



Sculpture - Unit 4 - Cardboard Portraits

Unit Focus

In this unit, students will explore the sophisticated world of relief sculpture—an art form where figures emerge from a flat background. Moving beyond simple two-dimensional drawing, students will learn to manipulate cardboard to create depth, texture, and shadow, transforming ordinary materials into compelling portraits of people who inspire them. This unit is aligned with our Profile of a Graduate (POG) framework, specifically fostering growth in Design and Product Creation. Students will act as lead designers throughout the creative process, moving from theoretical understanding to structural execution. Students will move from initial research and photographic references to the creation of an original cardboard portrait. They are challenged to create a product that effectively communicates the likeness of their subject through specific artistic choices.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

Standard(s)	Transfer	
National Core Arts Standards Visual Arts: HS Proficient <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document the process of developing ideas from early stages to fully elaborated ideas. (VA:Cn10.1.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) Collaboratively develop a proposal for an installation, artwork, or space design that transforms the perception and experience of a particular place. (VA:Cr2.3.HSI.a) Apply relevant criteria from traditional and contemporary cultural contexts to examine, reflect on, and plan revisions for works of art and design in progress. (VA:Cr3.1.HSI.a) 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	<i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</i> T1 Apply advanced relief construction techniques to translate complex organic subjects into stable 3D forms. T2 Critically analyze the use of value and shadow created by physical depth in their own work and the work of others. T3 Utilize and maintain specialized cutting tools safely to achieve high levels of detail in recycled media. T4 Engage in critique to inform next steps or deepen examination of an artistic work	
	Meaning	
	Understanding(s)	Essential Question(s)
	<i>Students will understand that...</i> U1 Relief sculpture exists between 2D and 3D, relying on overlapping layers to create depth. U2 Peeling cardboard to reveal corrugation or scoring it for curves are essential processes for creating realistic textures. U3 Successful portraits require a structural blueprint that maps out the “high points” and “low points” of the face.	<i>Students will keep considering...</i> Q1 How can the organic forms of a human face be broken down into layered geometric shapes? Q2 How does an artist use levels of relief (high vs. low) to create the illusion of 3D features? Q3 What artistic choices must be made to represent skin texture or hair using only the properties of cardboard? Q4 How do structural limitations and the “grain” of cardboard influence the likeness of a portrait?
	Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill	
	Knowledge	Skill(s)
	<i>Students will know...</i> K1 The difference between high relief and low relief and how they affect visual impact. K2 The basic mathematical placement of features on the human face.	<i>Students will be skilled at...</i> S1 Relief Construction: Layer varying thicknesses of cardboard to build a face out from a flat base. S2 Anatomical Translation: Convert the soft planes of a face into distinct cardboard shapes that mimic a likeness.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

- 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)

K3 How to use the interior “flute” or corrugation of cardboard to represent different values and textures.
K4 Which techniques are best for securing thin relief elements.
K5 Safe handling of X-Acto knives for intricate curved cuts.

S3 Structural Problem-Solving: Identify and reinforce weak points in the sculpture to ensure durability.
S4 Textural Detailing: Use subtractive techniques to create contrast between smooth and ribbed surfaces.