

Who is Cyrus Dallin?

Cyrus Edwin Dallin (1861-1944) Springville, Utah

Paul Revere, 1899

Sculpture-bronze cast, 37-1/2"x 36"

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

(History, Aesthetics, Criticism)

Have you heard of the statement that great portraiture and immortality go hand in hand? How can an artist or author contribute to the fame of individual people? How can a really great artist help you to see the subject's contributions? Can art change the way history is perceived? Is a painting the only way of making a portrait?

What are the three methods of sculpture (additive, subtractive, and constructive)? Which is a bronze? Does this sculpture capture the frozen moment of the subject? How do the positive and negative shapes of the silhouette work?

Does this sculpture fit a classical style or another style? (Classical= proportion; Romanticism=harmony; Idealism=dramatic expression; Impressionism=light and form; Expressionism=state of consciousness.)

How did the artist fashion the likeness of the subject? How is a bronze cast? What feelings does the sculpture give you?

ACTIVITIES

1. Visual Arts-expressing

Objective: The students will learn how hard it is for an artist to portray a subject, by making a small sculpture.

Before you start this activity you may want to research the process of additive sculpture.

Discuss with the students the additive method of sculpture--using clay to build up a form. Talk to them about the need for bases and armatures. Ask the students how they might deal with the problems of support for parts of the sculpture that project, for example, an extended arm.

What kind of difficulties might be encountered when making very small sculptures, or very large sculptures? How does an artist create an emotion or feeling? What is the difference between portraying emotion and simply imitating nature?

Have the students choose a small animal as their subject to sculpt. After they have chosen their subject they need to decide what emotion the animal will portray. The students should make sketchers of the subject from all four sides to use as a guide. Then, using clay or salt dough, the students will make an additive sculpture of their chosen subject. You may have the students display their finished sculptures and discuss the difficulties they encountered trying to portray an emotion, especially in an animal.

2. Music

Objective: The students will listen to and talk about music in a manner that demonstrates their understanding that people, animals, and objects can be portrayed through sound.

Many pieces of music are written as descriptions portraying someone or something. For example, "Peter and the Wolf: "The Grand Canyon Suite," and "The Four Seasons." Play "Peter and the Wolf" for the class; have the students listen to the different characters as portrayed by the different instruments. Discuss how well the sounds portray the characters, in contrast to how well the sculpture portrays Paul Revere.

Have the students research the music of Paul Revere's day. (Drum and fife, fiddle music.) Play a sample of drum and fife or fiddle music for the students. Ask the students if this music fits the way Paul Revere is portrayed in the sculpture. Then have the students write a short response.

3. Language Arts-writing

Objective: The students will each write a poem that describes a favorite hero.

Discuss narrative poetry with the class, being sure to include a definition of narrative poetry--the poem tells a story.

Introduce Longfellow's poem "Paul Revere's Ride." Have the students take turns reading the poem aloud to the class. Ask the students to think about, or to discuss, how they might write a narrative poem.

Have each of the students choose a contemporary hero to write a narrative poem about. Some examples of heroes/heroines are, General Swartzkoff, Colin Powell, Margaret Thatcher, Gorbachev, Sandra Day O'Connor, Steven Spielberg, Michael Jordan, Mother Teresa, etc. Have the students share their completed poems with the class.

4. Social Studies

Objective: The students will understand that biographies are written portraits of people and describe them much the way a sculpture does.

Have the students do some research about the people involved in the Revolutionary War. They should read some biographical information about one or more important persons of the time to help them understand what life was like during Paul Revere's day. Also, have the students read about Paul Revere--his occupation, background, likes and dislikes, etc.

Then each student will write a short report about his or her findings.

5. Creative Theater (Social Studies/Language Arts)

(Based on the assumption the American Revolution is being studied and students already have some background as to why the war was fought.)

Objectives:

1. Students will create frozen pictures of the sequence events leading up to and detailed in "Paul Revere's Ride" to demonstrate their understanding of what happened.
2. Students will list the sequence of events from the narrative poem "Paul Revere's Ride."
3. Students will evaluate the sculptor's choice in portraying this event in history (Paul Revere's Ride).

Materials Needed:

Slide of sculpture: Paul Revere by Dallin.

Copy of poem by Henry W. Longfellow "Paul Revere's Ride."

History of how the statue was created and finally erected.

Preparation:

1. Read the poem by Henry W. Longfellow.
2. Ask the children to listen for the sequence of events so you can list them on the board together when you finish reading the poem.
3. List the sequence of events in the poem on the board.

Background: The events of the story take place on the night of April 18, 1775, when seven hundred British troops marched out of occupied Boston to destroy colonial arms caches reportedly hidden in Concord. The British had hoped to move in secret, but American spies were alert, and soon silversmith Paul Revere was galloping ahead of the redcoats to warn John Hancock and Samuel Adams, who were staying at Lexington. That mission accomplished, Revere dashed down the road to Concord to spread the alarm further. --From "The Book of Virtues" by William J. Bennett, pages 708-712.

Sequence of Events:

- a. Paul Revere and his friend agree upon a signal.
- b. Paul Revere rows to the Charlestown side of the river.
- c. His friend spies on the British to find out what they are going to do.
- d. He hears the British troops marching to their boats.
- e. He climbs up the tower of the Old North Church.
- f. He waits to make sure he sees the British boats are coming.
- g. Paul Revere waits with his horse on the other side of the river watching for the signal in the church tower.
- h. The signal is given--two lights.
- i. Paul Revere gets on his horse and rides to Medford and warns people.
- j. He gallops into Lexington at one o'clock in the morning and tells people the British are coming.
- k. He goes to Concord to warn people and spread the alarm.
- l. The Americans have a battle with the British and win.

4. Discuss why Paul Revere's Ride is so important. Why would people want to remember this event in history?

Activity:

1. Divide the class into small groups of 3 to 5. Ask each group to decide on one of the events from the poem you have listed and create a frozen picture.
2. Give the groups 5-7 minutes to decide and practice.
3. Ask each group to share the frozen picture with the rest of the class.
4. Evaluate each picture after it is shared by commenting on what was done well and what might have been done to make it better. No criticizing or judging.
5. After all the groups have had a chance to share their frozen picture, ask:
If you were a sculptor, what part of the poem would you choose to depict in sculpture so it would help people remember how important this event in history is?
6. Show the sculpture of "Paul Revere's Ride" and explain this is the moment Cyrus Dallin, the sculptor chose to show. It is like a frozen picture.
7. How does this sculpture make you feel? When I say "Begin" (or some other agreed upon signal or sound) show me how the sculpture makes you feel. When I say "Freeze" (or some other agreed upon signal or sound), stop.
8. Comment on the kinds of feelings you saw being enacted. Ask: What did the sculptor do that helps give us these feelings? Discuss and/or point out specific lines and shapes.
9. Remember the poem we read and the frozen pictures we created? Why do you think the sculptor chose to show this moment out of all the other choices he had?

Extensions:

Have the children choose another important event in history to portray, either in a drawing, a story, or a script for a puppet show or an in-class drama presentation. As the class brainstorms and you list some possibilities, ask the students: If you could only choose a part of the story of this event, what detail of that event would you choose to share in your drawing, story, or script? How could you share that detail of the historic event so that others would want to look at or listen to your idea?

Idea for another session or a continuation of this activity:

Tell the story of how Dallin came to create the statue and the problems he faced in getting it erected. Create a role play dramatizing Cyrus Dallin's persistence in getting his statue of Paul Revere erected in Boston. Would you keep trying for 50 years to see that the statue was finished and put in place to honor Paul Revere and this event in history? Use the information from the book "Cyrus E. Dallin" by Rell G. Francis.

Paul Revere's Ride

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town tonight,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light--
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers.
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,

To the belfry chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the somber rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade--
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall.
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay--
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and somber and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark

Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting house windows, bland and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled--
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farmyard wall,
Chasing the redcoats down the lane,

Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.
So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm--
A cry of defiance, and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoofbeats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.