

Pop Art Clay Portraits

in the style of Andy Warhol

Andy Warhol (1928-1987) was a key figure in Pop Art, an art movement that emerged in the 1950s to become prominent over the next two decades. In the 1960s, Warhol created several “mass-produced” images from photographs of celebrities such as Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley and Jackie Onassis.

The non-representational colors of Pop Art do not depict the artist’s inner sensation of the world. They refer to the popular culture, which also inspires Warhol to experiment with the technique of silkscreen printing, a popular technique used for mass production.

By doing image transfer on clay, students can take a photograph or drawing of themselves or their favorite pop icon, duplicate it several times, and then experiment with various color combinations, just as Warhol did.

Students will learn how to roll clay slabs, transfer an image to clay, and then carve on clay. Lastly, they will experiment with not only ceramic pigments, but with various paints to learn how color changes can affect identical images.

Grade Levels 5-12

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

Preparation

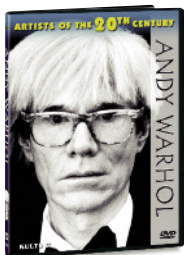
1. View works by Andy Warhol and other artists of the Pop Art movement. Recommend:

“Artists of the 20th Century: Warhol” DVD (70096-1001)

“Dropping in on Andy Warhol” DVD (70050-1011) and book (70050-1009); grade levels 5-8

“Taschen Basic Art Styles Series Famous Artists: Warhol” book (70033-1016)

Visit Warhol.org, the Andy Warhol museum website.



Materials

Printed or photocopied image, or drawing made with water-soluble media; at least one per student

Blick® White Moist Talc Firing Clay, 50-lb box, (30534-1050); share one across class

Wire Clay Cutter (30327-1018); one

Wooden Rolling Pin, 10" (30345-1010); five to share across class

Wooden boards, approximately 12" x 14"; one per student

Blick® Broadline Waterbased Markers, Black (21224-2001); one per student

C-Thru® Pick-up Ruler, 12" (55697-1012); share six across class

Mini Ribbon Clay Sculpting Tools, set of 6 (30321-1009); share four sets across class

Royal Super Value Sponges, set of 4 (32934-0009); share two sets across class

Amaco® Reward Sun Strokes Brilliant Underglaze Colors, 2-oz set of 6 (30425-1009); share two sets across class

Amaco® Lead-Free Velvet Underglazes, Jet Black, 16-oz (30411-2046); share one across class

Blick® No. 12 Heavy Weight Canvas 36" wide (07301-1036); need length to cover tables

Optional Materials

Amaco® Stonex™ White Clay, 25-lb bag (33247-1025) as a self-hardening clay option

Clay Thickness Strips, (30323-1009)

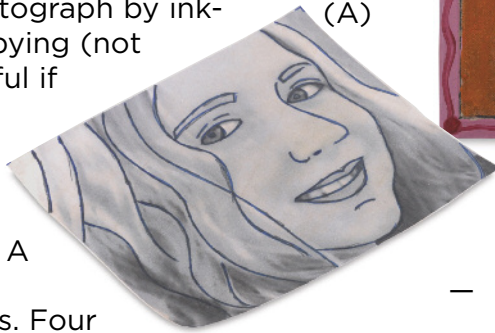
Student Clay Modeling Tools, set of 7 (30361-1009)

Preparation, continued

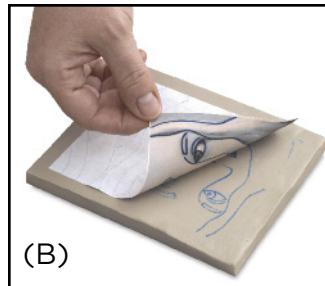
2. Assign students the task of finding a photograph of themselves or a pop icon that they want to use.
2. Divide clay using a wire clay cutter; need approximately 2 lbs per student.
4. Cover tables with unprimed canvas to keep clay from sticking.

Process

1. Make copies of the photograph by ink-jet printing or photocopying (not laserprinting). It is helpful if the image is digitally "posterized" first by making copies of copies to remove multiples levels of gray. A separate copy will be needed for multiple tiles. Four identical images can be printed onto an 8-1/2" x 11" sheet of paper.



2. With a watersoluble marker or gel pen, draw over the lines of the image that you want to transfer to the clay, see (A).
3. Roll slabs of clay, no thinner than 1/4" thick. Clay thickness strips positioned on either side of the rolling pin will facilitate the creation of even slabs. Roll in both directions to align the clay particles and reduce the possibility of warping. Carefully lift the slab from one end and move it to a plywood board for the remainder of the project.
4. Lay the image face down on the slab and smooth the back side with fingers to ensure good contact. After about 30 seconds, lift a corner to see if the image has transferred to the clay. If not, allow up to a minute for the transfer to occur, then carefully lift the image from the clay, see (B).
5. While the clay is still soft, use a ruler to cut it into a tile, leaving a border around the image. Wet fingers and smooth sides. Do not lift the tile after cutting, as this can cause warping.
6. After the tile has dried slightly, carve or incise the dark lines of the transfer by:



- Using a triangular-shaped mini-ribbon tool or other small modeling tool.
- Placing a clear plastic bag over the image and tracing the lines with a ballpoint pen. This results in a smooth line.

Experiment with a variety of depths and thicknesses of the carved lines on a scrap piece of clay.

7. After carving, sponge lightly over the surface to smooth rough edges and remove the remaining transfer. Dry slowly on the board, turning the tiles occasionally to ensure even drying.
8. Bisque fire the tiles to cone 04 or 1915 °F.
9. After the tiles are bisque fired, it's time to experiment with color!
 - Apply ceramic underglazes (or acrylic paints, see below). Brush Black into the carved lines first, then sponge the underglaze away from the surface of the tile. Then, add other colors to the surface, starting with the lightest shades. Avoid applying other colors to the Black in the lines. After the underglazes are applied, the tile must be re-fired to bisque temperature.
 - Another color option is acrylic paint. Apply Black to the carved lines, then sponge off the surface of the tile. Finish with additional acrylic colors; recommend [Blick® Artists' Acrylics](#), 6-color basic sets (00624-1029) and [Sargent Art® Metallic Acrylics](#), 8-oz, assorted colors (00730-)

Options

- Make a series of two or more tiles and vary the color to see how it affects the image.
- If a kiln is not available, air-dry clay may be used.
- Experiment with other media to add color: colored pencils, markers or pastels, for example. Spray with [Blair® Matte Fixative](#) (21708-1002) to permanently set the color.

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #1 Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes

5-8 Students select media, techniques and processes; analyze what makes them effective or not effective in communicating ideas; and reflect upon the effectiveness of their choices.

9-12 Students apply media, techniques and processes with sufficient skill, confidence and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks.

Content Standard #4 Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

5-8 Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures.

9-12 Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times and places.