

8th-grade Art: Sculpture Unit

Abstract Nylon Sculpture



Lesson Plan: Comprises visual presentation (left) and accompanying teacher notes (below)

Goal: 8th-grade students will use the work of artist Henry Moore as an introduction to discussing, creating, and reflecting upon abstract sculpture in-the-round.

In visual presentation:

Yellow text: art vocabulary we've covered in previous lessons/projects.

Blue text: critical stages in project development, execution, and reflection.

In notes:

Red Text: Relevant NYS Visual Art Standards.

Abstract Nylon Sculpture Step 1: Discussing Abstract Art

People often feel confused, or even threatened, when first viewing **abstract** art. Let's approach the topic by first discussing a few questions:

- 1.) What does "abstract" mean to you?
- 2.) Why make abstract artwork instead of realistic artwork?
- 3.) Do you think the **visual image** or the **idea behind it** is more important when looking at art?

Initiate class discussion on **abstract art** (students at this stage of artistic development can be very timid or very judgmental reviewing artists/artwork). *Gradually introducing conceptual aspects of visual art is crucial.*

Spend 10-20 minutes discussing questions. Use "dream" analogy to guide understanding of abstract vs. representational art. **Questions are meant to stir debate.**

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

8th VA:Cr I.1.8

a. Document and reflect on early stages of the creative process, visually and/or verbally in traditional or new media.

Abstract Nylon Sculpture Henry Moore

- English sculptor, 1898-1986
- Studied the human form, gradually **abstracted** it.
- Inspired by curving landscapes and ancient Mexican figure sculptures.

Henry Moore with small model, 1970's



Chac Mool sculpture in the Museo Regional de Antropología, Mérida, Yucatan, Mexico

Introduce Henry Moore. Note European vs. Mexican influences, "family/mother and child" theme, stylistic development over time.

Anchor Standard 1 I: Investigate ways that artistic work is influenced by societal, cultural, and historical context and, in turn, how artistic ideas shape cultures past, present, and future.

8th VA:Cn I.1.8

a. Through observation, infer information about the time, place, and culture in which a work of art or design was created.

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

Henry Moore



Family Group (1944)



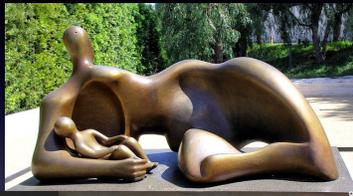
Family Group (1950)

Discuss Moore's signature family themed works first. Let student thoughts guide process; **refrain from giving too much background info initially.**

Briefly cover process of casting in bronze.

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

Henry Moore



Draped Reclining Mother and Baby (1983)



Reclining Figure (1938)

"All art should have a certain **mystery** and should make demands on the spectator. Giving a sculpture or a drawing too explicit a title takes away part of that mystery so that the spectator moves on to the next object, making no effort to ponder the meaning of what he has just seen."

- Henry Moore

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

Henry Moore



Standing Figure: Life Edge (1976)



Large Interior Form (1953-1954)

Note student thoughts on increasing abstraction. Compare works on this slide to those before: "**Do elements of the figure persist?**"

Additional questions if discussion stalls:
"How do you think the **scale** of these sculptures influences the viewer?"
"Do these designs feel modern? Ancient? Both/ neither?"

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

8th VA:Re7.1.8

a. Explain how the method of display, the location, and the experience of an artwork influence how it is perceived and valued.

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

Henry Moore



Reclining Figure (1969-1970)



12 Large Two Forms (1969)



13 Oval with Points (1970)

Cover most dramatic shift into abstraction from the figure and note the elements that tie both together (**organic forms, smooth texture, “portals”**)

If applicable in discussion:

“I want to be quite free of having to find a ‘reason’ for doing the Reclining Figures, and freer still of having to find a ‘meaning’ for them. The vital thing for an artist is to have a subject that allows to try out all kinds of formal ideas -

”

- Henry Moore

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

Henry Moore’s work ranged from recognizable to quite abstract.

- 1.) What **themes** do you notice in his work?
- 2.) What parts of Henry Moore’s style change in the examples we’ve seen? What parts stay the same?
- 3.) What **feeling** do these sculptures give you? Could you have experienced the same feeling if these sculptures were all realistic? Consider **form, color, texture** and other art elements we’ve talked about in previous lessons.

Wrap-up discussion, careful to note **conceptual, visual, and material** components of sculptures.

Punctuate with elements and principles of design.

END DAY 1

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

Our Project:

We’ll be creating sculptures **LOOSELY** inspired by Moore’s curving, abstract style (**ours don’t have to be based on the human figure**).

This is a multi-step project that is **freeform**, meaning loose and experimental. You’ll concentrate more on basic elements (**color, value, form**) rather than realistic details (as in the *Fantasy Cities* project).



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Dovetail into project overview after brief review of Moore sculptures. Explain that remaining stages (brainstorming, building, prepping, painting, reflection) will unfold over **2-3 weeks**.

Review relevant elements and principles of design. Refer to prior lesson and worksheet on these (located in bin).

Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

8th VA:Cr2.3.8

a. Select, organize, and design images and text to make visually clear and compelling artistic work.

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

Step 2: Brainstorming

Think about a **feeling** you want this sculpture to get across: what **form, colors,** and **patterns** will you use to make this work?

Will your sculpture be more **geometric** or **organic**? Will you shape your wire into **angles** or **curves**?

Make sketches and notes on possibilities in your **sketchbook**. Discuss with classmates and Mr. M. **Your plan may change as you proceed, but it's good to have options!**

Refer back to intro discussion on abstract art, tracing connections to Moore's combinations of representationalism and abstraction.

SKETCH. DISCUSS. CRITIQUE. Emphasize that this is an experimental stage. **Acknowledge discomfort of non-representationalism.**

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work

8th VA:Cr2.1.8

a. Experiment, innovate, and take risks to pursue ideas, forms, and meanings that emerge in the process of artmaking or designing.

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

Our Project:

We'll be creating our sculptures using the following materials:

- Wood blocks
- Wire hangers
- Nylon stockings
- Gesso
- Acrylic paint



Shift to construction and materials overview.

Demo drilling - guide students in drilling **their own** wire holes. Valuable tactile experience/group bonding.

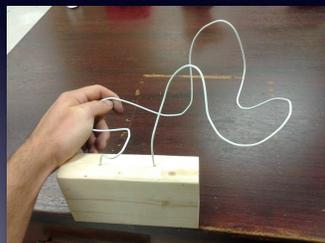
Distribute clipped, straightened hangers. Warn about sharp ends.

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

Step 3: Building

- Select a wooden block and a hanger.

- Bend the hanger in a variety of ways. **Play with several design ideas.** When ready, put the ends of the hanger into the holes in the wooden block.



Circle room to aid in wire mounting. Check depth of wire holes.

Encourage peer assistance (students with prior construction experience will love this stage - others will feel intimidated). **Patience and safety > speed.**

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

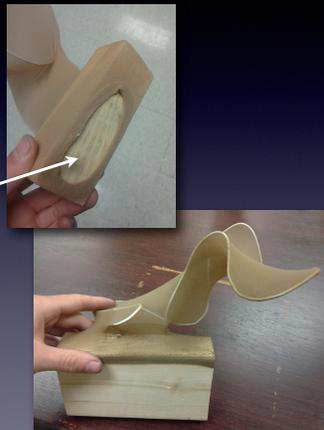
- Gently pull the stocking over your wire. Any pointy edges (on jewelry, fingernails, wood base) could damage it - be careful.
- Make minor adjustments to wire if needed
- If able, pull the stocking completely over the wood as well.



Demo addition of nylon. Distribute nylons and circle the room to check stability of wire before covering.

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

- **Write your name on the bottom of the wood before covering with nylon** (we'll clip off the extra in a later step).



Note preference for base design in **top** photo vs. **bottom**.

END DAY 2

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

Gesso

We'll first cover your nylon stocking with **gesso**. Gesso consists of calcium carbonate and a binder (**think of it as chalk dust and glue!**). Gesso serves as a primer - provides a smooth surface to paint on and adds structure to your piece.



All students should have a wired, nylon-covered wooden base. Account for prior absentees and assist after intro.

Introduce **gesso**. Include art history allusions and importance of priming (rabbit skin glue!)

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

Step 4: Prepping

Use the **gesso** at your table to cover your **ENTIRE** sculpture (except the very bottom).

This prepares the nylon for the paint layers.



Review materials procedures and routine for set-up and clean-up.

Distribute gesso (one container per 2-3 students). Use acrylic brushes and paint mats.

Abstract Nylon Sculpture

Apply the gesso evenly and as smoothly as possible. **Gesso the top and sides of the wood, but not the very bottom.**

Use a **paint mat** and return all brushes to **used brush container.**



Assist as needed during gessoing. Monitor time.

Address prior absentees (or partner peer(s) to aid in drilling, wire attachment, and nylon covering).

END DAY 3

Step 5: Painting

1.) Acrylic paint is **thicker** and **brighter** than watercolors - they're also very **forgiving!**

2.) **LAYERING** is the key to detailed work. Acrylics dry quickly - you can also use the hairdryer to speed things up.

3.) Paint ruins brushes and clothes **if it dries on them!** Feel free to wear an apron.

Review basics of acrylic painting. Highlight practical and artistic attributes. Most students will have used acrylics in previous projects.

Emphasize proper set-up and clean-up.

Acrylic Paint

- 1.) Paint Mat
- 2.) Brushes (2-3 of various size)
- 3.) Scrap paper
- 4.) Palette
- 5.) Paint (use only what you need)



At end of class, put brushes in **Used Brush Container** and **set palettes on counter**.

Display this slide over DAYS 4-6/7.

3-4 studio days unfold as painting progresses.

When it's time to clean up:

Brushes go bristle-down in the **USED BRUSH CONTAINER**

Set palettes on the counter or cover tightly with foil and store in your bin

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

8th VA:Cr2.2.8

Explain environmental implications of conservation, care, and clean-up of art materials, tools, and equipment; and demonstrate self-regulation in applying the understandings in the art classroom.

Painting Your Sculpture

Consider:

- Layer vs. wet blends
- Size of brush
- **Organic** vs. **geometric** design



Monarch butterfly motif

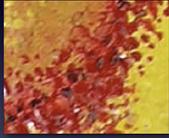
Display this slide over DAYS 4-6/7.

3-4 studio days unfold as painting progresses.

Acrylic Painting

Techniques we've previously covered:

Pointillism



Stippling



Wet-on-wet



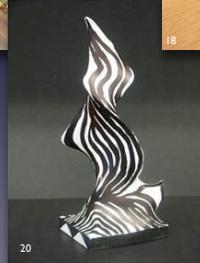
Dry-brush



Display this slide over DAYS 4-6/7.

3-4 studio days unfold as painting progresses.

Notice how painting techniques are applied in these student examples



Display this slide over DAYS 4-6/7.

3-4 studio days unfold as painting progresses.

END OF DAY 7

Step 6: Reflection

Circle the room to observe your classmates' projects. Choose 3 and answer the following in your sketchbook:

1.) What idea or feeling do you think the artist was trying to get across?

2.) What paintings techniques did they use? Did the way they shaped their sculpture effect the meaning?



“Gallery Walk”

NOTE: The procedure of this portion varies depending on maturity of the group. Works could be anonymized in display case or observed at table only.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret meaning in artistic work.

8th VA:Re8.1.8

a. Analyze how the interaction of subject matter, characteristics of form and structure, use of media, artmaking approaches, and relevant contextual information contributes to understanding messages or ideas and mood conveyed.

END OF DAY 8

Grading Rubric

1.) **Craft** - Is the project executed neatly (no tears, crumpling, or careless construction)?

25 Points

2.) **Concept** - Did the student show understanding of the stylistic or cultural themes most essential to the project?

25 Points

3.) **Classroom Behavior** - Did the student use his/her time valuably in the classroom?

25 Points

4.) **Materials Management** - Did the student handle class materials with respect?

25 Points

TOTAL: 100 Points

Discuss students' experience of each stage of the project. Ask about connections to intro discussion on abstraction, attempts at expressing feeling through elements and principles, "frustration vs. fun" ratio.

Review rubric. THIS SLIDE IS ALSO DISPLAYED THROUGHOUT INTRO AND STUDIO WORK DAYS.

Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

8th VA:Re9.1.8

a. Create a convincing and logical argument to support an evaluation of art.

Image Sources

ANS student examples
Henry Moore sculptures

- 1.-3. http://www.3villagecsd.k12.ny.us/artsgelinas/abstract_sculpture.htm
4. <http://www.abstractpaintingsandsculpture.com/artist/henry-moore-sculptures/>
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chatmoor#/media/File:2015_07_kL_CDMX_B30.jpg
6. <http://webarchive.henry-moore.org/works-in-public/world/uk/cambridge/the-fitzwilliam-museum/family-group-1944-lh-228>
7. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_Group_\(Moore\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_Group_(Moore))
8. https://c1.staticflickr.com/5/4151/5198176741_422e828f86_z.jpg
9. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reclining_Figure_1938#/media/File:HenryMoore_RecliningFigure_1951.jpg
10. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standing_Figure_-_Knife_Edge
11. <https://davidpotter2012.wordpress.com/2013/12/12/large-interior-form/>
12. https://www.flickr.com/photos/martin_john_evans/24000872988/
13. <http://webarchive.henry-moore.org/works-in-public/world/japan/hakone/open-air-museum/reclining-figure-1969-70-lh-608>
14. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oval_with_Points
15. <https://www.incredibleart.org/lessons/middle/middle23.html>
- 16.-20. <https://www.incredibleart.org/lessons/middle/middle23.html>

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

8th VA:Cr2.2.8

b. Demonstrate ethical responsibility when appropriating, posting, and sharing images.