

Angel Island Monuments

Project Overview

After studying and reading personal accounts of immigration, students created mixed-media monuments to memorialize the experiences of those who came through Angel Island, the West Coast immigration post.

Essential Question:

How do monuments honor people, places, and events?

Artistic Goals:

1. Students will learn the techniques of line drawing, gesture, contour, and rubbings.
2. Students will learn how to build an armature for a papier-mâché sculpture.
3. Students will learn how to use and mix colors with acrylic paints.
4. Students will learn how artists express meaning and tell a story through the choices they make when creating a sculpture.

Curricular Goals:

1. Students will write poems about the immigrant experience.
2. Students will understand the difficulties and discrimination faced by Angel Island detainees, relating it to their own experiences of immigration.
3. Students will learn the history of Chinese immigration to the United States, including key events such as the Gold Rush, Transcontinental Railroad, and Chinese Exclusion Act.

National Content Standards addressed:

National Social Studies-US History K-4.3: The History of the US: Democratic principles and values and the People from many cultures who contributed to its cultural, economic, and political heritage

- Students understand the causes and nature of movements of large groups of people into and within the United States, now and long ago.
- Students understand the folklore and other cultural contributions from various regions of the United States and how they helped to form a national heritage.

National Arts-Visual Arts K-4.4: Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History and Cultures

- Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places.
- Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art.

National Language Arts-English K-12.9: Multicultural Understanding

- Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

Part 1: Drawing Techniques

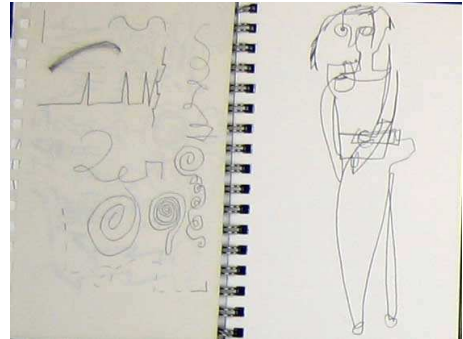
How can I express emotion and gesture with line drawing?

Activity 1: Line and Gesture Sketches

Students created line, gesture, and contour drawings in their sketchbooks. They also took turns modeling for each other, and created drawings that focused on how to express emotion and gesture with line.

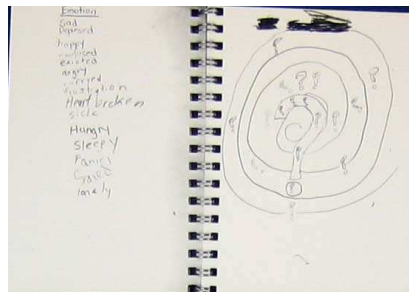
Recommended Time: Two 45-minute sessions

Materials: Sketchbooks, pencils



Part 2: Papier-mâché Exploration

How can I express a specific emotion through the symbolic use of shapes and colors?



Activity 2: Emotions in Sculpture

Each student brainstormed emotions, and sketched an idea for a sculpture that represented a specific emotion.

Inquiry Artwork: Isamu Noguchi, *The Cry*, 1959

Recommended Time: One 45-minute session

Materials: Sketchbooks, pencils

Activity 3: Exploring Papier-mâché

Students learned about armatures—skeletons for sculptures around which papier-mâché is built. Using their earlier drawings for reference, each student made a small armature (about 6" x 6") of their emotion sculpture, then covered it in papier-mâché, as a practice for their larger monuments.

Recommended Time: Two 45-minute sessions

Materials: Cardboard, wire, foil, masking tape, papier-mâché

Activity 4: Exploring Color

Students learned color mixing and made color wheels, giving each color a creative and interesting name. They practiced making unique colors, then chose an appropriate one to paint onto their emotion sculpture.

Inquiry Artwork: Kandinsky, *Accompanied Contrast*, 1935

Recommended Time: One 45- to 90-minute session

Materials: Paint, brushes, paper, pencils



Part 3: Research and Journal Entries

What was the experience of immigrating through Angel Island like?



Activity 5: Research

Students researched Angel Island and the experiences of immigrants who passed through it. They engaged in activities like writing poetry and sketching to accompany stories they read about the Transcontinental Railroad, the Chinese Exclusion Act, and other historic moments.

Recommended Time: Three 45-minute sessions

Activity 6: Journal Entries

After completing research, students each took on a character they had read about, and completed journal entries from that character's point of view as he or she went through Angel Island.

Recommended Time: One 45- to 90-minute session

Materials: Paper, pencils

Part 4: Creating the Monuments

How can I commemorate the immigrant experience at Angel Island in a sculpture?

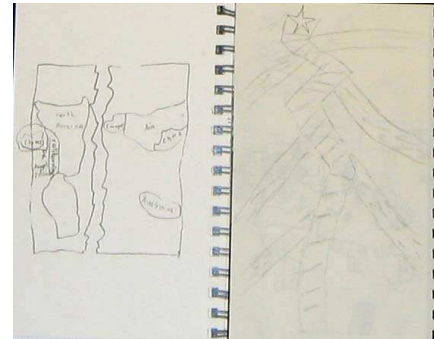
Activity 7: Brainstorming Ideas

Students reflected back on the research they had done, and considered ways to represent their ideas about the immigrant experience symbolically. They each developed sketches for their own monuments to commemorate the Angel Island immigrant experience.

Inquiry Artwork: Frank Lloyd Wright, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

Recommended Time: One 45- to 90-minute session

Materials: Sketchbooks, pencils



Activity 8: Monument Construction

Students built armatures for their monuments, covered them in papier-mâché, then painted and decorated them with a variety of materials including found objects.

Recommended Time: Four 45-minute sessions

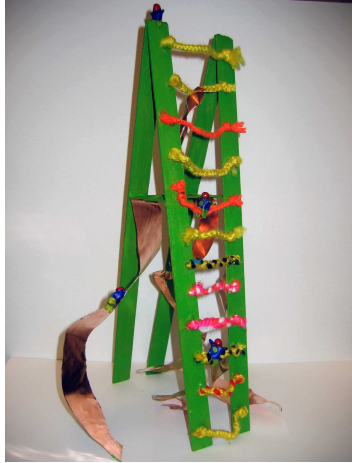
Materials: Papier-mâché, wire, cardboard, found objects, paint, glue, tape

Part 5: Reflection

Students reflected on their projects and wrote poems about their monuments.

Inquiry Artwork: Student monuments

Recommended Time: One 45- to 90-minute session



Chutes and Ladders

With confidence,
The immigrants work hard
To climb the ladder of success.

Struggling to overcome obstacles
Racism
Empty Pockets
Homesickness
Isolation

Like traps, chutes are hidden everywhere
Hanging from rungs.
Some fail to finish
Others, with luck,
And with gold in their eyes, succeed in scaling
The green American mountain.

By Ning Lin

Resource Materials

Curriculum and Teacher Resources:

Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation. <http://aiisf.org>

Lai, Him Mark, Genny Lim, and Judy Yung, *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910–1940*. San Francisco: HOC DOI (History of Chinese Detained on Island), 1980.

Ding, Loni, *Islands of Secret Memories*, VHS.

Ask Asia Lesson Plans: Angel Island, Asia Society. <http://askasia.org/teachers/>

Angel Island Immigrant Journeys: A Curriculum Guide. www.aiisf.org/resources

Angel Island Poetry, Department of English, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/a_f/angel.htm

Resources for Students:

Currier, Katrina Saltonstall, *Kai's Journey to Gold Mountain*. Tiburon: Angel Island Association, 2004.

Lee, Milly, *Landed*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

Wong, Li Keng, *Good Fortune: My Journey to Gold Mountain*. Atlanta: Peachtree Publications, 2006.

Sample Inquiry Plans



Isamu Noguchi
The Cry, 1959
Balsa wood and steel, 87 x 33 1/2 x 18 3/4 inches
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum 66.1812
© 2007 The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Also available at www.guggenheimcollection.org

Inquiry script:

- What do you notice about this work of art?
- What do the shapes in this sculpture make you think of?
- The title of this work of art is *The Cry*. Why do you think the artist, Isamu Noguchi, might have called it that?
- If you could change the title of this sculpture, what would you name it? Why would you choose that title?



Vasily Kandinsky

Accompanied Contrast, March 1935.

Oil with sand on canvas, 38 1/4 x 63 7/8 inches. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Founding Collection, Gift, Solomon R. Guggenheim. 37.338. Vasily Kandinsky © 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.

Also available at www.guggenheimcollection.org

Inquiry script:

- What do you notice about this work of art?
- The artist, Vasily Kandinsky, was not interested in representing the real world in this painting, but rather created a separate world on the canvas by arranging shapes and colors in ways that were meaningful to him.
- Take a few minutes to take a closer look at these shapes, then choose one and give it a name. Share your shape names with the rest of your group. What are the similarities and differences between them?
- Based on your observations and shape names, what kind of mood do you think Kandinsky might have been trying to create in this work of art?



Frank Lloyd Wright
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
Photograph by David Heald

More images and resources available at
www.guggenheim.org/the_building.html, and
www.guggenheim.org/artscurriculum/lessons/srgm_intro.php

Inquiry script:

- What do you notice?
- What do the shapes of this structure remind you of?
- The architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, was inspired by nature throughout his career. The building's placement next to Central Park was important to him, and its spiral structure may have been influenced by the shape of a nautilus shell.
- Why do you think Wright would have chosen nature as his influence for a building to be placed in the middle of New York City?
- What could you draw inspiration from to make a building for your own neighborhood?