



Affiliated with the national Young Audiences
Arts for Learning network



Content Standards

Social Studies

Students begin to understand how families lived long ago and how they live in other cultures.

Students study the Western Hemisphere, its geographic features, early history, cultural development, and economic change.

Culture, heritage, and democratic principles are explored, building upon the foundation of the classroom experience.

Visual Art

Recognize that people from various times and cultures create works of art to be looked at, valued, and enjoyed.

Explore a range of art concepts and artworks and construct meaning about the works.

Connect making art with individual choice and understanding personal cultural identity.

Day of the Dead Skulls

Collage and Clay

Educator Guide

Enriching the lives of children and promoting creative learning by uniting arts and education

About the Program



After discussing the nature of abstracting and animating the human face, artist **Mark Yasenchack** will help students explore the traditions and cultural and social importance of the Day of the Dead festivities. Each student creates a skull face from a lump of porcelain clay. The workshop can also be a collage/mixed media workshop where

students draw a traditional *la calavera* image. Whether students start with a piece of clay or a page of paper, they will craft an abstracted skull/face. In clay: with a chop stick and an old key card or credit card students sculpt a skull face. In collage: students use pencil and marker for the under drawing and add further layers of oil pastel, newspaper cuttings, and paper cut outs. Special attention will be paid to the balance, spacing, and size of the various facial features.

Objectives

1. **Develop** a vocabulary of symbols and icons to use in the artwork that represent their family history.
2. **Choose** between a variety of materials to use to represent the aforementioned vocabulary.
3. **Build** layers of imagery with various materials and techniques.
4. **Understand** the collage process and unique opportunities in expression it allows.
5. **Abstract** the human skull and face.

Before the Program

Review the tradition of *Día de los Muertos* and the idea of a family ancestor.

Review the artwork of Jose Guadalupe Posada.

Review the structure of the skull.

Collect images and symbols that represent one's family history and ancestors.

Review available art materials the students may be unfamiliar with: gouache, oil pastel, color pencils, markers, and the difference between acrylic and tempera paints.

After the Program

Have students discuss the imagery and the symbols used in their artwork.

Discuss how students in the class celebrate *Día de los Muertos* or the memory of their ancestors.

Combine the collaging element of the project with other art projects and how the juxtaposition of pairs of images or images and words can create new combined meanings.

Vocabulary

Skull: Skeletal formation of the face

Collage: Art technique that includes drawn or painted elements combined with collected images

Día de los Muertos: The Day of the Dead, a Mexican tradition and festival

Ancestor: Family member whom one is descended from

Under Painting/Drawing: The guidelines painted or drawn while composing a picture

About Mark Yasenchack

While finding an interest in art during high school it wasn't until **Mark Yasenchack's** junior year in college that he took his first wheel throwing class and found a passion working in clay. He graduated with a B.S. in Science from Baldwin-Wallace College but quickly found out how well it combined with a career in art. There is an analytical yet creative approach to scientific research that enhances his approach to teaching artistic processes by adding a depth to the content of lessons.

Resources

The Day of the Dead by Tony Johnston

Mark Yasenchack's Website

markyasenchackteachingartist.wordpress.com/

Romare Bearden's Art

www.beardenfoundation.org/artlife/

beardensart/beardensart.shtml



About the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning

Through a balance of demonstration and audience participation, the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning teaching artist performances and workshops introduce students to an art form, support various curricular areas, and inject excitement and wonder into the school day.

