



SENEGAL-AMERICA PROJECT LESSON PLAN



AUTHOR: Susan Sawyer & Zan Lombardo	GRADE LEVEL: Middle School
SUBJECT: Art	DATE: December 17, 2006
TOPIC: Benin Bronzes	
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: Who did the first portraits in bronze represent in Benin, West Africa? What do the Benin bronze portraits convey about the people they represent?	
PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: Students will learn about the art of the kings and queens in Benin, West Africa (formerly southern Nigeria). Students will draw well-proportioned faces and transfer those faces into metal foil to create relief sculptures embellished with patterns meant to convey the mystical powers of the person's soul. Students may choose to represent their mother as a queen or father as a king in the tooled metal portrait.	
THINKING SKILL: AS-4 Students will learn to explore thoughts underlying feelings and feelings underlying thoughts.	
LESSON CONTENT: Cognitive —1. Students will learn some history and art facts about the bronze portraits of Benin, West Africa. 2. Students will understand how faces are proportioned and will apply that understanding to create their own face drawing. 3. Students will find patterns of lines and shapes to represent human and spiritual qualities. Psychomotor —4. Students will draw a well-proportioned face in their sketchbook. 5. Students will tool metal foil to create raised relief face shapes and symbolic patterns with an awareness of the limitations of the media. Affective —6. Students will recognize emotion in facial expressions and be able to compose features to convey an intended emotion. 7. Students will embellish their tooled metal face choosing those patterns that convey most accurately their feelings and thoughts about the person they are representing.	
PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES: 1.A. Students will know and use the elements of art (line, shape, texture, space) and principles of organization (balance, emphasis, proportion, pattern) to create works in the arts and humanities. 1.E. Students will know and demonstrate how arts can communicate experiences, stories or emotions through the production of works in the arts. 1.H. Students will use and maintain materials, equipment and tools safely. 2.G. Students will relate works in the arts to geographic regions. (Benin, West Africa) 2.K. Students will identify, explain and analyze traditions as they relate to works in the arts. 3.E. Students will describe and use types of critical analysis in the arts and humanities. 4.A. Identify uses of expressive symbols that show philosophical meaning the works in the arts and humanities.	

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES:

1. Teacher will show students images of the original bronzes of Benin and give a brief history. Students will participate in a discussion about the expressions and embellishments and what feelings they convey as they study the Benin bronzes.
2. Using sketchbooks, students will practice drawing faces with correct proportions. Students may choose to represent a parent or someone specific from their own lives, showing personal attributes of that individual. Pattern and embellishment can be added after careful consideration of what each design will convey about the subject.
3. Students will trace their sketches onto tracing paper. The tracing papers are then taped onto pieces of metal foil whose edges have been covered with masking tape to protect the students' fingers as they indent their drawings onto the foil.
4. Teacher demonstrates metal tooling techniques by placing the foil on top of a soft surface (magazine or newspaper) and pressing carefully with a blunt plastic or wooden tool. Once the surface of the foil has been pressed outward slightly from one side, the foil is turned over and the surrounding areas are pressed to enhance the relief effect. Each bit of tooling is done gradually to coax the metal into the desired shape and raised height. Working too quickly causes rips in the metal.
5. Students tool their faces and patterns into the foil following teacher instructions.
6. When complete, a "patina" can be added to the foil by coloring the surface of the metal with marker and then gently rubbing off the raised areas, leaving dark colors in the recessed portions.
7. After completion, a critique can be held, giving students a chance to respond to each other's creations and share input about facial proportions, expressions, and embellishments.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES:

Benin Bronzes Rubric

Class Critique

Teacher Observation of Process and Product

MATERIALS AND AIDS (what you will need in order to teach this lesson)

- History of Benin bronzes, Photograph examples of Benin Bronzes
- Sketchbooks
- Pencils, erasers
- Metal tooling foil
- Plastic or wooden tools with blunt ends
- Magazines or newspapers
- Masking tape
- Mirrors to check facial proportions



Queen Mother heads were commissioned by the Benin Kings (Oba) in honor of their mothers. The first queen mother heads are thought to date to the early sixteenth century reign of King Esignie, the ruler who first established the office of Queen Mother for his mother Idia. The heads representing queen mothers were placed on special altars dedicated to these women both at the royal palace and the queen mother's residence. The elaborate "chicken beak" coiffure is a prominent feature identified with Benin royal women. The serenity of her expression and her regal features make this one of the most beautiful of the Queen Mother Heads.

(source: <http://www.shanigallery.com/brqm.html>)

For more information and images of Benin Bronzes—

Good site for history of Tribal African Art:

<http://www.zyama.com/benin/pics..htm>

Wonderful photographs and text regarding Benin culture:

http://www.randafricanart.com/Benin_Oba_commemorative_heads.html