



SCULPTURE: Trunnion II

ARTIST: Dale Graham

MEDIA: Aluminum

(You will need images of Claus Oldenburg sculptures for this lesson)

Kentucky-based sculptor Dale Graham uses his background in mathematics and engineering to create sculptures that make us aware of the principles governing the creation of structures and bridges. This aluminum sculpture features a trunnion, a cylindrical pin on a cannon that forms the axis on which it pivots, a device also used in bridge design. Graham chose to use lightweight aluminum instead of heavy steel so that his sculpture could be more easily transported from place to place. Yet, even though it's made of a lighter material, Trunnion II's large form still impacts the viewer.

Lesson: Line, Shape, and Space.

Grades: 6-8, High School

Website: <http://sculpturepark.org/>

Core Arts Standards:

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding: Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be developed.

Artists and designers shape artistic investigations, following or breaking with traditions in pursuit of creative art-making goals.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding: Artists and designers experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media and art-making approaches.

People create and interact with objects, places and design that define, shape, enhance and empower their lives.

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed through engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world and **constructed environments**.

Visual imagery influences understanding of and responses to the world.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: People gain insights into meanings of artworks by engaging in the process of art criticism.

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Enduring Understanding: Through art, people make meaning by investigating and developing awareness of perceptions, knowledge and experiences.

Objectives:

1. To engage students in active discussions of lines, shapes, and space found in

Graham's and Oldenburg's pieces.

2. To discuss the use of environment in the placement of a sculpture.
3. To motivate students to incorporate non-traditional everyday objects into their consideration for oversized sculptures, similar to the art of Claus Oldenburg.

Materials:

12" x 18" pieces of white construction paper-one per student.

Pencils

Erasers

Colored pencils or markers

Introduction:

Present the slide of **Trunnion II**. Ask students the following:

1. A trunnion is a piece of equipment used in bridge construction that moves when in use, similar to a cog in a wheel. What do you think was the artist motivation in choosing this piece and not another piece of equipment?
2. Lets look at some of Claus Oldenburg's pieces. Many of his pieces have a sense of humor. Which one speaks to you? Why? (Use your discretion to share images of Oldenburg's work you feel relate and can generate conversation.)
3. You have 30 seconds to leave your seat and look around the room for one object that if enlarged, would have a similar quality to Oldenburg's and Graham's pieces.
4. What did you choose? Why did you choose it? As an artist, what was your intended message to the viewer? Are you making a political comment, social, economic?

Activity:

Explain to students that when artists like Graham and Oldenburg choose an object to enlarge, that's only *half* the project. The other half is displaying it in a place that complements the sculpture.

Distribute a piece of paper to each student. Explain to them they are to draw a picture of an everyday object of their choice as an oversized sculpture. It cannot be larger than any of the Oldenburg sculptures, but can be in any environment of their choice. Tell them to keep in mind that the environment plays a roll in people's perception of the meaning or purpose of their sculpture. They should carefully consider where they place their sculpture and in what position. Ask them if any of their sculpture hidden or is it all visible? Tell them to put people in their drawings so we have an understanding of the scale of their sculptures.

Five minutes before the end of class, ask students to stop working. They should stand up, leave their art on their desk, and walk around the classroom looking at the "gallery" of their class mates artwork. As they walk around, ask them if they're getting any ideas of how they might do this lesson differently at home. (Asking this not only encourages them to think beyond the classroom as to how they will share their experience at home with others when they're showing off their art, but encourages and challenges them to pursue art outside the classroom and run with the concept of the project. It also keeps them on-task and aware that the teacher is engaging them in instruction, thereby deterring unnecessary socializing.)