

BACKGROUND READING FOR PRESENTERS

Head of a Youth Head of a Young Man

Third Grade

Head of a Youth - Fifth Century B.C.

Head of a Young Man - Fourth-Third Century B.C.

Sculpture of the fifth century B.C. in Greece sought to portray a new ideal of beauty. There was an attempt to capture a stillness and momentary action. A sculpture, such as "Head of a Youth", tried not to capture the qualities of one single youth, but of youth in general. The features were simple and gracefully modeled. The hair was stylized. There is none of the stiffness of earlier Greek sculpture.

Sculptors of the fourth and third centuries revived the emotional qualities in their work. Hair styling was more ornate. More individualism came into play. More realistic features show up. Actions of the figures, however, were kept simple. Drapery on the figure plays an important part in revealing the musculature in a natural manner.

Ancient Greek culture was full of different types of art. Ancient Greeks decorated almost every part of their lives, from their building city streets to the inside of their homes, many objects in Greek life were created with beauty in mind. Greek artists created masterpieces in painting, metal work, mosaic, sculpture, architecture, literature, and pottery.

Not very much Greek sculpture has survived for us to see. You might think it would last well, being made mostly of limestone and marble, but both limestone and marble can be burned and turned into lime, which is one of the ingredients of cement. In the Middle Ages, most Greek statues were not valued, and they were burned in lime kilns to make cement. Practically all big Greek archaeological sites have medieval lime kilns in the middle of them.

The ancient Greeks loved beauty, music, literature, drama, philosophy, politics, and art. Their statues always represented perfect looking people, with muscles and perfect noses and eyes spaced just right. This is very different from the ancient Romans; in ancient Rome, if someone had a big nose, the artist would give him a big nose in the painting or sculpture. The Greeks would never do that.

The Greeks carved most of their statues from white marble. They used hand tools made of hard bronze and iron. The sculptor set up a block of marble and drew an outline of the figure on it. Then he roughed out the figure with a hammer studded with sharp points. He used pointed chisels for the finer work. As the sculptor grew closer to the finished work, he used smaller tools and made lighter blows with his hammer. Finally, he gave a sharp edge to the figure's eyes and lips with a triangular, pointed tool.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR:

Greek Sculpture--Alvastone

Grade 3

Head of a Youth

Head of a Young Man

Look closely at both of the sculptures.

1. What kind of a mood is each one showing?
2. Are the people represented young or old? How can you tell?
3. How do you suppose the sculpture is carved? (Mallet and chisels, files and sanding)
4. What kind of material do you think these two sculptures are made of?
5. Which one do you like the best? Why?
- 6 Do you think it is easier or harder to make a sculpture than a painting? Why?
- 7 What is one thing a sculptor must consider that a painter doesn't need to? (3 dimensional work)
8. If you had a small sculpture, where would you put it in your house? Why?
9. Since light bouncing off the sculpture might make a difference in how a person sees the sculpture, would it be important to place it in just the right place?

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES TO ACCOMPANY Greek Sculpture--Grade 3

1. Greek theatre mask

Materials: copy of the Greek mask that is in the manila folder, scissors, crayons, popsicle sticks

Share the information about Greek theatre. Then, have the students color the mask,

cut it out, and cut out the mouth. Finally, glue a popsicle stick to the bottom middle

so that it can be held in front of the face. (easier than threading string or elastic to tie) Sticks are available at the BCA in the supply cabinet.

2. Foil face mask (takes very little time unless students work carefully)

Material: Aluminum foil (15 inches for each student) Available at the BCA.; black construction paper

This project enables students to understand the 3-dimensional quality of their own facial features. Each student should be given a square of aluminum foil at least fifteen inches long. By laying their heads back and placing the foil square over their faces, the children should be able to press the foil firmly down to fit the contours of their faces. Emphasize pushing firmly down around the eye sockets, nose and chin, pinching and pushing the foil until it holds the shape of the facial features when he/she is finished. If the first attempt fails, foil can be smoothed out and reworked. Caution to handle foil gently. Once completed, students may want to glue it to a piece of black construction paper.

3. Simple sculpture coloring

Materials: copies of a Greek vase, crayons, black markers (BCA)

Hand out copies of a Greek vase (manila folder). Students should color it in a color that they think a bronze or clay vase might be. Then, it should be decorated in a design that might be from ancient Greek times. (sample ideas are on the vase sheet to be copied)

4. Clay piece

Materials: newspaper, string, clay (you could find it at Dick Blick)

Crumple newspaper in tight ball about the size of their fist. Wrap tightly with string

to hold shape. Apply clay around newspaper shape until completely covered.

Add

additional clay to shape facial features and neck. As clay dries it should shrink, but newspaper should give enough to prevent cracking. (needs time to dry)(a more difficult project)