

Portrait Pots

The Moche* tribe of Peru is best known for its polychrome portrait pottery vessels. Since the Moche did not develop a writing system, much of what we know about them has been determined through the study of these portrait pots. Scenes of rituals and activities of everyday life are vividly depicted on many pots. Archaeologists have pieced together information from these vessels to help them tell the story of this tribe.



Target Grade: 12

Goal (Terminal Objective): Students will define portrait pots or jars as another informational tool to study the Moche tribe. Students will discuss that unlike the stylized approach their contemporaries in other parts of the Americas took for creating figurative sculptures, Moche potters preferred realism. Portrait pots so accurately depicted their subjects that doctors have been able to determine the types of diseases and injuries they had by viewing the pots. Students will create a portrait pot in the style of the Moche culture.

Objective: Students will identify portrait as an artwork created by artists to show the likeness of a person.

Students will identify self-portrait as an artwork created by an artist to show the likeness of himself or herself.

Students will examine and discuss a variety of portrait styles from artists of various time periods and various cultures.

Students will create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve the specific visual arts problem of creating a contemporary portrait pot in the style of the Moche culture.

National Standards:

Visual Arts Grades 9-12 Content Standard 1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

Visual Arts Grades 9-12 Content Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas Visual Arts Grades 9-12 Content Standard 4:

Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

Visual Arts Grades 9-12 Content Standard 5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others **Social Studies**

Cross Curriculum Connection

Purpose: Students will become aware of variations of media, techniques, and processes in the artwork of various cultures past and present. Students will view the work of the Moche culture and compare their use of portraiture with a variety of exemplars of other cultures. Students will compose a list of their own personal characteristics for creating their own portrait pot.

New Vocabulary: portrait, self-portrait, abstract, realistic profile, shading, value, form, culture, armature, symbol, slab construction, score, coil construction

Materials:



#66-5421 Acrylic Set



#22-3005 Air-Hardening Clays



#22-9111 11ct. Sculpting Tool Set

Matt board

Time: This lesson may be modified from one to five hours, depending upon the size and complexity of expectations.

Introduction and Motivation (Set):

View and discuss examples of the art of the Moche culture. Compare and contrast portraits and self-portraits of other cultures and times such as those of the ancient Romans and Greeks, as well as contemporary artists.

Discuss that unlike the stylized approach of their contemporaries in other parts of the Americas, Moche potters preferred realism in figurative sculpture.

Discuss specific attributes of the portrait pots. Describe the form and surface of the pot.

View examples of Pre-Columbian Effigy Pots. Discuss the similarities in the art exemplars. Compare and contrast portrait pots and effigy pots listing their respective characteristics. Students will observe designs on the pots and explain how artists enhanced the lines and shapes of portrait pots to make exciting patterns.

Discuss what the designs on the portrait pots tell us about the person personified in the pot. Analyze how these designs might have been made.

Instruction:

Teacher will demonstrate rendering sketches in the planning of a portrait pot. Teacher will make connections to the viewed exemplars as well as the project exemplar.

Teacher will demonstrate the slab, coil, and pinch pot technique construction techniques to create the armature.

Teacher using proper scoring technique to attach one piece of clay to another. Explain how students can carve linear designs and animal motifs into their portrait pots.

Teacher will demonstrate smoothing clay project for final presentation.
Teacher will demonstrate hollowing-out process.

Activities:

(1) Guided Practice:

1. Students generate sketches of themselves and others in preparation of the portrait pot. Students generate personally significant symbols to put on their pots.
2. Students will use coil construction to create a cylinder for the armature of the pots. Students may place their artwork in progress on mat board or cardboard for better mobility. Students will score clay, add small amount of water, and attach clay coil at end to form a circle for the neck portion of the sculpture.



3. Students form eye sockets on ball form and add triangular form for nose shape.



4. Students apply clay ball to neck for head form. Students form thin clay slab, wrap around head, and attach similar to step 2 for headdress.



Students continue to add small amounts of water and score to attach segments.

5. Students use clay tools to add details to facial features.



6. Students use a combination of coil, slab, and pinch pot construction in conjunction with clay tools to provide details and decoration to their figures. Students use fine clay tools, needles, or pencil points to add fine details as decorative accents. A wire loop clay tool may be used to remove areas.



7. Students smooth surface of clay project for final drying. Small amounts of water may be added to enhance smoothness.



Sculpture may be covered with plastic during formation stage to prevent quick drying.

8. Students use a thin wire to cut off top of head at headdress.



9. Students use wire loop tool to hollow-out vessel.



10. After sculpture is dried, students cover dried portrait pot with a wash of dark stain made with water and acrylic paint. Students wipe off acrylic paint immediately with a soft rag leaving recess areas containing paint.



11. Students will compose a writing component describing, in depth, the person portrayed in their sculpture.

(2) Independent Practice and Check for Understanding: Teacher circulates among working students visually recording students demonstrating understanding of objectives and provides reinforcement.

(3) Closure: Students record the emotion conveyed in their portrait pot and the elements used to convey those feelings. They will include innovations they provided to the piece.

Evaluation:

Level One -- The finished portrait pot very successfully replicates the portrait pots of the Moche tribe. The student very successfully defined portrait pots or jars as another example of where information can be found about the Moche tribe. The student very successfully used sculptural clay building techniques to create a portrait pot in the style of the Moche culture. The student very successfully created innovations to their portrait pot. The student worked independently and remained on-task.

Level Two -- The finished portrait pot replicates the portrait pots of the Moche tribe. The student defined portrait pots or jars as another example of where information can be found about the Moche tribe. The student used good sculptural clay building techniques to create a portrait pot in the style of the Moche culture. The student created an innovation to the portrait pot. The student worked independently and remained on-task.

Level Three -- The finished portrait pot replicates the portrait pots of the Moche tribe. The student poorly defined portrait pots. The student used adequate sculptural clay building techniques to create a portrait pot in the style of the Moche culture. The student did not create an innovation to the portrait pot. The student needed coaxing to work independently and to remain on-task.

Level Four -- The finished portrait pot replicates the portrait pots of the Moche tribe. The student poorly defined portrait pots. The student used adequate sculptural clay building techniques to create a portrait pot in the style of the Moche culture. The student did not create an innovation to the portrait pot. The student needed coaxing to work independently and to remain on-task.

Extension: Surface may have three-dimensional objects attached to their sculpture. Students may refer to other cultural portrait exemplars.

Resources:

<http://www.museum.upenn.edu/Moche/mocheculture.html>

<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/latinamerica/south/cultures/moche.htm>

<http://www.huacas.com/page20.htm>

<http://www.tribalarts.com/feature/peru/index.html#5>

<http://archaeology.about.com/od/mterms/qt/moche.htm>

<http://www.artcom.com/Museums/newones/images/oberlinperuvian02.jpg>

*The Moche culture was an ancient Native American civilization on the coast of North Peru. The Moche were warriors with a highly developed social and political organization. They built temples, pyramids, and aqueducts of adobe brick, were skilled in irrigation, and produced remarkable ceramics. In their stirrup jars painted with scenes of everyday life and their figure-modeled portrait jars, they revealed fantasy and humor and achieved an astonishing fidelity to human forms. The civilization, which began c.100 b.c., is believed to have lasted 1,000 years.

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