

Duncan ColorWorks

Gargoyle Project Ceramic Art Lesson Plan



www.duncanceramics.com



Gargoyle Project - - Ceramic Art Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 9-12

By Randy Ashenfelter

Introduction:

The menacing creatures that are often associated with Gothic architecture have actually evolved from lowly rainspouts. The word “Gargoyle” comes from the French word “Gargouille” and is the same root word that “Gargle” comes from. As architecture progressed, these rainspouts became more and more ornate. They reached such a point that they were no longer functional. Non-functional figures are technically called “Grotesques”, but most people still refer to them as Gargoyles. Gargoyles on buildings also served another purpose. They act as “Apotropaic devices,” or items intended to scare away evil spirits. Apotropaic devices have been used since ancient times to scare away not only spirits, but also foreigners and would-be attackers.

Educational Objectives:

This lesson provides opportunities for students to:

- Create a gargoyle in clay while learning techniques for pinch/slab construction and building using armatures.
- Learn the functions of gargoyles & other apotropaic devices from an Art History perspective.
- Learn about the significance and symbolism of gargoyles in Gothic architecture.

References:

A Love of Monsters
Surf Net with Kids
Architecture

<http://www.aardvarelectric.com/gargoyle>

<http://www.surfnetkids.com/gargoyle.htm>

<http://architecture.about.com/library/blgloss-gargoyle.htm>

Teaching Tips:

- When building using armatures, keep in mind that the clay will shrink as it dries so armature material must be able to compress with the clay’s shrinkage.
- When building pieces that have sealed hollow spaces, make sure that every hollow space has a vent hole. These holes will allow air to escape during the firing and prevent the piece from exploding.
- Make sure that you allow plenty of time for the figures to dry as hand-built items are usually built thicker than pottery or slip cast items. Also, fire the pieces slower than you would for pots or slip cast pieces.

Duncan Materials:

Courtyard™ Art Glazes:

- 8-10, 8oz bottles of assorted Courtyard Art Glazes

Concepts™ Underglazes for Bisque:

- 3-4, 8oz bottles CN 253 Black
- 3-4, 8oz bottles assorted Concepts™ for optional decorations

Brushes:

- BR 576- ¾” Premium Glaze
- TL 415- Sponge

Duncan Gargoyle Project - - Ceramic Art Lesson Plan

Miscellaneous Materials:

- Approximately 10 lbs. of clay for each student
- Newspaper for creating armature shapes
- Simple tools for texturing (forks, stamps, rocks)
- A rolling pin for rolling slabs of clay
- Slip for joining parts (Should be similar to your clay body)
- Books on Gothic Cathedrals for inspiration

Step-by-Step:

1. Use wadded newspaper to form basic shapes for the body, head and limbs of the gargoyle.
2. Wrap clay around the newspaper forms using slabs or pinch technique. Try to keep the thickness of the clay uniform around the newspaper.
3. When the basic shapes are made, join the parts together by scoring (roughening) the areas to be joined and adding a small amount of slip to them to secure the parts.
4. Add smaller shapes for eyes, horns, claws, wings, etc. Hint- when making wings, let them stiffen slightly before attaching. This will allow them to hold their shape.
5. When all parts have been added, check all joints for any signs of stress cracks or areas that need to be smoothed together.
6. Using your texturing tools, create a surface texture on your gargoyle.
7. After the pieces have dried, bisque fire to Cone 04.
8. Using a sponge or large brush, coat the piece in CN 253 Black and wipe back, leaving color only in the recesses of the textured areas.
9. Apply 3 coats of a Courtyard™ Glaze to the piece letting the glaze dry between coats.
10. (Optional) Using a spray bottle, spray lighter colored Concepts™ colors over the piece. This will produce very random and unique effects in the final result.
11. Let dry overnight and fire to Cone 06.

Project Closure:

Language Arts connection and project closure

- Write and illustrate a brief description of this project, include detailed descriptions of the materials used and what happened during this project.

National Standards for the Arts:

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ArtsStandards.html>

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Standard.asp?SubjectID=13>

State Standards:

<http://edstandards.org/Standards.html>

Or refer to the Dept. of Education for a specific state.

Please visit www.duncanceramics.com, Art Educators tab, Learning tab to view the Standards based vocabulary and language Instruction, Art Project Rubric, and Writing Rubric documents.