



CELEBRATING ALLAN HOUSER

AN OKLAHOMA PERSPECTIVE



Allan Houser and His Students National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City August 30, 2013 – May 11, 2014

Allan Houser worked in a variety of mediums, including stone and clay, to create his artwork. When visiting *Allan Houser and His Students* at the National Cowboy Museum, be sure to see *Apache Singer (study)* and *Buffalo Dancer of the Rio Grande Pueblo*. Notice the different textures on each piece. Walk around the sculpture and view it from different angles. Does it look smooth or rough? What tools might he have used to work in stone and clay? Sculpture can be used to convey feelings and ideas. What does the facial expression mean to you?



Marble Sculpture,
Apache Singer
(study)
Photo credit:
Ed MUNO



Bronze Bolo Medallion,
Buffalo Dancer of the Rio
Grande Pueblo
Photo credit: Ed MUNO



Clay portrait samples.
Photo credit: Gretchen Jeane

Activity

Create an original, three-dimensional piece of art through forming and carving clay.

Vocabulary: portrait, original art, three-dimensional, armature, texture, and sculpture.

Materials and tools

- Self-hardening clay, approximately 6 oz.
- Newspaper
- Popsicle stick
- Wax paper
- Straw
- Yarn or ribbon

Steps

1. Create an armature by wadding the newspaper into a tight ball until it is about the size of a baseball. Set aside.
2. On a sheet of wax paper, roll clay into a ball, then divide in half. Using one clay ball, flatten and shape into a circle or oval to become the face. Place rounded shape on newspaper armature. Clay will rest on armature, but not cover.
3. Take the second clay ball and divide in half again. Using one of these clay balls, shape into a triangle; this will be the nose. To attach the nose to the face, lightly scratch or score the areas of clay that will meet. Gently smooth seams by using a popsicle stick or by dipping fingers in water and blending clay together.
4. Repeat process to create eyes and mouth, using the last ball of clay. Add other features such as hair or a hat. Remember to use the scratch-to-attach technique.
5. Different textures can be created by using everyday household materials. A fork can be used to create evenly spaced lines. Experiment using scraps of fabric, buttons, leaves or sandpaper.
6. Use a straw to gently create a hole in the top of the clay portrait.
7. Allow clay to dry. Paint and seal if desired. Thread ribbon through hole to create hanger.