

## **LESSON 1**

**Grades 6/7/8**

**Title: *Searching the World Wide Web for Rudy Autio***

### **Description**

This history of art lesson is a research assignment that encourages students to use and maneuver through the internet in order to better understand Rudy Autio. It will examine his background, educational experiences, art production, influences, and style. This can be a stand alone lesson or linked with a larger project.

### **Lesson Objectives**

The goals of this lesson include:

- Examining history of art through the use of technology
- Patient use of the internet as an involved process
- Learning about the cultural influence Rudy Autio had on contemporary ceramics
- Helping students make the connection between life experiences and an artist work
- Encourage students to use abstract thinking skills
- Using this lesson as a spring board toward encouraging students to view poetry as another form of art

### **Duration of Lesson**

Two 50 minute classes

Five days out of class to finish the assignment on their own

### **Interdisciplinary**

#### **English /Language Arts**

Sentence structure

Poetry unit

Study the different types of poems (Sample: Sonnet, Ballad, Elegy, Villanelle, Ode, Sestina, Dramatic Monologue)

### **Materials**

Worksheet

Pencil or Pen

Extra computer paper or notebook for added information on Autio

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## **Internet Research of Rudy Autio**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: 1 2 3 4 5 6  
7 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Using two class periods, fill out this worksheet concerning the famous artist, Rudy Autio. You may fill out this form, or you may type your information into a new format. This worksheet is NOT looking for short phrase answers. You are to answer the questions in COMPLETE sentences. This handout is due a week from today. You are

allowed to work on this handout out of class, during library time, or at home. However, this is for you to fill out and is NOT a team or group assignment. You are to work on this SOLO. It is worth 25 points. **(NOTE: The teacher can assign any type of point system to this handout depending on the overall point or grading system of the class.)**

Include hardcopy visual pictures of some of Autio's works that you are focusing on for this worksheet.

List the three websites you used the most to fill out this worksheet.

Website #1 Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Website #2 Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Website #3 Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ceramic Sculptor's Name: Rudy Autio

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Town and State of Origin: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Educated Where?:

Practiced Where?: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Names of Most Famous Works: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Medium Worked In: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List of Different Media Worked In: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Artists that Influenced Your Artist (list at least 6 artist): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Most Common Method of Sculpting: Subtractive      Additive  
(Circle One)

Why did you pick this **type** of Autio’s sculptures as one of your favorite? Describe the difference in the diverse ways he sculpted. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe Autio’s childhood?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What type of literary works was Autio interested in? What did he enjoy reading and eventually created ceramic works based off of these mythical works? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What other materials did Autio create in? List medium/media. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did Autio develop into his style? For example, what changes did he go through in order to finally reach fame? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do you think Autio became famous? Back up your belief with hard facts. \_\_\_\_\_

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How do you think this Autio changed the progression of ceramics? \_\_\_\_\_

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When creating ceramics, what tools did Autio prefer using? \_\_\_\_\_

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What other hobbies did Autio enjoy? List at least 3 others) \_\_\_\_\_

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How was Autio influenced by the Works Progress Administration (WPA)? \_\_\_\_\_

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Explain what is and how Autio was involved with the Archie Bray Foundation. \_\_\_\_\_

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Why did Autio use images of human forms and horses in his artwork? \_\_\_\_\_

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Extra Credit Question #1: What was Rudy Autio's nickname in the ceramics world? \_\_\_\_\_

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Extra Credit Question #2: What is the difference between ceramics as a craft compared to ceramics as an art? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Homework Assignment

Directions: Choosing one of the stories you read about Autio, write a poem about Autio and the narrative OR one of his artworks (attach the image to the poem if it is inspired by one of his works). Make sure you edit the poem as much as possible before you turn it in. This may become publishable. This is worth 25 points.

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### **Vocabulary**

Kiln  
Bisque and low firing  
Abstract Expressionism

### **Places and Locations**

Butte, Montana  
WPA  
Archie Bray Foundation  
Flathead Lake

### **Possible Follow-up Projects**

1. After all the student's worksheets have been graded, review the questions in class as a group. The students enjoy this process and will learn additional information from their classmates. When conducting this review session, have available larger images of Autio's work so the students can see concrete examples as answers to questions.

2. Have a guest poet visit your class to work with the students on editing their Autio poems.
3. Display the written poems at a local ceramics shop or art gallery. Or, you may consider have an evening or Saturday poetry reading at one of these places and invite friends, family and the public to the student reading.

## **LESSON 2**

Grades: 7-8

### **Title:**

*Rudy Autio: Horses and People Clay Plate*

### **Description**

Each student will design a round 12" plate inspired by Rudy Autio's circular wall plates. The design will include at least one human figure and one horse.

### **Lesson Objectives**

The goals of this lesson include:

- Learning about Rudy Autio and his ceramic plates
- Using technology to complete gestured figure drawings of horses and people
- Manipulating preliminary sketches into a circular format
- Collaborative work ethics and knowledge while completing group work with a peer
- Understanding and completing all the steps involved in making a ceramic plate
- Learning how to glaze a vessel using a variety of glaze colors

### **Duration of Lesson**

(1 day = 50 minutes of instructional time)

Introduction – 1 day (**Possibly 1 more additional day for a visiting guest speaker**)

Drawing Exercise Lead-ups – 2 days

Rolling out and slumping the clay plate – 2 days (1 day per student in a team of 2 kids)

Sgraffito design on wet clay plate – 1 day

Addition of a clay foot and smoothing the bottom surface of the clay plate – 1 day

Drying time – varies according to temperature (**NOTE: Plan other activities during these days**)

Bisque Firing – 1 day to load, 1 day to fire, 1 day to cool

Glazing – 2 to 3 days

Low Firing - 1 day to load, 1 day to fire, 1 day to cool

### **Materials**

1. Videos with horses and people in them
2. Five sheets of 12x18 sheets of white drawing paper per student
3. One small box of oil pastels per student
4. Old dinner plate as close to a 12" size as possible

5. 1" strips of newspaper
6. Small bowl of water
7. Enough 24x24 pieces of canvas for students to roll out a clay slab (approximately 12 pieces for a class of 24)
8. A rolling pin or large diameter wooden dowel (approximately 12 for a class of 24)
9. Five pounds of low fire clay (Archie Bray Sculpture Lowfire for a white color or Archie Bray ABF Earthenware Clay for red looking clay) per student
10. Enough wooden strips about 1/2x12x2" to be used as braces to prevent the clay slab from getting too thin. (2 sticks per pair of students)
11. Butter knife or fettling knife (1 per pair)
12. Paper towels
13. 24 Plastic garbage sacks (1 per student)
14. Various clay or kitchen tools including a kitchen fork
15. Low fire glazes (Amaco LUG Opaque Liquid Glaze)
16. Electric kiln

## **Instructional Strategies**

### **1. Introduction**

- a. Present a history of Rudy Autio's clay work on circular ceramic plates. At this time, you may want to include research on Peter Voulkos and Henri Matisse, since Voulkos was a close friend of Autio and who also made clay plates, but of a heavy nature. **(See visual samples below)** Also, Matisse would be good to study since his figurative designs are similar to Autio's work.

### **2. Drawing Exercises as Lead-ups**

- a. **Horse Video** - Using a TV and DVDs, show the class movies concerning horses of various kinds. This could include horse races, rodeo, show, work, etc. **(NOTE: Consult your local video store. An example could be *Black Beauty*.)** You will just be using clips from these movies.
- b. **Gesture Drawings of Horses** - Give the students 5 sheets of 12x18 drawing paper and oil pastels. Freeze the video for 5 minute intervals that show a horse or horses in action. Have the students sketch them as gestures. They should draw quickly and try to capture as much as possible. Contour line is important to emphasize. They may switch colors throughout the 5 minute sketch. Complete 5 different sketches.
- c. **Gesture Drawings of People** – Repeat the same exercise as above, but this time use people as the subject matter. You can draw on the back of the original 5 sheets of paper to conserve paper.

### **3. Rolling Out the Clay and Building the Slump Vessel Plate**

- a. It is helpful if the students work in pairs for this step. Each 2 kids will need the following materials: (an old dinner plate as close to a 12" size as possible, 1" strips of newspaper, small bowl of water, a 24x24 piece of canvas to roll the clay onto, a rolling pin or large diameter wooden dowel, about 5 pounds of low fire clay (Archie Bray Sculpture Lowfire for a white color or Archie Bray ABF Earthenware Clay for red looking clay).
- b. Cut up a section of a newspaper into 1" strips and individually dip the strips into the water bowl. Sliding off the excess water with your fingers, place the strip across the center of the plate (how about at the 12 o'clock

through 6 o'clock position.) Repeat this many times shifting the next strip of newspaper toward the 12:30 through 6:30 position). Repeat this step until the entire surface of the plate is layered with wet newspaper strips and no plate surface is showing. It is ok to overlap paper on paper.

- c. Next, place the 5 pound clay ball (make sure it is kneaded if it is not new clay straight from the "pre-pugged" clay brick shipped from Archie Bray) on top of the 24x24 piece of canvas on your table. Using two wooden sticks as "clay depth guides", place one on the left side of the clay ball and the other one on the right side of the clay. Begin rolling out the clay as if rolling out a pie crust. Flip the flatten clay about every 15-30 seconds to prevent the clay from sticking to the canvas. Try to roll the clay out so that it remains circular and NOT oval. Keep slab consistent in thickness. Once the rolling pin hits the clay sticks, it will be impossible to roll out the clay any thinner than 1/2" in depth.
  - d. **Slumping the clay onto the template** plate - Carefully pick up the clay slab and drape it on the newspaper covered plate using this plate as a temporary mold. Take a butter knife or fettling knife and trim off the excess clay around the rim of the plate so the clay becomes the same size as the original old plate template.
  - e. You can place a damp paper towel on top of the clay plate and cover it tightly with a plastic garbage sack in order to store the wet plate overnight. It is imperative to keep the plate damp and free of air pockets.
4. **Sgraffito Design** – (the clay is still in the **wet stage**)
- a. Have the student pick their two best oil pastel drawings; one horse and one person design.
  - b. Next, they are to lightly scratch these two best designs into the clays surface using a blunt pointed tool (such as a dull pencil tip, a ballpoint pen cap, or anything that won't "cut" the clay like a knife blade would do). Rudy Autio used a brick layer's trowel to draw his designs into the clay. The students can manipulate the design so that it better fits the circular format of the plate. (For example, arching backbones, curved horse faces, curved legs and arms, etc. **See visual samples below**) Only scratch into the surface about 1/16 to 1/8 of an inch in depth.
  - c. Once the design is in place, use at least 4 textures within the positive and negative spaces. You can achieve this through the use of various clay and kitchen tools.
5. **Drying**
- a. Slowly start to uncover the clay vessel in the next few days to allow air to slightly dry it out. Make sure the clay is not sticking to the original plate mold. You are waiting for the leather soft stage. Once the clay is firm enough, you can take it off the plate.
  - b. Peel off the newspaper strips from the bottom and replace your plate upside down on the upside down original plate mold. Using your fingers, very light pressure, and a small amount of water, smooth out the newspaper embossed seams on the backside of the clay plate. Craftsmanship is important and if the piece were to break you cannot glue it together for a grade...you must reconstruct the entire piece.
  - c. **Foot** - Roll out a coil about 1/2 inch diameter in size and 8 inches in length. Connect the two ends to make a circular clay ring. Place it on the back



side of the clay plate, trace around it lightly with a pencil, and remove it. Next, using a kitchen fork, score a circular ring on the plate where the pencil mark was traced which is proportional to the 8" clay ring. Also, score one side of the 8" clay ring. Attach the scored clay ring to the scored surface of the plate using slip. Lock into place. Smooth out.

- d. You can begin to open the sack up more each day. Let the clay dry slowly until it has reached the **leather hard** stage, then totally remove the plastic.
- e. Allow to dry to the **bone dry** stage. It is imperative **NOT** to touch the clay at all during this stage. Only the instructor should move the clay in order to load the kiln.

**6. Bisque Firing**

- a. Fire the kiln at the recommended temperature according to your clay. Most low fire clays are fired at Cone 04, 05 or 06.

**7. Glazing**

- a. First demo to students, then have them complete the following steps:
  - i. how to rinse off the bisque vessel with water
  - ii. Instilling **Safety precautions** when working with glaze....do not eat or drink around glaze. Wash equipment and hands thoroughly when finished using glazes. Do NOT cross contaminate from one glaze jar to the next using the same brush. **(NOTE: After the clay pieces are fired, they are for display only and can not be used as dinnerware.)**
  - iii. Use old paintbrushes to paint on 3 layers of glaze to get proper saturation and coverage of glaze into the surface of the vessel.
  - iv. Possibly have the students limit their colors to 3-5 so that they will tie together more. Even talk about color schemes that work well together.
  - v. Make sure there is no glaze on the coil foot. If any glaze is touching the kiln shelf, it will adhere to the shelf during the low firing.

**8. Low Firing**

- a. Fire the kiln at the recommended temperature according to the glazes. Amaco LUG Opaque Liquid Glaze is rated at Cone 04.

**Rudy Autio: Horses and People Clay Plate**

Grade Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

**Requirements**

<b>Grades</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Your Points</b>
Craftsmanship		
No cracking or breaking of structure	_____	10
Foot is attached well and has a streamline shape	_____	5
Design		
Creative	_____	15
Manipulation of preliminary sketch onto the front of plate	_____	10

Used 4 different textures	10
Effort	
Worked well with partner	5
Finished on time	10
Glaze quality	
Colors work well together	20
Glaze has been applied with good workmanship	15
TOTAL	100 points

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### **Vocabulary**

Gesture drawing  
 Contour line  
 Slump Vessel  
 Negative and positive space  
 Wet Stage  
 Leather Soft  
 Leather Hard  
 Bone Dry  
 Bisque Firing  
 Low Firing  
 Embossed  
 Score  
 Slip  
 Glaze  
 Cone Temperature

### **Artist Influences**

Henri Matisse  
 Peter Voulkos

### **Websites**

Peter Voulkos – Voulkos & Co.  
<http://www.voulkos.com/suprplatejpg.html>  
 Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts  
<http://www.archiebray.org/>  
 Art 106 Intro to Ceramics Sgraffito  
<http://seco.glendale.edu/ceramics/sgraffito.html>  
 Amaco Brent  
<http://www.amaco.com/>

### **Resources for Teachers**

1. Possible Speakers
  - a. Veterinarian – could address the physical structure of a horse
  - b. Jockey – talk with the students about the occupation
  - c. Trainer – Raising and training horses for different purposes

- d. Rodeo Stunt Man – Handling horses under various conditions
2. Talk with the librarian at your school for suggested readings that could go along with your project. (ie. *Hope Rising*)

**Possible Follow-up Projects**

1. Consider displaying the pieces at one of the following places:
  - a. Gallery or ranch store
  - b. Veterinarian facility
  - c. Clay studio or ceramics shop
  - d. University ceramics facility

**Examples of Clay Plates**



Peter Voulkos' Untitled Plate, 1995, CR1168-W  
<http://www.voulkos.com/suprplatejpg.html>



*Electra*, Stoneware 1993, 28 inch diameter 3 inches deep, Collection of the artist  
<http://www.rudyautio.com/>



Missoula Art Museum



Student Sgraffito Plates

## LESSONS 3, 4, 5

**GRS. 6,7,8**

**Title: Autio Inspirations : Using Slabs**

### **Description:**

Students will make clay and use slab techniques with inspiration from the works of Rudy Autio . Using digital slides, the MAM archived website, posters and photos, students will review the clay works of Missoula artist Rudy Autio. When possible students will visit the closest art museum to see the works “for real” to get a good impression of the type of work he did and explore how he might have done it. (This is a good thing to do both before and after completing clay constructions. Students at all levels have a greater appreciation for how things might be done and complete an artist when they’ve had to try similar techniques.)

### **Objectives**

- a. Students will be familiar with the works of Montana artist Rudy Autio.
- b. Students’ skill development will proceed to slab construction.
- c. Students will discuss and evaluate the aesthetic value of their construction.

### **Materials**

field trip access!  
 low-fire clay (06 cone)  
 clay tools  
 buckets for slip  
 clay board (flat board covered with canvas and two ½” sides made of wood)

rolling pins  
paper towels

## **6<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

### **Title: Decorative Slab Vessels**

#### **Procedure**

1. Using primarily slab construction, develop incisive drawings on three dimensional slab constructions completed as vessels, sculptures or both.
2. Prepare clay using wedging technique.
3. Roll out clay to approximately 1/2" thickness using hands or rolling pin with aid of clay board.
4. Cut out two or three "sides" for sculpture, 4-6" tall and 4" at least at base.
5. Cut out slab base so that sides will fit facing upward.
6. Before scoring upright slabs and base, decide which side you want for outside and draw on it using pencil or clay tool. Also add texturing where desired. A preliminary drawing is helpful here in deciding what type of design works best on each side or is carried out around the entire surface. Imaginary or real animals are again a good theme. Be careful not to puncture holes in slab if making a vessel.
7. Place slip on all "scored" (scratched) surfaces to be joined. Smooth and allow to dry.
8. Touch up any areas on drawn surface. Paper towels or newspaper can be stuffed inside to strengthen shape while working on and drying the object.
9. Bisque fire sculpture or vessel when completely dry.
10. Underglaze/overglaze and fire again.

## **7<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

### **Title: Tile Art : Planning and designing your tile or tile mural:**

#### **Description**

Display various examples of tiles and tile murals and discuss the use of tiles as decorative art as well as interpretive art, including size, shape and composition. (Note: the large mural at St. Anthony's church on Tremont St. in Missoula is a good example of a large "relief" work or look around you town for other examples of tile murals)

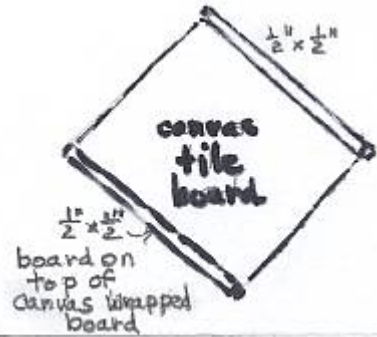
Either in small groups or as a class develop the overall tile design in the likeness of Rudy Autio's "horse" themes (<http://www.rudyautio/work>) or create an original design.

Brainstorm as a group and develop an overall plan on paper. Be sure to determine size and shape as a whole and how to make the individual tiles work in the composition as a whole. If helpful, a grid the size of your overall design can be made on paper depending on your plan. In this case make overall paper the size of your entire drawing and divide into separate tile size and shape. Be sure your sizes are uniform.)

#### **Procedure:**

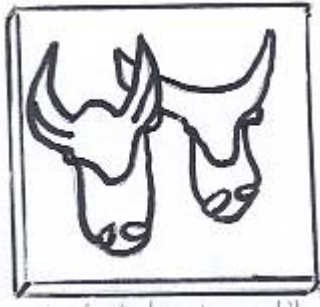
1. Discuss the procedure for developing a tile composition either as an individual or group project.
2. Prepare the clay for tile making, i.e., wedging and even rolling.

(Again a handy tile thickness board can be made simply by covering a piece of wood with canvas cloth and bordering the two sides



with even strips of wood about 1/2" thick.)

3. Incise and texture individual tiles as desired or as agreed by group design plan.
4. To incorporate raised areas of texture, pieces can be added on top of tile by scoring and adhering with slip. Be careful to attach thoroughly so no air pockets are trapped.
5. Dry slowly and thoroughly (partially covering tiles), so that tiles do not buckle.
- 6.. Bisque fire, glaze, and refire. Glue tiles to a board to achieve overall design for vertical view, or glue and grout for flat display/



## **Eighth Grade:**

### **Title: Dig it!**

#### **Description:**

Making clay from raw materials (optional/additional assignment, as requires collecting actual dirt clay from probable off school site, but it's really fun to put together. (groups of 4 work best). Making clay from local natural resources is something Rudy Autio and local artists did/do frequently. A visit to the Archie Bray clay studio in Helena is a fantastic experience for students as they can see the original manufacturing of clay as well as artists' uses of the material.

#### **Procedure:**

1. Collect clay from previously designated sites, perhaps with the help of local artists or Forest Service soils personnel. Sometimes clay can even be found below the surface in your own yard or garden. A little research from local artists as well as Forest Service personnel can reveal



many local sites .roads, particularly where the road has been dug out. (Large soap buckets work well as they are light and often have lids.) Half a bucket works well, per group. Another bucket is needed per group for water. )

2. Using old window screen cut to size of bucket top, sift dirt into second bucket so that all sticks and rocks are freed from dirt. (Have extra dirt in case original amount is not enough.)

3.. Allow dirt to sit in water and stir often with heavy stick (old wooden handles work well.)

4. Sift again into the second bucket to refine dirt/clay.

5.. Depending on the type of dirt, this process may need to be repeated over several days.

6. Allow water to evaporate and then remove clay and begin working with hands. Wedge as possible, keeping moist with “slip” (clay/water mixture)

7. Work clay until a good finished ball (or not!) is formed.

8. Evaluate success of clay forming and its elasticity.

9. Make something quite simple from the clay, i.e., pinch pot, etc., and low fire to see if successful.

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### **Time**

Ongoing classroom group project, set aside time and place for continuous stirring, etc. Total time, not including collection of dirt, which could be done as homework, would be 1-2 hours, divided into 15-30 minute segments.

### **Montana Content Standards for Art**

**Standard 2** Students apply and describe the concepts, structures and processes in art.

**Standard 3** Students develop and refine art skills and techniques to express ideas, pose and solve problems, and discover meaning.

**Standard 4** Students analyze characteristics and merits of their work.

**Standard 5** Students understand the role of art in society, diverse cultures, and historical periods.