Classroom Activity

Whimsical Clay Creatures

Enduring Understanding	Artists use gesture to create new and unusual shapes. Even non-representational forms can evoke mood like humor and whimsy.
Grades	K–8
Time	One class period
Visual Art Concepts	Shape, form, organic and geometric, representational and non-representational, movement, gesture, mood.
Materials	Clay (such as model magic, modeling clay, air-dry clay, and/or firing clay), cardboard circles. Optional: markers or acrylic paint and paint brushes.
Talking about Art	View and discuss the printed image of Ken Price's *Echo* (1997) included in the curriculum folder. What do you notice about this sculpture? Use your finger to outline the shape. Do the lines create a geometric, angular shape or is the shape curvy and organic? Imagine that you could turn this sculpture 360 degrees. What might it look like from all sides? Does its three-dimensional form represent something from life or a form that is entirely new? Why or why not? Explain your reasoning to a partner, including visual evidence of what you see. Ken Price made this sculpture out of clay, an ancient material that has traditionally been used to create functional objects like cups or bowls. Price, on the other hand, used clay to create organic and abstract forms, letting the material make its own decisions. He shaped *Echo* from raw mass, sculpting high and low curves that evoke slow and fast motion. He refined the curves by massaging the surface of the clay with water and a sponge. He then fired the sculpture and painted it in vibrant, galactic colors. Many viewers refer to Price's new forms as "blobs." If this blob could talk, what would it think? What would it say? Write a short monologue that expresses the character of this nonrepresentational form. Compare *Echo* to other blobs featured in the introductory essay on the curriculum CD, then, with a partner, develop a dialogue to accompany their fictional meeting.

Making Art

Use your hand to mimic *Echo's* curves. What type of gesture did you create? Price used these hand gestures to bring *Echo* to life in clay. Use your body to describe the form and gesture that *Echo* evokes. Think about how it would move, slide, and slither. Hold your pose then ask a partner to sketch the shape of your body. Switch and sketch your partner. Did the process make you smile? Ken Price used gesture to create humorous and whimsical forms.

Exchange sketches and use clay to sculpt a three-dimensional version of your partner's sketch using your whole body to mold the material. Let the clay move with your hands and work freely in the process. When finished, place the sculpture on a cardboard circle to dry or fire it in a kiln.

Select a whimsical color to add to your piece. Color the surface of air-drying clay with marker or, once fired or dry, paint the sculpture by mixing colors for a fun effect.

Reflection

Collect the sculptures and display them around the classroom. Facilitate a gallery walk so that students can view the sculptures. Remember, no talking or touching artworks in the gallery.

How are the sculptures similar? How are they different? Are they nonrepresentational in form or do they remind you of forms from real life? What moods do they evoke? How did the process of sculpting differ from how you have previously used clay before? Can artmaking take you to a fun and whimsical place?

Compare your sculpture with your partner's inspirational sketch. Does the final product match the original drawing? How did you use artistic license to add a personal touch? Together, brainstorm names for your nonrepresentational creatures.

Curriculum Connection

Write a poem about your sculpture that describes the character's traits, personality, and movement. Read the poem to your partner then compare the process of making art with that of writing about art. Did you write freely after sculpting freely in clay? How would the sculpture have turned out differently if you had started by writing the poem first? As a class, compare and contrast the two artistic disciplines.

Classroom Activity

Paint & Texture Venture

Enduring Understanding	Artists break boundaries between visual arts media by defying the traditional uses of art materials.
Grades	3–12
Time	One to two class periods
Visual Art Concepts	Texture, organic lines and shapes, color, abstract, mixed-media.
Materials	Variety of acrylic paints (including gold and silver metallic), brushes, canvas (such as canvas panels), polymer gloss acrylic medium, sponges, oil pastels, pencils, sketching paper. Optional: sand paper, Q-tips, plastic pallet knifes.
Talking about Art	View and discuss the printed detail image of Ken Price's *Zizi* (2011) included in the curriculum folder. What do you notice about this detail? If you could touch the surface of this sculpture, what might it feel like? Describe the texture and the colors that you see. What material do you think this sculpture is made of? Compare the detail view with an overall view of the sculpture, featured in the introductory essay on the curriculum CD. What steps do you think Price took to create the sculpture's shape and surface? Where did he start? Where did he end? Describe the use of form and color, and how light adds a reflective dimension. Price was not only a sculptor, but a painter as well. Price painted *Zizi* layer after layer in a rainbow palette of color like green, pink, blue, black, red, orange, and back again. He even incorporated reflective paint like the kind automobile painters use. Then, he sanded the surface of the sculpture with sand paper, revealing the vibrant layers of color underneath. Rather than use a system or formula, Price relied on his intuition when sanding. He sanded down some areas of the sculpture more than others until he reached an overall balance, giving this piece a glimmering glow.
Making Art	Turn a two-dimensional surface into a multidimensional artwork using a variety of matte and metallic paints. First, sketch some organic lines to create shapes inspired by *Zizi's* curves. Let your hand flow freely without concentrating on where the next mark will go.

Next, cover the canvas in an even layer of paint to serve as the foundation. While the first layer is drying, use a color wheel to help you choose an analogous or complementary color for the second layer. Let the first layer of paint dry completely before applying a thin layer of gloss medium as a sealant. Then, apply the second coat of paint over the gloss medium.

Apply oil pastel on top of the second layer to add texture and to reveal the background color underneath. Think of the canvas as the surface of one of Price's sculptures and experiment with different drawing techniques. Try adding a layer of metallic color for a reflective touch or contrast dark colors next to light colors to create depth.

Experiment with a pallet knife by scraping paint off to reveal color underneath or, once the layers dry completely, try sanding areas. When finished, paint a smooth layer of gloss medium across the canvas for a textual effect, added shine, and dimension.

Reflection

Collect the paintings and display them together on a single wall to create a quilt of color. Facilitate a gallery walk, allowing students to compare and contrast the paintings. Remember, no talking or touching artworks in the gallery.

How are the paintings similar? How are they different? Do you notice any trends in technique? How did this process differ from how you have previously used paint before?

Curriculum Connection

Colors have scientific relationships that are especially important when creating and viewing works of art. Investigate the science of color using primary- and secondary-colored cellophane. Cut the cellophane into rectangles and attach the pieces to simple viewfinders made of paper. Divide students into groups of six and assign each student a color. Have students investigate by mixing their cellophane pieces to create a new color. What happens when you mix blue and yellow? What about two secondary colors? Experiment with other combinations such as two complementary colors like red and green.

Ask each group to make a color wheel that exemplifies the relationships between colors.

Classroom Activity

Exploring American Indian Pottery

Enduring Understanding	Artists are often influenced by their environment—the landscape, art, and culture that surrounds them.
Grades	3–12
Time	One class period
Visual Art Concepts	Scale, form, ceramics, adobe architecture, pinch-pot clay sculpting technique, pictorial language, drawing
Materials	Pencils (colored or regular), image of Taos Pueblo, storyboard/roll-out template included in the introductory essay on the curriculum CD, scissors, tape, recycled bottle.
Talking about Art	View and discuss the printed image of Ken Price's *Hawaiian* (1980) included in the curriculum folder. What do you see? How big do you think this artwork might be? Is it as tiny as a miniature or as large as a building? Use your hands to describe your impression of the scale. Take a look at other students around the classroom then poll everyone's predictions on the classroom board. Next, read the tombstone information located underneath the image and you will discover that this sculpture is only 11½ inches tall. Although small in stature, Ken Price experimented with construction techniques to build the walls and windows that support this clay sculpture. Then, he fired it in a kiln and glazed it, turning the clay into ceramic. Does its form remind you of a southwestern structure that you have seen before? Compare it with an image of Taos Pueblo, a complex of multi-storied adobe buildings located in north-central New Mexico. What similarities do you notice between the two structures? Price was undoubtedly inspired by the adobe architecture (a mixture of clay, sand, sticks, and water) of Taos Pueblo, just a short drive from his studio. Continuously inhabited for more than one thousand years, the Pueblo has cultivated a vibrant collective of artists who continue to sell their pottery from the adobe curio shops. The pottery tradition of the southwest influenced much of Price's early work including *Cityscape Bowl* (1986), featured in the introductory essay on the curriculum CD (see below). He adorned the bowl with drawings that conform to the vessel's curves like the images ancient artisans drew to record their culture's history, life, and place.

Making Art

Using your hands, push, squeeze, and mold an imaginary lump of clay. What steps would you take to transform the material into a functional vessel? Try the pinch-pot technique: first, roll the imaginary lump into a round ball; then, push your thumb into the top of the ball to push the clay both inward and outward. Continue with similar movements, pushing your thumb and pinching the clay while smoothing the edges until you have created a round bowl. How could you use a different technique to create a similar shape (i.e., coil or slab)?

If you were to decorate your vessel, what story would you record about your community or neighborhood? Take a look at *Cityscape Bowl* and think about the message that Ken Price might be sending about life in Taos. Write your own unique narrative in words (including setting, characters, and action). Next, translate the text into pictures onto the storyboard template by sketching three distinct scenes that best describe your story. Then, draw the scenes on the roll-out template (on reverse) and add color with colored pencils. Lastly, cut along the dotted line and paste the roll-out on a recycled (or plastic) vessel.

Reflection

Share your vessel with a partner. Can s/he decipher the message without reading the accompanying text? Compare your partner's interpretation with your original narrative. Which version expressed the story best? Why or why not? What is the benefit of communicating messages with pictures as opposed to words? Display all the vessels together in the classroom. What do the vessels and stories say about students and about contemporary life?

Curriculum Connection

Extend the lesson into social studies class by asking students to research the culture and history of the southwest. Include historical events, key sites, and examples of important cultural production such as pottery, jewelry, metal, and animal-skin works.

Evenings for Educators, *Art and Architecture*. October 2012.
Prepared by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Education Department.

Classroom Activity

Paper Architecture

Enduring Understanding	Flat and rigid materials, when manipulated, can become organic and dynamic architectural forms.
Grades	7–12
Time	Two to three class periods
Visual Art Concepts	Function, building materials, aesthetic effect, design, organic form, architectural model, tessellation, origami, blueprint
Materials	Pencil, sketching paper, Bristol paper, rulers, X-Acto® knives, scissors, hot glue gun or tape, balsa wood, wood blocks, and/or popsicle sticks
Talking about Art	View and discuss the printed image of Frank Gehry's *Walt Disney Concert Hall* (2003) included in the curriculum folder. What do you notice about this building? Can you identify functional elements (i.e., windows, doors, walls)? What building materials do you see? How would you describe the texture of the materials? Turn to a partner and describe the optical effect that they create. If you and your partner were standing next to the building, what might you see, hear, and feel? This building was designed by Frank Gehry, a world-renowned architect who lives and works in Los Angeles. What steps do you think he took to design this building? How do you think construction workers executed the design? What might this building be used for? Hypothesize the building's function or purpose, share your ideas with your partner, then take a look at the title located in the tombstone information underneath the image. It is L.A.'s *Walt Disney Concert Hall*, home of the L.A. Philharmonic, and is used as a performance space for some of the city's best musicians. Have you seen this building in downtown L.A.? With your partner, compare and contrast this building with the buildings in your own neighborhood. What makes this building so unique? Gehry's architectural process is unique in that he often manipulates resilient and rigid materials such as metal. Refusing to conform to architectural tradition, he defies the nature and physics of metal to create new organic and curvaceous forms. In fact, he designs buildings in the same way that an artist creates sculptures.

First, he experiments with form by assembling and reassembling small building blocks. This becomes the model's foundation, akin to the skeleton of the human body. Then, he sculpts flexible materials such as aluminum foil and red velvet around the foundation to create a skin of fluid and organic forms. Once the model is complete, he scans it into an aeronautical-engineering program. The software creates a digital blueprint for the project and even provides instructions that help construction workers measure and cut the metal. Thanks to this new technology, Gehry is able to realize his innovative visions.

Making Art

Visit www.laphil.com/philpedia/about-walt-disney-concert-hall to see an original sketch of *Walt Disney Concert Hall*. Imagine that you, too, are designing a building out of a rigid material. Choose a building material like metal or wood, then create a sketch of the structure's form. The form should contradict the natural properties of the material so be sure to include organic lines and shapes.

Next, execute your design in paper as an architectural model. First, create an open frame for your model to serve as the foundation. Use modeling materials such as popsicle sticks, wood blocks, or balsa wood to build a sturdy geometric shape, such as a rectangle, square, or triangle. Use hot glue or tape to adhere the sticks together. Then, create a tessellation out of paper using an origami folding technique (for step-by-step instructions, see the document of lesson plans included on the curriculum CD). When finished, play with the feel of the paper tessellation and shape the sheet into the original form that you sketched. Lastly, use hot glue or tape to adhere the final form to the frame's exterior. Combine multiple tessellations to create a more complex model by cutting into one of the tessellations with an Xacto® knife, then fitting a second tessellation sheet into the first.

Reflection

Clear an area of the classroom floor and use colored masking tape to lay a grid of streets and intersections. Gather all models and insert them into the grid to create a miniature city. Take a look at the city's architecture and the types of buildings that students created. Who might live in a city like this? When, where, and why? Write a short story that describes a resident who lives and works in this city. Include key details about what life is like and how people interact with the architecture.

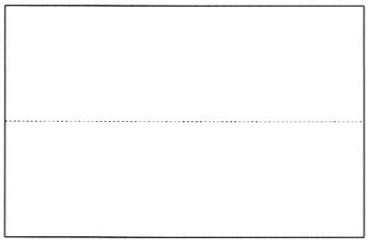
Curriculum Connection

Architects are not only artists, but mathematicians, too. Architects must translate three-dimensional models into two-dimensional blueprints before construction begins. Create a blueprint of interior rooms and functional elements to serve as a floor plan for your model. Use pencils, rulers, and compasses to capture precise measurements on graph paper. Be sure to include a legend to help construction workers execute the scale of your vision.

Evenings for Educators, *Art and Architecture*. October 2012.
Prepared by Jia Gu with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Education Department.

Step By SteP Guide to Origami Tessellation

1

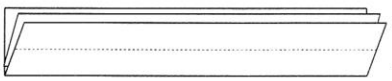


fold in half

2

fold again

3

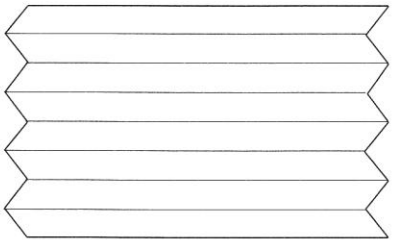


and again

4

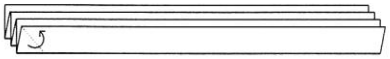
and again!

5



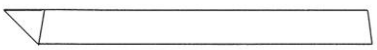
open and fold into acordian refold

6



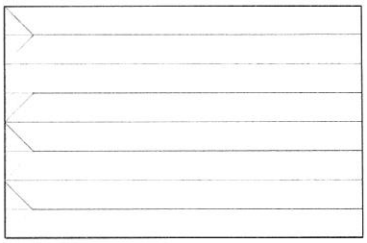
fold a triangle in corner

7



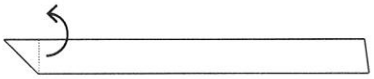
should look like this!

8



open and push into valley folds

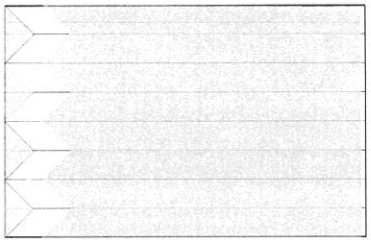
9



fold along edge of triangle

should look like this

10

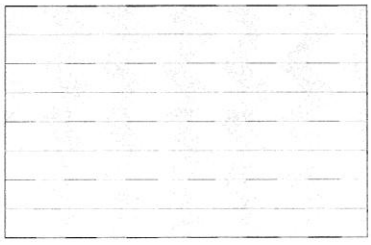


open and invert the folds to crease

gray denotes valley folds

repeat until...

11



the finished product!