

# The Use of Symbols & Metaphors

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An artist's work evokes the spirit of their age. They use **SYMBOLS** to make sense of the world and their place in it. An image is symbolic when it represents something else. For symbols to be successful modes of communication, they must be developed through social and group context.

A **METAPHOR** is a bridge between art and life connecting varied experiences and thoughts. It allows an artist/writer to compare seemingly opposite or unrelated things. A metaphor tries to explain a concept to make for a better understanding. It makes the impact of the art on the viewer much richer, stronger, and perhaps more meaningful depending on their personal experiences.



## **OTHER ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER IN THE PORTRAIT GALLERY:**

Click on magnifying glass on the subject's Artist's Comment page for a larger image.

When looking at a work of art, rather than trying to figure out what the artist is trying to say, experience how you feel and what you think about when looking at it.

- How does an artist get the viewer's attention and draw people over to think about the content?
- Symbols and metaphors can be very engaging to the viewer. The background space is a metaphor for possibility to this artist. How does it make you feel? Do you think you can imagine better looking down or looking up?
- The nebulas and constellations often help tell the story. Read the Artist's Comment for each.
- Notice the lighting. What areas are highlighted? Why?
- Notice the eyes. They seem to be looking at you and at the same time beyond. How do you feel if you follow their gaze?
- What do you read from their body language?