

Historical Houses of Silk Stocking Row

Heather White

Most county seats have a historical district with homes dating back to the late 1800s to early 1900s.

I live in Denton, Texas, and our historical district is called Silk Stocking Row. This area is composed of elaborate two-story homes built by prosperous merchants and businessmen before the Great Depression.

Many towns recognize the value and importance of preserving these historical homes. Communities are restoring them to their original grandeur and opening the homes for tours. Most of my students live in homes that were built within the last eight years, so I wanted to give them an understanding of how our historical structures have contributed to the styles of their modern-day houses.



A Virtual Field Trip

Since field trips can be cost prohibitive, I decided to bring these homes from yesteryear to my students through a video virtual field trip; students were able to explore the visual imagery of some of the Victorian homes without even leaving our school building. They observed the images, identified directional lines, geometric shapes, and architectural elements typical in the architecture of this time period. We particularly focused on the Bayless Selby House, a restored historical house museum in town.

Building Houses

After the virtual field trip, students used the Victorian architectural style to create a cardboard relief of a building.

Clapboard siding was made by peeling away the top layer of paper from recycled cardboard from the cafeteria. The cardboard was painted with a coat of tempera to simulate weathered wood, and copper tooling was used to create a roof finished with a patina of rust and verdigris.

I was amazed at how quickly students recog-

nized the Victorian architectural design elements of single-story porches, decorative millwork, towers, bay windows, and front façades with decorative shingles as design elements used in homes in their own neighborhoods. Using local history and geometric shapes found in architecture, students were able to bridge the past with the present.

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Procedures

1. Students view and discuss architectural forms and elements used in Victorian architecture or the architectural style of your choice. Use images from the above resources, from library books, the Internet, and home and architecture magazines.
2. Students use geometric shapes to create preliminary sketches of their homes. They may imitate a particular style or invent their own architectural elements.
3. Students cut base sheets of cardboard large enough for building designs.
4. Students cut geometric elements from cardboard or cardstock, being sure to build up multiple layers to create levels of relief. Glue in place.
5. If desired, students paint an undercoat of tempera paint over the finished cardboard piece and allow it to dry.



6. Students may wish to add tooling foil, beads, nails, and wire for interesting detail. Copper and brass should be lightly sanded before the patina is applied.
7. Brush patina over sanded copper.
8. Apply sealant to stop the process when desired patina has been achieved. 🌀

Heather White taught this lesson at E.P. Razor Elementary School in Denton, Texas. hlwhite1@verizon.net

NATIONAL STANDARD

Students identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum.

WEB LINK

dentoncounty.com/dept/main.asp?Dept=120

Objectives

Students will:

- understand the effect of time and place on artistic style.
- create relief sculptures based on historical architectural elements.

Materials

- metallics acrylic sealing compound
- cardboard
- tempera paint
- glue
- cardstock
- decorative-edged scissors
- paper crimpers
- texture plates
- copper tooling foil
- border and corner punchers
- copper wire, eighteen gauge
- brass wire, sixteen gauge
- wire bending jig
- beads
- nails and tacks of various types
- scissors
- rulers
- pencils
- brushes
- water containers