



Longwood Center for the Visual Arts  
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**Professional Development Teacher Workshop**  
*Fire it Up!*  
November 8th, 2013

**Lesson: *Wabi Sabi***  
**Grade Level: Art I and Art II**

**What is Wabi Sabi?**

Wabi-sabi is based on a Japanese philosophy of celebrating the beauty of hand-made objects. It seeks to find beauty in imperfections and nature, and to accept the natural cycle of growth, decay, and death. Wabi sabi is a state of consciousness. It is a way of life, but not a religion. It reflects the principles of simplicity and naturalness associated with Zen Buddhism. Its beauty hidden in the aesthetic or the feelings experienced between you and the world. The first people associated with Wabi-sabi were Japanese monks, priests and tea masters practicing Zen Buddhism around the 12th century.

The essence to successfully engaging in Wabi-sabi art is to eliminate unnecessary and superfluous elements and to value natural simplicity, while avoiding contrived perfection. You also must trust your intuition and lose yourself in the moment of the artwork, ignoring any compulsion to correct mistakes. Wabi-sabi is the opposite of today's sleek, mass-produced, technology-driven culture.

Wabi-sabi can be explored with ceramics by not worrying about every small blemish and imperfection of a clay pot. The beauty is in the imperfections themselves. The creator must let go of preconceived desires for perfection and work with the movement and natural phases of the art process.

Goals	Virginia Standards of Learning
<p>The students will use their sketchbooks to take notes about Wabi-sabi and record the process of making a Wabi-sabi art object.</p> <p>The students will use their sketchbooks to plan out their Wabi-Sabi project.</p> <p>The students will look at other examples of Wabi-sabi and describe what they see.</p> <p>The students will discuss why these pieces were made and what their functions might be.</p> <p>The students will learn about the culture that surrounds Wabi-sabi art and how the lifestyles and belief systems influence the product.</p> <p>The students will discuss the conceptual elements of the art and figure out what that piece of art means to them individually.</p> <p>The students will participate in a teacher-lead peer critique.</p>	<p><b>AI.1</b> The student will maintain and use a process art portfolio (e.g., sketchbook/journal and working portfolio) for planning and as a resource in the art making process.</p> <p><b>AI.2</b> The student will identify and use steps of the design process, including brainstorming, preliminary sketching, planning, reflecting, refining, elaborating, and researching, in creative problem solving.</p> <p><b>AI.20</b> The student will describe aesthetic qualities found in works of art.</p> <p><b>AI.21</b> The student will analyze the functions, purposes, and perceived meanings of works of design.</p> <p><b>AI.22</b> The student will formulate a definition for art and defend that definition in relation to objects in the world.</p> <p><b>AI.13</b> The student will analyze works of art as representational, abstract, or non-representational, including non-objective and conceptual.</p> <p><b>AI.18</b> The student will develop constructive approaches to critique (formative, peer-to-peer, self-reflective, summative) that are supportive in intent and that offer alternative points of view.</p>
<p>The students will learn how the culture of Wabi-sabi is non-traditional and how their culture is reflected in their artwork.</p> <p>The students will use sketchbooks to plan their Wabi-sabi projects.</p>	<p><b>AII.4</b> The student will use traditional and non-traditional media and concepts as inspiration to create works of art.</p> <p><b>AII.10</b> The student will use drawing media and processes to plan for and create works of art.</p>

During a classroom discussion, the students will learn about various elements of cultural influence involved in Wabi-sabi.	<b>AII.13</b> The student will examine and discuss social, political, economic, and cultural factors that influence works of art and design.
The students will participate in a teacher-lead critique, of both peer work and examples from others.	<b>AII.17</b> The student will use art criticism skills when analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating personal and professional works of art and design.
The students will discuss different perspectives and interpretations of art.	<b>AII.25</b> The student will investigate how art and design can be viewed from a variety of aesthetic stances/theories.

**Supplies and Materials:**

- Kiln (if firing)
- Glazes (if firing)
- Acrylic paint (if not firing)
- Paint brushes
- Clay tools for carving etc.
- Clay, enough for your entire class to make a face jug no bigger than 10”H x 8”W x 8”D
- Clay storage so that the pieces can be worked on over several days
- Sketchbooks

**TEACHER AND STUDENT PROCEDURE**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>TEACHER PROCEDURE</b>	<b>STUDENT PROCEDURE</b>
<b>MIN</b>		
<b>First Class 15 Minutes</b>	The teacher will introduce Wabi-sabi. The teacher will show images of Wabi-sabi art and discuss the history and culture of these art objects. The teacher will encourage students to take notes.	The students will learn about the context surrounding Wabi-sabi, see examples, and take notes.
<b>20 Minutes</b>	The teacher will explain basic ceramic techniques and show examples. The teacher will make sure that students are taking notes.	The students will learn about basic ceramic techniques. Students will take notes.
<b>Remainder of Class</b>	The teacher will have the students make sketches and plan how they are going to create their Wabi-sabi artwork.	Students will use their sketchbook to create thumbnail sketches or make a plan for their Wabi-sabi art.

<b>Second Class 10 Minutes</b>	The teacher will recap on the previous class and go over clay techniques. The teacher will go over rules and guidelines to working with clay in the classroom.	The students will remember what they started working on in the previous class and refresh themselves on clay techniques and rules and guidelines with using clay within the classroom.
<b>Remainder of Class</b>	The teacher will facilitate classroom work time.	The students will continue to work on sketches, or start making final sketches. Some students may begin making their Wabi-sabi artwork.
<b>End of Class</b>	The teacher will facilitate classroom clean up procedures.	The students will partake in classroom clean up procedures.
<b>(Optional Homework)</b>	The teacher can assign students to have finished sketches for the next class.	The students will have finished sketches for the next class.
<b>Third Class 10 minutes</b>	The teacher will recap on the previous class and go over clay techniques. The teacher will go over rules and guidelines to working with clay in the classroom.	The students will remember what they started working on in the previous class and refresh themselves on clay techniques and rules and guidelines with using clay within the classroom.
<b>Remainder of Class</b>	The teacher will facilitate classroom work time.	Students will work on making their Wabi-sabi clay art.
<b>End of Class</b>	The teacher will facilitate classroom clean up procedures.	The students will partake in classroom clean up procedures.
<b>Fourth through Seventh Classes</b>	The teacher will facilitate classroom work time.	The students will build and carve their Wabi-sabi pieces.
<b>After the Seventh Class</b>	After the seventh class the teacher should begin firing the pieces if they choose to have the pieces been glazed.	Students should be ready to have their work fired.
<b>After the pieces have dried or been fired</b>	(if glazing) The teacher will go over glazing techniques.  (if not glazing) The teacher will go over	The students will see how to use glaze to paint their pieces.  The students will see how to use

<b>20 Minutes</b>	painting techniques to use on clay. The teacher will have students take notes.	paint on their ceramic pieces. Students will take notes.
<b>Remainder of Class</b>	The teacher will facilitate classroom work time.	Students will glaze or paint their ceramic pieces.
<b>End of Class</b>	The teacher will facilitate classroom clean up procedures.	The students will partake in classroom clean up procedures.
<b>Next Class 10 Minutes</b>	The teacher will explain that after the pieces are finished, the entire class will participate in a class critique. The teacher will explain how to critique another's work.	The students will understand that they will participate in a classroom critique and will recognize how to critique their peer's works.
<b>5 Minutes</b>	The teacher will also make students aware that they will have to write an artist statement about their piece.	The students will also know that they are to write an artist statement about their piece.
<b>Remainder of Class</b>	The teacher will facilitate classroom work time.	The students will finish glazing/painting their pieces.
<b>End of class</b>	The teacher will facilitate classroom clean up procedures.	The students will partake in classroom clean up procedures.
<b>After the class</b>	The teacher will fire the pieces if they were glazed.  If desired, a clear top glaze may also be applied.	
<b>Final Class</b>	The teacher will recap on the previous class and go over techniques used for glazing or painting on the clay.  The teacher will have the students write artist statements and then partake in a classroom critique.  The teacher will facilitate the classroom critique.	The students will remember what they started working on in the previous class and refresh themselves on painting techniques used on clay.  The students will write artist statements about their pieces.  The students will participate in a classroom critique.

## References:

- "What Is Wabi Sabi? - Wwww.wabisabi.org.uk - Life Awaiting Discovery." *What Is Wabi Sabi? – Wwww.wabisabi.org.uk - Life Awaiting Discovery*. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Nov. 2013.  
<<http://www.wabisabi.org.uk/googled7ac3efe0c1c8055.html>>.
- "Wabi-Sabi: The Art Of Imperfection." *Utne*. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Nov. 2013.  
<<http://www.utne.com/mind-and-body/wabi-sabi.aspx>>.