

Art and The Great Hunger

The world's largest collection of Famine related art on view in Ireland for the first time.

Teacher Resource



Rowan Gillespie (b. 1953)
The Victim, 1997
Bronze, 8 x 7 x 9.5in

Suitability: Senior Cycle- Art History, Senior Cycle- Pottery, Junior Cycle- 3D craft

Theme: Voiceless People Around the World

Topic: Ceramics/ Pottery

The Victim is a representation of of all the millions of people that died from starvation and disease, or who emigrated. Gillespie says this piece “is about the miracle of human life in a galaxy of indifference”.

Questions

Looking at Rowan Gillespie’s ‘The Victim’

1. What do you feel when you look at this piece?
2. How do you think the figure in the sculpture feels?
3. Who do you think this person might be?
4. What do you notice when you look closely at the face?
5. Why do you think Gillespie decided to not give the figure eyes? And to block off the ears and nose?
6. What might this symbolise?
7. What do you think it was made from?
8. Do you think he would have used the additive or subtractive method to create the sculpture?
9. Why do you think Gillespie made this piece of work?
10. Do you think it is important to make work with a strong historical/political attachment?

Project (5-6 weeks)

1. Read newspapers and news apps until you find a topic that you feel strongly about. Make sure that it relates to the theme of voiceless people.
2. Research the topic and record findings through drawings. These findings could be photos, stories or quotes that you turn into imagery or primary source photography if possible.
3. Write down as many words as you can think of that best describe your voiceless person on an A2 page.
4. Draw an image to go with each descriptive word creating a visual mind map.
5. Begin designing your ceramic piece keeping the emotions of your person to the forefront of your design.
6. Create your piece using air drying or ceramic clay.
7. Present to the class when complete talking them through your design process and answering questions.

Activity (2 or 3 classes)

1. Pick a common situation that happens to many teenagers your age.
2. Think about the emotions involved.
3. Create a series of gestural charcoal drawings of a model in different positions which convey these various emotions.
4. Reflect on these drawings. Decide what specific positions/ movements are vital to conveying certain emotions.
5. Create a large A1 piece redrawing and overlapping your favorite sketches in order to create a piece which is full of movement, chaos and feeling.

Further Study

Visit Rowan Gillespie's *Famine Memorial* (1997, Custom House Quay, dublin)

Cross Curricular

ICT- research

Maths- proportion, weight, balance.

Geography- looking at voiceless people around the world

History- The Famine

English - new vocabulary, key words

Key skills

- Information processing
- Communicating
- Being personally effective
- Critical and creative thinking