

# Doodle Dancer

(art + social studies)

The history of art since prehistoric times is incomplete without including the practice of creating decoration on the human body.

Ancient Egyptians and Indians used henna to create elaborate designs on skin, a custom known as mehndi. The word "tattoo" was derived from the Polynesian word for the highly developed tradition of "tatau." It became part of the English language following the expeditions of Captain James Cook.

Historically, permanent body art was most often used to identify status, as a rite of passage and as a talisman. Today's "ink" is required to be much more artistic and individualized.

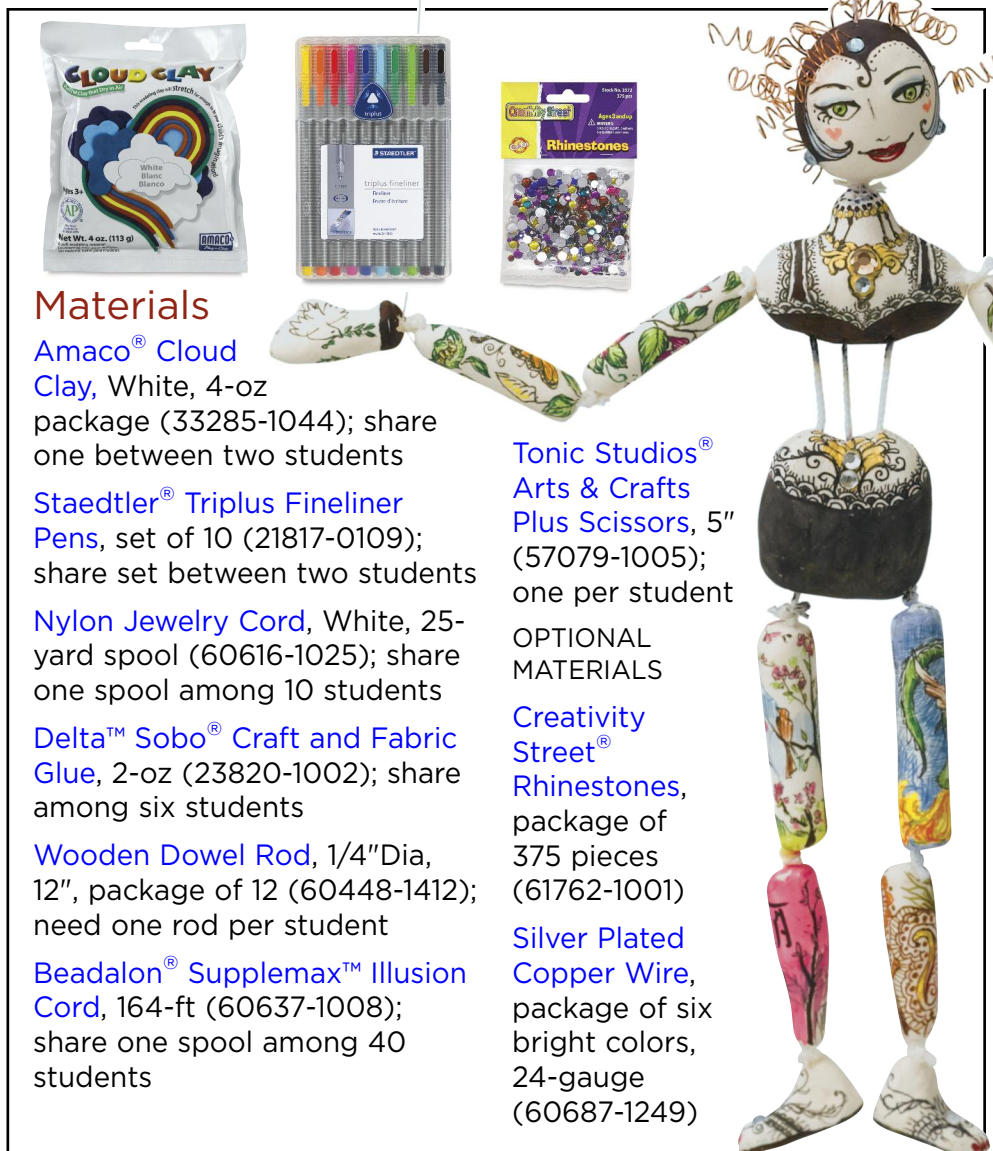
In this lesson plan, students create a 3-dimensional clay figure hinged with string so that it moves marionette-like on a rod. Line drawings are made directly on the surface of the dry clay with fine-point markers, allowing students to create expressive mehndi-style designs.

**Grade Levels** 3-12

*Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 25 students. Adjust as needed.*

## Preparation

1. Divide the clay into 2-oz sections and put it in a zip-lock bag. Keep a 1" ball per student set aside in another bag for a final step in attaching the dancer to the rod.
2. Cut the nylon cord into 8" sections; need 12 sections per project.



## Materials

**Amaco® Cloud Clay**, White, 4-oz package (33285-1044); share one between two students

**Staedtler® Triplus Fineliner Pens**, set of 10 (21817-0109); share set between two students

**Nylon Jewelry Cord**, White, 25-yard spool (60616-1025); share one spool among 10 students

**Delta™ Sobo® Craft and Fabric Glue**, 2-oz (23820-1002); share among six students

**Wooden Dowel Rod**, 1/4" Dia, 12", package of 12 (60448-1412); need one rod per student

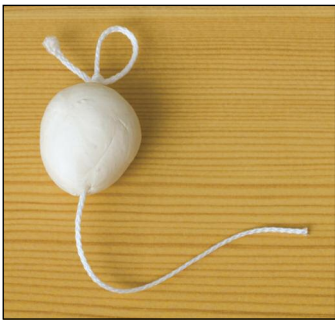
**Beadalon® Supplemax™ Illusion Cord**, 164-ft (60637-1008); share one spool among 40 students

**Tonic Studios® Arts & Crafts Plus Scissors**, 5" (57079-1005); one per student

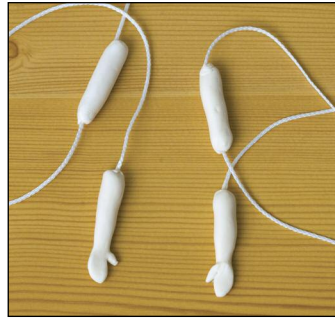
OPTIONAL MATERIALS

**Creativity Street® Rhinestones**, package of 375 pieces (61762-1001)

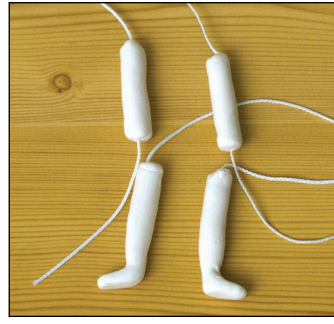
**Silver Plated Copper Wire**, package of six bright colors, 24-gauge (60687-1249)



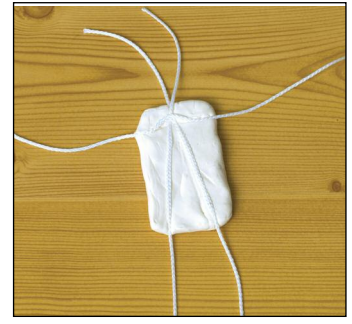
**Step 1:** Roll a 1-1/2" Dia ball around a piece of nylon cord to make the head. Create a loop at the top.



**Step 2:** Make four rolls around the cords for arms. Create hands at the ends of the two pieces.



**Step 3:** Make four rolls around the cords for legs. Create feet at the end of the two pieces.



**Step 4:** Create a torso with three cords: two for the neck and legs and one for the arms.

3. Cut Illusion Cord (a fine, transparent line) into 48" pieces.

### Process

1. Use a 1-1/2" Dia ball of clay to make the head. Flatten it with your hand and lay an 8" piece of nylon cord in the center, then roll it into a ball again. The cord may be moved so that it extends from either side (see Step 1). Knot a loop in the cord extending from the top of the head.

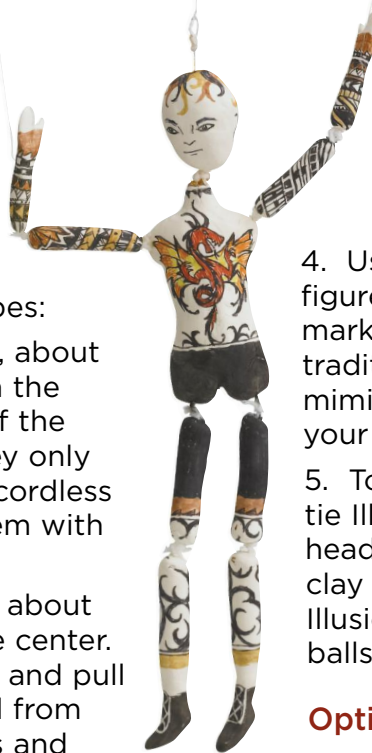
2. Repeat to make the following shapes:

**Arms** (see Step 2): Make four rolls, about 1-1/4" long x 3/8" Dia, with cords in the center. To make hands, take two of the rolls and pull the cords so that they only extend from one end. Flatten the cordless ends into small ovals and snip them with a scissors to make thumbs.

**Legs** (see Step 3): Make four rolls, about 2" long x 1/2" Dia, with cords in the center. To make feet, take two of the rolls and pull the cords so that they only extend from one end. Flatten the cordless ends and shape them into feet.

**Torso** (see Step 4): Divide the remaining clay in half. Flatten one half into a rectangle. Lay two pieces of cord on the clay in an X shape so that they extend from the center top (to attach the head) to the bottom sides (to attach the legs). Next, place a cord horizontally across the torso (to attach the arms). Place the remaining clay on top and shape the torso into whatever form you desire.

**Step 5:** Assemble the figure by tying the body parts together. Cover the figure with marker artwork and tie it to a dowel rod.



3. Allow at least 8 hours for the clay to dry and up to 20 hours for a complete cure. You can proceed as soon as the clay is dry on the surface. The clay will shrink around the cords and hold them firmly in place. Join the body parts by tying the cords together and then placing a drop of glue on each knot. When the glue is dry, trim the excess cords (except for the loop at the top of the head).

4. Using fine-line markers, decorate the figure with patterns and designs. Use black marker outlines filled with color to mimic traditional tattoos or a brown marker to mimic henna. Choose images that reflect your personal interests and ideas.

5. To attach the finished dancer to the rod, tie Illusion Cord to the loop at the top of the head and around each wrist. Place balls of clay on the ends of the rod to keep the Illusion Cord from sliding off. Allow the clay balls to cure.

### Options

1. Colorful wire and string can be inserted into the clay while it is still moist to make hair. The clay will shrink as it dries and hold the materials in place.
2. Glue rhinestones and beads to the figure for jewelry. Add scraps of fabric and ribbons for clothing.
3. To make a full-motion marionette, tie a second rod to the first rod with nylon cord. Tie Illusion Cord around both ankles and attach it to the second rod. Make sure you add enough slack to allow the legs to hang straight.

## National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #3 — Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.

**K-4** Students select and use subject matter, symbols and ideas to communicate meanings.

**5-8** Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks.

**9-12** Students reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally and describe how these are related to history and culture.

Content Standard #5 Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.

**K-4** Students understand there are different responses to specific artworks.

**5-8** Students describe and compare a variety of individual responses to their own artworks and to artworks from various eras and cultures.

**9-12** Students identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes and justify their analyses of purposes in particular works.