



Optional Art Activities

- Each activity varies for time, but all will require at least an additional 30 minutes to the Polasek group tour/field trip. We suggest planning for 45 minutes for art activity per 20 students.
- Please note groups of more than 20 students will be split into two groups, requiring two separate classes. Be aware of this extra time needed for scheduling your group.
- \$5 art fee per student for supplies
- All classes will be taught by our professionally trained museum education staff
- Please prepare your students and have them wear “art friendly” clothing, as they may get messy!

Making an Impression-Bas Reliefs: All ages

Drawing on inspiration from Polasek’s bas reliefs and the textures in our garden, students will use air-dry clay to experiment with mark-making and the reductive process to create a bas relief. More advanced level students can use precision sculpture tools to create miniature scenes on their 3-D clay canvas. This approach allows students to experience using positive and negative spaces. Lower grades will be encouraged to use “found objects, stencils, and natural elements with interesting textures to press into the clay surface. The outcome can be wearable medallions, ceramic quilt tiles, or individual bas reliefs depending on teacher’s preferences. The clay can be continued to be worked on at school or allowed to air-dry and later paint, decorate, or string with additional beads to enhance their sculpture. Great for a follow-up art project for educators or a holiday gift idea for students.

Packing Peanut Sculptures: All ages

Students learn the difference between two key art concepts, “abstract and representational” art by creating a sculpture made out of recycled packing peanuts. Students build their sculpture one peanut at a time and are only limited by their imagination! Students can work individually or in groups for a teambuilding exercise. Proudly display these 3-D sculptures in your classroom or follow-up with the sculptures and trace shadows their shapes make as a compliment activity.

Tinfoil Figures: All ages

Get your students thinking about form and proportion with this activity! Each student will choose a “natural pose” to shape their figure in using scissors and tinfoil. Students may participate by acting as each other’s gesture models. Once completed, teachers can continue with “Step Two” shadow drawing for a later lesson plan. Take the completed sculpture outside and sketch the changing shadows for a Plein Air activity as the sun shifts throughout the day.

Hand Bowls: All ages

Using the anatomy of their own hand as a reference, students will create a hand-shaped bowl with air-dry clay. Each student will be given a clay slab on which they will trace the outline of their hand and cutout using clay tools. The hand can then be decorated with meaningful words, designs, or follow the pattern of their own palm lines. This is an experiment with creativity and texture! When the student is happy with their design the hand will be transferred to a paper bowl to take home, allowed to harden, and take on the bowl shape. The clay can be continued to be worked on at school or allowed to air-dry and later paint, decorate, to enhance their sculpture. Great for a follow-up art project for educators or a holiday gift idea for students.

Interactive Clay Gestures: All ages

Your students will love this interactive activity; one-part modeling class and one-part gestures! After learning about classical sculpture, students will be arranged in a circle formation, allowing the center of the room free. A volunteer will be selected to be our sculpture model. Lower grades may pull a suggestion from a bowl of gestures, and upper level student can improv their own pose. The model will strike a pose and the class has just three minutes to quickly create a clay gesture sculpture of the pose. This will encourage them to look at overall form and shape and pay attention to human anatomy. At the end of three minutes a different student will strike a pose and the timer will be reset. The last 15 minutes of class, students will perfect their last sculpture and take home an air-dry clay figure which can be reworked at school or home, and or painted when dry.

Straw Magic with Watercolor: Grades 6-12

Inspired by our floral gardens, this is a step-by-step watercolor tutorial for beginners. Students will paint a classic cherry blossom scene and try out a cool technique for painting tree and flowers using straws as as pipette droppers and brushes. This is all about the art of “happy accidents” and exploring the medium of water color. No two cherry trees will end up the same, but all will be equally beautiful! The thick watercolor paper is acid free and is suitable for framing.

Sculpture Sketches: Grades 6-12

This art activity will be completed outdoors, so please have students dress in weather appropriate clothing with hats, bring extra water, and sunscreen if applicable. After their tour and learning about classical form, student will spread out in the sculpture gardens and find a sculpture the speaks to them. They will carefully sketch a line drawing of the figure. The next step will be embellishing Polasek' s design by adding clothing, hairstyles, accessories, and background to their sketch. If student have a smart phone, they may take a picture of their sculpture for reference. In addition to their drawing, have students think about their character they create. Who is this person, what are they doing, etc.? Students will write a short story, paragraph or poem to accompany their finished drawing. Drawings can be finished back at school depending on time, and teachers may assign the writing component later if they choose.