Grade 7 Unit 3 - Character Invention

Unit Focus

In this dynamic unit, students transition from viewers to creators as they explore the world of stop-motion animation and character design. Drawing inspiration from the distinct, moody style of filmmakers like Tim Burton, students will learn how to invent a character that doesn't just look interesting, but tells a story. By synthesizing narrative writing with three-dimensional sculpting, students engage in a rigorous creative process that mirrors professional animation studios. This unit is heavily focused on the Profile of a Graduate (POG) competencies of Design and Self-Awareness, pushing students to think critically about how every visual choice impacts the viewer's experience. Character creation is a complex problem-solving task. Students must utilize a structured design process: starting with a goal (a specific character mood), developing a plan (sketching and storyboarding), and executing that plan through physical construction. They must constantly check that their 3D sculpture aligns with their original narrative goals. Throughout the project, students engage in constant self-reflection. They develop a deeper awareness of their own artistic voice. They learn to identify their technical strengths, whether in sculpting, painting, or writing, and make adjustments to their work based on teacher feedback and personal reflection.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

Standard(s)

National Core Arts Standards
Visual Arts: 7

- Apply methods to overcome creative blocks. (VA:Cr1.1.7.a)
- Demonstrate persistence in developing skills with various materials, methods, and approaches in creating works of art or design. (VA:Cr2.1.7.a)
- Apply visual organizational strategies to design and produce a work of art, design, or media that clearly communicates information or ideas. (VA:Cr2.3.7.a)
- Reflect on and explain important information about personal artwork in an artist statement or another format. (VA:Cr3.1.7.a)
- Interpret art by analyzing art-making approaches, the characteristics of form and structure, relevant contextual information, subject matter, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed. (VA:Re8.1.7.a)
- Compare and explain the difference between an evaluation of an artwork based on personal criteria and an evaluation of an artwork based on a set of established criteria. (VA:Re9.1.7.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)

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 make thoughtful choices about their use of skills, technique, and style to in hopes of creating a specific response for an audience.
U2 Evaluation of an artistic work is based on analysis and interpretation of established criteria that is helpful to the artist or deepens understanding of the work.
U3 Artists improve the quality of a performance/piece of art through a cycle of deliberate practice and examination of results.

Essential Question(s)

Students will keep considering...
Q1 How can I use art and design to invent my own character?
Q2 What inspires me? Where do I get my ideas from?
Q3 What am I learning or have I learned from creating this work of art?
Q4 How do I show mood or feeling in this work of art? How did the audience/viewers respond? Did what I was trying to express work?
Q5 How can I use art to illustrate a story?

Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill

Knowledge

Students will know...
K1 Elements of Art and how each are used in a work of art: Shape, Form, Proportion, Color

Skill(s)

Students will be skilled at...
S1 Create a 3D character that tells a story and has a purpose.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings		
• Self-Awareness: Examining current performance critically to identify steps/ strategies to persist. (POG.4.1)	**K2** Influence of Artist(s): Describe the characteristics of various animators' style of art **K3** Art Vocabulary: Stop Motion Animation, Armature **K4** Artists use appropriate internal support structures to create 3D sculptures.	**S2** Using wire, newspaper, cardboard, and various recycled materials to construct an armature **S3** Using proper application of various materials for the finished sculpture: plaster gauze, paint, fabric, model magic, e.g.