South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

John Peters
“Positive vs. Negative Space”

Provided by the South Dakota Art Museum
Brookings, South Dakota
South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

Unit of Study: John Peters, sculptor

Title of Lesson Plan: Positive vs. Negative Space

Grade Level: 3 – 5
South Dakota Content Standards

Fine Arts:

Visual Arts Standard One 3-4:
Students will describe how visual arts tell stories, express moods, or convey ideas.

Visual Arts Standard One 5-8:
Students will express personal ideas, experiences, or emotions through various media, processes, and techniques.

Visual Arts Standard Two 3-4:
Students will understand selected techniques which give artwork detail.

Visual Arts Standard Two 5-8:
Students will describe the various techniques which give artwork definition and detail.
Assessment Strategies

- Class discussion
- Observation using VTS
- Creation of an art project graded by a rubric
Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about South Dakota artist John Peters.

- Students will evaluate the art piece using VTS techniques.

- Students will differentiate between positive space and negative space in relation to sculpture. Students will create a soap sculpture illustrating their understanding of positive and negative space.
Time Required

- One class period of 40 – 50 minutes

Materials/Technology Needed

- Images of John Peter’s sculptures: “Arthur” and “Zippity Do Da”
- Bar of Ivory Soap (one for each student) (also Ivory is a softer type of soap which is easier for students to carve)
- Plastic spoons
Background Information

- SD artist John Peters is known for his detailed sculptures. He also works part-time at Augustana College in Sioux Falls.
Lesson Description

- Show students images of John Peters’ sculptures “Arthur” and “Zippity Do Da”.

- Using VTS observations, have students describe what they see in these sculptures by answering questions such as:
  - What do you see?
  - What do you think this is a sculpture of?
    - How do you know?
  - Explain the types of emotions you feel as you look at this sculpture.
Lesson Description continued

- Discuss as a class. Talk about positive space and negative space and how John Peters uses them in his sculptures. (The Multimedia Glossary listed below has very good definitions and illustrations of both positive space and negative space.)

- Explain to students that they will be creating a sculpture out of a bar of soap. They need to keep in mind positive as well as negative space with their soap sculpture as they create detail.
  - Have students re-examine John Peters’ sculpture “Zippity Do Da” for detail using negative space.
Enrichment

- Have students relate their soap sculpture to what you are discussing in language arts, science, math, social studies, etc.
Bibliography/Resources

- South Dakota Sculpture Collection at the South Dakota Art Museum
  - John Peters’ sculptures: “Arthur” and “Zippity Do Da”

John Peters Presentation to Students
John Peters

http://www.augie.edu/dept/art/art/faculty%20divisions/peters.htm
John Peters

- Sculptor
- Work shows a respect for life and its mysteries
- Enjoys creating strange little creatures
Bibliography

Arthur

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Zippity Do Da

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum