

PAPER MÂCHÉ MASKS

ART TECHNIQUE

Paper Mâché Masks

AGE GROUP

6 to 15 years of age

CONCEPT

Using the face as a vehicle for self expression to create a 3D character and develop a better understanding of other people and cultures.

SESSIONS

4 sessions of 1½ hours each. This project can be implemented over a 4 week period.

MATERIALS

- 1 paint shirt or art smock per student
- 1 stand (optional) for displaying the masks per student. (Made with timber and dowel)
- 2 small newspapers for covering the desks
- 1 roll of masking tape for securing the paper to the desks
- 3 x 10 kg packs of terracotta or red raku clay or any other type of inexpensive clay per class, each pack cut into 10 portions
- 1 A3 sized 'mat' (vinyl or thick fabric) per student for working clay on
- 1 big sheet of newspaper per student for creating the clay mould
- 2 bottle corks per student
- 4 newspapers cut into 8 cm x 8 cm squares per class (1)
- 5 bags of thin kitchen wipes cut into 8 cm x 8 cm squares per class (1)
- 20 sheets of 500 mm x 700 mm tissue paper cut into 8 cm x 8 cm squares per class (1)
- 200 gm of wallpaper paste (or similar) dissolved in 10 litres of warm water per class.
- 1 plastic bucket and a 50 cm stick for mixing wallpaper paste for the class
- 4 plastic containers for wallpaper paste mixture, kitchen wipes, newspaper and tissue paper squares, and glue per group of 4–6 desks. (Ice cream tubs are ideal.)
- 2 rolls of plastic kitchen wrap for covering paint trays and clay moulds
- 1 #6 hog hair paint brush per student
- 1 #10 hog hair paint brush per student
- 1 x 2 litre bottle of **Chroma2** paint for each of the following: white, black, warm yellow, cool yellow, warm blue, cool blue, warm red, cool red, and any other colour available, per class
- 2 plastic containers for water per group of 4–6 desks



Throughout time masks have been used by many different cultures. Primitive societies wore them for ceremonial purposes; nowadays people wear them for celebrations and fun.

Knowing the purpose of a mask helps you understand its significance. Masks have been designed to depict animals, characters in drama, good and evil spirits, and mythological characters. In ancient Greek comedies and tragedies, for example, actors used masks when playing different characters to conceal their own identity and take on the identity portrayed by the mask. In Africa, masks were used in religious, magical and social rituals. When a boy was initiated as a hunter, for example, he wore a mask to scare away evil spirits. Today, children adorn themselves with masks for parties, parades and festivals.

OBJECTIVE

This project offers teachers the opportunity to research, present and discuss with students the cultures of other countries and the significance of masks in those cultures.

This project provides students with opportunities for individual artistic expression, creativity and the exploration of different materials; and, in the process, a means for developing a better understanding of other people and their cultures.

ROOM SET-UP AND PREPARATION

Arrange the desks in groups of 4 or 6 and cover them with sheets of newspaper secured with masking tape (2) so the students can work in groups and share the art materials easily.

MATERIALS (continued)

- 2 ice cube trays for different colour paints per group of 4–6 desks
- 1 cleaning rag per student
- 1–2 pieces of scrap paper per student for mixing paint
- 1 plastic bucket with soapy water for cleaning brushes per class
- 1 litre PVA (white glue) per class
- 1 glue gun (optional) for older students with a parent helper.

MATERIAL FOR DECORATION

Copy the list of recycled materials below. Send it home with the students to ask parents for any donations they can make. Coloured felt, buttons, different types and colours of wool, raffia, large paper clips, pipe cleaners, large pompoms, small shells, wooden pegs, small pieces of colourful fabric, ribbons, lace, tulle, old jewellery, sequins, thin wire, paddle-pop sticks, bottle corks, small pieces of leather, feathers, fur, seed pods – and anything else suitable.

This project has been design to suit normal classroom conditions and illustrates how the classroom can be adapted to create the working space required.



1. Kitchen wipes, newspaper and tissue



2. Room arrangement

Prepare all the materials in advance—cut the newspaper, tissue paper and kitchen wipes and place into plastic containers. Make the mats and stands (if required).

Sort and prepare the decorator materials in advance—cut the colourful fabric, lace, ribbons, fur, felt and raffia into small pieces and place in plastic containers.

Older students should sort and prepare all these materials as part of their learning experience.

If you are working with young children invite two or three parent volunteers to help in the classroom.

FIRST SESSION**RESEARCH AND VISUAL REFERENCES**

Many kinds of masks can be used as inspiration. There are, for instance, masks used in cultural ceremonies involving music, dancing, and singing. Masks worn in festival parades in Mexico or in the Carnevale Di Venezia (Carnival of Venice) in Italy. Masks used in Japanese Kabuki theatre.

Find visual references in your school library, the local library or on the internet. With teacher guidance, older students can do this research in the school library.

Decide what kind of masks the students are going to make—masks to be worn, masks to be held or masks to be set up on a stand (student gallery).

African masks and culture are the inspiration for this Tutorial 5 project.



3. Art materials set up

SECOND SESSION**MAKING CLAY MOULD AND APPLYING THE PAPERS**

Arrange the desks as above. Place the cut clay on a mat on each desk. Place the squares of kitchen wipes, newspaper and tissue paper and the wallpaper paste mixed to a medium consistency in plastic containers centrally on each group of desks (3).

MOTIVATION

Gather the students in a class group and introduce them to your chosen visual references. To help students to focus their ideas, encourage them to examine and discuss the pictures and masks on display. Discuss the masks' significance, based on their research. Ask them questions that follow the steps of art criticism to assist them in responding to the masks.

DESCRIPTION – What do the masks look like—people, animals or birds? What are the masks made of—wood, clay, metal or mud?

PURPOSE – What are the masks used for? Are they used for tribal ceremonies like dancing or singing?

ANALYSIS – What are the visual characteristics of the masks? Are they carved? Painted with bright/dull colours? Are other materials stuck on them—shells, fur or fibres?

Encourage your students to interpret the masks in their own individual way. Aim to inspire your students to invest their work with originality, imagination and meaning.

PROCEDURE – MAKING THE CLAY MOULD

Demonstrate how to flatten the clay and shape it like an oval on a mat (4).

Crumple the large sheet of newspaper into a soft ball and place it under the flattened clay to give it a convex shape (5).

Start to add the facial features such as eyebrows, nose, lips, eyes and ears. Remind the students to exaggerate them (6).

After the students have made their clay mould, give each one a piece of plastic wrap to cover it; ensure that they press gently on the features (7). Insert two corks into the eye sockets, if the mask is to be worn. Parent assistants should help young students.

PROCEDURE – APPLYING THE PAPERS

To facilitate the drying process, cover each mask mould as follows:

- Apply one layer of kitchen wipe to make the mask strong so only two layers of newspaper are needed (8).
- Apply two layers of newspaper and finally one layer of dry tissue paper.

Demonstrate how to use finger-tips to apply the wallpaper paste mixture to the kitchen wipes and newspaper squares resting on the desk (9), and how to place them on the mould, overlapping and smoothing down as you go (10). Finally, demonstrate how to apply the dry tissue paper squares to the mask (11).

When the students have finished their paper mâché (12), place the masks in a pre-selected area to dry for a week. Instruct the students to clean up by placing all the left over papers into their containers, clearing the tables of newspaper and reassembling the classroom as it normally is.

THIRD SESSION

PAINTING THE MASKS

Set up the room as before. Provide each group with paint contained in 2–3 ice cube trays with all the colours suggested and with 2–3 containers for water. Provide each student with a piece of rag for wiping the paint brushes, a medium paint brush, a



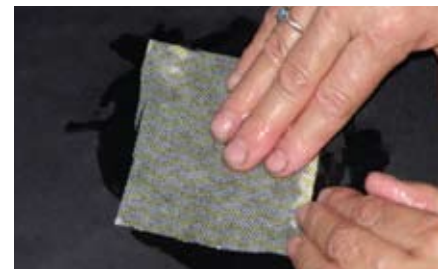
4. Kneading and flattening the clay



8. Applying the kitchen wipes to reinforce the mask



5. Moulding the clay over newspaper



9. Using fingertips to apply the glue



6. Example of exaggerated facial expressions



10. Applying the squares of newspaper



7. Applying the plastic wrap



11. Applying the dry sheets of tissue



12. Example of a finished papier mâché mould

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Raquel Redmond has more than 20 years extensive experience in researching, developing and teaching art programs aimed at primary school students and also conducts in-service programs for primary school teachers. She directed the Visual Art activities, Children's Art exhibitions and Artists in Residence programs for the 'Out of the Box' children's festival from 1992 to 2000. Since 1998 Raquel has been working with students at Queensland University of Technology School of Early Childhood's art studio. She is an active practising visual artist exhibiting her lino and wood cuts throughout Australia.

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small paint brush and scrap paper for mixing colours on (13).

DEMONSTRATE

Gather the students in a class group and demonstrate how to mix colours on their mixing paper; how to paint big areas first; and then how to paint repetitive patterns like lines, circles, dots, and swirls over the big areas of colour. Demonstrate how to wash the brushes in the water containers on their desks and how to wipe them clean with the provided rags.

Encourage the older students to use outline to emphasize features like eyes, mouth and eye brows.

When the painting is finished, return the masks to the allocated area and clean the room with the help of the students.

FOURTH SESSION

DECORATING THE MASKS

Set up the desks as before. Distribute decorator items on plastic trays on the desks and provide 2–3 containers of glue and brushes per group. If working with older students, designate an area where a parent helper can set up a glue-gun to help glue bulky or difficult items.

Gather the students in a class group to discuss decorating their masks.

It is very important to allow students the freedom to select, discard, explore and experiment with different design possibilities.



13. Arrangement of art materials

DISPLAYING THE MASKS AND CRITIQUE/EVALUATION

Work with the students to display the completed masks. Once this is done, gather the students for a critique/evaluation session to find out about the students' responses to what they have created.

CRITIQUE – What did you think of your final mask? Do you think you achieved what you intended? Are you pleased with the way you used colour, line, shape and texture?

EVALUATION – What have you learned about: the procedures used, the art techniques used and the culture you researched?

STUDENT

gallery

