

Seward Johnson Inspired Wire Sculptures

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Grades: 7-12

I. Enduring Understanding:

- Seward Johnson was an American artist/sculptor who was best known for his trompe l'oeil statues.
- Wire can be used as a sculpture medium.

II. Learner Outcomes:

1.1 The Creative Process – Students will be able to demonstrate their understanding of the elements of line, shape, and form by constructing a wire sculpture inspired by artist Seward Johnson. (Bloom Level 6)

1.2 The History of Arts and Culture – Students will be able to identify multiple works of art (sculpture) created by Seward Johnson by discussing his sculptures (seen on their field trip) and/or in the powerpoint activity “Spring Lake Sculptures”. They will use techniques developed by Alexander Calder to create wire sculptures. (Bloom Level 2)

1.3 Performance – Students will be able to demonstrate the skills and methods appropriate for creating a wire sculpture in the shape of a face by transforming an image of one of Seward Johnson's sculptures into a line drawing which will then be made into a wire sculpture. They will analyze wire sculptures by Alexander Calder for illustration of techniques he used to create the sculptures (Bloom Level 2)

1.4 Aesthetic Response and Critique Methodologies – Students will be able to critique their sculptures by explaining to the class their effectiveness as well as the positives and negatives of their finished wire faces. (Bloom Level 5)

III. Standards (NJCCCS)

1.1 The Creative Process –1.1.2.D.2- Identify elements of art and principles of design in specific works of art and explain how they are used.

1.2 The History of Arts and Culture –1.2.5.A.3- Determine the impact of significant contributions of individual artists in dance, music, theatre, and visual art from diverse cultures throughout history.

1.3 Performance –1.3.P.D.2- Create two and three-dimensional works of art while exploring color, line, shape, form, texture, and space.

1.4 Aesthetic Response and Critique Methodologies –1.4.8.A.7- Analyze the form, function, craftsmanship, and originality of representative works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

IV. Essential Questions:

- Who was Seward Johnson?
- What is trompe l'oeil?
- How can line be used to create a wire sculpture?

V. Procedures: (Including Assessments linked to Learner Outcomes):

ASSESSMENTS

- Assess the students use and effectiveness of the elements of line, shape, and form in their finished wire sculptures. (L.O.1)
- As students participate in the powerpoint activity “Spring Lake Sculptures,” check for participation as well as understanding in discussing the art/sculptures created by artist Seward Johnson and techniques used by Alexander Calder. (L.O.2)
- Assess the students’ ability to transform a photograph of a face into a line drawing, and use appropriate technique to create a wire sculpture from the drawing. (L.O.3)
- Assess students participation in class discussion and their ability to explain the effectiveness as well as the positives and negatives of their finished wire sculptures. (L.O.4)

PROCEDURES

- As students enter the classroom, present the first slide in the PowerPoint. Engage students in discussion with each other what they see and prompt them to analyze the simplicity of the face and techniques used to create it..
- After discussing with the students their responses, explain to them that they will be making a wire sculpture just like the one displayed. However, they will base their sculptures on one of the faces from Seward Johnson's sculptures that they saw on their field trip.
- Note: While on the field trip to view the sculptures around Spring Lake, students must take a picture with a camera of one of the faces from the sculptures (the image should be of only the face and of course, it requires teacher assistance) or they may use an enlargement of a photo from the PowerPoint of Seward Johnson's sculptures on display in Spring Lake.
- Explain to the students that they will be using the images they took on the field trip to make a line drawing of a face, which will then be traced with wire ultimately to complete their sculptures. After this explanation, show students the youtube video "Contour Line Face Drawing" by Justin Wheatley.
- After watching the video, have each student take out their image from the field trip. (Images should be printed in black and white prior to this lesson). On the board, display an image of one of the sculptures that you (the teacher) will use as an example to make a simple line drawing overtop of the image. Be sure the students understand the line drawing should be simple, and only hit on the key features of the face (eyes, nose, lips, ears). Students can use tracing paper and trace the features of the photograph that they will include in their wire sculpture.
- Explain that it will be easier for the students to translate their drawing to wire if they begin their drawing at the neck of the face to provide a base for their line sculpture.
- After students complete their simple line drawings demonstrate the following procedure:

- Each student will mount their traced line drawing on a piece of scrap matt board.
- They will be given a piece of thick floral wire that they can bend with their hands. They will tape the end of the wire to the place on the drawing where they began the line drawing, on the botton of the neck.
- They will follow their drawn line bending the wire as they go, taping down the wire as needed to facilitate their work.
- Students should wrap the wire at necessary points to secure in place.
- When the line drawing has been completed, the student will remove the wire drawing from the drawing. Hot glue can reinforce areas that are fragile.
- The completed line sculpture can be mounted on a styrofoam or wooden base or hung with fishing line.
- When the students have finished their sculptures, have them discuss with the class what they feel are the positives and negatives of their wire face sculptures. Furthermore, encourage the students to talk about whether or not they like their pieces and if they are effective in displaying the face from Seward Johnsons sculptures.
- As a closing, the students will asses their own work.

VI. Modifications/Accommodations

- For any student(s) that require assistance for this project, the teacher will have a variety of pre-made line drawings made of the various Seward Johnson sculptures. This way, students will only need to trace the line drawing with the wire.

VII. Materials/Use of Instructional Technology:

- Projector
- Powerpoint Activity "Spring Lake Sculptures"
- Camera
- Black and White Photographs (Faces of Seward Johnson Sculptures)
- Pencils
- Tracing Paper

- Wire (Floral Wire- thick)
- Scissors

VIII. **Reflections:**

An alternative for more advanced students would be to synthesize the poses of the sculptures by Seward Johnson in wire sculptures.