

Personal Reflections: Tiny Idols
Intro to Ceramics: 9th -10th Grade
Maya Jaafar Lena
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Eye Idols of Tell Brak, Syria

Introductory Information:

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Lesson Plan 01: Personal Reflections: Tiny Idols

Title: Personal Reflections: Tiny Idols

Grade Level: High School, Introductory Ceramics (9th & 10th Grade)

Lesson Topic & Description: In this lesson, the students will consider the history of idol figurines. After reflecting on their personal hopes and desires, they will create an idol that represents their current life and something they hope for the future. The students will also make multiple versions of their idol--one for each student in the class. The students will then collect one idol figurine from each classmate, gathering a collection of hopes and wishes for the future. The students may choose to glaze their piece or leave it unglazed.

STAGE 1: DESIRED RESULTS

A ENDURING UNDERSTANDING:

- a Throughout history, idols or figurines symbolize a wish or a hope for the future
- b The interpretation of what many idols mean is often speculative as we often do not have written record about their meaning.

B ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

- a How does creating an idol or figurine promote an idea, wish or hope?
- b How can these ideas, hopes or wishes be represented in a figurine?
- c How does the act of creating multiples change the meaning of a the idol or figure?

C MASSACHUSETTS STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

- a 1. Methods, Materials, and Techniques.
- b 2. Elements and Principles of Design.
- c 6. Purposes of the Arts

D LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- a Students will learn about figurines and idols from art history.
- b Students will consider what is important to them for their future.
- c Students will apply their knowledge of working in clay in order to create an idol figurine.
- d Students will consider texture in creating their figurine.
- e Students will create multiple versions of the idol to share with their classmates.

STAGE 2: ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

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A PERFORMANCE TASK OR FINAL PRODUCT:

Each student's idol will be a unique representation of a hope or wish that they have for the near or distant future. The finished piece will be no larger than 5 inches in height, and no smaller than 2 inches. After the student is satisfied with her piece, she will reproduce the idol, creating one for each member of the class. After the idols are fired, the students will trade the idols so that each student will possess a collection of idols that contain the hopes and wishes of her classmates.



Sample Idol expressing serenity or peace. 5"

B CONTINUUM OF ASSESSMENTS:

- a Students will make their thinking visible by making lists and sketches in their studio journals
- b Students will check in with teacher after first models are made to determine the final design

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Eye idol. (3500–3100 B.C.).

C. CRITERIA

- a. Did the student make his thinking about hopes and wishes visible in his studio journal with brainstorm lists and sketches?
- b. Did the student create 3-dimensional sketches with clay?
- c. Did the student meet with the teacher to go over ideas, strengths and weaknesses in the 3-dimensional sketches?
- c. Did the student successfully portray the emotion or wish in the clay figurine?
- d. Did the student refine his work?
- e. Did the student use proper clay techniques (slip & score, hollowing forms that are more than $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick)?
- f. Did the student create the minimum number of figurines?

STAGE 3: LEARNING PLAN

A MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT:

- a stoneware clay
- b wire cutter
- c needle tool
- d assorted wooden clay tools
- e water

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- f buckets for water
- g sponges
- h electric kiln
- i glaze (optional)

B VOCABULARY WITH DEFINITIONS:

- a clay - a natural earthy material that is plastic when wet, consisting essentially of hydrated silicates of aluminum: used for making bricks, pottery, etc.
- b carving - the act of fashioning or producing by cutting into or shaping solid material
- c slip - is a liquefied suspension of clay particles in water
- d score - to scratch hatch marks into the clay before attaching
- e kiln - a furnace or oven for burning, baking, or drying something, especially one for firing pottery.
- f three-dimensional - to possess, or to create the illusion of possessing, the dimension of depth, as well as the dimension of height and width.
- g Cycladic - of or pertaining to the Cyclades Islands, Greece.

C VISUAL IMAGE RESOURCES:



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Statuette of Seated Harp Player. (ca 2800-2700 BC).

Eye idols. (3500–3100 B.C.). middle–late Uruk period. Excavated at Tell Brak, northeastern Syria. Alabaster (gypsum)

Venus of Willendorf. (ca 30,000-25,000 BC). Austria. Gravettian culture; Palaeolithic, Limestone, 110 mm. Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Smiling Figure. (7000-8000 AD). Mexico, Remojadas. Ceramic. H. 18 7/10 in. (47.3 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY.

Statuette of Seated Harp Player. (ca 2800-2700 BC). Cycladic Culture. Marble. 29.21cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.

Group 1 and Group 5. (2012). Marina Banguil. clay. England.
<http://www.marinabauguil.com/>

Mousweb. (2010) Michelle Hall. ceramic and fiber. England.
<http://michellehall.wordpress.com>

Can You See Me? (2003). Adele Macy. ceramic. Asheville, NC.
<http://adelemacy.artspan.com/>



Smiling Figure. (7000-8000 AD).

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D TEXT, MEDIA AND WEB RESOURCES:

Venus of Willendorf: Exaggerated Beauty. How Art Made the World. Retrieved October 6, 2012 from <http://www.pbs.org/howartmadetheworld/episodes/human/venus/>

Eye Idols of Tell Brak. Macdonald Institute of Archeological Research. Retrieved on October 6, 2012 from <http://www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk/projects/brak/history.htm>

"'Smiling Figure' [Mexico, Remojadas] (1979.206.1211)". In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Retrieved on October 6, 2012 from <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1979.206.1211>

Statuette of a Seated Harp Player [Cycladic; Grotta-Pelos culture] (47.100.1)". In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Retrieved on October 6, 2012 from <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/47.100.1>

Venice Clay Artists. Retrieved on October 8, 2012 from <http://www.veniceclayartists.com/tag/ushabti/>

E TEACHER INSTRUCTION:

- a The teacher will assign the lesson 2-3 weeks into the semester, one the students have some familiarity with clay, including how to slip and score, and maintain the appropriate amount of moisture in the clay
- b The teacher will introduce the topic of idol figures by showing a variety of slides of idols found in world history, and will include information about the date, size and culture of origin of each piece.
- c Show *Statuette of a Seated Harp Player*.
- d Show Syrian Eye Idols
- e Show *Venus of Willendorf*
- f Show *Smiling Figure*
- g The teacher will ask the following question about each figure
 - i What do you notice about this idol?
 - ii What meaning might you think this one holds?
 - 1 What makes you say that?
- h The teacher will then show works of contemporary ceramic artists who create idol figurines:
 - i Marina Bauguil
 - ii Michelle Hall
 - iii Adele Macy

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- i The teacher will discuss the idea of permanence and the reason for choosing a medium like clay or stone to create an idol figure.

F LEARNING ACTIVITY:

- a In their studio journals, students will make a list of 10 hopes or wishes that they have for the near future
- b Students will make a list of 10 hopes or wishes that they have for the long-term future
- c Students will then choose 2-3 ideas and make a list of characteristics or traits of those ideas, and then begin to sketch their ideas on paper.
- d The students will then use clay to begin modeling their figurines.
- e Once the students complete an idol concept for each idea, they will meet with the teacher to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each piece.
- f The students, then, will choose one idol figurine to replicate. The repeated forms can either be identical to the original model, or may have slight variations.
- g Once the pieces have been fired, students may decide to glaze their pieces if the wish, but it is not required.



Sample Idol expressing laughter. 2"

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Mousweb. Michelle Hall. 2010



Can you see me? Adele Macy, 2003. North Carolina

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Group 1. Marina Bauguil., England. 2012



Group 5. Marina Bauguil., England. 2012

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