

# BUFFALO AKG ART MUSEUM

## Lesson: Contrasting Styles



Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917). *Horse with Head Lowered*, ca. 1885 (cast executed 1919–21). Bronze, 22/K. 7 5/8 x 10 3/4 x 3 1/8 inches (19.4 x 27.3 x 7.9 cm). Collection Buffalo AKG Art Museum. Bequest of A. Conger Goodyear, 1966 (1966:9.23).

**Artists:** Make a sculpture of an animal in the style of the artist of your choice

**Period/Movement:** Compare and Contrast works from many styles and eras.

**Grade Level:** K-12

**Enduring Understanding 1.2:**

Artists and designers shape artistic investigations, following or breaking with traditions in pursuit of creative artmaking goals.

**Essential Questions:**

How does knowing the contexts, histories and traditions of art forms help us create works of art and design?

Why do artists and designers follow or break from established traditions?

How do artists and designers determine what resources and criteria are needed to formulate artistic investigations?

# LESSON

## Conceptual Basis:

Throughout history, artists have found inspiration in their fellow artists and past artistic styles and movements. While Edgar Degas, Louise Nevelson, and Marino Marini each have a unique artistic style and process, each has used the horse as a subject in their sculptures. Through the study and comparison of these artists and their sculptural works, this lesson plan examines different artist styles through the theme of animals. Students will create a sculpture of an animal inspired by the style of one of the artists studied in this lesson.

## Objectives:

Become familiar with artists Edgar Degas, Louise Nevelson, and Marino Marini.

## Lesson:

- Increase awareness of different artistic styles.
- Discover the similarities and differences between the three sculptures of horses.
- Support the understanding of basic art elements and principles.
- Create an animal sculpture with a focus on different art styles and technique.

# ACTIVITY

## Compare and Contrast:

All three of the sculptures in this lesson can be discussed individually to highlight the artist and work, as well as together to compare and contrast the sculpting styles. Creating a chart such as a Venn diagram can help students comparing the similarities and differences of the artworks.

It is helpful to discuss basic equine science with students before the artmaking activity begins. Showing an image of a real horse and discussing the parts of a horse can introduce students to the art they will view. Showing a video of a horse trotting or galloping is also beneficial, as some students may have no prior experience with horses.

Begin the discussion exercise by showing students a picture of each sculpture individually. For each sculpture, ask students to identify the different parts of the horse (e.g., head, neck, legs, etc.). Ask them to identify what the horse is doing in each sculpture. Ask students to also identify the color, shapes, mood, shadows, and texture they see in each sculpture.

Next, display all three images of the sculptures together. Have students create a three-sectioned Venn diagram with all three sections intersecting one another in a triangle form. Label each of the sections as one of the sculptures. In these sections, have students fill in elements of each sculpture that are unique and different than the others (e.g., Degas's horse appears moving while Nevelson's is kneeling, and Marini's is standing still). Where all three areas meet on the diagram, have students list similar aspects of each sculpture (e.g., all three works are horses made of bronze). Have students share their observations with one another. To wrap up this discussion and segue into the artmaking activity, ask students to share which sculpture style they like best and why.

## Artmaking Activity

Have students bring in images of animals as visuals for their sculptures. Creating a sketch of how they would like their sculpture to appear is a helpful way for students to brainstorm before artmaking. This process can also help students visualize the basic shapes and structure of the animal. Before students create their animal sculptures, have them focus on their chosen artist as inspiration. If they choose Degas's work, their animal should appear real and possibly in motion. If they choose Nevelson's work, students can make a semi-abstracted animal. For Marini, students might distort the portions of their animal. Remind students that artists can find inspiration in other artists or styles and use them to create their own artwork.

Students will begin by creating the basic structure of their animal. Students will crumple up the tinfoil to create the body, limbs, and head for their sculpture. Scale can be determined by the teacher. Remind students that the tinfoil will be the base of their sculpture and bulk will be added with the plaster wrap or papier-mâché. Once students have created the parts of the animal, they will tape the pieces together using masking tape. Again, remind students that the plaster wrap or papier-mâché will help bind the pieces of the sculpture together.

Once the basic structure of the animal has been created, students can begin adding plaster wrap or papier-mâché around the tinfoil animal. If using plaster wrap, one or two layers of the material will suffice. For papier-mâché, two to three layers will create a hard surface for the sculpture.

When the surface of the plaster wrap or papier-mâché is hard and dry, students can begin painting their sculpture. Depending on the lesson goals, sculptures can be left monochromatic like the bronze horses studied in this lesson, or they can be painted in detail.

## Lesson Tips

- This lesson can be tailored to focus on subject areas. Plaster strips or papier-mâché can be used to create objects of interest from science classes, historical figures, or architecture.
- For a cross-curriculum connection to Spanish or Latin American lessons, Oaxaca animal sculptures can be studied and created using the techniques above with the use of bright colors and elaborate designs.
- Sculptures can also be created with clay, if available.

## Optional Reflections and Lesson Wrap-Up

- Students can create a short story about their animal sculpture, giving the animal characteristics and personality. They can also create a poem based on their sculpture.
- For a playful activity, display student artwork and have the class try to guess which artist inspired each student's work. This conclusion could be made into a game or a class discussion. Once the class guesses, let each student explain which artist they chose and how they constructed their sculpture based on their inspiration.

**Materials:****Tinfoil****Masking tape****Plaster wrap or papier-mâché****Foam or wooden bases (optional)****Paint****Paintbrushes****Vocabulary:****form:** element of art—a three-dimensional figure**texture:** physical feel or appearance of a touchable sensation on a surface area**equine:** of, relating to, or characteristic of a horse**New York State Standards:**

| Grade | Code       | Standard   |
|-------|------------|--|
| K     | VA:Cr1.1.K | Engage collaboratively in creative artmaking in response to an artistic problem.   |
| 1     | VA:Cr1.1.1 | Use observation and exploration in preparation for making a work of art.   |
| 2     | VA:Cr1.1.2 | Create art of design with various materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity.                       |
| 3     | VA:Cr1.1.3 | Apply knowledge of available resources, tools, and technologies, to investigate personal ideas through the artmaking process.        |
| 4     | VA:Cr1.1.4 | Work individually and collaboratively to set goals and create artwork that is meaningful and has purpose to the makings.             |
| 5     | VA:Cr1.1.5 | Identify and demonstrate diverse strategies for artistic investigation to choose an approach for beginning a work of art.            |
| 6     | VA:Cr1.1.6 | Use brainstorming to formulate an artistic investigation of personally relevant content for creating art.                            |
| 7     | VA:Cr1.1.7 | Develop criteria to guide making a work of art or design to meet an identified goal.   |
| 8     | VA:Cr1.1.8 | Collaboratively shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present-day life by using a contemporary practice of art and design. |

## Standards:

The New York State Visual Arts Standards for High School Students are divided into 3 categories (Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced) rather than by grade level. Please feel free to choose the standard that best applies to the needs of your students and class curriculum.

| Grade Level 9-12 | Code           | Standard   |
|------------------|----------------|--|
| Proficient       | VA:Cr1.1.HSI   | Consider a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.  |
| Accomplished     | VA:Cr1.1.HSII  | Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design that follow or break established artistic conventions.   |
| Advanced         | VA:Cr1.1.HSIII | Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices, following or breaking established conventions, to plan the making of multiple works of art and design connected by a theme, idea, or concept. |

## Teacher Example:

