



Objective: To expose the children to sculpture and teach them that sculpture can be carved, modeled, or molded.

**\*\*If you have a cake or Jello mold bring it as an example to show the class. If you have any three-dimensional examples of carved, modeled or molded sculpture at home, the children would enjoy seeing these too.**

## A) Introduction:

Today we will be exploring sculpture in the round, as an artist creates a work of art that can be viewed from all sides.

*(If the vocabulary words have been provided on poster boards, refer to them here. Otherwise, write the words on the board before you start the discussion on vocabulary)*

## B) Vocabulary:

- **Sculpture in the round:** Art that can be viewed from all sides. The artist needs to make all views interesting, including the top. Does anyone remember what an artist who makes sculpture is called? (**Sculptor**)
- **Carved:** To cut away material into a desired shape or form. Carving is a process in which you start with something big and take parts away. What kind of materials could you start with if you were going to carve a sculpture? (Make sure they include wood, stone, and bones such as ivory)
- **Modeling:** To make a sculpture by shaping a material such as clay. Modeling is a process where you shape a soft substance into a sculpture. What kind of materials can you model with? Clay is a common one. Artists can take a clay sculpture and fire it. That means they bake it into a very hot oven to make it hard. What other kinds of modeling materials can you think of? (Playdough, snow, etc) Artists also use wax and plastic substances.
- **Fire:** The hardening process of baking clay in a kiln. Which kind of sculpture do you think would last the longest, one carved of wood or stone or one modeled from clay and fired? The clay sculpture could easily break, couldn't it? The wooden sculpture would last longer but it might be eaten by bugs or deteriorate in the weather. The stone sculpture would probably last the longest
- **Mold:** A form (a cavity) that may be used to create the same shape over and over again. Sometimes sculptors want to make a sculpture that will last a long time but they don't want to spend the time it would take to carve it. Carving takes a long, long time and modeling is much quicker. One solution is to make a mold. Do any of you know what a mold is? (A hollow form into which a soft or liquid material is put. When the material hardens, it takes the shape of the mold). Some kinds of molds are common in our everyday lives. For example, can you think of some molds that are used in the kitchen? (Layer cake or bundt cake baking pans, Jell-O molds, etc) Show the example you've brought. When you take the food out of the mold, it is in the shape of the mold, isn't it?



Let's look at some pictures of sculptures and discuss how they were made.

## C) Artwork

***Title: Storyteller Figure, Mexico, 100BCE – 250 BCE***

***Details: Modeled Sculpture***

- This figure was found in a tomb that dates from an ancient culture in West Mexico. The figure would have been one of the many ceramic objects, both beautiful and useful, that were put in a burial chamber to aid the deceased person's journey between life and the afterlife.
- Does this piece look like it was carved or modeled?
- The head and body were coated with a watery mixture of potter's clay called a slip to add the dark red color, and then the figure was fired. The black patches on the head, fingers and legs are a result of the firing process.
- Storytellers were very important in ancient cultures. They pass on the stories, both real and imagined, that explained the people's history and place in the world. We don't know why this figure was put into the tomb, but perhaps it was to help carry those stories into the afterlife.

***Title: Horse (Tomb Figure)***

***Details: China, Tang Dynasty (618-907, 1st half of the 8th century)***

- This statue was also found in a tomb. What kind of feeling do you get from this horse? (powerful, important)
- The ancient Chinese believed that when a person died, part of their spirit went to an afterlife and part stayed with the body on earth. Rich and powerful people were buried with clay objects to provide the part that stayed on earth with all the things that were important in his or her life. The higher the rank of the person, the larger and more plentiful these things would be.
- Horses were a symbol of political power, and since this horse is a 2 1/2 feet high and so beautifully made, we know it came from the tomb of a very important person. How do you think this sculpture was made? It was molded. Craftsmen pressed clay into molds of different body parts, which were then assembled and dried or fired. Decorative glazes were painted on to add color, and when these were fired they melted into a hard, glass-like finish.



## Reinforcement Activity

***Materials provided: clay, matte board, paper towels***

Today, the children are going to make clay sculptures. Have them model their clay into any form they like. Remind them of the vocabulary words and how they apply to what they are doing. The children can set their sculptures on a small piece of matte board and put them in the plastic bag



## **Additional Background Material:**

*This material is provided to give you, the discussion leader, additional information about the artists and paintings that may help you answer questions or generate additional discussion with the children if time permits. You are not expected or required to cover this information in the classroom.*

### **Mexico, West Central Region, “Storyteller” Figure, 100 BC – 250 BC**

Doris “West Mexico has long been recognized as a region of shaft tombs and beautiful ceramic sculptures – both of which were manifestations of a reverence of ancestors and belief in the afterlife,” a scholar wrote recently. Ceramic pieces found in the shaft tombs have been thought of as works of funerary art and functional pieces that aid in the transition between life and afterlife. This particular ceramic piece, the “Storyteller” Figure, was excavated from such a tomb in Jalisco. The technology of the West Mexican people was quite basic, not much beyond that of the Stone Age, except in terms of workmanship in gold and silver. Despite their limited tools, these cultures produced art forms of complexity and sophistication and their thought processes were highly developed. The “Storyteller” Figure is made of a modeled clay material and partially covered with a deep, brick red colored slip (potter’s clay thinned with water used for decorating or coating ceramics). The piece’s surface is polished, and a few black patches caused by the firing process are visible on the head, fingers, and legs. “Storyteller” Figure has been named so because of the position of the man. He seems to be in the midst of telling a story, and although no definite description of the piece has been uncovered, he seems to visually represent a timeless recounting of history, legends, and myths.

### **China, Horse (Tomb Figure), Tang Dynasty (618-907, 1st half of the 8th century)**

The ancient Chinese believed the human soul had two parts that separated at death. One entered into the spirit world; the other stayed here on earth in the tomb. During the Tang dynasty, whenever a rich and powerful person died he or she was buried with hundreds of clay objects called mingqi (ming- chee). Mingqi included figures of people and animals, pots and bowls, and even models of buildings. Mingqi provided the spirit that stayed on earth with all the things important in his or her life. The quantity of figures allowed in a tomb was regulated by the government and depended on the rank of the deceased. In China, horses symbolized political power. This grand horse is two and a half feet high which tells us that the person in the tomb must have been rich and important. To make mingqi like this horse, craftsmen pressed clay into molds of different parts of the body. These parts were assembled while the clay was still soft. After the figure had dried, it may have been fired to further harden the clay. After drying or firing, craftsmen painted the horse with glazes, which are a mixture of tiny crystals with ground minerals, added to create different colors. When the glazed sculpture was fired, the glazes melted into a hard glass-like finish.