

Lesson Plans

Portrait of Sid Richardson

Peter Hurd

1958

Tempera on panel, 32 X 48"

CONCEPT

Students will view, analyze and interpret the work of art. Students will learn that a portrait can depict physical likeness and personality, as well as reference setting, time period and events.

TEKS

The SRM Educator Guide lessons support inquiry-based discussion and align with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for art, history and English language arts. To select correlations for your grade level visit the [Texas Education Agency TEKS website](#).

VOCABULARY

- **Cross hatching** - shading created by drawing closely set parallel lines that crisscross.
- **Portrait** - work of art depicting a person, persons, or an animal.
- **Tempera** - permanent, water-based, fast-drying paint made by mixing egg yolk with pigments and distilled water.



DESCRIBE

Briefly describe what you see. (Seated man in front of a coastal scene). How is this man dressed? (Nicely: slacks, no belt; button-down shirt; jacket; no tie or jewelry). Describe his posture. (Leaning back, arms at rest). Describe the chair. (Ample, padded). Observe the wrinkles on his face and hands and estimate his age. Is there anything that indicates a time frame, present or past? (Chair, 20th century).

Where does he seem to be looking? (Into the distance; his eyes do not meet our gaze). Does the direction of his eyes affect our reading of his personality? What words describe his demeanor? (Contemplative? Relaxed?)

Where is he sitting? (On a porch). Describe the scene behind him. (Fenced land and a large area of land behind. Palm trees, waves, sand dunes and windmills). Imagine what you might hear/smell. (Crashing waves, whinnying horses, rustling palm leaves, salty air). What animals do you see? (Horses, cattle. Their scale implies great distance.) Do you think the land and livestock belong to this man? Does this painting suggest what this man does for a living?





INQUIRE

Observe the horizontal format. Consider how the proportional relationship between the man and the scene behind him might affect our reading. (The man appears steady, solid; the scene, calm).

Find evidence of brushstrokes. (Left side of jacket, left of the lapel; left jacket sleeve). Look for crosshatching. Tempera paintings are long lasting, and suited to artists who enjoy a meticulous approach. The paint dries within seconds of application, so colors cannot be blended on the painting's surface as with other media. Colors are built up with thin layers in glazes, or with tiny, hatched strokes. Repeated layers give tempera paintings a luminous quality.

SUPPOSE

Why do people desire to have a portrait painted? (To be remembered by family or others). What words might describe his personality?

Records do not indicate who commissioned artist Peter Hurd (1904-1984) to paint this portrait. Hurd was acquainted with Sid before beginning work on the portrait. He considered Sid an old friend, colorful and amusing. The likeness reveals a man of substance and vision. At sixty-seven, Richardson sits, self-assured and comfortable. His warmth comes through, though there is pensive quality to this portrait made the year before he died.

Peter Hurd had depicted Richardson's likeness four years earlier, in 1954, in a mural at Texas Technological College (now Texas Tech University). The mural depicts the history of Lubbock and the South Plains. Richardson was chosen to represent the oil industry. Note that while Sid is being depicted in oilman attire, he is posing in a suit and tie.



Sid Richardson posing for Peter Hurd's Mural of the Oil Industry at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX., Fort Worth Star-Telegram Photography Collections.

INFORM

Although *Portrait of Sid Richardson* was executed in Palm Springs, CA, the background depicts Richardson's ranch in San Jose Island, off the coast of Rockport, TX. Sid bought the ranch in 1936. It was the site where the oilman and philanthropist raised Santa Gertrudis cattle.

EXTEND

What are reasons an artist might paint a portrait? (To honor a historical figure; interest in and admiration for an individual). Thinking about this portrait, and of portraits of significant individuals in American history, how would you paint your self-portrait? Profile, full-face, or full figure? How would you be posed? Alone, or with family, friends? How would you like to be remembered? How could you represent this? What clothing and setting details would reveal your personality/interests? What would identify the time period of the 21st century?

