

Are you Human?

Clay vessel face with stained detail.

Visual Art and Language Arts

GRADES: 9-12, *Beginning Ceramics*

BASED ON



The Workman, Edward Potthast



The Parrot, Mary Cassatt

OBJECTIVES

- Students will review various portraits, including the etchings: *The Workman* and *The Parrot* - discuss details of each face and how the portraits' expressions can be 'read'.
- Students will sketch an expressive vessel face, including details.
- Students will explore the 'human' face in clay, convey emotions within the finished vessel form, and practice staining process.
- Students will write an artist's statement about vessel: both the challenges worked through and intentions for vessel face.

CONCEPT

Inspired by a recent visit to the regional Scholastics art exhibit, students will study the details of the face and facial expressions, and respond through creating their own vessels with great expressions. Students will explore the staining process and practice writing an artist's statement.

MATERIALS

Images: *The Workman* and *The Parrot*

CLASS EXPERIENCE

Reference books and images on portraits and facial expressions
9" x 12" sketch paper
Pencils/ Erasers
Brown, low-fire clay (approx. 1-2 lb. per student)
Clay tools: loop tool, needle tool, modeling tool, rolling pin
Clay Slip
Canvas mats for each student
Plastic bags for storage
Trays as needed for transport and storage
Newspaper, paper towels
Handout: "Face Vessels"
Black iron oxide and Red iron oxide
Plastic gloves for staining

VOCABULARY

Slab	Model/Sculpt	Expression	Stain
Additive	Subtractive	Etching	Artist Statement

PROCEDURE

1. Discuss the etchings and each portrait's expression. What makes up the details of the face and how can you 'read' what the person(s) are feeling? Review of other portraits, faces, and each other's expressions. Discuss human expressions on 'non-humans' (animals, etc.)
2. (Students) Sketch out a face vessel. The face should fill up the cylinder shape. The goal is expression!
3. After watching a demonstration, (students) roll out a slab to accommodate the basic vessel. Slip, needle tools, modeling tools, and rolling pins are all used to create the face vessel and its details.
4. Sculpt the face: modeling the form, adding and subtracting clay as needed. Experiment with texture, the extruder tool, etc. Components are hollowed out as needed.
5. Students complete all details of their expressive face vessel, adding modeled clay and cutting out holes if desired (eyes, mouth, etc.)
6. Low fire clay: Dry time takes 5+ days before bisque-firing. Once bisque-fired, demonstrate to students about oxide stains. Students apply stain, then wipe away in areas. Allow piece to drive overnight, can add two coats of clear.
7. (Students) write an artist statement about face vessel. Tell the story and emotions that are conveying. Challenge students to interpret a literary influence as part of their self-evaluation.
8. Group critique. Interpret work prior to student's own explanation.

ASSESSMENT

Individual artwork evaluations will examine the following criteria: meeting the *goals of assignment*: at least 7" height, expressive face vessel with human features that show feeling and details that makes their face vessel unique, additive and subtractive components, stained and glazed if desired. *successful craftsmanship*: sturdy construction with pieces that are securely attached, clay carefully rolled out, slip used to securely attach the facial details, thought was given to the many details of their expressive face vessel, skill is demonstrated in the care and use of materials, time was spent to create all parts of the face vessel, stain and glaze was carefully applied, *overall effort and time used well*, and *creativity/visual impact*.

NATIONAL STANDARDS: VISUAL ART

Standard 1- Understands and applies media, techniques and processes related to the visual arts.
Standard 2- Knows how to use structures (e.g., sensory qualities, organizational principles, expressive features) and functions of art.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: NATIONAL STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS

Standard 3- Understands the characteristics and merits of one's own artwork and the artwork of others

Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

RESOURCES

Books & Websites:

Facial Expressions, A Visual Reference for Artists, Mark Simon

Looking at Faces in Art, Joy Richardson

Carving Facial Expressions, Ian Norbury

www.istockphoto.com/file_closeup/people/5898941-useful-facial-expressions

Artist Statement/Self-reflection included the following questions:

1. What does your face convey? Tell the story of your figure in 10 or more sentences.
2. What specific feeling/emotion 'label' does your face express?
3. If your face could speak, what would he/she have to tell us?
4. Identify a potential literary tie-in. What book or story could this figure have been a part of?
5. What do you like best about your figure? Be specific.
6. What were your challenges with your figure? What would you like to change?