

Reclining Clay Figure, inspired by Henry Moore



Grade: 4th grade

Medium: Clay, paint or glaze

Learning Objective: Students will view & recreate reclining figures as depicted by sculptor Henry Moore. Using clay tools & processes they will create their own. They will make creative decisions about details used and use good craftsmanship.

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Elements of Art

Form: a three-dimensional object that takes up space with and has height, length, width, and depth.

Texture: the art element that refers to how objects look or feel.

Principles of Design

Balance: a sense that the sculpture feels stable, 'feels right'. In this case, does the figure sit upright?

Proportion: the relationship of parts to a whole or parts to one another in regard to size and placement. Are all the body parts proportional to the figure?

Additional Vocabulary

Biomorphic: Lines, shapes or forms that are rounded, fluid, undulating.

Slip: a slurry combination of clay & water, used to attach wet clay.

Materials & Supplies

- Low-fire clay
- Clay tools: wire cutter, wood modeling tools, small natural sponges
- Canvas or vinyl placemats
- Half class set of slip in plastic, lidded containers
- Class set of forks to apply slip
- Glazes – stone like*
- Glaze brushes

Context (History and/or Artists)

Henry Moore was the most important British sculptor of the 20th century, most popular in the post-war period. His motifs included mother and child, and the reclining figure. His human forms were massive in proportion, abstracted to their simplest shapes and biomorphic (form based on a living thing), usually made of stone.

**Henry Moore's work was typically done in bronze or stone and there are many glazes that will give you that look. If you want to do something more representational then be sure to look for glaze for paint options which have a wide variety of skin shades available so no student feels excluded.*

Options could be:

- *use of stone or bronze-looking glazes to look more like Henry Moore's work*
- *The 'Teachers Pallet' line of glazes can be mixed like paint to get a semblance of a wide variety of skin tones.*
- *Paint the finished sculptures with tempera paint that can be mixed for custom skin tones or several companies make skin tone paint sets in tempera paints and then seal with a spray art sealant. (This will need to be done outside by adults only).*

Advanced Preparation

Using a wire cutter tool, cut cubes of clay the size of a navel orange, enough for each student. Wrap in plastic until time to use. Put clay tools (cutters, mats, rolling pins and straws) in the middle of each table group, or at a couple of central locations. At each seat or using an overhead projector, display photos of Moore's reclining figure sculptures.

Tips & Tricks

- It may be necessary to limit access to sponges. Some students use too much water and waste time with the sponge.
- It is always better to pinch and model clay than attach parts that might fall off.
- Limit appendages that stick out stiffly. These tend to appear unnatural and break off easily. Encourage arms or hands to touch another part of the body to assure they don't break off, but still look natural.

Discussion Points

After showing examples of Moore's sculptures, have the students (or 1 student) try a reclining pose of their own on the floor. Point out how they are balanced to be stable, & what the body's limbs are doing. Encourage students to give their sculpture a similar strong foundation.

Reflection Point (Assessment of Learning Objectives)

The students should make a stable, seated or reclining clay figure following directions given, keeping proportions relatively balanced. They choose details about their figure (gender, clothes, hair, etc.) & use good craftsmanship. Note: this is not a direct copy of a Moore reclining figure. Details and color can be added for personal expression.

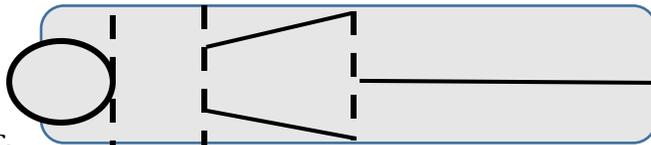
Instructions for Lesson

1. Demonstrate the process for making a figure outlined here, guiding the students through the process step by step.
2. Have students gather their own supplies: clay, mat, & tools. While they work, pass out the slip & forks.

3. Hand out the clay to students.
4. Roll it and then flatten slightly into a 'burrito' shape.



5. Using an overhead projector or gathering the students around a large table, demonstrate making a person. Body parts should be proportional.
 - a. If 'burritos' are really round, then lay them down and push them into the table to flatten them a bit. It is hard to cut something that rolls.
 - b. Make a light mark (dotted line) on the burrito dividing it in half. (See marking diagram c).



- c.
- d. On the top half, make a light mark (dotted line) dividing it in half again.
- e. One more time, the very top quarter, should be lightly marked in half (dotted line).
- f. Cut from the halfway mark (solid line), the waist, all the way through the 'burrito' to the end. This creates the legs.



- g. Pinch out the feet by folding the bottom tips of the legs out or up.
- h. Pinch out the top 1/8th, or 1/4 of the top of the body (oval in diagram), into a head. Round it into an oval, taller than it is wide. Students may need to remove a little clay from this portion.



- i. Cut the diagonal lines from the top ½ line out to the waist (diagonal lines) and sculpt these into arms.



- j. If students need to add clay to their arms, to make them proportional, have them 'scratch to attach', scratching both spots that will touch with a fork to make gouges & fill in with slip (not water) before attaching. Smooth out seams with fingers.
6. Walk around and help students with proportions.
 7. Once the pose is good, add details: pinch the nose, while pressing in with the end of a pencil or skewer for eyes. Model a chin.



8. Position the figure simply in a reclining pose. If the clay is breaking or cracking, it may be drying too quickly. Gently wipe clay with the small wet sponge. This will also help the coils to flex.
9. *If you plan to paint them then with a wooden tool draw lines to delineate clothing if desired, hair (which can be texturized with the fork or a sharp pencil, or wooden skewer) or other accessories.*
10. To assure a flat, stable 'seat' you can tap the figure gently on the table top before writing the first name can be written underneath the sculpture with a skewer. Have an adult write the names so they are legible to others on the base of the sculpture.
11. Before these are left to dry, make a quick check for any weak or cracking spots & repair with smoothing, or extra clay or slip. Also check for names.
12. Dry the figure until they are bone dry (approximately 2 weeks)- dry and warm to the touch.
13. Fire figures
14. Glaze or paint the figures.

Tempera Painted:



Stone glazed:



Notes for Educators

21st Century Thinking Skills

Observing, making connections, visualizing, sequencing, comparing/contrasting, decision making.

WA State Learning Standards

(VA:Cr1.1.4) a. Brainstorm multiple approaches to a creative art or design problem. This happens when you look at different poses.

(VA:Cr1.2.4) a. Collaboratively set goals and create artwork that is meaningful and has purpose to the makers. This happens when students make decisions about details in their sculptures.

(VA:Cr2.2.4) a. When making works of art, utilize and care for materials, tools, and equipment in a manner that prevents danger to oneself and others. This happens when they use the tools properly.

(VA:Cr3.1.4) a. Revise artwork in progress on the basis of insights gained through peer discussion. This happens when you walk around & talk about the work you're seeing happen.

(VA:Re8.1.4) a. Interpret art by referring to contextual information and analyzing relevant subject matter, characteristics of form, and use of media. This happens when you compare Moore's sculptures to real figures, & to the figure's students' make.

(VA:Re9.1.4) a. Apply one set of criteria to evaluate more than one work of art. This happens when you assess your students' work.

Arts Integration Opportunities

Writing: Students can write about their 'person.'