

Lesson: Chicago Relief Sculpture Cityscape

Grade Level: Elementary (grades 3 to 5 - examples are 3rd grade)

Time Allowed: approximately 2-3, 60 minute class periods



Vocabulary:

Sculpture	Model magic	Wet On Dry
Drawing	Watercolor	Dry On Dry
Relief	Sculpture	Dry On Wet
Skyline	Surreal	
Sculptor	Realism	
Cityscape	Texture	
Coil	Pinch	
Mixed-media	Acrylic Paint	
Public Art	Wet On Wet	

Resources:

Cityofchicago.org (Public Art Program)

<http://library.thinkquest.org/J002846/buildings.htm> (Chicago's Best Buildings)

Motivation/Visual Aids/Artists:

You will need numerous photographs of various Chicago buildings, public art sculptures & monuments for students to reference. I usually have examples of Alexander Calder “Flamingo”, Anish Kapoor “Cloud Gate”, Pablo Picasso “Untitled (The Picasso)”, Jaume Plensa “Crown Fountain” and Buckingham Fountain.

Student will learn:

1. to appreciate the diversity and detail in Chicago architecture and public art.
2. to demonstrate basic hand building techniques to create a relief sculpture.
3. to create a watercolor cityscape.

Materials Needed:

- Model Magic- A small handful per student (any air dry clay will work).
- Pencils
- Sharpies
- Watercolors
- Scissors
- Elmer’s Glue
- 6”x9” newsprint (practice sketch)
- 12” x 18” 90lb paper
- Tools to create the relief sculpture and add texture to the model magic (toothpicks, nails, screws, marker caps, clay modeling tools).
- Acrylic Paints-Assorted colors to go with your choice of public art examples.

Procedure:

1. Talk about Chicago’s unique skyline and buildings with the class. Students love to talk about which buildings their parents and family members work or live in. Next, talk about the 4 or 5 public art sculptures you selected for the class to learn about.
2. Have students chose a public art sculpture/monument that they would want to create as a relief sculpture. Then, have students create a sketch of their public art sculpture/monument.
3. Demonstrate different basic building techniques like rolling coils, pinching and flattening. Next, demonstrate using tools like scissors, marker caps, clay modeling tools, toothpicks, nails & screws.
4. Give each student a small handful of model magic. Open the packet/ bucket of model magic ONLY when you are ready to begin modeling as it dries out quickly. You must finish building your Chicago sculpture/ monument in 1 session including detail and texture. Students will paint their sculpture after they have completed drawing their skyline. Note: air dry clay sculptures can be wrapped tightly in plastic and worked on a second day. Let completed relief sculpture dry 24 hours or more.

5. Have students fold a 12"x18" piece of 90lb paper in half lengthwise. Trace the crease with pencil to create the foreground and background areas of the cityscape. Next, students will draw a series of buildings on the pencil line that fills the top half of the paper. Make sure to have numerous examples of popular skyscrapers like the Sears Tower and John Hancock buildings for students to reference. Encourage students to add lots of detail to their buildings. On the bottom half of the paper create a plaza or park using simple perspective. Use black sharpie to trace over completed pencil drawing.
6. Demonstrate the use of different watercolor painting techniques (i.e., wet on wet, wet on dry, dry on dry, dry on wet or salt). Students will then paint their cityscape using watercolor in realistic or surreal style.
7. Next, students will paint the model magic relief sculptures with acrylic paint. Make sure students are painting all raised surfaces so that the sculpture has a unified look with no white spots. Set relief sculptures aside and let dry for a few minutes. Note: I often use old hair dryers to speed the drying process up.
8. Attach relief sculpture to the center of the watercolor cityscape with Elmer's glue. Let entire piece of artwork dry for 24 hours before hanging.

