

Developed with Stacy Lord
Worcester East Middle School, Worcester, MA
Grades 5-12

Giacometti FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

The long, thin figures of Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966) have become famous symbols of modern sculpture. These fragile figures standing alone in an empty space visually express how many people felt after the terrible destruction of the Second World War. Giacometti worked with volume, texture, and negative space to express a feeling of isolation in his work. Their thin, gaunt bodies suggest the hard times many people experienced after the war. A very limited color scheme adds to the solemn mood.

This project involves critical thinking and problem solving. Making the sculpture stand up on its own is not easy, and each student has to figure out the best way to prop their sculpture up as they work on it. The process of this project is additive, working from the bottom up. CelluClay® is heavy when mixed, and the armature can be very thin and flimsy, so working a little bit at a time is crucial to keeping the overall shape.

To introduce this lesson to the class, have the students think back to a time when they felt alone and isolated. If they had to sketch an idea for a sculpture based on Giacometti's work, how would it work? Would it be one lone figure or more? Would they be suspended in space, or trapped within a cage? Would they be standing alone on a large or small platform? What would their stance (posture) be? Would they be by themselves, or would they have props? Would they have exaggerated and/or distorted proportions?

Have your students think of their mood/emotion during that time of loneliness and how they would translate it into a sculpture using Giacometti's style of art. Students should sketch their ideas first. Stress to the students that the story behind their sculpture is personal and does not need to be shared but the theme/emotion does.



RESOURCES

Scholastic Art® — Alberto Giacometti, December 2007-January 2008

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Begin to form the figure using wire and tape. Stress that the smaller they work, the harder it will be to attach the CelluClay®. Working extremely large will stress the wire into distorting the figure, causing frustration. Finished sizes should range between 6"-14".



- 2 Once the wire armature is formed, mix up the CelluClay® a little at a time. Dust masks may be needed for students with asthma.



- 3 Working in an additive style of sculpture, start adding the wet CelluClay® to your armature from the bottom up, making sure to "squeeze" it on the wire and not just place it on. During this process, students will need to prop up their sculpture as they are applying the CelluClay®, working in small portions at a time. Anything can be used as a prop (rulers, stools, old books, string, etc.). Drying time varies depending on how thick the CelluClay® is applied. Flipping the pieces over might be needed if they are lying on a flat surface.

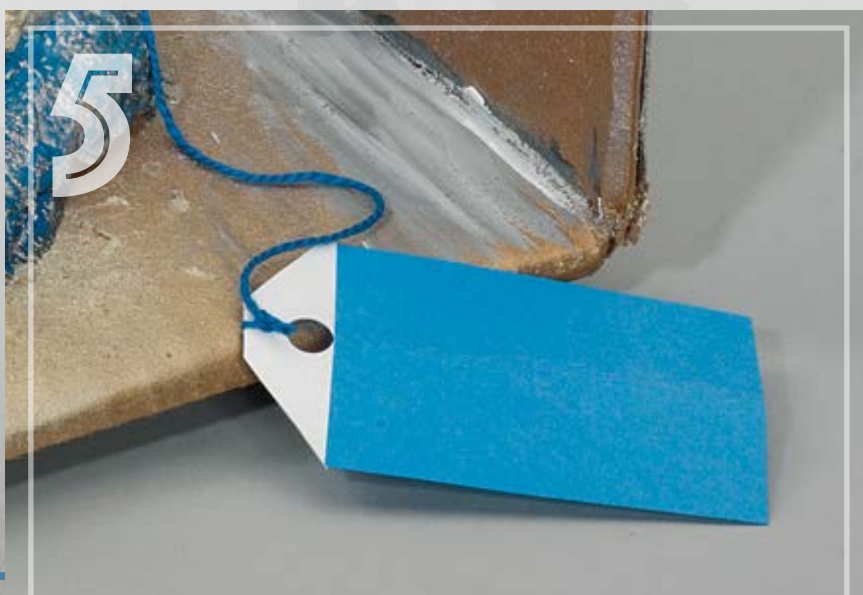




- 4 At this time, students can paint the sculpture however they wish. One suggestion is to first apply spray paint to the sculpture, then paint over it with tempera or acrylic paints.



- 5 Write an artist statement discussing the emotion behind the sculpture's creation on a tag. Tie the tag around the sculpture. Allowing students to talk to each other about their sculptures while working on them can aid in the writing thought process. It is suggested to have the students not put their names on the tag to encourage more honesty in their artist statement.



FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

Set up sculptures from a different class around the room and give each student five pieces of paper. Ask them to walk around and read the artist statement for each piece. Have them write a comment for five pieces of their choosing and leave the paper next to the sculpture. Next, ask the students to take two more pieces of paper and write comments for two sculptures that have no or very few comments left for them. This ensures that every artist receives feedback on their work. Finally, have a group discussion about the works of art.



MATERIALS LIST

- Activ-Wire Mesh, 12" x 24" — 9730226
- Masking Tape, $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 60-yd. Roll — 9722434
- CelluClay®, 5-lb. Pkg., White — 9706147 (plan on two 5-lb. bags per 15 students)
- Krylon® Metallic Spray Paint — *9731728(A-D)
- Nasco Country School™ Tempera Paint, pints — *9703627(A-N) or Nasco Bulk-Krylic® Acrylic Paint, pint squeeze bottles — *9714719(A-AE)

*For individual color listings, go to NascoEducation.com

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