

I. Lesson Plan

Title: Citrus Sculptures with Daniel Watson

Credit: Chris Busse

Grade Level: High School

Length: 4 days (and ongoing)

Description: Students will be creating sculptures from citrus peels inspired by the work of artist Daniel Watson.

Illinois Fine Arts Standards:

- **26.A.5-** Analyze and evaluate how the choice of media, tools, technologies and processes support and influence the communication of ideas.
- **26.B.5-** Create and perform a complex work of art using a variety of techniques, technologies and resources and independent decision making.
- **27.B.4b-** Understand how the arts change in response to changes in society.

Objectives:

- Student demonstrates an understanding of how choice of media, tools, and processes support and influence the communication of ideas through choosing appropriate tools and processes to create their citrus sculpture. (26.A.5)
- Student demonstrates an understanding of creating a complex work of art using a variety of techniques through the creation of their citrus sculpture that incorporates two or more techniques outlined by artist Daniel Watson. (26.B.5)
- Student demonstrates an understanding of how the arts change in response to society through notes taken on Watson as well as turning in three questions that they have about Watson. (27.B.4b)

Activities and Timeline:

Prelude to Lesson and Field Trip:

- Discuss Watson and his story.
- Have a class discussion about Watson, his work, and his vision as an artist.
- Have students fill out notes on discussion. At the end of class have students turn in three questions they still have about Watson.

Day One:

- Field Trip to Intuit Gallery to see the work of Daniel Watson.
- Have students take notes and make drawings in their sketchbooks of things that they enjoy at the exhibit.
- Have students bring in oranges, lemons, limes, and grapefruits to the next class

Day Two:

- Discussion about Watson's citrus sculptures
 - Points of interest
 - How do you think these were made?
 - What tools might he have used to create these?
 - Why use citrus peels to create a sculpture?
 - What are some things you think you would be able to create after seeing Watson's work?
- Outline different techniques to create the sculptures as outlined in Watson's letter. Pass out the worksheet (attached) as well as a copy of the letter so students can follow along.
- Have the students then begin to sketch out ideas for their sculpture.
 - Will it be carved?
 - Assembled?
 - Flat?
 - 3-dimensional?
 - What are you trying to say through your sculpture?
 - What are you making? Why?

- What type of design are you creating and what does it mean?
 - Students should be making more than just designs and shapes. Have students explore personal beliefs and ideas and create sculptures from those ideas. If they are creating a pattern or design, perhaps it is a tattoo that they would get or something that they would make permanent.

Day Three:

- Students should now begin to de-fruit their citrus.
- Have students keep in mind not to tear or rip any of the pieces and keeping the inside at an even wall thickness so that they dry at evenly.
- Also mentioning that eating the inside of the fruit is not only healthy but is not wasteful as well would be a good thing.
- At the end of the class have the students stuff their pieces with paper towels so that they dry evenly.

Day Four- End:

- The rest of the time should be used to create the sculptures. For them to completely dry out it may take weeks. I suggest using this project as an ongoing one. Where students can work on them periodically depending on how they are creating their sculpture.
- Hairdryers and things of that nature work to speed up the process of drying, however for them to become entirely dried out just takes patience.
- There is also the option of making several pieces, letting them dry out completely over a month or so, and then returning to the project to assemble them together in a sculpture.
- These are all options that need to be thought of. Explore what would be most conducive to your classroom.

Visual Culture images/slides:

- Daniel Watson's citrus sculptures (Intuit can provide images)

Demonstration of materials and skills:

- See worksheet

Materials: Citrus fruits (enough for each student to have at least 2 or 3. Recommend having students bring in as many as they can), spoons, carving tools, hairdryers, salt, other various tools, and Watson's explanation of techniques.

Resources and Bibliography:

Intuit: Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art

- www.art.org

Rubric:

- **Student demonstrates an understanding of how choice of media, tools, and processes support and influence the communication of ideas through choosing appropriate tools and processes to create their citrus sculpture.**
 - Exceeds Objective (25-21)
 - Meets Objective (20-15)
 - Does Not Meet Objective (14-0)

_____ /30
- **Student demonstrates an understanding of creating a complex work of art using a variety of techniques through the creation of their citrus sculpture that incorporates two or more techniques outlined by artist Daniel Watson.**
 - Exceeds Objective (25-21)
 - Meets Objective (20-15)
 - Does Not Meet Objective (14-0)

_____ /30
- **Student demonstrates an understanding of how the arts change in response to society through notes taken on Watson as well as turning in three questions that they have about**

Watson. (27.B.4b)

- Exceeds Objective (25-21)
- Meets Objective (20-15)
- Does Not Meet Objective (14-0)

_____/30

- **Student creates a sculpture that reflects personal beliefs or ideas. It is conceptual and the student applies strong research and thought into their piece.**

_____/10

Total Score_____/100

A- 90-100

B- 80-89

C- 70-79

D- 60-69

F- 50 and below

Citrus Sculptures with Daniel Watson

(Note: This information and more can be found in Watson's outline of creating citrus sculptures. It is highly advised to read that in its entirety and use this as a simple guide.)

Types of fruit:

- Oranges (all types)
- Grapefruits
- Limes
- Lemons (note: lemons shrink at an extremely high rate, about 1/5 the original size)

Tools:

- Spoons (for scooping out fruit)
- Carving tools (linoleum cutters work very well, but any type of knife or scraping tool would work)
- Exacto knives
- Butter Knives
- White (Elmer's) glue
- Newspaper or tissue paper (for stuffing inside spheres, as well as keeping table clean)
- Hair dryer
- Watson notes that nearly any tool you would normally not think of as a useful tool may be a very useful to use for citrus sculptures, experiment!

Techniques and Process:

- Preparing Citrus Peels:
 - De-fruiting your citrus:
 - To maximize the size of the citrus peel, a small hole can be cut in the top of the fruit and a long skinny tool can be used to slowly cut up and empty the fruit.
 - For hemispheres, the fruit can be cut in half and then a spoon or butter knife can be used to scoop out the fruit.
 - EAT THE FRUIT!!! It's good for you!
 - Once the fruit is removed, there will be an inner pulp layer. This can be removed. If it is removed, the resulting outer peel will be very thin and almost transparent. When it is dried completely it will be very hard, similar to a plastic like material. If the inner peel is kept, it will dry to a material similar to wood.
 - Even wall thickness is vital when removing the inner peel as well as if the inner peel is kept. If any part of the peel is thinner than the rest of the peel, the peel

will tend to deform from its original shape in the direction of the weakened area, this can be avoided by constant manipulation and stuffing it with tissue paper.

- Cutting your citrus peels apart:
 - This is obviously a critical part of creating any sculpture, what will your piece look like? It is strongly recommended that you have a sketched out plan of what your sculpture will look like, from here think of the pieces of your citrus peels as clay slabs being put together to create a form.
 - Cutting out pieces that fit to what you need for your sculpture before you start constructing will help in the overall process because some pieces may need to be dried out or cured more than others.
 - Peels can be cured with salt once the fruit has been removed. This addition of salt will make the peel flexible after it is dried out, similar to leather.
 - Peels can have their color altered by placing them in darkness, allowing them to mold. The longer they are in the darkness the darker they will become.
 - Watson notes that this is a hit or miss technique.
 - Connection bands:
 - Using an Exacto knife, cut out a hula-hoop shape from one of the citrus peels.
 - This “hoop” can be used to bind two pieces together. Attaching this while the peel is wet is highly advised because when the peel is wet it is in a much more flexible state. As the hoop dries, it will tighten around the two ends of the other citrus peels and clamp them together.
 - Using a few dabs of glue would help fully secure this bond.
- Flat or Curvilinear Pieces:
 - To flatten out a piece, cut out desired shape or part of the citrus.
 - Next place it between several pieces of newspaper and set several heavy books on top of it. Allow to dry out for several days so it maintains its flattened shape.
 - Once shape has been achieved, carving can now take place (see carving techniques below for details)
 - For curvilinear pieces, cut out appropriate part of the citrus that has the desired curve to it.
 - Stuff the underside of the shape with tissue paper so it maintains its shape during the drying process.
 - Carving can take place at two points in this process, dry and wet. Dry carving will result in sharper, crisper lines. Wet carving will result in a more natural or organic line due to the citrus shrinking (see carving techniques below).
- Spherical or Cylindrical pieces:
 - For a spherical piece, as noted earlier, a small hole should be cut in the top of the citrus. From here, using a long skinny tool to cut up and remove the inner fruit slowly is the only known way to do this process.
 - Once the fruit is removed, stuffing it very tightly with tissue and slow drying would help aid in keeping the shape of the peel.
 - For a cylindrical piece cut out the appropriate part of the fruit, similar to the hula-hoop just much thicker according to your needs.
 - Again, even wall thickness of the peel is vital in it keeping its shape. Also, stuffing it with tissue or perhaps using a paper towel roll to put it around would help to keep its shape as it dries.
- Carving Techniques:
 - Wet carving:
 - I have found that the same tools used for linoleum carving are extremely effective for wet carving.
 - Wet carving will result in an organic or natural line.
 - Nearly any other type of scratching or carving tool could be utilized.
 - The main thing to be careful for is to not pierce the peel because it will cause deformities during the drying process.

- Dry carving:
 - Carving when the peel is completely dry is a little trickier, but the result is a much crisper and precise line.
 - Tools such as chisels, Exacto knives, Dremel drills, and things of that nature would work when the peel is in a dry state.

- Drying process:
 - Drying can be done in a number of different ways. Sunlight and open air is probably the slowest, but most effective in the long run.
 - Other techniques like a hairdryer, placing it over a heater, putting it in the oven or putting it in front of a fan would speed up the process.
 - Putting it over an open flame similar to roasting marshmallows also works, but caution needs to be taken because it will only dry it out so much before catches fire; also holding it well above the flame rather than in the flame is more productive.
 - Microwaves work, only to a certain extent. Anything longer than 30 sec. on high will result in shriveling and deformation. More experimentation is needed to discover any use of this technique.
 - Most importantly when drying out the peels one needs to keep in mind that the peels will want to bend and warp, constant attention is needed to avoid this.

- As Watson notes in his instructions (available from Intuit upon request), this is a new and exciting medium for creating sculptures. As with anything new, experimentation is key. Think of these as guidelines to get you started, once you have started to explore the medium, see what else can be done with it, and don't hold back; there are no wrong answers.