Grade 6 Unit 2 - Clay Animal Sculptures

Unit Focus

This unit introduces students to the tactile world of clay sculpture, where they will transform raw material into three-dimensional animal forms. Students will learn the foundational handbuilding techniques: slab, pinch, and coil construction, while gaining an understanding of the technical requirements for working with clay, such as the critical "slip and score" method for attaching pieces and the importance of hollowing out larger forms to ensure a successful firing in the kiln. This unit is anchored in the Profile of a Graduate (POG) competencies of Design and Product Creation. Design is about more than just aesthetics; it is about intentionality. Students must visualize their animal forms and translate those mental images into stable, physical structures. They learn to make deliberate choices about which building method (slab, coil, or pinch) best supports their desired final product. Creating a ceramic sculpture requires perseverance and an understanding of the material's limitations. Students demonstrate mastery of product creation by iterating on their designs, managing the drying and firing stages, and applying surface finishes with precision.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

Standard(s)

National Core Arts Standards
Visual Arts: 6

- Combine concepts collaboratively to generate innovative ideas for creating art. (VA:Cr1.1.6.a)
- Demonstrate openness in trying new ideas, materials, methods, and approaches in making works of art and design. (VA:Cr2.1.6.a)
- Reflect on whether personal artwork conveys the intended meaning and revise accordingly. (VA:Cr3.1.6.a)

Madison Public Schools Profile of a Graduate

- Design: Engaging in a process to refine a product for an intended audience and purpose. (POG.2.2)
- Product Creation: Effectively use a medium to communicate important information. (POG.3.2)

Transfer

Students will be able to independently use their learning to...
T1 Create works of art to personally engage in the artistic process and/or communicate meaning
T2 Develop and refine techniques and skills through purposeful practice and application to become more fluent

Meaning

Understanding(s)

Students will understand that...
U1 Artists' creative choices are influenced by their expertise, context, and expressive intent.
U2 Artists improve the quality of a performance/piece of art through a cycle of deliberate practice and examination of results.
U3 Artists make thoughtful choices about their use of skills, technique, and style to in hopes of creating a specific response for an audience.

Essential Question(s)

Students will keep considering...
Q1 How do I use what I visualize/ imagine and make it come to life?
Q2 How much freedom do I have to be creative and also work within established criteria?
Q3 What (skill/technique) am I focusing on? How do I get better at this? How do I know I'm making progress?

Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill

Knowledge

Students will know...
K1 Driving Elements: Shape, Color, Texture, Form
K2 Identify slab, coil, and pinch techniques
K3 Using techniques such as slipping & scoring, and wedging to create a successful final piece

Skill(s)

Students will be skilled at...
S1 Using handbuilding techniques properly to make a 3 dimensional form (slab, coil, pinch)
S2 Using a variety of textures to accurately depict a realistic sculpture
S3 Using proper painting techniques to apply surface design on sculpture