



Unit 21: Ancient Masks

IN THIS UNIT:

- Theory
 - General Principle of Beauty: Proportion
 - Specific Skill: Seeing and Creating Complementarity of Shape
 - Medium: Paper Mache
- Lesson: Paper Mache Masks
- Follow-up

THEORY

Definition:

Proportion: The proper or due relation of the parts of a body to one another or the whole with regard to size and form.

Complementarity: A type of proportion in which the relation of two or more disparate elements achieves a certain perfection due to the manner in which each provides something that is missing from and improves the others.

Seeing

Relations of proportion need not be symmetrical, nor balanced. They can also be achieved in the way in which two things that are entirely unlike can yet exist in a relation that is beautiful. We call this relation between disparate (i.e. essentially different) elements “complementarity.” The most noteworthy type of this phenomenon in nature is, perhaps, that which we find between a man and a woman in marriage. Here we see that it is specifically in the way the different qualities possessed by each fill in those missing in the other that the beauty of the relation is evident.

From the definition above we can understand that the basic artistic meaning of complementarity is that two things that are quite unlike can go well together and achieve beauty. What shapes complement each other? What colors? What objects?

It is worth noting that elements can be balanced and complementary at the same time. They may be balanced in size and complementary in shape for example. Alternatively, they may be balanced in size and ill-proportioned otherwise.

Creating

This week we are creating Paper Mache masks. The sides of a face can be symmetrical, the parts generally balanced, and yet the differing elements complementary all at the same time. Perhaps a face might have a rather silly mouth, but a brow serious enough to offset it. Perhaps it has a rather fleshy jaw, but an intensity of brow keeps it from upsetting the balance of the whole. Complementarity is about proportion out of difference. The medium of Paper Mache will keep our focus upon complementarity of shape in this unit.

LESSON: PAPER MACHE MASKS

Before the Lesson:

- Review “Theory” to understand philosophy and ideas.
- Review materials list below and make sure you have everything.
- Review In-Class section below to make sure you understand the activity.
- Visual Aids: Use the image at the beginning of this unit; or you may print or download “Visual Aids” from the Schola Rosa online suite, if enrolled, or purchase them from the Schola Rosa Bookstore.

Materials Needed:

- 20-30 strips of newspaper cut into 1-2” lengths
- Paper Mache recipe: 2 cups flour, dash of salt, 1/8 cup liquid glue, and ½ gal. water
 - Liquid glue
 - Water
 - Ice cream buckets
 - Salt
- 1 Balloon per student
- Large fan
- Roll of paper towels
- Bottle of cleaning spray
- Smock per student
- Sheet of plastic for floor
- 1 set of Visual Aids

Classroom Preparation (always plan at least 30 minutes):

- Cover the art room floor with plastic.
- Set up tables throughout the room with plastic on them.
- Set up your table with the supplies, neatly laid out.
- On each table, place a few buckets filled with Paper Mache recipe (half full) and piles of paper strips.
- Have ready one inflated balloon per student. Try to make the balloons the same size as or slightly bigger than a child’s head.
- Have smocks ready at the door for students.

In-Class:

- Welcome the students and show them pictures of ancient and classical Greek masks.
- Tell them they are going to make masks today, and the mask should have COMPLEMENTARITY. Refer to “Theory” for guidance. In other words, each mask should demonstrate “complementarity.” The different elements of each should work together to create a perfection that is not mere symmetry, nor balance.
- Give each student a balloon and have them cover one side with paper Mache. (N.B. Students will be coloring and cutting the masks in the next meeting).
- Walk around and allow students to work quietly. Older Students: This activity can be as complex as they desire – encourage excellence!
- 5-Minute Warning: Have students finish up and direct them to hand-washing, making sure there is a supervisor or hall-monitor at all times with students.

Clean-Up:

- Blow Dry balloons in between classes.
- Return supplies and tables to storage area and follow clean-up checklist.
- Balloons can be stored at the Schola Rosa facility or art teacher’s home until the next meeting, where they will finish the project.

Student Samples

FOLLOW UP:

You could help your students understand the concept of “complementarity” better at home this week with everyday tasks, such as setting the table or making a flower arrangement. When we set the table, what do we do? We might have a tablecloth for a “backdrop”. Then, there is a center piece, and around the centerpiece is a complementary (even symmetrical) arrangement of placemats, napkins, and dishes. We try to place all the place-settings evenly around the centerpiece, if we are able. This is a great lesson in complementarity that we perhaps do not usually consider.

Finally, when choosing a centerpiece for our table, we might decide upon a flower arrangement. We try to place the flowers just so. How? We might choose a tall or particularly large flower to be the centerpiece of our vase, and then we arrange similarly-shaped flowers of similar size on either side of our center-piece flower. We do this to complement the shapes throughout the arrangement.