts.

Reflecting, Responding & Analyzing

Overall Expectations:

B1. The Critical Analysis Process: demonstrate an understanding of the critical analysis process by using it to monitor the creative process, and by examining, interpreting, assessing, and reflecting on media art works;

B2. Identity and Values: demonstrate an understanding of how media art works reflect personal and cultural identity, and affect personal, cultural, and community values and their awareness of those values;

B3. Connections Beyond the Classroom: demonstrate an understanding of the types of knowledge and skills that are transferable beyond the media arts classroom.

Specific Expectations:

B1.1 Analyse, through examination and reflection, their initial response to media art works, using various strategies and modes of communication;

B1.2 Use the critical analysis process to deconstruct, interpret, and assess media art works created by recognized artists, and record and organize their findings using a variety of tools and formats;

B1.4 Use the appropriate components of the critical analysis process to assess and enhance their own creative process, including their planning, pro duction, and presentation decisions, and to interpret audience responses to their media artwork;

B2.1 Identify and analyse ways in which media art works express the personal identities of artists

B3.2 Analyse skills connected with design, production, distribution, or management processes in media arts.

Foundations

Overall Expectations:

C1. Terminology: demonstrate an understanding of, and use correct terminology when referring to, elements, principles, and other concepts relating to media arts;

C3. Responsible Practices: demonstrate an understanding of responsible practices associated with producing, presenting, and experiencing media art works.

Specific Expectations:

C1.3 Explain terminology associated with the technologies, tools, and techniques used in the production and presentation of media art works, and use this terminology correctly and appropriately when producing, presenting, and analysing media art works;

C2.3 Describe, with reference to individual artists and their works, culturally specific methods used by contemporary media artists to engage their audiences.

MINDS-ON (HOOK):

Looks like: brainstorming, mind mapping, setting a mini-task, discussion, reviewing previous material, before reading strategy, video, visual, question, challenge, other…

These should be the awareness and engagement activities around the topic. They can be a whole class (i.e., modeling) or small group activities (i.e., shared practice).

1. Kahoots: Review of Colour Theory (5-10 minutes): Whole class warm up & Review

Kahoot! | Learning games | Make learning awesome!

http://www.kahoot.com

- Search for 'colour theory' and run through a game of Kahoots! To get an informal assessment of how much the students know/don't know about colour theory.
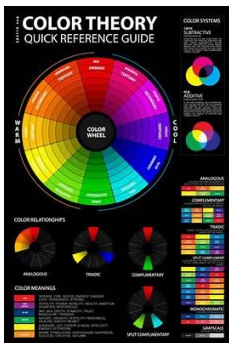
Colour & Painting review should include:

Colour Theory can be fascinating. We will be looking at how the concepts of Colour Theory have been applied to artwork by other artists and then have a chance to apply colour theory to our own work in a way that helps us express emotion and ideas.

Colour Theory Websites:

Basic Color Theory

http://artlex.com

Students should have a basic understanding of:

Primary: blue, yellow, red.

Secondary: orange, green, purple.

Tertiary: yellow-green, yellow-orange, yellow-purple, blue-green, blue-orange, blue-purple, red-green, red-orange, red-purple.

Monochromatic: One colour mixed with black to create shades or with white to create tints.

Analogous: 3 colours that are next to each other on the colour wheel. These colours give warm or cool feelings.

Complementary: Colours directly across from each other on the colour wheel and have the most contrast. These colours can be mixed to create brown or gray to create more neutralized colours or feelings.

Feelings- (happy, sad) are brief emotional reactions that can create 'mood.'

Moods- (dreary or angry temperament) A state of mind for a longer duration.

DEVELOPMENT OF LESSON

This may include instructional strategies, activities, and/or cross-curricular activities. These are all of the activities (e.g., creating, reflecting, and revising) that the student would engage in to build understanding and skills to meet expectations and learning goals.

ACTION #1: (30 minutes)

> **Investigation & Analysis of Digital and Photographic Self-Portraits by Well Known Artists**

Present: Introduction to Self-Portrait Trickery (PowerPoint)

Whole Class Discussion & Analysis:

1. Present the '**Introduction to Self-Portrait Trickery**' PowerPoint to the entire class (also included on Edsby/D2L course platform). Students will consider & analyse the photographic and/or digitally created Self-Portraits by 4 historical and contemporary artists.

> **Prompt:**
>
> As a class, consider and discuss the following questions for each:
>
> - What makes each of these images a self-portrait?
> - How do artists use colour to express themselves?

2. **As an introduction to the analysis portion of the project:**
   Included on the slides for each artist are **questions** that you can discuss with students can as a class and/or with a seat partner;

3. Students will answer the questions independently and submit their answers to the 'Assignment' submission button on the course website platform.

PowerPoint: Self-Portrait Trickery (contents):

With a partner, consider the work of the following artists, discuss your answers to the questions provided for each artist and individually, write down your analysis for each work:

These artist works will be projected for the entire class and will be made available on Edsby/D2L for students to review together and at their own pace.

1. Andy Warhol

Andy Warhol's Haunting Self-Portrait: Andy Warhol/Self-Portrait #9 (1986)

Bing Videos

Questions:

1. Why might Andy Warhols 1986 self-portrait be depicted with a blue, pink, orange, and yellow camouflage pattern over his own face?
2. How was hybridization applied to this self-portrait? What purpose does it serve?

2. Cindy Sherman

How Cindy Sherman Redefined Self-Portraiture (7 Artworks) | TheCollector

Untitled #98 by Cindy Sherman, 1982, via the Tate Modern, London

Questions:

1. How does Cindy Shermans' Photograph 'Untitled #98' make you feel?
2. How did the artist use colour to provide information to the viewer?
3. What is the focal point of this self-portrait?
4. What perspective is this photograph taken from?
5. Why do you think the artist took the photo from this perspective?

3. Karen Armenta-Digital Self-Portrait

"*i'M a MeSs*", Medium: Digital Illustration, Size: 36 in. x 36 in., October 15, 2017

Questions:

1. How does this artist use elements of design (colour, line, shape, space, texture, value) to portray a particular emotion or mood?
2. What emotion or mood is this artist trying to express? Do you think they were successful? Why or why not?
3. If you could make suggestions to the artist to improve this work, what advice would you give?

4. Mishelle Angarita

Questions:

1. List step-by-step, the process that you believe the artist took to create this digital self-portrait?

2. What digital tools could have been used to create this self-portrait?

3. How did this artist use symbolism and colour theory to create a particular emotion or mood?

ACTION #2: Introduction to Main Activity: Creative Process (30 minutes)

1. *Show **PowerPoint** for **Introduction: Beyond the Selfie:*** Beyond the SElfie PPT.pdf as an introduction to the creative part of the project.
2. Discuss the student exemplars and how they might have been created. Some possible considerations:
   - Which digital tools were used? Which compositions use colour theory to emphasize emotion/mood?
   - Which compositions use symbolism in their arrangements?
   - What other elements and principles of design are being applied to create an intended effect?

PowerPoint Includes:

- 'Inspiring Questions to Ask Yourself' before starting your own Expressive Self-Portrait Painting

- Student Exemplars

INSPIRING QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF WHEN PLANNING TO CREATE THIS IMAGE:

- • Who are you?
- • What is your identity as a student, daughter/son, friend, sibling, artist, etc.?
- • How can you express this through a meaningful self-portrait, using colour to show emotion and meaning?
- What setting could help you express your ideas/emotion? Ensure that the background is not too busy or distracting. The negative space (background) should add value to the narrative (idea/emotion) or neutral to emphasize the positive space.
- How can lighting help to create the mood/emotion that you would like to achieve?
- Which phone apps or computer programs could you use to manipulate your self-portrait in order to further express your concept?
3. Introduce the remaining criteria for the project and direct students to continue independently with the following activities. Instructions will be on Edsby/D2L Platform as well.

MAIN ACTIVITY: Creation of 3 Expressive Self-Portraits (4 hours or choose 1-1 hour)

Create 3 self-portraits using colour theory and symbolism to represent 3 different emotions and/or moods. Another option could be to create a series of self-portraits (triptych) to represent different perspectives of one emotion/mood.

Tools & Materials:

- Computer drawing/painting programs (Photoshop, Procreate, Claris Draw, CorelDraw, CorelPaint, Drawpad Graphics, Painter, Illustrator, Color It, Dabbler, GIMP) and/or apps (Blender, Astropad Studio, Sketchbook, Clip Studio Paint, Inspire Pro, Zen Brush 3, GIMP, Paintstorm Studio, Krita, Metabang Paint Pro), Ibis Paint.
- Camera/Phone
- Drawing Tablet
- Props for photography such as flowers/greenery, twinkling lights, fabrics, and miscellaneous items available.
- Greenscreen or backdrop

Self Portrait Instructions:

1. Using the steps of the Creative Process, plan out your idea using sketches, mind map, lists, colour scheme plans either physically or on a digital template.

2. Photograph yourself. In your photos, include 2 **symbolic objects** (props) along with yourself and/or photographed alone. Make sure to take lighting into consideration in relation to the emotion or mood that you want to create.

   a. **Symbolic Objects/Props**-Include symbols/props that represent your interests. These symbols can be human, animal, or object. Add symbols of objects that define your feelings.

      Example:
       I would include my dogs' favourite toys that they have had since the day I found my dogs in Taiwan. These toys represent the love and memories I shared with my dogs over their lives through the only toys that they cared for their entire lives, while tearing every other toy apart. The tattered and muted toys represent my fading memories of the simple moments I shared with them daily.

   b. The entire composition will become a **metaphor** for your experience. A metaphor is a figure that stands for something else. For instance, in some of the photos I wore the mask I would wear while riding my scooter in Taiwan to try not to breathe in all of the pollution. This mask represents my struggle with health and with not speaking the language fluently while I lived there.

3. **Upload your photos into a digital folder** in your OneDrive account. Be sure to label the folder 'Computer Generated Self-Portrait'. This is where you will keep your photographs and images that you would like to use for this project.

4. **Edit through the photos** that you have. Narrow down the selection to your top 3-5 photos. Remember that you are not looking for the photo that you think you look the best in but rather the photo that would best represent the emotion or mood that you are trying to convey.

5. Open your chosen digital drawing/painting program and upload your images to the program.

6. Add colour (and symbolism) to make the work more expressive by using the following colour theories:

S.P. #1: Monochromatic

Choose ONE colour and make lighter and darker tones of that colour. If you are using PS, Open multiple layers, and working between the layers add at least 3-5 tones of your chosen colours to create the emotion or mood that you are trying to create.

For example, you can use a variety of light and dark blues, adjusting transparencies of the colours over your image to represent the mood you are trying to convey. Feel free to add patterns and textures, overlayed imagery to create the intended mood and compositional arrangement that you would like to create.

S.P. #2: Complimentary

Choose 2 complimentary colours.

Try mixing/layering 2 colours that are opposite each other on the colour wheel. What happens if you mix blue and orange? Yellow and purple? Green with red? When overlapping strokes turn a shade of grey or brown, the tone is dull. Use your chosen 2 colours in a range of brightness and dullness as well as the mixed tones to draw/paint over your photograph and give the intended emotion/mood to your composition. Include textures and patterns, distort or exaggerate your facial expression to match the emotions/mood you are creating.

S.P. #3: Analogous

Choose 3 colours found next to each other on the colour wheel or choose 2 primary colours such as blue and red together to create blue violet, violet and red violet. What mood would you create if you changed your colours to blue and green? Are the combinations that you chose warm or cold?

Create a composition using a combination of your analogous colours to give the intended emotion or mood to your self-portrait. Add patterns, textures and drawing details where you feel fit to add to the composition and its arrangement.

7. Have students complete the following questions to create their own **Artist Statement.** The final statement should be **between 350-500 words.**

ARTIST STATEMENT QUESTIONS (Self Analysis aka Self Reflection) (1 hour)

1. Describe your subject matter.
2. Analyse and describe your colour scheme.
3. Interpret the meaning of your composition.
4. What symbols did you use? Why?
5. What are the 3 most important elements and principles that you applied to your work?

6. Which Principle of Design (Hybridization, Point of View, Interactivity or Duration) are being used in your compositions. Explain.
7. Why are they located where they are in your composition?
8. How is your work expressive regarding:
   a. Ideas b. Feelings c. Mood d. symbols.
9. How successful (unsuccessful) is your progression of ideas/depiction of feelings/moods in each of your 3 compositions? How can you improve your work?
10. What did you learn about colour, symbols, and/or depiction of feelings/mood in a self-portrait?

PRESENTATION & SUBMISSION: (1 hour)

8. Save your final 3 Digital Self Portraits. Give the series of compositions and each of the self-portraits a title and a short 'Artist Statement' by answering the Self Analysis questions for all 3 compositions that you have created.

- Create a simple **Powerpoint or Canva presentation** to arrange your completed project. Be sure to include the following:

Slide 1: Title of Assignment, Course Code, Your Project Title, Your Name, Date;

Slide 2-3: Artist Statement (Can be more than one slide). (See questions below to create A.S.)

Slide 4: Monochromatic Self-Portrait (In small font underneath your composition include your Title and 'Monochromatic S.P.)

Slide 5: Complimentary Self-Portrait (In small font underneath your composition include your Title and 'Complimentary S.P.')

Slide 6: Analogous Self-Portrait (In small font underneath your composition include your Title and 'Analogous S.P.')

9. Submit completed project to the appropriate Admission Button on Edsby/D2L by Deadline.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

(lesson delivery and/or assessment; What accommodations and/or modifications (for students with IEP's) will you make to support students with special needs? What strategies will you use to support English Language Learners?)

Differentiated Instruction for the Expressive Self-Portrait Project (ASM 3M):

To support diverse learners in this project, instruction is differentiated across **content, process, product, and environment**:

- **Content**: Students explore identity and self-expression through various media—photography, digital illustration, and writing. Resources are provided at varying levels of complexity, including visual exemplars, artist statements, and scaffolded guides for analysis and reflection.
- **Process**: Students choose from multiple tools and techniques (e.g., DSLR cameras, mobile photography, digital drawing tablets, or collage apps) based on their comfort and skill level. Mini-lessons and tutorials are offered in small groups or one-on-one, allowing students to progress at their own pace.
- **Product**: While all students complete a self-portrait, analysis, and artist statement, the format and emphasis may vary. For example, a student with strong visual skills might focus more on digital illustration, while another might express themselves more deeply through writing. Rubrics are flexible to honor different strengths.
- **Environment**: The classroom is structured to support collaboration and independence. Quiet zones, peer feedback stations, and tech support hubs allow students to work in ways that suit their learning preferences.

This approach ensures that every student can engage meaningfully with the project while developing both technical and conceptual skills in media arts.

CONSOLIDATION-LESSON DEBRIEF: Expressive Self-Portrait Project (ASM 3M)

This project invited students to explore identity through photography, digital illustration, and written reflection. Differentiated instruction played a key role in ensuring all learners could access and engage with the creative process meaningfully.

REFLECTION:

What Worked Well:

- **Student Choice**: Allowing students to select their tools and techniques (e.g., DSLR vs. mobile photography, digital vs. hand-drawn illustration) empowered them to work from their strengths and interests.
- **Scaffolded Supports**: Providing exemplars, step-by-step guides, and mini lessons helped students navigate both the technical and conceptual aspects of the project.

- **Flexible Assessment**: Rubrics that valued diverse expressions of identity encouraged authentic, personal work and reduced performance anxiety.

Challenges Observed:

- Some students required more time to articulate their ideas in writing, suggesting a need for additional support in the self-portrait analysis and artist statement components.
- A few students struggled with decision-making when given too many options, indicating that structured choice menus might be helpful in future iterations.

NEXT STEPS

(Follow-up to this lesson)

- Incorporate peer critique sessions earlier in the process to build confidence and refine ideas.
- Offer optional writing workshops or sentence starters for students who need help expressing their thoughts in writing.
- Continue to refine rubrics to better reflect the range of media and modes students use to communicate their ideas.
- Offer checkpoints for students to follow in order to stay on track with deadlines.

1. Visual Learner – Digital Illustration Focus

Student A gravitated toward digital illustration using Procreate on an iPad. They explored surrealist techniques to depict their inner world, layering symbolic imagery like clocks and mirrors. While their writing skills were developing, they used a visual mind map to plan their artist statement, which helped them articulate their ideas more clearly.

2. Verbal Learner – Writing-Driven Approach

Student B expressed themselves most confidently through writing. They created a minimalist photographic self-portrait but wrote a deeply reflective analysis and artist statement that explored themes of cultural identity and personal growth. They were given sentence starters and exemplars to scaffold their writing process.

3. Kinesthetic Learner – Mixed Media Exploration

Student C struggled with digital tools but excelled when allowed to incorporate physical collage elements into their portraits. They photographed their collage and enhanced it digitally. This hands-on approach kept them engaged and allowed them to express complex emotions through texture and layering.

4. English Language Learner – Multimodal Support

Student D, an ELL student, used a combination of photography and emoji-based annotations to plan their self-portrait. They recorded their artist statement orally first, then worked with a peer and a teacher to translate it into written form. Visual aids and bilingual glossaries supported their understanding throughout.

5. Neurodivergent Learner – Structured Choice and Routine

Student E, who thrives on routine and clear expectations, was given a structured choice board to select tools and themes. They appreciated the predictable workflow and used a storyboard template to plan their portrait. Their final piece was highly detailed and conceptually rich, reflecting their unique perspective.

SUCCESS CRITERIA: Expressive Self-Portrait Project

(What will success look like)

Creative Process & Media Use

- I selected and used media tools (e.g., photography, digital illustration, collage) that best express my identity and artistic intent.
- I demonstrated thoughtful planning and experimentation in developing my self-portrait.
- I applied elements and principles of design effectively to communicate emotion, symbolism, or narrative.

Critical Thinking & Reflection

- I wrote a clear and insightful self-portrait analysis that explains my artistic choices and personal symbolism.
- I reflected on how my identity, experiences, and culture influenced my creative decisions.
- I used appropriate media vocabulary and critical thinking to evaluate my work.

Communication & Expression

- I created a cohesive and expressive self-portrait that communicates a personal message or theme.

- I wrote an artist statement that clearly communicates my intent, process, and reflection on the final piece.

- I presented my work in a way that demonstrates pride, clarity, and understanding of the creative process.

Collaboration & Learning Skills

- I participated in peer feedback sessions and used suggestions to improve my work.
- I managed my time and resources effectively to complete all components of the project.
- I demonstrated initiative, responsibility, and openness to learning throughout the process.

ASSESSMENTS

(For/As/Of Learning; What are you looking/listening for? What assessment tools and strategies are you going to use? This may include Learning Skills, Achievement Chart, Rubric, Checklist, Peer-Evaluation, Self-Evaluation, Metacognition.)

ASM3M Self-Portrait Project Rubric

Criteria	Level 1 (50-59%)	Level 2 (60–69%)	Level 3 (70–79%)	Level 4 (80–100%)
Analysis of Self-Portrait Work *(Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing)*	Demonstrates limited understanding of self-portrait conventions and emotional expression.	Demonstrates some understanding with basic insights into self-portrait conventions and emotional expression.	Demonstrates considerable understanding with thoughtful analysis of self-portrait conventions and emotional expression.	Demonstrates thorough and insightful analysis with strong connections to emotional and artistic intent.
Creative Process & Concept Development *(Creating and Presenting)*	Limited evidence of planning and exploration of ideas. Colour schemes are not clearly connected to emotion/mood.	Some evidence of planning and idea development. Colour schemes show a basic connection to emotion/mood.	Considerable planning and thoughtful development of ideas. Colour schemes effectively convey emotion/mood.	Extensive planning and innovative development of ideas. Colour schemes powerfully enhance emotional impact.

Technical Use of Digital Tools *(Creating and Presenting)*	Uses digital tools with limited skill and control. Compositions lack cohesion.	Uses digital tools with some skill. Compositions show basic structure and intent.	Uses digital tools with considerable skill. Compositions are cohesive and visually effective.	Uses digital tools with a high degree of skill and creativity. Compositions are polished, expressive, and visually compelling.
Application of Colour Theory *(Understanding of Elements & Principles)*	Colour schemes are unclear or incorrectly applied. Limited emotional impact.	Colour schemes are somewhat accurate. Emotional intent is partially conveyed.	Colour schemes are accurate and support emotional intent.	Colour schemes are expertly applied and enhance the emotional and aesthetic quality of each piece.
Communication of Mood/Emotion *(Communicating Meaning)*	Mood/emotion is unclear or inconsistent across the works.	Mood/emotion is somewhat communicated. Some inconsistencies across the works.	Mood/emotion is clearly communicated and consistent across the work.	Mood/emotion is powerfully and consistently communicated across all three compositions.
Reflection and Artistic Intent *(Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing)*	Reflection is vague or lacks connection to artistic choices.	Reflection shows some connection to artistic choices and intent.	Reflection clearly explains artistic choices and emotional goals.	Reflection is insightful, articulate, and deeply connected to artistic intent and personal expression.

RESOURCES

(such as materials, books, handouts, links and/or technology needed)

PowerPoint: Self-Portrait Trickery (Website/Edsby)

PowerPoint: Beyond the Average Selfie-Student Exemplars (Website/Edsby): Produced by Nancy Papak at Belle River District High School.

I wish someone had told me this about color

Brooke Glaser

[digital self portrait tutorial | SELF PORTRAIT digitally in 4 WAYS](#)

digital self-portrait tutorial | SELF PORTRAIT digitally in 4 WAYS/ Anna Sok_Art

Student Exemplars: [Beyond the SElfie PPT.pdf](#)

Next Steps: Possible next projects

(Follow-up to this lesson)

1. **Visual Autobiography Digital Self Portrait**

Link:

[Visual Autobiography Digital Self Portrait](#)

2. Can an AI Generated Portrait be considered Art? Why or Why Not? Explain using your definition of what makes a work of art actually 'art.'
    a. Create a debate format activity for students to choose "yes", "no", and "it depends" and have them team up to prepare a summary of their decision. Each group will be able to share their criteria and considerations.
    b. After each group shares their reasoning and considerations, give students the opportunity to decide if they want to change their original answer.
        i. Ask students why they chose to stay or leave their original choice and help mediate the balance and merits of each perspective.

Link:

[AI Portrait Generator - Create AI Art Portraits Online Free](#)