

AFRICAN ART – “MASKS”



Art Element:

Texture, Symmetry

Tools:

Mask samples and Mask photos
Art Term Posters

Supplemental Tools/Ideas:

Music – use the boom box in the portable
Books – check the Art Docent library, books from home, etc.
African fabrics, etc.
World Map – show where artist is from
Color Wheel

Supplies:

Construction paper – 10 x 12
Construction Paper – multi-colored
Glue
Hole punchers
Staplers
Beads, feathers, yarn, raffia, etc.

Introduction:

1. Oh Africa! What a place! Today, we are going there with our art! We're making African masks! (*Read Artist Inspiration below to give students a good idea of background. Show various pictures of masks)
2. What do you notice about the materials they've used -- they have lots of TEXTURE! TEXTURE is one of our Art Elements today (show poster--show examples from poster of the various texture) What textures can you think of? (bumpy, fuzzy, smooth, etc) Where do you see textures in nature? (wood, leaves, animals, etc.) Yes, these are all great inspirations for your masks today!

4. Another thing I want you to notice is - do these masks look balanced or lop-sided? Very balanced, right? Another word for that is SYMMETRICAL – that means that these masks are the same on both sides. See – both sides match! (Show poster and discuss the pictures attached of symmetrical vs. nonsymmetrical.)

5. Now, remember that these African masks were often worn at special events, ordered by a king or someone very important. Let's pretend that you are all famous tribal mask makers! And the king has ordered a very special mask - think carefully how you would design it, it is very important! Will it be for a special event? What is that event? Remember to use lots of texture and symmetry! This mask is for the king!!

Technique:

1. First, have students choose what color they want their mask to be. Hand out those 10 x 12 pieces. Students will then fold in half length-wise. They will need to cut rounded off corners on the outside and cut triangles on folded corners – to create darts when opened.

2. While mask is still folded, have students cut eye and mouth holes – students may need help with this step! Be careful not to get too close to darts.

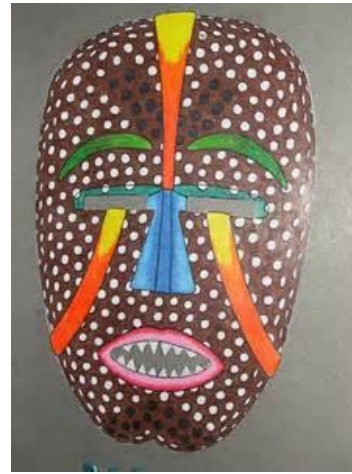
3. Now students can unfold the masks, lay them flat, and begin decorating! Remember symmetry!

4. Once mask is completely designed and completed, students will then glue the darts together to create depth and form.

Summary/Art Quiz:

1. Once students have cleaned up their work area. Remind them what they learned today.

2. Can anyone tell me the artist's name who inspired us today? And what art techniques did we learn? And do you remember what tools we used? What was your favorite part of this lesson? Use the Art Quiz Door Poster for reference.



Artist Inspiration:

African Tribal Masks

Ritual and ceremonial masks are an essential feature of the traditional culture and art of the peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa. While the specific implications associated to ritual masks widely vary in different cultures, some traits are common to most African cultures. For instance, masks usually have a spiritual and religious meaning and they are used in ritual dances and social and religious events, and a special status is attributed to the artists that create masks and to those that wear them in ceremonies. In most cases, mask-making is an art that is passed on from father to son, along with the knowledge of the symbolic meanings conveyed by such masks.

Masks are one of the elements of African art that have most evidently influenced European and Western art in general; in the 20th century, artistic movements such as cubism, fauvism and expressionism have often taken inspiration from the vast and diverse heritage of African masks.^[1] Influences of this heritage can also be found in other traditions such as South and Central American masked Carnival parades.^[2]