

ADMISSION TICKETS

THEN &

NOW

Rose-Ann Chrzanowski

When the ancient Greeks attended the theater, they presented a carved clay "ticket" for admission. These tickets were molded to represent characters in the plays. Intrigued by the idea of using clay to create small, expressive, caricature-like sculptures, I shared the concept with my high-school Introduction to Fine Art students.

Inspiration through Art History

We gathered around a worktable to look at photographs of the tickets in the book *Multicultural Studio Art Projects for Secondary Students* by Susan Hogan. We discussed the ingenuity of these sculptures and the people who thought to create them as admission tickets. (The first time I did this project, a shy, quiet girl of Greek ancestry who usually kept to herself, flashed a wide smile, her pride appar-

ent.) We studied the many lines and indents in the photographs and imagined how the various textures would feel. We discussed the shapes sculpted into the clay that depicted the facial expressions; and marveled at the artists' ability to work on such a small scale.

Motivation

While we pondered the feasibility of working so small, I produced samples of past student work so new students could explore the surfaces firsthand. Once students touched the sculptures and felt the textures created by carving, molding, and sculpting the clay, they became excited about making sculptures of their own. We noted the use of line, shape, balance, symmetry, pattern, and, of course, texture—this project fits into the study of the elements and principles of art nicely!

Clay Techniques

Next, I demonstrated the process of sculpting the clay. Starting with a 2" block of clay approximately 1" thick, I showed students how to shape it into an oval and demonstrated pushing in eye sockets, molding the nose, pushing in the mouth, and pulling out a chin and ears. I used various clay tools to carve hair on the head and facial hair. We reviewed using scoring and

Students compare ancient Greek sculpture admission tickets with the graphic design of two-dimensional tickets used today.

slip to add protruding eyes and lips. I explained the need to create several sketches to use as composites for their final sculptures. Finally, we talked about different shapes of faces and facial expressions, using each other as examples, taking the opportunity to ham it up.



Discussion

Students met in their work groups and shared their sketches, discussing which would work and what revisions they would make. Once they were satisfied with their plans, they assembled their materials and began the sculpting process.

The Modern Ticket

Once the sculptures were completed and set aside to dry, students gathered around a worktable again. This time we discussed the layout of modern tickets and brainstormed to compile a list of events for which they might be designed. We talked about the differences between the two-dimensional modern tickets with their colorful, eye-catching graphics and the three-dimensional ancient Greek tickets. We generated a list of information that must appear on the paper ticket: name of performance, venue, price, time, date, and seat location. We talked about use of color and the need for attractive visuals.

Procedure

Students were instructed to draw some sketches in their sketchbook/journals and include notes for their designs. We reviewed layering technique for colored pencil work and discussed color intensity. Students



transferred their designs to 3 x 5" paper and used colored pencils, ultra-fine-point markers, and/or computer-generated text to create their paper tickets.

When the sculpted tickets were fired, students used watercolor washes in shades of brown or gray to paint their tickets. These washes collected in the crevices of the sculptures, giving them the appearance of old, weathered stone. Students mounted their ancient tickets on mat boards with E6000 glue, and mounted their modern tickets on the same board with double-sided tape.

Assessment

Student work was assessed using a rubric that asks students to evaluate the success of each step of their project and to write simple reflections of their work based on a list of prompts. Students were invited and encouraged to work in groups or pairs to complete the rubrics and the reflections. Once students had completed the rubrics and reflections, they meet with me individually to determine their final grades.

These pieces of artwork have drawn much admiration from students, faculty, and visitors to the building. This project is a great way to correlate with learning in Social Studies and English classes.

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NATIONAL STANDARD

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

WEB LINKS

Metropollitan Museum of Art, www.metmuseum.org/Works_of_Art/departement.asp?dep=13

