

## **Mythology Relief Sculpture: Lesson Plan**

**Central Focus/Summary:** Students will be introduced to the art style of relief sculpture. Students will explore art historical examples (as well as contemporary examples) from various cultures and the purpose of relief sculptures (historically). They will create their own relief sculpture based off of a mythological story of their choosing. They will analyze how myths were used to understand the natural world and how they can have a deeper meaning. Students will explore the subtractive techniques associated with sculpture, and the elements/principles of design: form, proportion, texture, emphasis, line and space. Students may be able to paint their relief sculpture when they finish carving.



**Objectives:** Students will be able to...

1. Identify a relief sculpture by researching and presenting relief sculptures from various time periods.
2. Develop a relief sculpture by applying subtractive techniques of clay sculpting and carving.
3. Summarize the life lessons/meaning behind mythological stories by discussing what mythology/myths are and how they are used to make sense of the world.
4. Evaluate and interpret the work of others by performing group critiques, utilizing their knowledge of relief sculpture.

**Essential Questions:**

1. What lessons can we learn from mythological stories?
2. Why is it important to explore stories from different cultures?

**Key Questions:**

1. What is the difference between low-relief and high-relief?
2. What is “subtractive” (technique) art?
3. What is the difference between relief sculpture and sculpture-in-the-round?
4. What is mythology?

**Standards:**

New Jersey:

- 1.1 The Creative Process: All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.
  - 1.1.12.D.1 Distinguish innovative applications of the elements of art and principles of design in visual artworks from diverse cultural perspectives and identify specific cross-cultural themes.

- 1.1.12.D.2 Translate literary, musical, theatrical, and dance compositions by using them as stimulus/inspiration for corresponding visual artworks.
- 1.4 Aesthetic Responses & Critique Methodologies: All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of arts philosophies, judgment, and analysis to works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art. Strand B. Critique Methodologies
  - 1.4.12.B.2 Evaluate how an artist's technical proficiency may affect the creation or presentation of a work of art, as well as how the context in which a work is performed or shown may impact perceptions of its significance/meaning.

National Core Art:

- Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work Enduring Understanding: Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed through engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments.
  - VA:Re.7.1.la Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences.
  - VA:Re.7.2.la Analyze how one's understanding of the world is affected by experiencing visual imagery.
- Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding Enduring Understanding: People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art.
  - VA:Cn11.1.lla Compare uses of art in a variety of societal, cultural, and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary and local contexts.

**Modifications:**

Students will be able to choose any story, character or creature they like as their subject for their sculpture (if this is still too difficult, they can choose any subject they'd like). They will find a photo of this person/thing, trace it on tracing paper and transfer it to the clay slab. They will then carve on and around the subject to create different levels of relief. Once finished, they will allow the clay to dry. They can then paint the sculpture if they'd like.

The size of the piece can be increased (for those who are more advanced or need a larger space to work) or decreased (if the size is too large for them or they take a long time to complete tasks).

**Day-By-Day Breakdown**

**Day 1-4 (Brief Research Assignment)**

*Day 1-2*

- Students are introduced to the Researching Relief Sculpture assignment
- Students get into groups and work on the Researching Relief packet
  - Lookup and define the different types of relief sculpture
  - Find an artist (historical or contemporary) that creates relief sculpture

- Select 3 relief sculptures from this artist to present, conduct research and gather info on these pieces
  - Answer questions about their artist
- Closure: review expectations for the day and what will occur next class

*Day 3*

- Students get into groups
- Review what is required in handout and presentation
- Create handout and presentation
  - Handout: Artist, brief info about the artist, 3 artworks with titles/dates
  - Presentation: Artist, in depth biography, 3 artworks with in depth descriptions
- Closure: Review what is expected of the handout and presentation, discuss how we will present next class

*Day 4*

- Students get into their groups, acquire copies of their handouts and discuss turns when presenting
- Presentations
  - Groups hand in 1 copy of their handout and their Researching relief packet
  - Pass out copies of handout to classmates
  - Present their findings (3-5 min) - each member must speak at least once
- Students gather all their handouts, select 3 to put into their final portfolio
- Cath-up Time: Students have the remainder of the class to work on any assignments that they owe, they may also work on their portfolios

**Day 5**

- Presentation on Relief Sculpture
  - Review of vocab
  - Game - Relief Sculpture vs. Sculpture-in-the-Round
  - History and purpose of relief sculpture, its relevance today
  - Mythology/Myths
    - What they are, their relation to relief sculpture
    - How they are significant to ancient civilizations
    - What we can learn from them
  - Introduction to assignment
- Students use the remainder of class to lookup myths that interest them
- Students are asked to consider what deeper meaning the myth might have
- Possible time to begin creating thumbnail sketches
- Closure: Review of project expectations, discuss what will occur next class

**Day 6**

- Review of class expectations for the day
  - Catch up absent students

- Students finish finding a myth (if they haven't already)
- Finish sketching ideas
- Select one idea and begin drawing it on 10"x10" paper in pencil
- Closure: Review of expectations, ask if students need help or clarification on the assignment, discuss what will occur next class

### **Day 7**

- Demo: How to transfer drawing to clay and how to begin carving
  - Tips and tricks, discussion of techniques
  - Discussion on tools and materials
- Finish drawing and acquire tools and clay
- Transfer drawing and begin carving
- Cleanup and Closure: Discuss where tools and supplies will go for storage, discuss any common errors or misunderstandings, cleanup

### **Day 8-10**

3 Days of Studio Work (Can be extended or decreased if need be)

- Review of assignment guidelines and discussion on any common mistakes
- Continue carving relief sculpture
- When finished, leave sculpture out to air dry
- If students finish early, they can choose to paint their sculpture and then work on their portfolio entry for this assignment

### **Day 11 (Critique Day)**

- Class is divided into 2 groups
- Students use prompted questions to critique each other's pieces
  - What myth is being depicted? Which scene is being depicted? Is there a good sense of emphasis? Was the artist successful, why? How is craftsmanship? What could they do to improve? What do you like about it/what is done well?
- Remainder of class is used to make any desired changes to sculpture and to work on portfolio entry

## Lesson Reflection

**Positives:** Powerpoint presentation was beneficial; as even though students completed a research assignment on relief sculpture, many still were confused as to the difference between relief sculpture and sculpture-in-the-round. Students were excited to use clay. Students were interested in the subject/concept.

**Negatives:** Students had difficulty understanding what was meant by “multiple levels”. Some carved too deeply, making the piece fragile. Some students didn’t understand how to use the loop tools. Many pieces cracked and/or broke when they dried. During the research presentations, many groups researched the same artist.

**Changes:** Discuss the difference between tools and how to carefully carve. Find examples of pieces that have multiple levels of carving and have an in depth discussion on what is meant by “multiple levels”. When finished, put pieces back in bags to dry, so that they dry slowly and won’t crack. For the research presentation, assign each group an artist so that there are no repeats.