This photograph is a self-portrait. A portrait is a work of art (like a photograph or a painting) that shows a person. A self-portrait is a portrait of an artist, made by the artist themselves. This self-portrait was made by and shows the artist Ilse Bing. Ilse was a photographer, and used a Leica camera to take photographs of people and night scenes in Paris, France. In this self-portrait, Ilse uses mirrors to photograph herself with her favorite Leica camera. By putting herself as the subject of the self-portrait, Ilse is letting us know that she is in control of her artwork and her camera is important to her identity.

ILSE BING

Ilse Bing (1899-1998) was a photographer. She worked in the early 20th century, during a time when it was difficult to be a woman artist. Ilse had to work twice as hard as male artists to get the same attention by art critics. Ilse lived to be 99 years old, and saw many changes during her lifetime. She was born in Germany and moved to France to be an artist. Ilse and her husband were Jewish, and just before World War II started, they moved to the United States to escape the evils of Nazi Germany. Ilse lived in the United States for the rest of her life. She is an important pioneer in photography and is remembered for using a Leica camera to make her art.
The artist Ilse Bing chose to make this self-portrait with her camera, an object that shows who she was as a photographer. You can make your own self-portrait using things that are important to you.

DIRECTIONS

1. Choose one object that represents who you are. This object could be anything: a soccer ball if you enjoy playing on the soccer team, or your favorite book or video game, or maybe even a baked dessert if you enjoy cooking.

2. Ask a family member to take a couple of photographs of you holding your favorite object in different positions. You can also use mirrors like Ilse Bing, and take photographs of your reflection. Review the photographs and choose the one that you think shows your personality the best.

3. Using that photograph as a guide, create a self-portrait using paper and colored pencils, crayons, or markers. You can use a grid to help you with the proportions by using an app like Art Tools or Drawing Grid. Divide your paper into the same number of squares using light pencil lines. Fill in the squares of your grid using your photograph as reference.

4. Discuss with a family member why you chose that object for your self-portrait. How would someone looking at your artwork understand you? What does that object have to do with your identity?