

CALIFORNIA ARTISTS

Projects for Kids

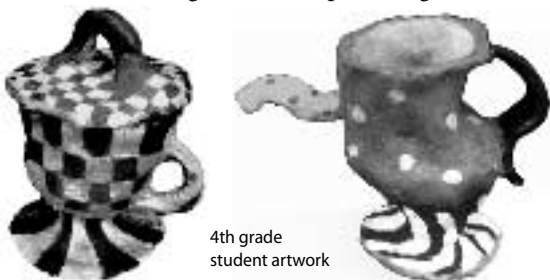


Robert Arneson, *Study for California Artist*, 1982
Polaroids, mixed drawing media, acrylic, and watercolor on paper, 54 1/4 in. x 41 1/4 in. (137.8 cm x 104.78 cm), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Rena Branstetter
Art © Estate of Robert Arneson / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

Funk Art

When Robert Arneson first studied ceramics, artists used clay to make useful forms like plates & pitchers. In the 1960's he experimented making objects that had no use such as wacky household items. He loosely molded the clay & colored it with bright glazes in a funky, earthy style that was named the Funk Art movement in ceramics.

- ◆ Pick an everyday object like a cup, brush, shoe or even a hamburger or hot dog.
- ◆ Mold it in clay. Exaggerate its shape. Let dry & fire in a kiln.
- ◆ Paint with bright colors of paint or glaze.



4th grade student artwork

Robert Arneson

Robert Arneson (1930-1992) brought humor, wit & brashness to ceramics, an art form that had been traditionally reserved for cups & saucers. He used clay as a medium to make serious art, combining humor & contemporary issues in his work. He skillfully molded clay into playful everyday objects, large-scale portraits & powerful sculptures. As a professor at UC Davis from 1962-1990, Arneson influenced a whole generation of artists & students & is known as a groundbreaking ceramicist nationwide.

Drawing with Expressions



Student artwork by Diana V., gr 7

Robert Arneson used many facial expressions in his portraits. He often used his own face to convey humor or show sadness. He could play the clown, introducing strong, grotesque or painful images without hurting anyone else. Try looking in the mirror to make different faces: happy, sad, outraged, silly or mad. Draw several of your best expressions.

Ceramic Portrait

Robert Arneson sculpted oversized portraits & busts from clay. He molded lively images of artists, friends & people he admired, combining them with visual "extras": words, drawings & informative details. Often he used his own comical expressions & exaggerated looks to animate his works. His faces had a range of feelings of pain, horror & hilarity that let him use his art to comment on important world issues.

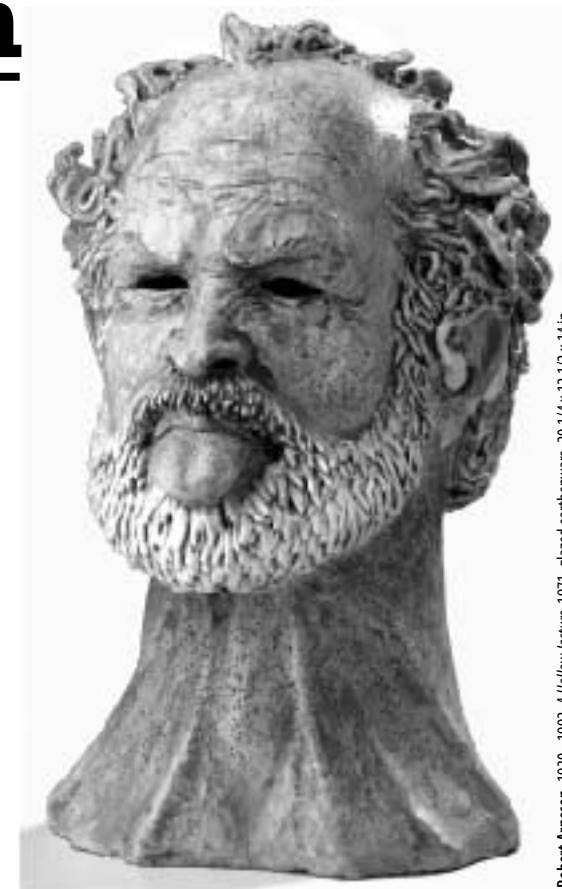
- ◆ Make a hollow clay egg shape & attach it to a hollow cylinder.
- ◆ Plan your portrait. Who will it be? What expression will it have? What feeling do you want to express?
- ◆ Add clay shapes for nose, eyes, lips & cheeks. Score & smooth to attach.
- ◆ Add hair. Let dry & kiln fire. Paint with bright colored glazes or paint.
- ◆ Flat Variation: Roll out clay to 1/4 inch thick. Cut, score & attach an oval for head onto background clay shape. Add clay for facial features. Let dry & kiln fire & paint.



Student artwork by Aaron A., Rose A. & Marisela D., gr 9

Look in the Mercury News

- ◆ As a teenager, Robert Arneson drew cartoons for the local newspaper. Find the comics page & look for humor like his.
- ◆ Arneson's sculptures showed how he felt about nuclear war without using words. Search the paper for images that give an opinion visually.

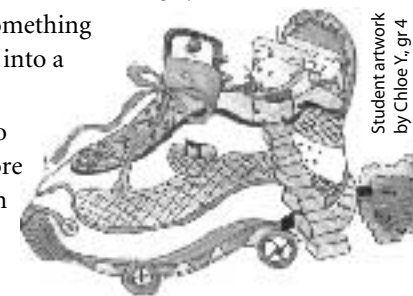


Robert Arneson, 1930 - 1992, *A Hollow Lecture*, 1971, glazed earthenware, 20 1/4 x 12 1/2 x 14 in. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Partial gift of Dorothy and George Saxe to the Fine Arts Museums Foundation 2002.148.2 Art © Estate of Robert Arneson / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

Unlikely Combos

Arneson often created goofy clay sculptures. He combined whatever came to mind with whatever he saw around him. Frequently, his wacky images illustrated a serious idea. He made a typewriter with ladies' fingers as keys, binoculars with eyeballs peering out the ends & a TV with a president's head squeezed inside. What goofy thing can you make?

- ◆ Write a list of ten items in your room.
- ◆ Make another list of ten things you can see.
- ◆ Try pairing something from each list into a goofy combo.
- ◆ Choose one to draw. Add more details. Stretch into the unusual.



Student artwork by Chloe Y., gr 4

Learn more about Robert Arneson & his work at: www.sfmoma.org/voices/index.html



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Written by Mary Bender; Designed by Ina Johnson, ©2008

