



Huntington and Scott Gallery Programs

RELIEF SCULPTURE IN TWO PARTS

Huntington's Borghese Style Urn as a Study of Two-Dimensional Art & The Production of a Piece of Two-Dimensional Art



Grades 4–8

PART I. HUNTINGTON'S BORGHESI STYLE URN AS A STUDY OF TWO-DIMENSIONAL ART

I. Introduction

In preparation for a school visit to the Huntington's Art Collections, this lesson will introduce students to relief sculpture. The Huntington's reproduction of a Borghese style urn will be the focus. The relief sculpture lesson is presented with background information and discussion questions.

II. Objective

- ◆ To develop and enhance student's awareness of relief sculpture and to have them discover how this can be used in relaying information about a culture.

III. Background

Roman style garden urns are “encyclopedias” of information on Roman life, culture, sports, commerce, and industry. Urns were decorated with either relief sculptures or drawings and used human figures, animals, and gods as subjects. Smaller urns were used for everyday use such as for holding fruit or liquid and larger urns were displayed in elaborate gardens or public gathering places. More elaborate pieces were given as gifts, placed in tombs, or used as grave markers.

IV. Lesson Activities

Discussion Questions

1. What is sculpture?
2. What does three-dimensional mean? What things are three-dimensional?

3. What does two-dimensional mean? What things are two-dimensional?
4. Describe this sculpture. Is it two-dimensional or three-dimensional?
5. Describe the scene on the urn. What are the figures doing?
6. Look at the clothing worn by the figures. How is the clothing different from today?
7. Some of the figures depicted aren't clothed. Why? If you were the artist what style of clothing would you sculpt?
8. There is a figure in the scene that seems to be bending over. What do you think is happening? What is his hand pointing to? Why?
9. Are there any clues in this relief sculpture that indicate why the figures are assembled?
10. At the top edge of the urn a vine encircles the form. What does this vine represent? Is it necessary? Why?
11. If you designed a relief sculpture for a Roman style garden urn, what story would you tell? What would it look like?

Making Connections

1. Have the students read stories about Roman life and compare it to their own lives. (How is it the same, how is it different)?
2. Discuss ways in which everyday activities relating to sports, culture, commerce and industry are recorded today (billboards, print ads, television, radio, etc.), and compare them with how Roman activities could have been recorded (drawings, two-dimensional and three-dimensional sculpture, stories, etc.).
3. Guide your students through discussions of myth and mythologies. Compare the "god-like" qualities of a particular character (such as Diana, goddess of the hunt) to a modern character (such as Mia Hamm, huntress of a soccer goal).

PART II. THE PRODUCTION OF A PIECE OF TWO-DIMENSIONAL ART**I. Objective**

- ◆ To reinforce discussion of relief sculpture.

II. Background

In this activity you will use drywall, water and spray bottle, pencils, popsicle sticks, glue and paint. You will use these items to help students produce a two-dimensional object—a relief sculpture.

III. Materials Needed

- 5/8" drywall - 4' x 8' piece cut into 12"x12" pieces or smaller (purchase at a home improvement store)
- drywall knife or x-acto knife
- straight edge or ruler
- water and spray bottle
- crayons
- popsicle stick or pencil with the lead tip broken off
- glue, hair spray or spray varnish
- tempura or water based paints
- paintbrushes

IV. Preparation

1. Preparing the drywall for the activity (this should be done by the teacher):

Lay the piece of drywall down on a flat surface. (The top piece of drywall is the side that tapers down at the edges. It is also the side that has a lighter color of paper.)

Using a straight edge or by free hand, draw guide lines. Now taking an x-acto or drywall knife, follow the lines you drew and cut through the paper face of the drywall. Lift the drywall up and "snap" it against the edge of your work surface to break it at the line you cut. Turn the drywall over and with the knife, cut the paper on the underside. Continue the process until you have the desirable size (12"x12" works well).

2. Before the students begin:

Have the students sketch a few designs, decide which areas will be carved away and which areas will remain. Next, color in the areas that will be cut away using a pencil or crayon (some designs that work well are fish, birds, flowers and trees). Try to keep the designs simple.

V. Procedure

1. Remove the layer of paper from the top side of the drywall (this is the side that has the lighter color of paper). To do this, spray the surface with water until the paper peels away easily. The wetter the drywall, the more easily it will break or crack so use just enough water so that the paper will peel away easily.
2. Once the paper is removed, have the students copy their design on the surface of the drywall using a pencil. With crayons or pencil, color the parts of the design that will remain.
3. Next have the students carve the drywall using a popsicle stick or pencil with the tip broken off. If the drywall is too hard, soften it by spraying water on it.
4. When the students carve, make sure they don't go too deep because the drywall will lose its strength in areas that are too thin.
5. When the design is fully carved students can either leave it as is or paint it using whatever paints are available.

Tips:

- To seal the drywall, make a mixture of glue and water (7 oz. white glue, 1 oz. water) and paint the drywall with the mixture. You can also hair spray or spray varnish to seal the drywall as well.
- The top of a piece of drywall is the side that tapers down at the edges, this side usually has a lighter colored paper. The bottom of a sheet of drywall tends to have the manufacturers name stamped on it and there are usually little holes here and there.
- This activity tends to be a bit messy. Use drop cloths or newspaper to aid in clean up. Any drywall residue on hands, clothes, etc., will wash out with soap and water.

Sculpture Art Lesson Vocabulary

<i>aesthetic</i>	The science of the “beautiful” in a work of art. The aesthetic appeal of a work of art is defined by the visual. Social, ethical, moral, and contemporary standards of a society.
<i>armature</i>	A structure of wood or wire for example, used under sculptural materials, such as clay for support.
<i>asymmetry</i>	A balance achieved through the use of unequal parts or elements. Visualize a beach ball sitting on one side of a stick and two baseballs on the other—balancing out the picture.
<i>balance</i>	A principal of art and design concerned with the arrangement of one or more elements in a work of art so that they appear symmetrical (even) or asymmetrical (uneven) in design and proportion.
<i>bas-relief</i>	A lower relief sculpture that projects only slightly from its two-dimensional background.
<i>bisque</i>	After clay has its first firing in a kiln, it is called bisque ware. At this stage, the clay has changed composition and can no longer have water added to it and turned back into useable material.
<i>bronze</i>	An alloy of copper and tin used for sculpture.
<i>carving</i>	A subtractive method of sculpture that consists of removing stone or wood from a single block.
<i>casting</i>	Plaster mixed with water is poured into a mold. Once it has hardened it is taken out of the mold as a solid piece of cast sculpture.
<i>ceramic</i>	Used to describe the shaping, finishing and firing of clay.
<i>classical</i>	Term used to identify Greek art from approximately 500 B.C. to 300 B.C. Sculptural characteristics include a more life-like body, more natural form with movement, calmness, idealized beauty, and the appearance of the contrapposto pose.
<i>composition</i>	The arrangement of lines, areas, colors and forms.
<i>contrapposto</i>	A twist or “S” curve of the human figure caused by placing the weight of one foot and turning the shoulder.
<i>form</i>	Form is an element of art that refers to an object with three dimensions. A sculpture is three dimensional because it can be seen from all sides.

<i>glaze</i>	A “liquid glass” that is applied to bisqued ware, then fired. The result is a hard protective coating.
<i>greenware</i>	When clay is leather hard. not yet fired. it is called greenware. At this point, the clay can be made wet and turned back into useable material.
<i>painting</i>	a picture created with paint
<i>kiln</i>	A baking oven for clay or metal.
<i>lost wax</i>	A method of creating a wax mold of a sculpture and then heating the mold to melt out the wax and replace it with a molten metal or plastic.
<i>medium</i>	The art material used. i.e.: clay, paint, pencil, bronze, marble.
<i>regionalism</i>	art that deals with one specific geographical area
<i>school</i>	a group of artists with common interests
<i>myths</i>	Stories about Greek and Roman gods and goddesses that explains and teaches about events, beliefs and natural phenomena.
<i>plaster</i>	A powder which when mixed with water will harden into a chalk-like solid.
<i>proportion</i>	In any composition. the mathematical relationship of the parts to each other and to the whole. For example, the relation of the head to the body, etc.
<i>shape</i>	Geometric shapes look as though they were made with a straight edge or drawing tool. Square, circle, triangle. rectangle, and oval. Organic shapes are also called free-form. These shapes are not regular or even. Their edges are curved or angular, or a combination of both.
<i>symmetry</i>	A balance in which elements are alike. One side “balances out the other.” Visualize two beach balls sitting on opposite sides of a stick on the ground.