Sculpture - Unit 1 - Recreating a Famous Work

Unit Focus

In this sculpture unit, our classroom becomes a creative laboratory where students explore the expressive power of clay. This unit is designed to challenge students to think like designers and act as self-aware creators, grounding our work in two core Profile of a Graduate (POG) competencies: Design and Self-Awareness. In our studio, we emphasize that sculpture is an intellectual process as much as a physical one. Sculpture requires a high degree of intentionality.

To master this capacity, students will:

- Develop a strategic plan that allows them to examine the impact of each step toward a finished product, from initial sketches to the final firing;
- Engage in a deliberate cycle of purposefully refining a product based on feedback from peers and their own personal reflection;
- View technical challenges and failures as essential data points that lead to more informed, better-designed decisions.

This unit acts as a mirror for personal development. Students will practice self-awareness by learning to:

- Reflect on their strengths and areas for growth, making necessary adjustments to their techniques as they work with the medium;
- Effectively manage their time and prioritize tasks to ensure their clay stays at the proper consistency across multiple project stages;
- Stay motivated to achieve desired outcomes, taking full responsibility for the condition and evolution of their work.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

Standard(s)

National Core Arts Standards
Visual Arts: HS Proficient

- Document the process of developing ideas from early stages to fully elaborated ideas. (VA:Cn10.1.HSI.a)
- Describe how knowledge of culture, traditions, and history may influence personal responses to art. (VA:Cn11.1.HSI.a)
- Use multiple approaches to begin creative endeavors. (VA:Cr1.1.HSI.a)
- Shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present-day life using a contemporary practice of art or design. (VA:Cr1.2.HSI.a)
- Explain how traditional and nontraditional materials may impact human health and the environment and demonstrate safe handling of materials, tools, and equipment. (VA:Cr2.2.HSI.a)

Transfer

Students will be able to independently use their learning to...
T1 Apply foundational ceramic techniques to solve design challenges and create new forms.
T2 Critically analyze and evaluate their own work and the work of others based on craftsmanship and aesthetic principles.
T3 Utilize and maintain tools and equipment safely and effectively in a studio environment.

Meaning

Understanding(s)

Students will understand that...
U1 There are various properties of clay, such as plasticity and shrinkage, that dictate how it can be manipulated and fired.
U2 Slipping and scoring are not just steps, but essential processes that ensure the successful bonding of clay pieces.
U3 The choice of hand-building technique directly impacts the final form and aesthetic of a piece.
U4 Glazing is both a protective finish and an artistic medium that adds color and texture.

Essential Question(s)

Students will keep considering...
Q1 How does an artist translate the illusion of depth in a 2D painting into physical 3D space?
Q2 What artistic choices must be made when interpreting a painter's style through the medium of clay?
Q3 How do specific techniques, like slipping and scoring, impact the structural integrity of a clay piece?
Q4 How do the structural limitations of clay influence how a famous work is reimagined?

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

- Establish relevant criteria in order to evaluate a work of art or collection of works. (VA:Re9.1.HSI.a)

Madison Public Schools Profile of a Graduate

- Idea Generation: Studying a problem, need or model (mentor text, political piece, documents, art work, etc.) to consider limitations and imagine new solutions/transformations. (POG.2.1)
- Design: Engaging in a process to refine a product for an intended audience and purpose. (POG.2.2)

Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill

Knowledge

Students will know...

K1 Stages of clay and drying properties: how to keep the clay workable during sculpting process.
K2 The purpose and process of slipping and scoring.
K3 The importance of the planning stage and how to translate 2D images into 3D forms.
K4 The steps for using the slab roller.
K5 The importance of consistency in thickness for successful firing.
K6 Basic safety procedures for a ceramics studio.

Skill(s)

Students will be skilled at...

S1 Using proper techniques (e.g., wedging to remove air pockets, attaching pieces together, proper thickness) to ensure structural integrity in preparation for firing in the kiln
S2 Slab Construction: Roll out a uniform slab of clay and use it to create a functional form.
S3 Additive & Subtractive Techniques: Add and remove clay from a surface to create texture and design.
S4 Dimensional Translation: Convert brushstrokes and color values from a painting into physical textures and depth.
S5 Join Clay: Confidently and securely join two pieces of clay using the slipping and scoring method.
S6 Glazing: Apply glaze to a bisque-fired piece, considering color, texture, and application methods.
S7 Critique: Using established criteria to critique others work to potentially inform their next steps