



CELEBRATING ALLAN HOUSER

AN OKLAHOMA PERSPECTIVE



Allan Houser: On the Roof
Oklahoma City Museum of Art,
Oklahoma City
May 1 – July 27, 2014

Dawn, 1989. Bronze,
18 ¾ x 38 x 19 ½ in.
On loan courtesy of
Allan Houser, Inc. Photo
by Wendy McEahern
©Chiinde LLC



Activity

Like Allan Houser did, observe nature, and find inspiration.

Supplies

A beautiful day to go on a nature walk

Bags for collecting materials (Paper bags, small drawstring bags, etc. Any kind of nontransparent bag will work.)

Modeling clay or air-dry clay

Pencils, combs, toothpicks, and other tools to create texture on clay

Optional supplies

Paper and pencil for sketching

Instructions

Many of Allan Houser's sculptures that were completed near the end of his career involved simplifying complicated forms, such as figures or objects in nature. For this lesson, you will rely on their sense of touch to help you complete abstract sculptures.

1. Take a nature walk, collecting materials that would be interesting sculptures. Avoid flat items such as leaves, and opt for three-dimensional items such as acorns, pine cones, flowers, etc. Try to find a wide range of textures, and put the items in your bag. Collect at least two to three objects.
2. Return to the place where you are working. Leave the items inside of the bag, and without looking, use your hand to hold one of the objects and feel the entire object on all sides, getting a sense of the form. Is it round? Is it smooth? Do a quick sketch of the item, including the textures you can feel.
3. Repeat step 2 for each item in your bag.
4. Using the clay, sculpt each item. Don't look at the item when sculpting, but instead, use your sense of touch to examine the item. Start by focusing on the overall shape. Once the shape of your sculpture is close to the item in your bag, then, start applying textures with clay tools, pencils, toothpicks, combs, etc.
5. Complete the exercise for each item you collected. How are your sculptures similar to one another? How are they different? How do your sculptures compare with the items you collected? Do they resemble any of Allan Houser's works? If so, how?