



SUBTRACTIVE PLASTER CARVING

This project introduces the subtractive sculpture technique while covering topics such as the effective use of positive and negative space.

OVERVIEW

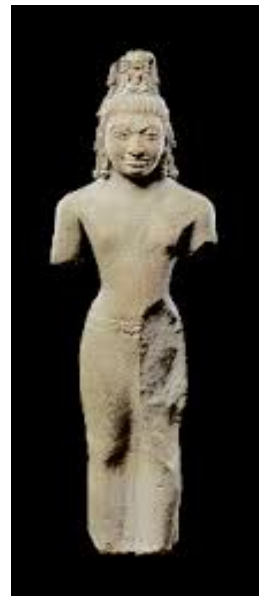
Students will plan out sculptures to be made using the subtractive carving method. The sculptures should be expressive and non-objective in style. Students will mix plaster, allow it to dry, and begin carving using an assortment of carving tools. Once the carvings are complete, students will allow their projects to dry thoroughly and paint them using a desired color palette.

OBJECTIVES

The students will understand the use of the element of art, space, including positive and negative space. The students will demonstrate the subtractive method technique for creating sculpture. The students will brainstorm, plan, and execute a carved sculpture. The students will demonstrate proper use of materials, techniques, and processes necessary for creating a sculpture.



Shiva as Lord of Dance
(*Nataraja*), Chola period (880–1279), about 11th century. Tamil Nadu, India. Copper alloy, 26 7/8 x 22 1/4 in. (68.3 x 56.5 cm).



STRATEGIES/ACTIVITIES

(DAY1)

- 1) Introduce to students the concept of non-objective sculpture. Show them numerous visual examples and explain to them they will be creating their own sculpture using the subtractive method. Introduce the element of art, space, to students and explain how the effective use of positive and negative space will affect their overall sculpture.
- 2) Students will need to plan out their sculpture in sketches. Encourage students to do research and obtain visual references to help the planning process.
- 3) Students will begin to mix plaster and pour into molds for drying. The ratio used was 2 parts plaster, 2 parts water, and 1 part vermiculite; however, this ratio may be adjusted to suit your needs. Fine grain vermiculite can be added to plaster to help the plaster retain moisture to be softer for carving. Students should mix the dry ingredients first and then mix in the water. Plaster should be mixed in an area with good ventilation or outside if possible. If students are unable to mix the plaster and vermiculite outside, they should wear dust masks to prevent inhalation. The plaster and vermiculite may act as a lung irritant, especially for students with allergies. The plaster molds will need to cure overnight. Students will then pour the plaster mixture into the recycled milk and juice jugs to be used for the molds. We use containers made from the waxed cardboard material, not plastic. Leave the containers to cure overnight.

(DAY 2 - Up to 3 Weeks)

- 4) The following day, students may remove their plaster forms from the molds. The cured plaster form will still contain some moisture. They should use their sketches to redraw their designs on the plaster forms, extending their designs all the way to the edges.
- 5) Demonstrate for students the proper use of carving materials to remove unwanted plaster in order to create their subtractive sculpture, paying special attention to safety concerns. Reemphasize the concept of positive and negative space and viewing their sculptures from all sides as they work.
- 6) Students may begin to carve away large areas of plaster with the carving tools until they have the desired general forms. Then they can begin to refine the shape using the rasps and files. Students should cover their work space in newspapers for easier cleanup. I encourage students to drape their projects in plastic after they are finished working for the day, so their projects dry slowly. Working with plaster that still contains moisture will be softer and easier to carve, but it will also be quite fragile. Carving dried plaster will be harder and result in a lot of dust, but you can achieve a greater amount of detail. Strongly encourage students throughout the project to work gently, as the plaster can break. Students should let their projects dry to suit the needs of the stages of their projects.
- 7) When students have completed carving their projects, they will need to dry them out completely. Drying may take a few days in order for the plaster to be fully removed from moisture. Students should sand their plaster sculptures with sand paper gently if there are any rough areas.
- 8) They will prime the plaster with acrylic gesso. Acrylic paint should be mixed to manipulate light areas for the projecting areas and darker colors for the shadows.

PROJECT OUTCOMES (Alberta Curricular Outcomes - Refer to Rubrics for specific projects)

1. Technical Understanding :

Develop critical thinking skills necessary to develop and execute their ideas with an artistic intent. Develop the skills, knowledge of techniques, and processes necessary to successfully execute their ideas and create their artwork. Understand how art reflects and documents cultural trends and historic events.

2. Quality of Work

- Work reflects Intermediate-level of detail.
- Composition is polished. Elements of the composition do not appear unfinished or rushed.
- Elements and Principles of Design are incorporated in the composition

3. Completeness

- Project is complete and submitted via online Gallery in Moodle.fsd38.ab.ca