

Two by Two, the Noah's Ark Project

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Objectives

- discover a variety of sources of inspiration for visual art
- begin to develop a general understanding of the various ways artists acquire and transform ideas (feelings; experiences; social; cultural and political positions; etc.) into visual form
- generate ideas for art works and manipulate these ideas to achieve meaning and personal expression
- begin to understand and use various aspects of the creative process when developing works of art (choosing an idea or topic, brainstorming, identifying focus, adapting, reflecting, refining)
- become aware of various health and safety hazards and procedures in visual art
- challenge themselves to solve visual art problems in a variety of new ways
- continue to hone skills of observation and image-making in order to become more



Materials

Clay

A variety of clay tools

Images of animals

Cardboard chunks

Rolling pins

Flat boards similar to a ruler but twice as wide

Spooze (Recipe: 5 parts clay, 1 part vinegar, 1 part white corn syrup, all is thoroughly mixed until really smooth)

Tissue paper

Glaze

Acrylic paint

Optional for smoke firing

Paper

Tape

Metal garbage can



Background Information

Charlotte Poulsen http://www.galerie-ancienne-poste.com/pp/expos/01_charlotte_poulsen/index.html

At 19 years old she was already wheel-throwing and modeling when she started to study at the School of Fine Arts in Aarhus Denmark. She was inspired by photo articles of her uncles to work on animal pieces. Her uncle was an agronomist in Africa. The wildlife originated from this far continent would take on a special place in her memories and become a major subject in her work in later years. Her work often uses several types of clay in one piece. She works with Grey clay, terra cotta, African Stoneware, porcelain and raw clay.



Noah's ark — taken from <http://skepdic.com/noahsark.html>

Noah's ark is the boat built by the Biblical character Noah. At the command of God, according to the story, Noah was to build a boat that could accommodate his extended family, about 50,000 species of animals, and about one million species of insects. The craft had to be constructed to endure a divinely planned universal flood aimed at destroying every other person and animal on earth (except, I suppose, those animals whose habitat is liquid). This was no problem, according to [Dr. Max D. Younce](#), who says by his calculations from *Genesis* 6:15 that the ark was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet deep. He says this is equivalent to "522 standard stock cars or 8 freight trains of 65 cars each." By some divine calculation he figures that all the insect species and the worms could fit in 21 box cars. He could be right, though Dr. Younce does not address the issue of how the big boxcar filled with its cargo rose with the rainwater level instead of staying put beneath the floodwaters.

Those not familiar with the story might wonder why God would destroy nearly all the descendants of all of the creatures he had created. The story is that God was displeased with all of his human creations, except for Noah and his family. Annihilating those one is displeased with has become a familiar tactic of the followers of this and many other gods.

Despite the bad example God set for Noah's descendants--imagine a human parent drowning his or her children because they were "not righteous"--the story remains a favorite among children. God likes good people. He lets them ride on a boat with a bunch of friendly animals. He shows them a great rainbow after the storm. And they all live happily ever after. Even adults like the story, though they might see it as an allegory with some sort of spiritual message, such as *God is all-powerful and we owe everything, even our very existence to the Creator*. Furthermore, *the Creator expects us to behave ourselves*. But there are many who take the story literally.

According to the story told in chapter 7 of *Genesis*, Noah, his crew, and the animals lived together for more than 6 months before the floodwaters receded. There are a few minor logistical problems with this arrangement, but before getting to them, there is one other thing that needs commenting on. It is obvious that floods are no laughing matter. The destruction of life and property caused by floods has plagued many animals, not just humans, from time immemorial. To watch one's family or home swept away in floodwaters must be a terrible spectacle. To see one's children drown, one's life and dreams washed away in an instant, must be a devastating experience. But if one were to discover that the flood was not a whimsical effect of chance natural events, not unplanned and purposeless, but rather the malicious and willful act of a conscious being, one might add rage to the feelings of devastation. I suppose one could argue that it is God's world; he created it, so he can destroy it if he feels like it. But such an attitude seems inappropriate for an All-Good, Loving God.

the "finding" of the ark

Yet, as preposterous as this story seems, there are people in the twentieth century who claim they have found Noah's ark. They call themselves "arkeologists." Yes, they say that when the flood receded, Noah and his zoo were perched upon the top of Mt. Ararat in Turkey. Presumably, at that time, all the animals dispersed to the far recesses of the earth. How the animals got to the different continents, we are not told. Perhaps they floated there on debris. More problematic is how so many species survived when they had been reduced to just one pair or seven pairs of creatures. Also, you would think that the successful species that had the furthest to travel, would have left a trail of offspring along the way. What evidence is there that all species originated in Turkey? That's what the record should look like if the ark landed on Mt. Ararat. Still, none of this deters the true believer from maintaining that the story of Noah's ark is the God's truth. Nor does it deter those who think the ark has been found. For example, in 1977 a pseudo-documentary called "In Search of Noah's ark" was played on numerous television stations. CBS showed a special in 1993 entitled "The Incredible Discovery of Noah's Ark." The first is a work of fiction claiming to be a documentary. The second was masterminded by George Jammal, who has admitted that the story was a hoax. Jammal said he wanted to expose religious frauds. His hoax was seen by about 20 million people, most of whom probably still do not know that Jammal did not want them to take it seriously.

During his show, Jammal produced what he called "sacred wood" from the ark, which he later admitted was wood taken from railroad tracks in Long Beach, California, which he had hardened by cooking in an oven. He also prepared other fake wood by frying a piece of California pine on his kitchen stove in a mix of wine, iodine, sweet-and-sour and teriyaki sauces. He also admitted that he had never been to Turkey. The program was produced by Sun International Pictures, based in Salt Lake City, and responsible for several pseudo-documentaries on Nostradamus, the Bermuda Triangle, the Shroud of Turin, and UFOs.

the evidence for a universal flood

Stories of floods are not unique to the ancient Jews.* What geological or archaeological evidence is there of such a universal destruction of all human societies, all plants and all animals except for the ones on Noah's boat (or Ziusudra's [Sumeria], or Utnapishtim's [Babylon])? There should be a layer of sediment dating from the same time which contains all the bones of these poor creatures. There should be evidence that all human societies were wiped out simultaneously. No such evidence exists of a universal flood. Evidence of a great flood, perhaps caused by melting glaciers bursting through the Bosphorus strait some 7,000 years ago, has been discovered off the coast of Turkey by Robert Ballard (who found the remains of the Titanic) and [some \(like Ryan and Pitman\)](#) have claimed this is evidence of Noah's flood, but this is pure and inane speculation. The Biblical flood is due to rain, not a bursting dam. As archeological anthropologist John Alden notes

...the story in the Bible is clear -- it rained for weeks before Noah's flood, and after it stopped raining the floodwaters receded. The Black Sea flood wasn't caused by rain, and after the water rose it never went away. And neither [the Sumerian nor the Biblical] story mentions the most dramatic consequence of the Black Sea flood, which turned fresh water into salt. Noah's flood, in short, doesn't sound anything like the inundation of the Black Sea.

However, for the sake of argument, let's agree that there was a universal flood, but that somehow the evidence got twisted around so that geologically and archaeologically it doesn't appear that the flood occurred. There are still a few questions we should ask before accepting this theory. First, how big was this boat? The answer: *really, really big!* Would it float? Noah might have been given divine guidance here, so maybe this boat could float. Remember that this is all done before the discovery of metallurgy ([or was it?](#)), so the boat is made of wood and other natural materials. How many forests would it take to provide the lumber for such a boat? How many people working how many years would be required? Building a pyramid would be peanuts compared to building the ark. But remember, people lived a lot longer in those days. Noah was 600 years old when he built his giant boat in the desert.

But let's say that, however implausible, such a boat could have been built using the technology of wooden-boat building known to the earliest peoples. After all, Noah allegedly had God's help in building his boat. There is still the problem of gathering the animals together from the various parts of the world that, as far as we know, Noah had no idea even existed. How did he get to the remote regions of the earth to collect exotic butterflies and Komodo dragons? How did he get all those species of dinosaurs to follow him home? (Fundamentalists believe dinosaurs and humans lived at the same time.) By the time he collected all his species, in twos and sevens, his boat would probably have rotted in the desert sun.

But let's grant that Noah was able to collect all the birds and mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, and a couple of million insects that he is said to have gathered together on his boat. There is still the problem of keeping the animals from eating one another. Or, are we to believe that the lion was lying down with the lamb on the ark? Did the carnivores become vegetarians for the duration of the flood? How did he keep the birds from eating the insects? Perhaps the ark was stocked with foods for all the animals. After all, if Noah could engineer the building of a boat which could hold all those animals, it would have been a small feat to add room to store enough food to last for more than six months. Of course, Noah would have to store enough food for himself and his family, too. But these would have been minor details to such a man with such a plan guided by God.

Still, it seems difficult to imagine how such a small crew could feed all these animals in a single day. There is just Noah, his wife, their three sons and three daughters-in-law. The "daily" rounds would take years, it

seems. Delicacy forbids me from mentioning the problems of the "clean-up" detail, but I would have to say that if the noise of all those animals didn't drive Noah insane (not to mention the insect bites), the smell should have killed him. At least they didn't have to worry about water to drink. God provided water in abundance.

Finally, belief in the universal flood or even belief in the building of the ark are not nearly as strange as the belief that this event of mass destruction was the direct work of the Creator to show anger at people who would dare to enjoy this life and have a good time rather than spend all their free time worshipping the Almighty.



Resources

The Bible

Two by Two by Barbara Ried <http://www.barbarareid.ca/books/twobyttwo.htm>

Website Georges Vanier School http://www.scs.sk.ca/van/Website%202006-2007/clay%20animals%20grade%204-5-6/Noah%27s_Ark.html

Procedure

1. Read the Story of Noah's Ark from the Bible
2. Talk about the story with the children. Is Noah's Ark physically possible. What lesson is there in the story etc. You will get many ideas on discussion topics from the background information above. Some of the information above is very mathematical and some children will enjoy calculating whether the ark is really possible.
3. Introduce the art of Charlotte Poulsen, show link to her work and to the Georges Vanier website. Discuss the scale of her work and the interpretation of an animals form. Stretching of limbs and simplification of form.
4. Have the children look through calendar pictures or books on animals to select an animal that they would like to make out of clay. Discuss how the female animal is sometimes different than the male in size and characteristics (ex. Horns)

5. The instructions for creating the animals follows and most of the instructions will be pictures with a brief explanation. A grade six student at my school posed for all the photos. **SAFETY:** Be sure and make the children aware that clay dust is hazardous to the lungs and must be cleaned up with a wet sponge. Never sweep up clay bits from the floor always mop. The same with tabletops sponge rather than dust off with a dry rag. The best way to keep down on clay dust is to work on cardboard pieces. The cardboard pieces are also great to roll clay on and have it come off, as well the cardboard will absorb the water from the clay when the projects are drying. Clean up is much easier with cardboard pieces, a lot less mopping and sponging.
6. Cut clay into cubes about the size of a peach.



7. Each student will need two pieces.
8. Make each cube into a pinch pot. Pinch pots are just what they sound like. Pots made by pinching the clay. Be sure they keep the edges of the pot about 1 cm thick. Thinner than this will cause breakage. Make each pot the same size, as this will comprise the body of the animal. The bodies are made hollow because large pieces of clay in the kiln will blow up when fired. The trapped air, which expands when heated, has nowhere to go so causes breakage. Nothing larger than a golf ball should be fired if it is not hollow.



9. Stuff both halves with tissue paper. This will burn off later in the kiln. I don't recommend using newspaper as it is too stiff and causes breakage through the body of the animal.



10. Score the edges of the pots, scoring makes them stick together better.

11. Put spooze (the great clay glue) on both edges.



12. Pinch together. Using fingers smooth the line between both sides. Using the paddle (thin wood thicker than a ruler) paddle the clay until it is smooth.

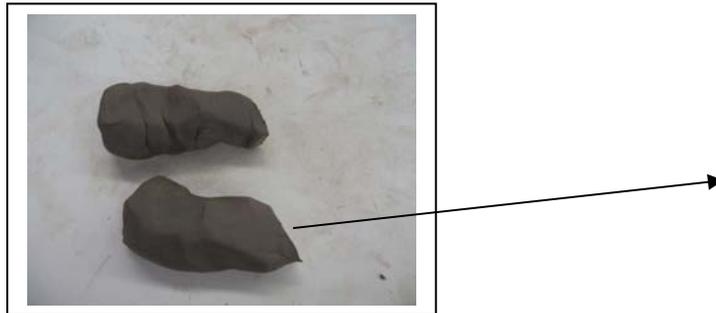


13. Shape it to a body shape.

14. Using the same chunk of wood roll legs from another piece of clay. The wood will help to keep the clay even and avoid any breakage.



15. Cut where the leg will be attached to the body on a 45-degree angle. The legs will be attached nearer to the outside of the body not directly underneath.



16. Score where the leg will be attached score the leg use spooze and attach.



17. Press the leg firmly in place a smooth out any seams.



18. Using small bit of clay form the area around the leg to look like the animals, thigh etc.

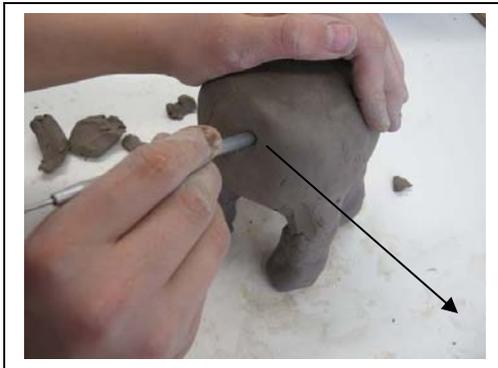


19. Once the legs are attached turn the animal over and poke a hole in the bottom about the size of a pencil. Do this near a leg so it is not visible when the animal is standing.



20. To make a head for an animal where the head is small just use a small bit of clay nothing larger than a golf ball. For a larger head make a pinch pot (1) and attach it to the body of the animal after **MAKING A HOLE IN IT WHERE THE INSIDE OF THE HEAD AND THE INSIDE OF THE BODY WOULD MEET. THERE MUST BE AN AIR HOLE CONNECTING BODY AND HEAD OR THE**

HEAD WILL BLOW UP IN THE KILN. Attach a head in the same manner as you built the body but only use ONE pinch pot not two. Be sure the pinch pot is securely attached with spooze and has been scored as well.



21. If the child needs large ears for an elephant etc. It is best to roll the clay between two wooden rulers or boards. This makes the clay even and therefore it dries more evenly with less cracking.



Two slabs stacked

22. The students add detail to their animals using various tools. A great tool for fur is an old window screen. Push clay through it from the back and you will get amazing fur. See other ideas in images below. If the animal has really smooth fur or skin the students can achieve this by burnishing the clay before it is fired. This can be done by using the back of a metal spoon and rubbing in circles. The clay will become very smooth and shiny.



23. Finish all details and dry. These projects should dry for a full week before firing because it is difficult to know how thick they are and whether they are dry on the inside.
24. After they are fired the students can glaze them or paint them with acrylic paint. A third option is to smoke fire them. Smoke firing leaves a smoke residue on the project and is unpredictable in where it may go but very beautiful when complete.
25. **Smoke firing** -wrap the projects tightly in newspaper taping it in place. Place the projects in the bottom of a steel garbage can. Try and place the projects keeping in mind that they will shift when the paper disappears and you don't want the trunks, tails or ears to fall off of any animal. Wait until the projects have completely stopped smoking before removing them. It is best if the projects stay in open air for a while to get rid of the smoke smell. The projects can then be varnished with a matte or gloss varnish.



Evaluation

The students in my classes often self evaluate with the criteria for evaluation decided before the project begins. I also give each student a mark on each days work based on task behavior and effort. The students sometimes give themselves this mark as well. I mark a project like this continually because it is a large and difficult project that extends over many weeks. I don't want a child to feel that only the final result is important I want them to know that process is important as well. Even if a child had their project explode in the kiln they could still get a good mark based on the in class work and effort.

The students in the class were also involved in creating a webpage of the animals. It can be viewed at http://www.scs.sk.ca/van/Website%202006-2007/clay%20animals%20grade%204-5-6/Noah%27s_Ark.html

