

# SUMMER FUN

## PRESIDENT KENNEDY IN ART

President Kennedy and First Lady Jackie Kennedy were big supporters of the arts and wanted to share the arts with the country. To do that, the Kennedys sponsored many projects including “Concerts for Young People” which helped introduce younger audiences to music and performance. In 1962, Mrs. Kennedy convinced French Culture Minister, André Malraux, to loan the Mona Lisa to the United States for a special exhibit. 1.7 million visitors to the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York saw the Mona Lisa while it visited the U.S. The activities below show how artists used different techniques to create images of President Kennedy’s image and teach you how to make your own art.



The White House Historical Association / Wikimedia Commons

## ***The Presidential Portrait***

Since George Washington's presidency, every president has had an official portrait. Most official presidential portraits are unveiled after the president leaves office with a ceremony held at the White House. President Kennedy's portrait was unveiled in 1971, eight years after he was assassinated. First Lady Jackie Kennedy picked artist Aaron Shikler to paint the portrait and played a key role in its creation. To help him create the portrait, Shikler used several photos of the president and even a photo of his brother, Edward Kennedy, standing at President Kennedy's grave. The oil painting shows the president gazing down with his arms crossed, appearing as if he is in deep thought. What details in this portrait show President Kennedy as a leader?

### **What would your presidential portrait look like?**

Create your own self portrait following these steps:

1. Pick a spot in your home that you would like to use as your background. Arrange any objects or furniture so that your background looks just right.
2. Next, go through your closet and pick your favorite outfit to wear for your portrait and put it on.
3. Decide on a pose for your portrait.
4. Once you are ready, have a member of your household take your photo.
5. Using the photo as a reference, sketch the image on a piece of paper
6. Using paint, crayons, or markers bring color to your portrait.
7. Add to your portrait by creating a decorative frame using materials from home. Choose a location you would like to have your portrait hung at home and have an adult help you hang it.

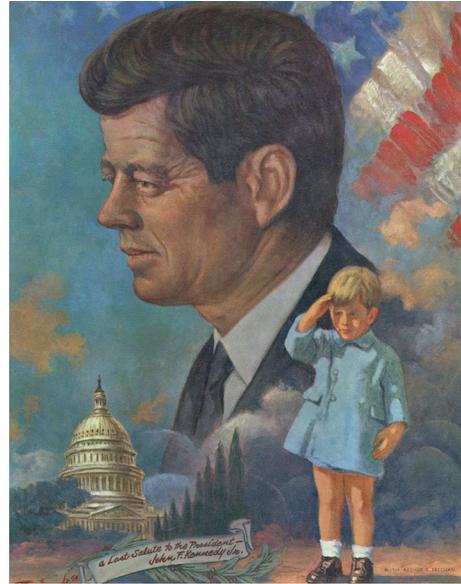
Visit [si.edu/spotlight/presidential-portraits](https://si.edu/spotlight/presidential-portraits) for inspiration.



## Prints

Printing is the process of mass-producing images and text. Some of the earliest prints were made in China by carving images into a woodblock, dipping them in ink, and then using them as stamps to transfer an image to cloth or paper. Woodblock printing continued to be the main form of printing until 1440 when the printing press was created. Prints are now easily mass produced because they can be made by machine rather than by hand. The printing press was revolutionary and was the foundation for machines like the typewriter and the inkjet printer that we use today.

This lithograph entitled *A Last Salute to the President*, by Arthur P. Freeman depicts a profile of President Kennedy along with the United States flag and United States Capitol building. A depiction of John Kennedy Jr. giving a salute at his father's funeral is in the lower right corner. Lithography is a type of printing invented by German author Alois Senefelder in 1796. The original process for creating a lithograph began by drawing a design with oil, fat, or wax onto limestone, and then applying chemicals to produce markings in the stone. These markings are called an etching. Etchings were a common type of print made during the Middle Ages, produced by using a pointed needle to scratch into a stone or metal plate. The etching is then treated with water, and an oil-based ink is applied to the surface. Because oil and water do not mix, the ink will only stick to the etching. The etching is then put into a press to transfer the image to paper, creating a lithograph.



While a lithograph can be tough to make without the proper materials, you can create an etching easily from home. **Gather the materials and follow the steps below to create a crayon etching.**

**Materials:** one piece of white paper, a box of crayons that include the color black, sewing needle (make sure a parent supervises when using this tool).

### Directions:

1. Using different colored crayons, color over the piece of paper making sure all the white of the paper is covered.
2. Take your black crayon and apply a layer of black over the layer of color.
3. Take your sewing needle and use it like a pencil to draw an image by lightly scraping away at the black to reveal the color underneath.



The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza Collection

## Creating the Bigger Picture

A mosaic is an image made up of small pieces of material, sometimes referred to as tiles, like stone or glass. Mosaics date back to the time of Ancient Rome and were commonly used to decorate floors and walls of religious buildings. While mosaics can still be seen on building walls today, they can also serve as standalone artworks. In the photo-mosaics here, artist Alexander Cao uses photos to create images of President Kennedy and Jackie Kennedy. Specifically, the image of President Kennedy is made up of 50,000 photo portraits of Jackie Kennedy and vice versa. Look at the detail shots to see the mosaic portraits. How many small images can you count in each big picture? How did the artist make the smaller images create the details of the large image?



**Now follow the steps below to make your own mosaic:**

**Materials:** a white piece of paper, magazine pages or construction paper, scissors, glue, a pencil

### Directions:

1. Pick an object you want to model for your mosaic.
2. Make a large drawing of your object in the center of the piece of paper.
3. Cut out small shapes from your magazine pages or construction paper. These will serve as your mosaic "tiles".
4. Arrange the tiles to cover the white of the paper and bring color to your drawing. Make sure to cover as much of the white of the paper but do not overlap your mosaic tiles. You can often see small line-like spaces that border the tiles like in the example to the right.
5. After you arrange your tiles glue them down.



*JFK vs Jackie* (2010), Gift of Alex Cao, in honor of Andres Pastrana, former President of Colombia  
*Jackie vs JFK* (2010), Gift of Alex Cao, in honor of Andres Pastrana, former President of Colombia  
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