

Longwood Center for the Visual Arts
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Professional Development Teacher Workshop
Power and Beauty: New in the African Art Collection
October 5th, 2012

Lesson: *African Mask*
Grade Level: 8

Studying the history of mask-making in Africa is a great way for students to experience the relationships between the process of creating art, and appreciating the significance it carries. African artists design and prepare a mask with great consideration to its purpose and its place in their culture. This project mimics face masks that may have been used in village ceremonies.

Goals	Virginia Standards of Learning
The student will create an African ceremonial mask using different types of art processes	8.6 The student will create three-dimensional works of art, using a variety of themes and processes.
Students will look at examples of African masks and be able to discuss the social, cultural, and historical contexts as they contribute to the masks themselves.	8.17 The student will investigate and discuss the use of social, cultural, and historical context as they contribute to meaning in a work of art.
Students will become aware of the social significance of cultural artifacts such as the African masks.	8.21 The student will formulate and respond to meaningful questions about works of art, based on observations and interpretations.

Supplies and Materials:

- Plaster cloth cut into strips (Rigid-Wrap Plaster Cloth Pack can be ordered from dickblick.com)
- Warm water
- Plastic face mask form (can be ordered from dickblick.com at item #60959-0000 for \$1.99 ea.)
- Petroleum jelly

- Matte Acrylic paint
- Raffia
- Shells, feathers, beads etc.
- Masking tape
- Stapler and staples
- Scissors
- Glue

TEACHER AND STUDENT PROCEDURE

TIME	TEACHER PROCEDURE	STUDENT PROCEDURE
MIN		
First Class period		
3 minutes	The teacher will ask questions to see what students already know about African masks.	Students will use educated guessing or previous learned knowledge to answer questions and begin thinking about African Masks.
5 Minutes	The teacher will talk about the history of African Masks, why they are important, what they mean, when they were used.	Students may want to take notes in a sketchbook to help with their thought process later when they make their own masks.
3 minutes	The teacher will explain the African mask project and show an example of a finished mask.	
10 Minutes	The teacher will show examples (pictures, books, and/or videos) of African masks being used or on display.	Students should ask questions regarding the masks, and make thumbnail sketches to help them when they make their own mask.
5 minutes	The teacher will demonstrate how to use the plaster strips on the face mask form. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sign your name on the inside of the plastic face mask form. - Coat the mask form with petroleum jelly - Plaster strips should be 1-1/2" wide. - Dip strips in warm water and apply to face mask form then overlap and blend the edges with your fingers. 	Students should take notes in a sketchbook on the process of applying the plaster strips. Students should be sure to put their names on the insides of their plastic face mask forms.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply second layer but remember to leave holes for the eyes and the mouth. - Masks must be allowed to dry for several hours before it can be removed from the face mask form. 	
Remainder of class	Facilitate classroom work time	Students should be putting their plaster strips on their face mask forms so they have time to dry by the next time class meets.
10 minutes before class ends	Facilitate clean up time. Make sure that wet plaster is not stuck on the tables.	Students should start cleaning up and wiping down tables.
Second class period		
5 Minutes	The teacher will recap on the class before.	Students should be able to recall their awareness of the social significance of the masks. As well they should be able to recall that they are creating an African ceremonial mask using different types of art processes.
2 Minutes	The teacher will demonstrate how to remove the plastic face mask form.	Students should take notes so they have them readily available when they go to do the process themselves.
5 Minutes	<p>The teacher will demonstrate how to paint on the plaster mask form with the matte paint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First write your name on the inside of your mask. - You will want to coat the entire mask with brown matte acrylic paint. - Try using sponges or lightly stipple red, yellow-orange and beige colors over the brown. - Or make different patterns with the paint. 	<p>Students will want to take notes from this demonstration to refer to when painting their own masks.</p> <p>Students should be sure to write their names on the insides of their masks.</p>

10 Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of course, you may use other colors, but these colors match traditional African earth-pigments. <p>The teacher will demonstrate how to attach the raffia to the mask.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take small handfuls of raffia and cut them into 6"-8" pieces. - Lay them out in flat rows on tabletop, and place a strip of masking tape at the top near the cut edge. Turn it over and place a matching piece of masking tape on that side - Fold the edges and trim the excess raffia over the tape and wrap a final piece of tape on the top - Repeat until you have several sets of the raffia to make a full beard. <p>Next:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staple the raffia sets to the side of the face so that the taped edge follows the back edge of the mask and the raffia extends forward in front of the face. - Bend the raffia back away to form a full beard. - Finish by gluing on feathers, shells, and other decorative materials. 	<p>Students may want to practice these following steps as the teacher does them. They should also be continuing to take notes on the process.</p>
Remainder of class	<p>Teacher should Facilitate classroom work time</p>	<p>Students should paint their masks and attach raffia</p>
10 minutes before class ends	<p>Facilitate clean up time so that paint brushes and materials get washed.</p>	<p>Students should start cleaning up and wiping down tables and washing paint materials.</p>
Third Class Period	<p>Facilitate classroom work time</p> <p>Once everyone is finished have each student put on their mask, display it, and then talk a bit about why they added certain decorations or patterns.</p>	<p>Students should begin finishing their projects</p> <p>Students should be able to discuss in appropriate art vocabulary why and how they created their mask.</p>

References:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8XxU9URbEg&feature=relmfu>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBXOg30xPaQ&feature=relmfu>
- <http://www.artyfactory.com/africanmasks/index.htm>
- Finley, Carol. *The Art of African Masks: Exploring Cultural Traditions*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1999. Print.

