

Art Lesson Plan

Title: Foil Rodin Sculpture
Concept: Sculpture and Emotion
Idea: Students will create a sculpture that represents human movement.

Tasks / Objectives

Aesthetics & Criticism

Students will ask questions about the value of sculpture. What constitutes a sculpture? How is sculpture different from other art media? Does sculpture have value? Is sculpture important? If so, why is it important?

Students will ask questions about the purpose of sculpture. What does it tell us about the subject?

Historical and Cultural Perspectives

Students will look at and compare images of sculptures by Auguste Rodin, then students will talk about what the artist sought to achieve in his sculpture.

Create, Present and Perform

Students will create a sculpture by manipulating and shaping a sheet of aluminum foil into the shape of a human form, emphasizing human movement in the product.

Need to know/have ready

Benchmarks for your grade levels are determined by the educator's district or state.

Visual & Literary Resources

Maryhill Museum of Art Auguste Rodin Collection. Click link for image to print for classroom use.

- 1) Auguste Rodin, (French, 1840-1917), *Despair*, c.1880. Bronze, 91/2".
- 2) Auguste Rodin, (French, 1840-1917), *The Thinker*, c.1880. Plaster, 15".

Books on Rodin's life and work are plentiful. A perusal of your public or school library will result in many examples of his work.

Vocabulary

Emotion
Sculpture
Simplify
Abstract
Movement

Production Materials

Heavy-duty foil 15 x 18 inches
Scissors
Pencils
Staplers
5 x 5 light cardboard or one large notecard



Auguste Rodin, (French, 1840-1917), *Despair*, c. 1880. Bronze, 91/2". Collection of Maryhill Museum of Art. Photo by Jerry Taylor.

The Lesson

Lesson Criteria

Students will create an abstract action figure from cut foil using form and balance to show movement.

Looking at the work

Look carefully at the sculpture, *Despair*.

Ask students about *form*. What are the forms you see in the sculpture?

Ask students about *balance*. How has the artist achieved balance in the sculpture?
Is the sculpture symmetrical or asymmetrical?

Ask students about the materials used to create *Despair*. What are the materials used to make the sculpture? How do the materials aid or inhibit the sense of *movement*?

Ask students how the sculpture, *Despair*, makes them feel. Show images of several other sculptures in which human movement is depicted. Briefly discuss each sculpture's *form*, *balance*, and *movement*.

Demonstration

Show five cuts into the sides of a large rectangle of heavy foil as diagramed.

Leave foil flat on the table. Crumple the sides in at the top to form the head.

Then crumple and squeeze the arm sections.

Next, crumple and squeeze the right side to form the body and right leg.

Repeat on the left side to form the body and left leg.

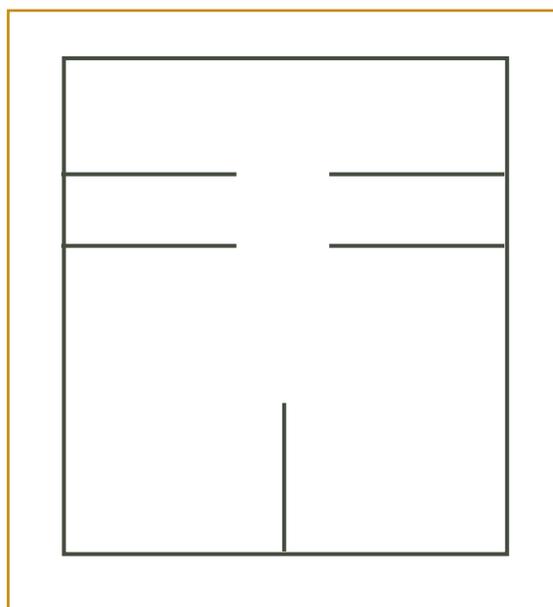
Continue squeezing and manipulating the foil until you have formed a rather firm and solid figure.

Bend the knees, elbows, waist and neck to show human movement.

Staple sculpture onto a large-sized notecard.
Have students label and sign their work.

Post and Review vocabulary.

Post and Review criteria.



Cuts in Foil

Production

Distribute materials.

Encourage on-task working.

Have students title their artwork.

Oversee clean up.

Display student work.

Assessment

Assess student work using lesson criteria and benchmark(s) selected.

Appreciate student work for form, balance and movement.

Correlations, extensions, ideas

Have students write about their sculpture, and display the written work with their sculpture.

The writing assignment may be expanded to a short story written in the voice of the person depicted in their sculpture.

Students may explore other media to find examples of humans displaying movement.



Despair, c. 1880, bronze

Auguste Rodin's self-described "masterpiece project" was *The Gates of Hell*, the result of a commission from the French government in 1880 to create a set of doors for a new museum of decorative arts. Rodin envisioned his Gates as depicting scenes of Hell based on the epic poem, *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, an Italian author (1265-1321).

Some of Rodin's most well known sculptures were created for *The Gates of Hell*, including *The Thinker*, *Eve*, *Je Suis Belle* and *Man with a Broken Nose*. In all, Rodin created 186 separate figures for his Gates.

About 1890 Rodin made four or five sculptures on the theme "despair" in connection with *The Gates of Hell*. Victor Frisch, Rodin's studio assistant, noted that "Rodin preserved over twelve figures embodying the various human expressions of despair."

Despair holds her raised left foot with both hands, her body folding into itself, recalling Rodin's drawings of dance movements. *Despair* can be seen in *The Gates of Hell* in the upper left as you face the work of art.

The Thinker, c. 1880, plaster

Initially named *The Poet*, the figure was intended to depict Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), author of the epic poem, *The Divine Comedy*, as he contemplated images of Hell.

In 1904, Rodin wrote about his sculpture, *The Thinker*, saying "*The Thinker* has a story. In the days long gone by I conceived the idea of *The Gates of Hell*. Before the door, seated on a rock, Dante is thinking of the plan of the poem...all the characters from *The Divine Comedy*. This project was not realized. Thin, ascetic Dante in his straight robe separated from all the rest would have been without meaning. Guided by my first inspiration I conceived another thinker, a naked man, seated on a rock, his fist against his teeth, he dreams. The fertile thought slowly elaborated itself within his brain. He is no longer a dreamer, he is a creator."

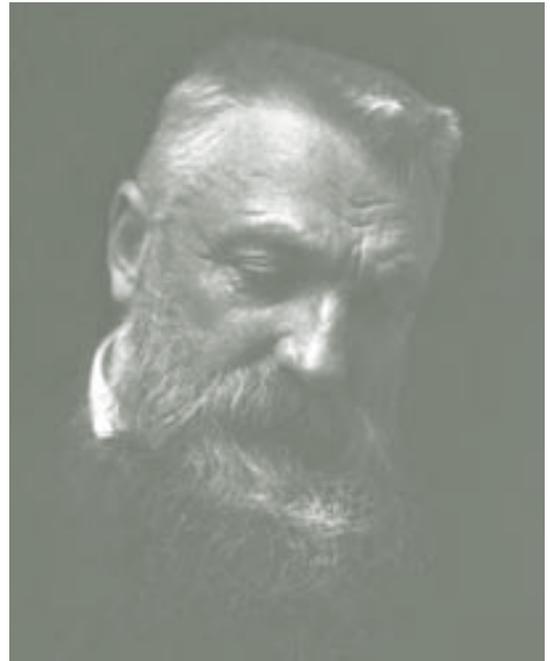
Auguste Rodin (1840-1917)

Father of Modern Sculpture

Auguste Rodin was born in 1840 to a working class family in Paris. A poor student, Rodin showed his artistic talent at an early age and was sent to the *Ecole Imperiale Speciale de Dessin et de Mathematique (Petite Ecole)* where the young student learned to sculpt and to draw. Determined to enter the noted *Ecole des Beaux-Arts*, he applied and was rejected three times. Humiliated, Rodin began working for commercial decorators and sculptors. In 1862, after the death of his sister, Maria, he gave up sculpture and briefly entered the religious Order of the Fathers of the Holy Sacrament.

As his compulsion to sculpt resumed, Rodin rented his first studio and then entered the studio of sculptor Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse. He met his lifelong companion, Rose Beuret, and in January 1866 they had a son. In 1870 Rodin departed Paris for Belgium to join Carrier-Belleuse in a commission to decorate the Brussels Stock Exchange. He remained in Belgium for six years, during which time he traveled to Italy to study the work of Michelangelo. The emotion he found in the twisting forms of the Italian master inspired him to depart from the accepted style of French taste in sculpture. Like Michelangelo, he turned his attention to investigating the human form as a vehicle to express human emotion. His rejection of the tenets of French academic sculpture resulted in widespread public controversy. He was both severely criticized and openly championed for his innovations in sculpture.

In 1900, at the age of sixty, Rodin had his first major retrospective exhibition, the *Exposition Rodin*, which was held at the Universal Exposition in Paris. By his death Rodin was being lionized as the father of modern sculpture. Rodin died of influenza on November 17, 1917.



**Auguste Rodin, (French, 1840-1917),
Photographer unknown.**



Auguste Rodin, (French, 1840-1917) *Despair*, c.1880. Bronze, 91/2 ". Collection of Maryhill Museum of Art. Photo by Jerry Taylor.

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35 Maryhill Museum Drive, Goldendale, Washington 98620
509-773-3733 . www.maryhillmuseum.org



MARYHILL MUSEUM OF ART

Auguste Rodin, (French, 1840-1917) *The Thinker*, c.1880. Plaster, 15".
Collection of Maryhill Museum of Art. Photo by Robert Reynolds.

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