



Objective: To expose the children to sculpture and to teach them about balance.

PLEASE NOTE: For this lesson, please bring a seashell or other object from nature to use in the lesson. Three-dimensional examples of carved or modeled sculpture, if available.

A) Introduction:

Today we are going to talk about sculptures and the sculptors that create them. We are going to look at how sculptures are different from other works of art like drawing and painting. Let's review a few terms before we begin to look at some art:

(If the vocabulary words have been provided on poster boards, refer to them here. Otherwise, write the words on the board to refer to as you talk about them)

B) Vocabulary:

- **Sculpture in the round:** Sculpture that can be viewed from all sides. Here is a beautiful seashell [or other object from nature]. Why isn't this art? [Because it was made by nature. Art is made by a person—a man or a woman.] The seashell is a lot like a piece of sculpture, however. As I turn it around and hold it up for the class to see, you can see that it is interesting and different from all sides. So is sculpture in the round. The artist carefully plans and works around all sides of a sculpture so that every part is interesting to look at, even the top. How is sculpture different from painting? A painting is only interesting from the front, isn't it? What would you see if you turned a painting over? [Nothing].
- **Sculptor:** An artist whose artwork is sculpture.
- **Carved:** A sculpture made by cutting away at the substance, such as whittling wood. Sculpture can be carved. Carving is a process in which you start with something big and take parts away. Once you carve something away, you can't put it back, can you? What kind of materials could you start with if you were going to carve a sculpture? [Make sure the ideas include wood, stone and bones such as ivory].
- **Modeled:** Sculpture can also be modeled. Modeling is a process where you shape a soft substance into a sculpture. How many of you have made a snowman? Then you have modeled! You took the snow and pushed and patted and rolled it into shapes. In modeling, you can put pieces together if you want, just like you can stack snowballs to make a snowman. To model a sculpture you need something soft that you can push around and shape with your fingers. What kind of materials can you model with? Clay is probably the one you all can think of. What other kinds of modeling materials can you think of? [Playdoh, snow, etc.] Artists also use wax and plastic substances.
- **Balance:** One important thing sculptors have to think about when they create their sculpture is how to balance it. Who can tell me what balance is? If I lean over too far I will fall over, won't I? I will



lose my balance. Sculptors have to make sure that their sculptures don't fall over. There are two ways a sculptor can balance his sculpture.

- **Symmetrical Balance:** Art that can be divided into two parts which are the same or almost the same. The first kind of balance I'm going to explain is called symmetrical balance. Does anyone know what symmetrical balance is? [Put both your arms straight out.] When I put my arms out like this, both sides of my body are exactly the same. I am symmetrically balanced. I will not fall over like this.
- **Asymmetrical Balance:** When artwork is not the same on both sides and cannot be equally divided. Now I am going to lean over to one side and lift one of my arms. I am still balanced, but both sides of my body are not the same. This is called asymmetrical balance. Balance is very important in art. Some artists like sculpture and paintings to be symmetrically balanced. Other artists think art is more interesting when it is asymmetrically balanced.

Now let's take a look at a sculpture

C) Artwork

Title: Two Figures (Menhirs)

Artist: Barbara Hepworth

Details: Carved Sculpture

- Do you think this sculpture was carved or modeled? [Carved.] It was made from teakwood and carved using hand tools. You can see two tall shapes that look somewhat like baseball bats rising from a base.
- The artist scooped out some of the wood to create several rounded, bowl-like shapes that she then painted white. In the middle of the white spaces she punched holes through the figures. The holes look black in this picture. Is this a symmetrical or asymmetrical sculpture? [Asymmetrical.] Why? [The two figures are not the same.]
- Since we are looking at a picture of this sculpture, we can't turn it around to look at the other sides. But just from looking at the front and talking about how it was made, can you imagine what you would see from the back that would look interesting? [The holes, the "bat" shape, the wood grain]. What about if you saw it from the sides? [The sides of the scooped out shapes, especially on the small figure, one figure partially hiding another.]

Now let's try a little carving of our own (see reinforcement activity on Page 3)

Reinforcement Activity

Materials provided: bar of soap, toothpicks, napkins or paper towels

Give each child one bar of soap and one toothpick. Have them use the toothpick to chisel a sculpture.

Optional Activity



Materials provided:
wooden sticks
1" Molding Clay Cylinders

Give each student 1 cylinder of clay and 1 wooden stick. Instruct them to begin to carve away at the clay cylinder. They can make an abstract sculpture, carve their name, their initials, they can carve a silly face, or icons from their favorite sport. Let them use their imagination, but if they are stuck think of creative ideas to pass along to them for thought.



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.

Barbara Hepworth, Two Figures (Menhirs), 1954-1955

Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) determined at the age of sixteen that she wanted to be a sculptor. She did not use power tools to carve either wood or stone, preferring to work directly on the sculptural material with chisels and hammers. Two Figures (Menhirs) shows Hepworth's interest in direct carving with its white-painted oblong concavities, which contrast with the natural browns of the polished teak wood, which in turn contrasts with the base of the lighter wood. By painting the concavities white and then piercing them with openings, Hepworth emphasizes the contrast of inner and outer, placing an equal emphasis on both. Like other artists who make abstract works, Hepworth directs the observer to pay close attention to how she has manipulated the elements of art—such as form, shape, mass, color, texture and light—as opposed to simply identifying the subject. Yet, Two Figures (Menhirs) also demonstrates how abstract forms also can evoke figure and nature. Hepworth's choice of two closely aligned vertical forms prompts the viewer to regard them in relationship to one another, conscious of their close proximity, but also their difference in height. Her title suggests that they may be two figures, and since she specifies no further, the viewer is encouraged to imagine any sort of personage. She parenthetically indicates that the two forms may also represent menhirs, the Neolithic monuments found in Cornwall, England. Many 20th century artists liked to suggest a connection between their artwork and the primitive, since it indicated a direct approach to the materials and processes of art without superimposing a specific subject.