

LESSON PLAN

Everyday People in Clay

Inspired by Roxanne Swentzell's *Transformation*

Created by Pamela Conyers-Hinson

Grade Level All grade levels

Overview

Students will be introduced to sculpture using non-traditional self-hardening red clay. They will create 3-D figures using the works of Roxanne Swentzell as a creative guide.

Anticipatory Set

Students will be challenged to use their creative knowledge from the world of Manga (animation-graphic novels) and connect it to the creation of a 3-D figure. The students will be asked to base their sculpture on one person. This could be a family member, friend, teacher etc. The selected person will be brought to life through clay.



Objectives

- students will learn to make an armature
- students will learn to create 3-D figures
- students will learn to identify and capture unique features of their selected subject

Resources

- Roxanne Swentzell – Living Portraits of New Mexico Artists; YouTube video posted by netmansam <http://goo.gl/RKiCXL>
 - Native American Sculptor Roxanne Swentzell <http://www.roxanneswentzell.net>
 - Towa Artists – Roxanne Swentzell - <http://www.towa-artists.com/roxanne-swentzell/>
 - Joslyn's Roxanne Swentzell Teaching Poster - <http://goo.gl/306RuL>
 - *Roxanne Swentzell: Extraordinary People*, Gussie Fauntleroy
 - *Pottery by American Indian Women: Legacy of Generations*, Susan Peterson*
 - *Children of Clay: A Family of Pueblo Potters*, Rina Swentzell*
 - *The Legacy of Generations: Pottery by American Indian Women* (video)*
- *Available via Joslyn's Nelson Teacher Resource Center <http://www.joslyn.org/education/teachers>

Supplies

- Armature Wire: each student should have (1) 12 inch long and (1) 18 inch long pieces
- Pliers
- Wire cutters
- Ruler
- Standard Clay Mines – Claystone or Boneware Self Hardening Clay (Red)
 - Sold in 4 lb boxes at Blinks Art Materials
 - Give each student 1.3 lbs
- 12x12 inch piece of interfacing – (1) per participant
 - This will prevent the clay from sticking to the table surface; it can be reused
 - This can be purchased at any fabric store
- 5x5 inch piece of cardboard or Masonite (this is used to transport the sculpture prior to drying)
- Small sponges
- Small containers for water

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- Rolling pins (this is a “just in case” tool)
- Sculpting tools – variety (I have made tools out of both large and small popsicle sticks)
- Black Sharpies
- Masking tape

Vocabulary

- Abstract
- Armature
- Characteristic
- Expression
- Movement
- Realism
- Transformation

Lesson Outline

1. Each student will receive the following:
 - (1) 12 inch long and (1) 18 inch long pieces (1) piece of interfacing
 - 1.3 lbs of self-hardening clay
 - Pliers
2. The students will receive a demonstration on how to create the armature for the figure.
 - take the shorter armature wire and fold in half loosely.
 - create a loop at the fold (this will create the head of the figure)
 - twist the loop two-three times (this will create the neck of the figure)
 - straighten the rest of the wire out vertically (this will serve as the arms)
 - take the longer armature wire and stick it through the head (loop) halfway
 - wrap one half of the wire over the right arm twice and bring down (horizontally)
 - wrap the other half of the wire under the left arm twice and down (horizontally)
 - twist both wires together at the mid-section (this will form the waist)
 - bring both wires out vertically on each side to form the hips
 - the remaining wire will be arranged horizontally to create the legs
3. The student will place their figure in the desired position
4. Clay will be applied to the figure at the joints first.
 - this will be done by forming ball of clay and then attaching to the joints (this will be foundation for attaching additional clay to form the rest of the figure).
5. Students will continue to add clay to the figure while using sculpting tools to apply desired details.

Additional Information

- The rolling pins can be used for layering on pieces of clay if a hollow figure is desired (this will reduce the amount of clay being utilized. (This will also speed up the drying time)
- Self-hardening clay can be painted using acrylic paint before or after drying with good results.
- Damp sponges work well on this type of clay for smoothing out the surface.

Academic Standards

Available on online version at www.joslyn.org/education/teachers/ [select Lesson Plans, then American Indian]

About the Artwork



Swentzell's clay sculptures are reflections of the human spirit. She describes herself as a sculptor of emotions, and these are evident in *Transformation*. There are four women. Three are intently engaged in preparing themselves for the important ritual of the Corn Dance. One is very self-focused, pulling on her moccasins. Another assists her fellow dancer by reverentially placing a tableta on her head. The fourth stands completely transformed; she has become a Corn Maiden, as her ancestors became Corn Maidens for generations before, and as her daughters will for generations after. With her sculptures Swentzell shares her culture and declares a common humanity — she invites us to "Come, sit down, we aren't that different, let me tell you something about us."

IMAGE: Roxanne Swentzell (Santa Clara Pueblo, born 1962), *Transformation*, 2000, ceramic, Museum purchase, 2000.26.a-n