

LESSON PLAN: Shapes and Balance

By Heather Lamanno Lough, July 2010

Learn about symmetry in art and create a mask sculpture using clay shapes.

Key questions / ideas

Introduce the concept of visual balance:

- What does the word **symmetry** mean? **Asymmetry**?
- How do artists create symmetry or asymmetry in art?
- Where have you seen this kind of balance before?
- Who has worked with clay material before? What was it like?



Objectives

INTRODUCTION: Discuss and identify how we have experienced these ideas before so students relate the new vocabulary to things we are already familiar with (ex. face, butterfly, heart). Practice identifying symmetry and asymmetry in provided example cards.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY: using pre-cut templates children will trace $\frac{1}{2}$ shapes on folded construction paper to create symmetrical shapes that we can use as reference when making our clay projects.

We will enjoy a museum tour exploring numerous works of art to see how artists use shapes, line, and color to create different types of visual balance. We will think about how what we have seen in the museum can give us ideas for making our own projects.

Tour activity: in the RC west hallway: build towers using foam blocks. Discuss balance, weight, see-saws...

We will complete a studio project using shape templates to create a mask form out of air dry clay exploring ideas of balance.

Vocabulary

Balance,
symmetry/asymmetry
Shape
Line

Pattern
Slip/score
Profile
Relief



Materials needed

Sargent Art Sculpt-it modeling clay
Plastic cups for water
Foam board (small square base for transporting sculptures)
Shape templates (or cookie cutters)

Wax paper
Construction paper
Scissors
Crayons

Hands-on Tour Elements: mirror, foam building blocks, fur swatch, cedar, raffia, images: Mexican jaguar masks, katsina doll masks

Assessment

Even though we all used the same materials, our works all look different, don't they?

Which works have an asymmetrical design? Which pieces look more symmetrical?

Which pieces have characteristics similar to works we saw on our tour?

Tour Artwork Images:



Alberto Bautista Gómez (Mexican, d. 2007)

Jaguar, 1970 – 1980

Clay

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art



George Hunt Jr. (Northwest Coast Am. Indian, Kwakwaka'wakw, b. 1958)

Supernatural Bumble Bee, 2000

Wood, hand-hammered copper, abalone inlays, rabbit fur and domestic feathers

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009.46



Stan Greene (American/ Coast Salish, b. 1953)

The Four Winds, 2000

Red cedar, cedar bark, sheep hair and rabbit fur (mask)

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009.47



Shyatesa White Dove (American Indian, Acoma Pueblo, b. 1956)

The Way Acoma Goes Is The Way The World Will Go, 2012

Clay, slips and natural dyes

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2013.42