

Collection Conversations: Raul Caracoza & George Segal

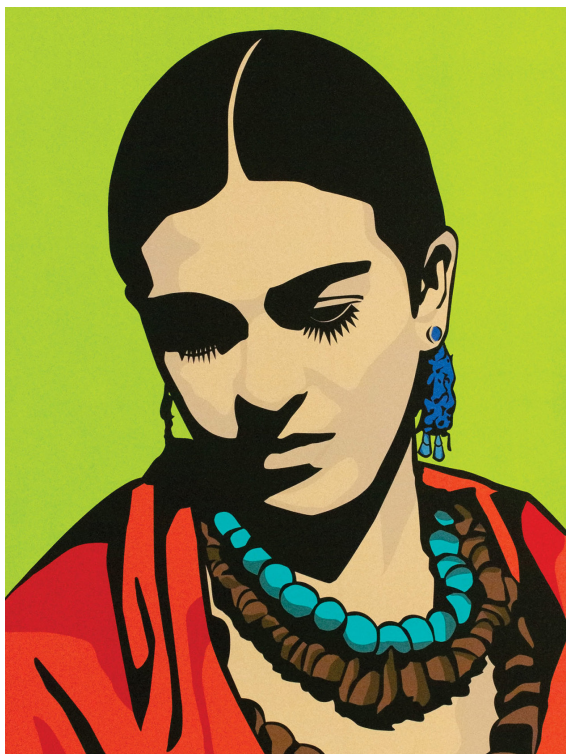
Ages: 8+ (Grades 3–12)

Duration: Open-ended

Materials Needed: Paper, plus pencil, colored pencils, markers, crayons, and/or paint.

Inspiration: Raul Caracoza (American, b. 1980). *Young Frida (Green)*, 2006. Serigraph, edition 14/40. Collection of the Hudson River Museum. Gift of Henry S. Hacker, by exchange, 2019 (2019.11). © Raul Caracoza (@artbyboog). Featured in *Frida Kahlo in Context*, February 4–May 22, 2022, at the Hudson River Museum.

George Segal (American, 1924–2000). *Untitled (Cast of a Face with Bust)*, 1974. Plaster and gauze. Gift of Jan and Warren Adelson, 2010 (2010.11). Art © The George and Helen Segal Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY.



Introduction

Portraiture is a genre, or type, of artwork. Portraiture includes paintings, photographs, sculptures, or other artistic representations of a person, in which the face and its expression is predominant.

Look

- What's going on in this painting?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can you find?

Connect

George Segal (American, 1924–2000) is best known for his monochromatic (single-color) plaster figures placed in ordinary settings, suggesting everyday isolation and alienation in the modern world. The sculptor's pioneering technique required reproducing live models by encasing separate sections of their bodies in plaster-coated cloth designed to make casts. He assembled these shells into complete figures, preserving the rough texture of the bandages. You can see an example of one of Segal's full-body sculptures in HRM's collection, *Man Leaning Against a Wall of Doors*. Segal's rough surfaces are a visual clue indicating his focus on process. As early as 1970, taking these ideas one step further, Segal also produced a series of individual fragments exhibited on their own, like *Untitled (Face with Bust)*, illustrated above.

Contemporary visual artist and graphic designer Raul Caracoza (American, born 1980) creates work inspired by Latino culture in his hometown of Los Angeles, California. He has also created several series of works inspired by Latino icons and musical figures. Caracoza's serigraph, or screenprint, portrait of Frida Kahlo depicts the artist in bright colors and graphic lines, highlighting Kahlo's colorful clothing inspired by traditional Mexican dress and hinting toward her complex and unique character.

Both works of portraiture rely on the subject's expression and body language to make a connection with a viewer, despite the vast difference in medium, or material, used to create the work.

Think

- What similarities can you find between these two works?
- What differences can you observe between these two works?
- How does each piece make you react emotionally? What makes you say that?
- What comes to mind when you view each portrait?

- What clues in each work give you a fuller understanding of the person portrayed?
- What do you think the subjects represented in the works might be thinking about? Why?
- If you were able to ask the subject of each work one question, what would it be? Why?

Do

1. Choose a person you would like to portray with a portrait. What personality traits does this person have? What physical features are unique to them? What details of how they dress, move, or present themselves do you want to highlight through your work?
2. Consider the mood or emotion you want your work to convey to a viewer. How can you position the subject of your portrait to share that mood? What body language or facial expression might you include in a visual depiction of this mood or emotion?
3. Consider the colors you might use to communicate something about your subject to a viewer. How might your color choices impact or affect the mood of your work?
4. Using scrap paper and pencil, experiment with sketching your portrait first. You may work from an existing photograph or image, or from your memory. Experiment with the layout: a full portrait shows the entire person; a bust includes just the head and shoulders.
5. Using fine art materials of your choosing (markers, colored pencils, paint, multicolored paper, or even digital apps), make a final version of your portrait.

Reflect

How can a portrait tell a story about a person or group of people? How does the medium, or material, used to create an artwork affect your understanding of the subject, if at all? What examples of portraiture can you point to today that illustrate the full range of an individual's characteristics and personality? Where do you see those examples—in museums, in magazines, in newspapers, on social media, in ads, etc.?

Share

Post a photo of your work on Instagram and tag @HudsonRiverMuseum.