MACKENZIE ART GALLERY
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TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

VICTOR CICANSKY: *THE GARDENER'S UNIVERSE*

8 JUNE TO 23 OCTOBER 2019

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

VICTOR CICANSKY: *THE GARDENER'S UNIVERSE*

Victor Cicansky, *Wreck Beach Coffee Table*, 2003, bronze, patina, acrylic paint, glass.
Collection of Mea Cicansky. Photo: Don Hall.

INTRODUCTION

VICTOR CICANSKY: *THE GARDENER'S UNIVERSE*

The MacKenzie Art Gallery is pleased to present the first comprehensive retrospective of the influential Saskatchewan ceramic and bronze sculptor Victor Cicansky. As one of the main instigators of the Regina Clay movement in the 1970s, he is known nationally for a stance that asserts history and locality as a vital source for creative expression. But Cicansky has never been solely a Canadian Prairie regionalist. His work speaks to a range of contemporary environmental concerns and points to the fact that nature—and by extension culture—is at its healthiest when it resists monoculture and celebrates nature's variegated forms. Humorous and full of metaphoric potential, his work engages the viewers' creative imagination in order to question and position themselves in the world.

Curated by Timothy Long (Head Curator, MacKenzie Art Gallery) and Julia Krueger (craft writer and curator), this will be the first retrospective exhibition to include both Cicansky's ceramic and bronze production. Drawing on public and private collections from across Canada, the exhibition will present five decades of work ranging from early Funk experiments, to ceramic Mason jar pantries and Bonsai bronze trees, to ceramic wall murals and park-size bronze tables and benches. The exhibition will be accompanied by a substantial monograph and documentary film, leaving a lasting legacy and contribution to Canadian art and craft history.

Victor Cicansky, *Cabbage with Hailstones,* 1982, ceramic. From the University of Lethbridge art collection; purchase, 1982. Photo: Don Hall.

TOUR OUTCOMES AND BIOGRAPHY

VICTOR CICANSKY: *THE GARDENER'S UNIVERSE*

TOUR OUTCOMES

Students will learn about a prominent Saskatchewan artist's contributions to both localized and larger scale art historical movements.

Students will explore the ties between Victor Cicansky's artwork and the aesthetics of folk art.

BIOGRAPHY OF VICTOR CICANSKY

Victor Cicansky (Czekanski) grew up in a large family headed by Romanian parents in an area of Regina known as the "Garlic Flats." Here Cicansky witnessed firsthand the interdependence of gardener and garden and the constant invention of his blacksmith father. After studies with noted Regina ceramist, Jack Sures, he pursued graduate studies at the University of California, Davis where he expanded his artistic vocabulary under iconoclastic Funk ceramist, Robert Arneson. In 1970, he returned to the University of Regina where he taught Art Education and worked alongside other revolutionary Regina-based ceramists such as Joe Fafard, David Gilhooly, Ann James and Marilyn Levine, who together pushed against the stereotypical understanding of ceramics as pottery. Cicansky took up this cause in a series of memorable ceramic sculptures inspired by his childhood experiences of gardens and "working class" people, including major ceramic murals for the Sturdy-Stone Building in Saskatoon. Adding bronze to his repertoire in the 1980s, Cicansky has continued to unearth the multiple histories that connect us to place and to nurture an empathetic relationship with the natural world. Cicansky's work has been recognized with numerous honours and awards including the Order of Canada, Saskatchewan Order of Merit, and Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award.

RESOURCES

VICTOR CICANSKY: *THE GARDENER'S UNIVERSE*

OTHER RESOURCES

Victor Cicansky's website http://www.cicansky.ca/index.htm

ArtSask resource on Victor Cicansky
http://www.artsask.ca/en/artists/victorcicansky

Info on the exhibition *Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making*, which highlights artists from the Regina Clay Movement.
http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/virtual-exhibits/exhibit/regina-clay-worlds-in-the-making/

Books available at the Regina Public Library

The Garden of Art: Vic Cicansky, Sculptor by Don Kerr. Note that there is some mild sexual content before sharing book with classroom.

Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making, a catalogue published by the MacKenzie Art Gallery with writing by Sandra Alfoldy and Timothy Long.

NOTE

This exhibition contains some instances of nudity which are presented in an art historical context. These images are grouped together in one area of the exhibition and can be avoided in your tour upon request. They may also be avoided by group facilitators without the request, depending on the age of the group.

Mixed Farming, 1973, Victor Cicansky, ceramic, wire, plastic flowers on plywood base, from MacKenzie Art Gallery Collection.

This is the fountain you've been looking for all your life complete with mosquito bites, 1974, Victor Cicansky, ceramic, from the Canada Council Art Bank collection.

PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

PRODUCE STILL LIFE *(ALL AGES)*

ACTIVITY

Students will take the time to closely observe details of fruits and vegetables and depict them in observational sketches.

MATERIALS

Produce for still life setups

Examples of Victor Cicansky's work (could use examples from his website)

Sketchbooks or paper

Drawing materials- pencils and erasers, pencil crayons

INSTRUCTIONS

1. When Victor Cicansky sculpts, he often observes real objects closely, bringing actual fruits and vegetables into his studio and looking at their details. Looking at one of his clay or bronze sculptures as a class, ask your students to describe what details he has included. If needed, you can ask them what textures they see, what variations in colour exist, how he has made the shape more lifelike, and so forth.
2. Assemble produce at still life stations, where students can sit and draw. Make sure stations are not too crowded, so that the students can have a good, close look at the produce in front of them. You may even want to give students a moment to hold and pass around the produce at their station before setting the produce items in the middle to be drawn.
3. Ask them to make a sketch, or multiple sketches of the produce still life, focusing on looking very closely and depicting the details they see. Encourage them to look close for variations and imperfections in the produce. As a more advanced option, you could have students create up to five sketches of the same still life scene: one sketch that just shows the outlines and shapes of the produce, one sketch that uses pencil to depict the form of the produce through shadows and highlights, one that uses pencil lines to depict texture on the produce, one with blended and layered pencil crayon showing the colour variations of the produce, and a final sketch that puts all these elements together.

PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

PRODUCE STILL LIFE *(ALL AGES)*

EXTENSIONS

This lesson could be expanded to include discussions about perspective by having students observe the same still life from different angles. They could also continue practicing their observational skills with progressively more difficult still life setups. Produce tends to have simple geometric forms that will be approachable for most students, but they could progress to other objects in the classroom or bring objects that are important to them from home.

OBJECTIVES

Students will learn about the observational process of artists like Victor Cicansky, which will also prepare them to observe his artwork in the Mackenzie Art Gallery.

POST-TOUR ACTIVITY

FINISHING THE SURFACES OF YOUR AIR-DRY CLAY

ACTIVITY

Students will add colour and seal their clay artworks, helping to preserve them and adding more detail.

Note: Air-dry clay projects are not food safe; even if you use one of the sealing methods below, you can not eat or drink out of air-dry clay artworks.

MATERIALS

Finished and completely dried clay artworks made during gallery visit (will take several days to a week to completely dry)

Acrylic paints

Paintbrushes

Images of produce as examples

OPTIONAL MATERIALS

White glue diluted with water , or classroom-safe sealer such as Mod Podge, or clear acrylic in gloss or matte

Containers for glue

Brushes for glue

POST-TOUR ACTIVITY

FINISHING THE SURFACES OF YOUR AIR-DRY CLAY

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Be sure that all works are completely dry before painting and sealing them, or trapped water can cause issues with the artwork over time. Clay will feel cold to the touch if there is any remaining water in it. It will be room-temperature if it is dry. It is highly recommended that you let the works dry for several days to a week, and that the tail end of that drying time includes setting artworks in some direct sunlight or near a heat source.
2. Paint the surfaces of the artworks with acrylic paints. Encourage students to look at images of the type of produce they sculpted to think about surface details and colour variations. Ideally, cover the entire surface of the object, waiting for the tops to dry so that you can cover the bottom- this will prevent the artworks from breaking or creating dust. Acrylic paints will act as a seal on their own if the entire surface is covered.
3. Optionally, students may wish to add another sealant layer to create a more ceramic-like finish. This could be white glue diluted with water until it is a brush-able consistency, a sealant such as Mod Podge (which comes in many different variations such as glossy, satin, or matte), or clear acrylic paint (these clear acrylics are sometimes advertised as “pouring mediums” for poured paint techniques but can also be used as a sealant). Brush these in a thin layer over the dried acrylic paint. Multiple layers could be added if desired, such as if you are using glossy mod podge and want to create a shiny surface. Be sure to completely dry artworks between layers.

POST-TOUR ACTIVITY

FINISHING THE SURFACES OF YOUR AIR-DRY CLAY

ADAPTATIONS

More advanced students may want to use more layering techniques on their artworks. For example, if adding a sealant layer over the acrylic painting, students could tint their sealants by mixing in liquid watercolours. Or older students may even try drawing on the top surfaces with Sharpies and letting them dry very well (the coloured ones usually have some transparency to them which will allow painting underneath to show through). This can add more depth, similar to how the layering of glassy glazes on low-fire ceramics creates depth of colour.

The teacher may also choose to spray an acrylic sealant such as Krylon over the acrylic painted objects for the children instead of having them add a clear sealant layer. This should not be done by children- these sprays are usually considered toxic, and must be used outdoors. Follow the directions on the sealant you purchase closely.

EXTENSIONS

Continue to work with clay or sculptural mediums in your classroom! A detailed guide to working with low fire or air-dry clays in your classroom begins on page 10.

OBJECTIVES

Students will experience finishing the surface of a ceramic artwork.

HOW TO WORK WITH CLAY IN THE CLASSROOM

SAFETY AND CARING FOR YOUR SPACE WHILE USING CLAY

While using clay in the classroom can be fun and safe, there are a few key tips to make it so.

- Clay creates dust. The high amount of silica in this dust can be harmful to the lungs if you are exposed to it in large quantities or for a long time. For most classrooms following good cleaning procedures, and with proper ventilation in the school, this will not be a problem, but always inform parents when working with clay to ensure you don't have any students for whom this may be a health problem (ex.- students with asthma or lung conditions). In the event that parents are concerned about exposure to clay dust, it may be worthwhile to work with a dust-free modelling medium instead, such as an air-dry clay specifically labelled low-dust or dust free, an oven-baked polymer clay such as Sculpey or Fimo, or an oil-based modelling clay (which will not create permanent projects but will still allow students to experience sculpting techniques).
- Always clean up all tools and surfaces with water! Do not scrape dry clay off of items or bang on surfaces encrusted with clay. Mop floors (rather than sweeping) after working with clay. Have kids wear aprons or "paint shirts" to minimize getting clay dust on the clothes they will be wearing the rest of the day. These actions will help keep dust down!
- Check labels for safety info. While most commercial glazes, clays, and air-dry clays today are considered non-toxic and classroom safe, it is always wise to check labels! AP-Non-toxic is a good standard for classrooms. It is not recommended that you use very old glazes that you find lying around the art room, as they may contain lead or other unsafe materials. Check the section "If you have a kiln in the classroom" for more info on fired glazes.
- Clay clogs drains. Do not wash clay down the drain in your classroom. Put something in the sink to block it off, so students will know not to use it. Instead, use a two-basin or bucket system to wash items and hands. Make a "dirty wash" bucket where most of the clay is washed off all

HOW TO WORK WITH CLAY IN THE CLASSROOM

tools and hands first, and a "clean wash" bucket to rinse any traces off. There are two main ways to deal with your wash bins when your lesson is complete- let the clay settle to the bottom overnight, then scoop off the clean water and pour it down the drain. The sludge at the bottom can be left for the water to evaporate off, then it can be thrown out. Or, if only clay (no glazes) has been washed in buckets, they can be dumped outside, or even used to water plants on the school grounds- clay is a natural part of our soil.

- Clay is drying. Letting your students use an unscented hand lotion after working with clay will help prevent irritation. Some students I have worked with even use lotion before as well, to create a bit of a barrier between their hands and the clay. You may need to check for allergies before providing lotion to the classroom.
- Kilns require extra safety measures. If using a kiln makes you uncomfortable, consider some air-dry options and no-fire finishes. However, if you are following your kiln's instructions, they can be safe and easy to fire. See the section below "If you have a kiln in the classroom and plan on firing your projects" for more info on safely using kilns.

TECHNIQUE BASICS

These are some tips that apply to all clay projects, whether fired or not.

- Work on a surface that clay doesn't stick to. The most common choice is a board or table that has been covered with canvas or cotton material, stretched over the surface and stapled into place. Newspaper can work as well, but it will be trickier to wedge clay on for fired works (see section "If you have a kiln in the classroom" for more info on wedging.) Clay also does not stick to raw, unfinished wood (which is why wooden tools can be nice to work with too).
- Prepare some slip beforehand. Slip is clay mixed with water to a consistency ranging from frosting-like to buttermilk-like. Usually for hand building, a more frosting-like slip is best. It is used for connecting clay

HOW TO WORK WITH CLAY IN THE CLASSROOM

pieces when sculpting, kind of like a glue. While slip can be made by adding water to dried out clay bits, you will still need to make some for your students when you first start your projects before there are any leftover dry clay bits to use. If you mix some clay and water in small containers the night before you need it, it will soak up a lot of the water overnight and become easier to mix into a smooth paste.

- Get creative with tools! In my studio, I use many different store-bought wooden, metal, and plastic sculpting tools. Yet some of the most coveted studio tools in various studios I have worked in have been found objects- a dried-out pen that carves clay nicely, an old fashioned cheese slicing wire that cuts beautiful flat surfaces, a comb that makes perfect scratches for slipping and scoring, or just a good o'l wooden spoon for batting clay into shape. You can make beautiful projects with as few tools as a couple of toothpicks and popsicle sticks. Or look at the kitchen gadgets in second hand stores for some fun inspiration. A must will be something that makes score marks/scratches for helping assemble things, and something that can pop air bubbles in the clay- a toothpick can usually suffice for both in a pinch. A rolling pin is usually a welcome tool too. Cookie cutters can be a good starting place, though I encourage students to alter and sculpt the shapes they cut out with them for a more challenging experience.
- Slip and score anything that is being joined together. It is tempting just to squish two pieces of clay together and hope they stay stuck, but odds are they will break apart after drying or firing. When connecting two pieces of clay, it is usually best to slip and score. First, scratch up both clay surfaces where they are to be connected using a pin tool, toothpick, stiff toothbrush, or comb. I sometimes tell students to imagine they are creating many, many "hashtags" in one spot on their clay. Apply some slip to both scored surfaces. Press the scored surfaces together, squishing them a bit. Smooth off any excess slip, and if desired smooth together the seam where the two items meet with a wooden tool or by hand.
- Keep unused clay in air-tight bags or containers. This will keep it workable longer. If students want projects to stay

HOW TO WORK WITH CLAY IN THE CLASSROOM

workable for longer spans of time, they can cover those in plastic too. Unless you are using an oil-based or polymer clay (like Sculpey or Fimo), you can also moisten it again if you need to, and work moisture in by wedging.

- The three basic hand building techniques: Coil Building, Slab Building, and Pinch Pots. These are the essentials to working with clay - most hand building techniques are modifications or combinations of these.
- Pinch pots — Start with a ball of clay and press your thumb into the centre of it. Slowly, start pinching the clay around in a circle with your thumb on the inside, and your fingers on the outside. The clay will start to widen into a little bowl or pot. Encourage students to work slowly. Several passes of pinching- trying to make the clay stretch too much, too fast, will likely just make it crack (although it can always be smoothed back together). You can purposely pinch your clay into any three-dimensional shape you can imagine and can smooth or texture the outside however you see fit. This is a good way to make hollow forms for fired projects (see the section "If you have a kiln in the classroom and plan on firing your projects" for more info on why fired projects may need to be hollow).
- Slab Building — Slabs are thin, smooth pieces of clay. You can roll them out with a rolling pin, or a slab roller if you are lucky enough to have one in the classroom. Slabs can be cut into shapes and assembled by slipping and scoring, to create all kinds of shapes and forms! They can be carefully draped and smoothed over objects and removed before they start to shrink too much as they dry (hump molding) or rested inside of other forms like bowls or plates to take on their shapes (slump molding). You can roll textures onto slabs with doilies, lace, leaves, or commercial texture molds. Slabs will become stiffer as they dry, and some people prefer to work with them at a "leather hard" stage, where they will still be a little pliable, but will hold shapes on their own and will slip and score together easily. Large slabs tend to have a bit of "memory," if they are bent in one direction, they will seem to always want to go in that direction as they are worked with and as they dry, so keep that in mind when handling them!

HOW TO WORK WITH CLAY IN THE CLASSROOM

- Coil Building — Coil building can start with a clay slab for a base or can be done entirely with coils. It usually works best with wet clay. Roll long thin tubes of clay, similar to how young children will often make clay "snakes". Start your coil-build form by placing your coil close to the edges of your clay slab, or by winding it into a tight spiral for a base. The walls of your form will be built up by laying the coil in layers on top of itself. Smooth the coils together very well on at least one side (inside or outside), so that the vessel doesn't break apart (or slip and score each coil on as you lay it down, though this will take a long time!). When you reach the end of a "snake," you can just add a new one. You can play with laying the coils on in different ways to create different patterns, or smooth them out to make a nice surface ready for other decoration.

IF YOU HAVE A KILN IN THE CLASSROOM, AND PLAN ON FIRING YOUR PROJECTS:

Here are some steps and techniques you might use.

- Wedge any reused clay. When firing clay, it is important that there are no air bubbles worked into it, as these may cause projects to explode in the kiln, destroying many students' work. New clay straight out of the package is usually mixed in such a way that it has no air bubbles, but clay that is being re-used needs to be wedged. Wedging is similar to kneading, but intentionally forces out air bubbles. It also keeps moisture evenly distributed in the clay- something that can help with success in throwing on a wheel. Check out this resource for instructions on wedging. https://ceramicartsnetwork.org/daily/ceramic-supplies/pottery-clay/how-to-wedge-clay-properly/
- Remember, keep clay no thicker than an adult's thumb! To further prevent unseen air bubbles and trapped moisture that might make projects explode in firing, it is best to keep all sections of your sculpture no thicker than the width of an adult's thumb. If you want to make

HOW TO WORK WITH CLAY IN THE CLASSROOM

something larger, it should be hollow- this can be done by using the pinch pot method, the coil building method, the slab building method, or by working over some sort of armature (and removing before the clay starts to dry and shrink). Be sure that there is a way for air to escape from all hollow forms- if they are a closed hollow form, you may need to poke a pin tool or toothpick into the centre. If a child hands you a finished project that looks too thick, and you are not able to get them to hollow it out with a tool, it can be helpful to stick a pin tool in the bottom of it a few times to create some air channels and be sure it is absolutely bone dry before firing.

- Be aware of the type of clay and glazes you are using. Most clays can be grouped into three categories- low fire, mid-fire, and high fire. Temperatures are measured by a system of pyrometric "cones" that will melt at particular temperatures due to their makeup. Low-fire clays are usually fired to Cone 06-04. Mid temperature clays usually fire to Cones 5-6. Note that these mid-fire numbers don't have a zero in front of them- this is very important, as cone numbers with zeros in front of them are much cooler than cone numbers without- see the image below . Finally, high-fire clays are usually fired to around Cones 9-10. Be sure to choose a glaze that is meant for the correct temperature of clay- this will ensure that it will "fit" over the clay body when fired. Finally, glazes may state that they are meant for oxidative or reductive firings. If you are using an electric kiln, you are doing an oxidative firing because air will keep coming into the kiln as it fires. If you are using a gas kiln (which is highly unlikely in a school setting), you are doing a reductive firing because you will be burning out all of the oxygen.
- Usually, in a school setting, you will want to choose low-fire clays (Cone 06-04), and low-fire, oxidative glazes. Firing your kilns to lower temperatures is faster, cheaper, and helps reduce how often the kilns will break down.
- Fire bone dry. Clay needs to be completely dry before it is fired. Otherwise, the water will create gasses that can build up in tiny, unnoticed air pockets, and will possibly make your projects blow apart! Touch the different

HOW TO WORK WITH CLAY IN THE CLASSROOM

surfaces of the clay before firing- it should feel similar to the temperature of the room- if it feels cool, it probably still has water in it! Leaving works uncovered for a week is a good precaution and moving mostly dry works onto a rack where the bottom can be exposed to air is a good idea. If you want further insurance that works are completely dry, you can "candle" your kiln, as I will describe in the next section.

- Firing Steps. You will likely be firing your kiln twice for each project, once to pre-harden the artworks (the bisque firing), and once to create the finished coloured surface (glaze firing). Some artists do add more steps than this (for example, I will sometimes do an underglaze firing before my glaze firing, and an overglaze(lustre) firing after my glaze firing, but the latter in particular is not appropriate to be doing in a school setting). If you are in a time crunch or need to simplify, there are now commercial glazes that are available that allow you to apply glazes to unfired, bone dry clay and do just one firing- Mayco's Stroke-and-Coat line comes to mind (https://maycocolors.com/index.php/colors/stroke-coat). Outlined below are the basic firing steps. Be sure to follow your kiln's directions, the firing recommendations for the clay you listed on the particular glazes you are using. I am going to assume you are using low-fire clay and glazes below.
- Bisque firing — Load all the unfired greenware into your kiln. For this step, artworks can touch and even be carefully stacked if they aren't too heavy, as they will not adhere together without glaze. You should have multiple shelves you can add on stilts to your kiln, so that you have many layers of artwork being fired. If your kiln is not computerized, and requires a small cone in the kiln sitter, be sure to add it following the instructions given with your kiln. If you are low-firing your bisque, you should be using a cone with 04 printed on the side. You may also choose to use larger witness cones in your kiln- these are placed in holders (or you can make your own holders out of clay) and set standing near one of the peepholes in the side of your kiln, so that you can see them if you remove the peephole plug. Witness cones help you to know if the temperature was accurate throughout your kiln. All pyrometric cones will bend over at the temperature listed

HOW TO WORK WITH CLAY IN THE CLASSROOM

on them. Plug the peepholes with the plugs that came with your kiln (usually made of porcelain, soft brick, or other heat safe material). Optionally, you can candle your kiln, turning the lowest burner on to the lowest heat, keeping the lid slightly cracked open to allow moisture to escape or the peepholes open, and running the kiln for several hours at this low temperature to remove any remaining moisture in the works. Otherwise, follow the instructions suggested with your kiln to start firing it to cone 04. With a non-computerized kiln, I usually close the lids and peepholes and turn all burners on to low, then turn the kiln up to it's medium temperature after an hour, then to it's highest temperature after another hour. The kiln sitter or computer on your kiln should turn it off after the kiln hits Cone 04, but it is wise to peek at the witness cone (using gloves to remove the peephole plugs) occasionally just to ensure something odd hasn't happened and that it hasn't overfired and needs to be turned off manually. On my kiln, this is usually after 4 hours of total firing time, but this can be different for different kilns, and can be intentionally slowed down with a computer kiln for a gentler firing. Let the kiln cool as much as possible, likely overnight, before cracking it open a little bit to let it release more heat- if the kiln is opened too fast the artworks could become cracked.

- Glaze firing — After all works are glazed with the number of layers suggested on the glaze bottles using the method suggested on the label (likely brushing it on), and dried well, they can be loaded in the kiln again. Glazes will stick to things when fired. This means that artworks cannot touch in this firing, and all surfaces that touch the kiln shelves should have no glaze on them. Double check this before loading items, and wipe off glazes on the bottom surfaces, or fire works that are glazed on all surfaces on stilts meant for this purpose. Many commercial low-fire glazes such as ones from Duncan and Mayco recommend that you fire to Cone 06 (which is actually a little cooler than Cone 04). As with the bisque firing, add the appropriate cone to your kiln sitter if you do not have a computerized kiln, and add a larger witness cone if you like where it is visible near a peephole. As before, close the kiln, cover the peepholes, and fire it as recommended

HOW TO WORK WITH CLAY IN THE CLASSROOM

by your kiln manufacturer's instructions, or following a similar pattern to what I suggested for the bisque fire, leaving the kiln on low for an hour, at medium for an hour, and at high until the kiln turns itself off, checking the witness cone if you are uncertain. Again, expect the kiln to take 3-4 hours to fire. Be sure to let the kiln cool as much as possible, and to only crack it open a little bit at first rather than opening it wide- if the glazes are suddenly hit by cold air rather than gradually cooled, they will likely crack.

- Always have good ventilation around a kiln, so that gasses aren't building up around it. Always follow the instructions for your kiln. Always ensure the kiln has shut off before leaving the building!
- Check for the food safety of glazes and apply appropriately. Most school-safe glazes are also food-safe. The exception will likely be glazes with different textures. Double check that if an item is going to be used for holding food, you are using only glazes that say food-safe on the label. All surfaces that will touch food need to be covered with glaze, and if any cracks or bubbles occur on the surface that will touch food, the item is not food safe and should be re-fired to try and smooth out the glazes. For food-safe low fire ware, I prefer to cover all surfaces with glaze (even the bottom) and fire the item on stilts, so that there are no porous clay surfaces exposed at all that might collect moisture and mold (high-fire wares are non-porous, which is why your dishes at home likely have an unglazed ring on the bottom). The stilts will leave little bumps in the glaze that need to be sanded off, and all dust must be cleaned off after sanding.

HOW TO WORK WITH CLAY IN THE CLASSROOM

IF YOU DON'T HAVE A KILN IN THE CLASSROOM:

- Avoiding air bubbles is not as important. However, you may still choose to make hollow forms to avoid wasting clay, and to ensure works will dry quickly and evenly.
- Dry works slowly and evenly. Clay works that dry to fast may still crack, or pieces may break off.
- Apply a no-fire finishing method once completely dry if desired. See "Post Tour Activity" above for variations. If you choose not to apply a finish to pieces, be aware that some air-dry clays will still give off dust when handled, and therefore should be put somewhere as a decoration rather than carried around.
- Air dry clays and their finishes are NOT food safe or waterproof. Sorry, you can't use these works as dishes, vases, or planters. However, if you want to make something semi-functional, you could make bowls for holding jewellery or desk supplies.
- You can make your own air-dry clays using recipes online, but…they do not hold fine details as well. However, for younger students, making a dough out of salt and flour may still be exciting to them! I have not had any success with online recipes that use white glue and cornstarch as a base, as they tend to either be crumbly, or too soft to hold their shape, and will not hold any fine details.
- You can purchase dust-free and low-dust clays but… similar to home-made air-dry clays, they do not hold details as well as air-dry clays with real clay in them. You may choose to use these products when you have children with asthma in the class. Oven-fired polymer clays such as Sculpey may be a good choice- these do not make dust at all and hold details exceptionally well but are significantly more expensive. Smaller projects may be necessary.

HOW TO WORK WITH CLAY IN THE CLASSROOM

SUPPLIERS

Lakeview Pottery in Regina sells low-fire clay, tools, and a limited selection of glazes. This business is run out of someone's home, so you will need to contact the owner for availability of supplies and to arrange a pickup time. http://www.wasumi.org/lakeview/pottery.htm

T&T Tree Pottery in Saskatoon sells low-fire clay, tools, and glazes. https://www.treesaskatoon.com/

The Sounding Stone in Winnipeg sells low-fire clay, air-dry clays, and an extensive selection of glazes. Business shipping rates can be cheaper on large orders than what is listed on the website, so contact the company if making large, heavy orders. https://www.soundingstone.com/

The Artist's Loft is a small store within Cathedral Village Art School with limited hours that sells tools, and Amaco Mid-Fire (Cone 5-6) glazes. https://www.instagram.com/artistsloftyqr/

Amazon and Staples sell Amaco, Crayola, and Das Air-dry clays, often with cheap or free shipping.

FURTHER INSTRUCTION AND PROJECT RESOURCES

The Ceramic Arts Network offers many free guides for a range of levels from beginner to expert.
https://ceramicartsnetwork.org/.
Their Ceramic Arts Daily Youtube Channel has some great follow-along technique videos.
https://www.youtube.com/user/CeramicArtsDaily/featured

Duncan Ceramics' Education page, with project ideas
https://www.duncanceramics.com/education

Mayco's Project Library, contains many project ideas
https://www.maycocolors.com/index.php/projects

The Resources section of the Amaco website contains project ideas, techniques, and even a glossary of ceramic terms.
https://www.amaco.com/

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

ARTS EDUCATION CURRICULUM KEY OUTCOMES

KINDERGARTEN

CHK.1 Investigate arts expressions found in own homes and school community in relation to own lives. Students will be exploring the work of Victor Cicansky, an artist who is very active in Regina's community. He works primarily in ceramics, but also works in mediums such as bronze casting and laser-cut metal. This exhibition will also include an exploration of functional artworks that are meant to be used in everyday life.

GRADE 1

CH1.1 Describe the arts and cultural traditions found in own home and school community. Students will be exploring the work of Victor Cicansky, an artist who is very active in Regina's community. He works primarily in ceramics, but also works in mediums such as bronze casting and laser-cut metal. Students will be responding to his artworks through drawing and discussions in the gallery and a hands-on ceramic workshop in the studio.

GRADE 2

CR2.1 Examine arts expressions to determine how ideas for arts expressions may come from artists' own communities. Students will explore how Victor Cicansky's work is influenced by his family's Romanian heritage, and the strong ties in Saskatchewan to food production and gardening. Students will be responding to his artworks through drawing and discussions in the gallery and a hands-on ceramic workshop in the studio.

GRADE 3

CR3.2 Respond to arts expressions that use the environment (natural, constructed, imagined) as inspiration. Victor Cicansky's artworks have strong ties to garden environments and Saskatchewan's connections to rural life and food production. His work also is tied back to environments in Saskatchewan, as some of the artworks are functional parts of home environments, or public artworks. Students will be responding to his artworks through drawing and discussions in the gallery and a hands-on ceramic workshop in the studio.

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GRADE 4

CR4.2 Respond thoughtfully to a variety of contemporary Saskatchewan arts expressions. Victor Cicansky is a contemporary Saskatchewan artist who is still creating artwork in the community today. Students will learn about the influence Cicansky has had on the artistic community of Saskatchewan and his participation in the historical Regina Clay movement. Students will be responding to his artworks through drawing and discussions in the gallery and a hands-on ceramic workshop in the studio.

GRADE 5

CH5.3 Analyze and describe how arts and pop culture expressions convey information about the time and place in which they were created. Students will learn about the Regina Clay Movement and the California Funk Movement in the sixties and seventies, how they influenced artists like Victor Cicansky, and how those movements were responses to popular ideas in the art world at the time. Victor Cicansky's work conveys many ideas about Saskatchewan life and culture and its connection to gardening and food production.

GRADE 6

CH6.1 Investigate how personal, cultural, or regional identity may be reflected in arts expressions. Victor Cicansky's artworks explore his personal identity as a Saskatchewan resident with Romanian Heritage, and the larger identity of Saskatchewan people with their strong ties to rural life and food production. The exhibition includes self-portraits and portraits of Saskatchewan people, which will be responded to with storytelling and drawing activities in the gallery.

GRADE 7

CH7.1 Investigate how artists' relationship to place may be reflected in their work. Students will explore how Victor Cicansky's artwork is influenced by Saskatchewan's environment and culture, especially its ties to gardening and food production. They will also explore how the artist has contributed to Saskatchwan's artistic culture through his involvement in the Regina Clay and California Funk movements, and the presence of his artwork in public spaces.

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GRADE 8

CP8.12 Solve visual art problems using a variety of processes and media. In our studio activity, students will work with air-dry clay, which is a new experience for many students. They will be able to respond to the techniques they see used in Victor Cicansky's ceramic artworks and challenge themselves to create their own three-dimensional artworks.

GRADE 9

CH9.3 Investigate diversity of artistic ideas, styles, and media in contemporary arts expressions. Victor Cicansky is a contemporary Saskatchewan artist who is still creating artwork in the community today. Students will learn about the influence Cicansky has had on the artistic community of Saskatchewan and his participation in the Regina Clay and California Funk art movements. They will learn about the influence of folk art styles and rural culture on Victor Cicansky's artwork, and how he has continued this discussion about Saskatchwan's identity.

VISUAL ART 10-20-30

CR10.3 Reflect/respond critically to art works of professional artists, including Indigenous artists, to explore artistic intent. Students will use the gallery visit to explore and respond to the artworks of Victor Cicansky. Being a retrospective, they will have opportunities to see how his style has developed over time, examining how his artworks reflect Saskatchwan's culture.

CP20.4 Use inquiry to create a work of art inspired by the work of local and international artists. In our studio activity, students will work with air-dry clay and respond to the techniques and ideas in Victor Cicansky's ceramic artworks.

CH30.2 Examine how visual art expressions have changed over time and/or inspired change in individuals, communities and societies. Students will explore Victor Cicansky's contributions to Saskatchwan's artistic culture and history, including his roles in the Regina Clay Movement and California Funk Movement. They will learn about how these movements were responses to the cultural output of the Regina Five and modernist artists working in abstraction.

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ARTS EDUCATION 10-20-30

Visiting this exhibition can be connected to Arts Education Module 1. History in the Making, and Module 6 - Expanding Horizons: the Arts in Canada, as it explores the career and influences of Saskatchewan artist Victor Cicansky, and his contributions and connections to art historical movements.

CONTACT

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GALLERY HOURS

Monday - Saturday
10 AM - 5:30 PM
Thursday 10 AM - 9 PM
Sunday 12 - 5:30 PM

CRAFT SERVICES CAFÉ HOURS

Monday Closed
Tuesday, Wednesday 8 AM - 4 PM
Thursday 8 AM - 8:30 PM
Saturday 10 AM - 4 PM
Sunday 12 - 4 PM

CORE FUNDERS

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