

## EDUCATOR GUIDE

Story Theme: Elevating the Everyday  
Subject: Richard Shaw  
Discipline: Visual Art

SECTION I - OVERVIEW .....	2
SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT .....	3
SECTION III – RESOURCES .....	5
SECTION IV – VOCABULARY .....	8
SECTION V – ENGAGING WITH SPARK.....	9



Artist Richard Shaw at work in his studio.  
Still image from SPARK, 2005.

## SECTION I - OVERVIEW

### EPISODE THEME

Elevating the Everyday

### SUBJECT

Richard Shaw

### GRADE RANGES

K-12 & Post-secondary

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Visual Arts & Language Arts

### OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to ceramic art through the work of Richard Shaw, and to provide a history of ceramic art in California and beyond.

### STORY SYNOPSIS

Since the late 1960s, Bay Area ceramicist Richard Shaw has been steadily recreating the world around him in clay, piece by piece. Spark visits the artist in his Fairfax studio as he scrambles to finish work for an upcoming one-person gallery show.

### INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Group oral discussion, review and analysis, including peer review and aesthetic valuing  
Teacher-guided instruction, including demonstration and guidance  
Hands-on individual projects in which students work independently  
Hands-on group projects in which students assist and support one another  
Critical reflection on personal expressions and how they are seen and received by others

### INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

To introduce students to the relationship of art to social themes and ideas, abstract concepts, and the history of art

Develop basic observational drawing and/or painting skills.

Develop visual, written, listening and speaking skills through looking at, creating and talking about visual artworks.

Develop an expressive visual vocabulary with which to address personal and/or social themes and ideas.

Develop observational and representational skills by looking at and reproducing images of people, places and things accurately and thoughtfully.

### EQUIPMENT NEEDED

KQED SPARK iTunesU Podcast “Elevating the Everyday” about Richard Shaw

Computer with Internet access, navigation software, speakers and a sounds card, printer

Cassette player, CD player, or computer audio program

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Access to libraries with up-to-date collections of periodicals, books, and research papers  
Pencils, pens, and paper

### INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED

Bodily-Kinesthetic - control of one's own body, control in handling objects

Interpersonal - awareness of others' feelings, emotions, goals, motivations

Intrapersonal - awareness of one's own feelings, emotions, goals, motivations

Spatial - ability to manipulate and create mental images in order to solve problems

Logical-Mathematical - ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, think logically

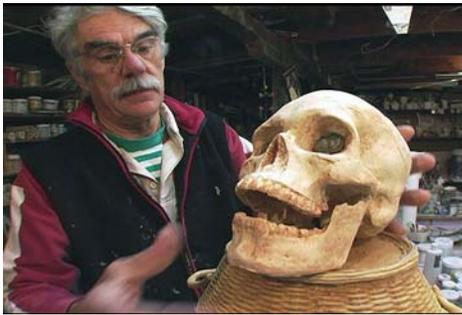


See more information on [Multiple Intelligences](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education) at [www.kqed.org/spark/education](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education).

## SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

Since the late 1960s, Bay Area ceramicist Richard Shaw has been steadily recreating the world around him in clay, piece by piece. Shaw's remarkable sculptures mimic everyday objects with an accuracy that belies their medium. In this week's episode, Spark visits the artist in his Fairfax studio as he scrambles to finish work for an upcoming one-person gallery show.



Richard Shaw with a work in progress in his Fairfax, California studio. Still image from SPARK story, 2005.

Shaw is associated with Bay Area Funk, a movement characterized by its irreverent, sometimes surreal assemblage of everyday objects into artworks that can be alternately whimsical and disturbing. But rather than assemble readymade found objects, Shaw fashions his pieces out of porcelain, perfectly cast to replicate exactly the ordinary things that surround us.

The kind of work that Shaw produces is known as *trompe l'oeil*, a French term that literally means "fool the eye." In order to produce these amazing effects, Shaw has developed an array of techniques that extend to printmaking and glazing transfer decals, which help to increase the realism of his objects. Shaw keeps a library of hundreds of molds in his workshop, a vocabulary of objects that he inverts, varies, and combines in his assemblages.

Richard Shaw received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1965 and a Masters of Fine Arts from the University of California, Davis, in 1968. He has won grants from the National

Endowment for the Arts, and has shown his work across the United States. His ceramics can be found in major collections across the country, including the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, as well as in collections in Europe and Japan. Shaw is currently a professor at the University of California, Berkeley in the Department of Art.

### THE BIG PICTURE

Richard Shaw was part of an art movement initiated in Northern California in the 1960s and 70s that sought to elevate contemporary ceramics above the status of craft to be recognized as a recognized form of fine art. The movement, which came to be known as "The Revolution in Clay," included such noted artists as Robert Arneson, Peter Voulkos, Manuel Neri, and Viola Frey. Prior to the Revolution in Clay, ceramics had been relegated to a secondary position by art institutions as a lower medium, typically used in small, functional objects, fashioned by either hand-building or through the use of a potter's wheel.

Though the artists associated with Bay Area ceramics are often thought of as a cohesive group, each used his or her chosen medium in individual ways. Viola Frey--featured in Spark episode 207, "From Life"--made colossal sculptures that challenged the notion of ceramics as a medium reserved for small-scale objects. Peter Voulkos drew on the centuries old traditions of Eastern ceramics, wedding elegant Japanese clay forms to a spontaneous and energetic aesthetic inspired by American Abstract Expressionism. Robert Arneson's often disturbing figurative work took yet another tack, taking on psychological resonances never before seen in ceramic work. In various ways, each of these artists pushed his or her medium to new levels, forcing art institutions and critics to take ceramics seriously.

Richard Shaw's use of ceramics distinguishes itself from that of his contemporaries though its use of

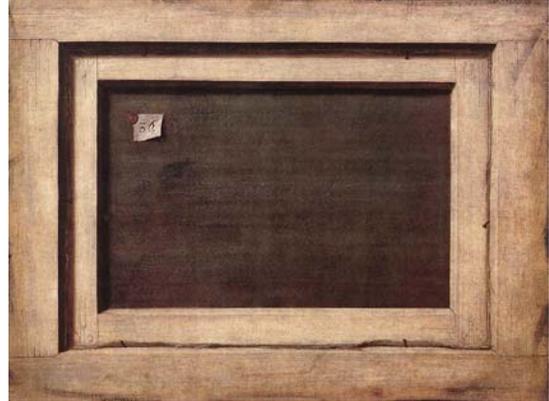
trompe l'oeil, a French art term that literally translates as "fool the eye." The term is usually used to refer to a style of painting that is hyper-illusionistic and tricks the beholder into thinking that the object represented in paint is actually a three-dimensional object.

Trompe l'oeil painting saw its beginnings in the fifteenth century Italian Renaissance with the invention of mathematical perspectival systems of rendering three-dimensional space. Once painters were able to create the illusion of a unified, believable three-dimensional space, they could use painting to virtually extend interior spaces beyond the limits of the architecture, as in Andrea Mantegna's ceiling for the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua.



Andrea Mantegna, Ceiling painting, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, 1465-74.  
[http://fits.depauw.edu/aharris/Courses/Arth132/galleries/images/fullsize/fs\\_Mantegna\\_Camera\\_ceiling.jpg](http://fits.depauw.edu/aharris/Courses/Arth132/galleries/images/fullsize/fs_Mantegna_Camera_ceiling.jpg)

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, trompe l'oeil became very popular due to advances in the study of optics which put a number of devices at painters' disposal that could be used as drawing aids. The portable *camera obscura*, which became popular amongst Northern European artists and formed the basis for modern day cameras, was instrumental in the development of trompe l'oeil painting such as Dutch artist Cornelis Gijbrechts's Reverse Side of a Painting from 1670.



Cornelis Gijbrechts, Reverse Side of a Painting, 1670.  
[http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/t/images/trompe\\_gijbrcht\\_reverse.lg.jpg](http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/t/images/trompe_gijbrcht_reverse.lg.jpg)

## SECTION III – RESOURCES

### TEXTS & PERIODICALS

Plagens, Peter. Sunshine Muse: Art on the West Coast. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Reynolds, Jock. Robert Hudson and Richard Shaw: New Ceramic Sculpture. Andover, MA: Addison Gallery of American Art, 1998.

Shaw, Richard. Richard Shaw: Illusionism in Clay, 1971-1985. Corpus Christi: Art Museum of South Texas, 1985

Shaw, Richard. Richard Shaw: Ceramix Sculpture. San Francisco: Braunstein/Quay Gallery, 1979.

Smith, Roberta Gordon. Trompe L'Oeil: Create Decorative Illusions with Paint. Devon, UK: David and Charles Publishers, 2001.

Westall, Christopher. The Trompe L'Oeil Bible. Devon, UK: David and Charles Publishers, 2003.

Garrels, Gary and Janet Bishop, eds. Robert Arneson: Self-Reflections. San Francisco: SFMOMA. 1997.

Plagens, Peter. Sunshine Muse: Art on the West Coast, 1945-1970. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

### WEB SITES

Richard Shaw on the Frank Lloyd Gallery Web site - <http://www.franklloyd.com/dynamic/artist.asp?ArtistID=26>

Richard Shaw page from Artnet.com - [http://www.artnet.com/artist/645078/Richard\\_Shaw.html](http://www.artnet.com/artist/645078/Richard_Shaw.html)

Richard Shaw at the Braunstein/Quay Gallery - <http://www.bquayartgallery.com/archive/shaw.html>

ArtLex.com pages with definitions and examples of trompe l'oeil painting - <http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/t/trompeloeil.html>

National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC) pages on trompe l'oeil painting - <http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/trompe-info.shtm>

### FILMS & VIDEOS

Viola Frey on SPARK – An innovative ceramic artist in California and the world, Frey is renowned for her constructed large-scale figures – see her story at: <http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/spark/profile.jsp?essid=4954>

Revolutions of the Wheel: The Emergence of American Clay Art. - Documentary film including interviews with artists, gallery owners, historians and art critics that document the technical and creative processes inherent to the ceramic art form and its growth and development in the US. Complete 5-tape set contains: The Tradition of No Tradition, The Great Move West, Peter Voulkos & the Otis Group, Robert Arneson & the Davis Group and The Width of a Circle, described below.

The Tradition of No Tradition - Program One examines the European origins of ceramic art in America. Experience rare, archival footage of early manufactures in the U.S. as it examines the famous Rookwood Pottery in Ohio. Discusses the work of Adelaide Alsop Robineau, George Ohr and other early American studio potters, including the Arts and Crafts Movement.

The Great Move West - Program Two follows ceramic art's move west to California with its rich deposits of minerals and clay, clean air and creative freedom. It examines the work of Glen Lukens, Marguerite Wildenhain and the early years of Peter Voulkos at the Archie Bray Institute in Helena, Montana. Includes archival footage of Shoji Hamada on his visit to the Bray with Bernard Leach.

Peter Voulkos & the Otis Group - Program Three closely examines the great American artist, Peter Voulkos during the years he spent teaching at the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles. Includes excerpts from one of the last in-depth interviews with Voulkos, as well as conversations with John Mason, Malcolm McClain, Billy Al Bengston, Henry Takemoto, Paul Soldner plus historians and art critics.

Robert Arneson & the Davis Group - Program Four explores the life and work of San Francisco bay area artist, Robert Arneson. This film contains full color footage of Arneson's sculpture plus interviews with his widow, the artist Sandra Shannonhouse, Arneson himself, Robert Brady, Roy DeForest, Stephen DeStaebler, Richard Shaw. Historians and critics clarify the work of this most singular artist.

The Width of a Circle - Program Five takes a look at contemporary ceramic artists in California. Colorful interviews with artist/teachers James Melchert, Stephen DeStaebler, Clayton Bailey and Adrian Saxe shed light on unique American approaches to clay art.

## **BAY AREA FIELD TRIP LOCATIONS**

### *Galleries & Museums Showing Ceramic Art*

Asian Art Museum  
200 Larkin Street – Civic Center  
San Francisco  
415/5581.3500  
<http://www.asianart.org>

Rena Bransten Gallery  
77 Geary Street (btw Kearny & Grant Streets)  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
415/982.3292  
<http://www.renabranstengallery.com>

Braunstein/Quay Gallery  
430 Clementina St.,  
San Francisco, CA  
415.278.9850  
<http://www.bquayartgallery.com>

California Palace of the Legion of Honor  
Lincoln Park  
San Francisco  
415/750.3600 <http://www.famsf.org>

Clouds Porcelain  
2801 Leavenworth St.  
San Francisco  
1.800.472.4591  
<http://www.clouds porcelain.com>

M.H. deYoung Museum  
Golden Gate Park  
San Francisco  
415.750.3600  
<http://www.famsf.org/>

Oakland Museum  
1000 Oak Street  
Oakland  
510.238.3401  
<http://www.museumca.org>

The Berkeley Potter's Guild  
731 Jones St. (at 4th St.)  
Berkeley  
510.524.7031  
<http://www.berkeleypotters.com/home01.html>

San Francisco Craft & Folk Art Museum  
Landmark Building A, Fort Mason Center  
San Francisco  
415.775.0990  
<http://www.mocfa.org>

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art  
151 Third Street  
San Francisco  
415.357.4000  
<http://www.sfmoma.org>

San Jose Museum of Art  
110 South Market Street  
San Jose  
408.294.2787  
<http://www.sjmusart.org>

Susan Cummins Gallery  
12 Miller Avenue  
Mill Valley  
415/383.1512

TRAX Gallery  
1306 3rd St. (1/2 block south of Gilman St.)  
Berkeley  
510.526.0279  
<http://www.traxgallery.com>

UC Berkeley - Worth Ryder Gallery  
Kroeber Hall, 1st Floor  
UC Berkeley  
510.642.2582  
<http://art.berkeley.edu/gallery>

University Art Museum, Berkeley  
2626 Bancroft Way  
Berkeley  
510/642.0808  
<http://www.bampfa.berkeley.edu>

## SECTION IV – VOCABULARY

### DISCIPLINE-BASED VOCABULARY & CONCEPTS IN THE SPARK STORY

**Ceramics**

Pottery, porcelain or other items of baked clay

**Characterized**

Identified or distinctive trait, typical feature or quality

**Consistency**

Even texture in terms of clay

**Ecals****Fiendish**

Evil, wicked or cruel

**Frantic**

Anxiety or desperate hurry, wild

**Iconoclastic**

Irreverent Literally a breaker of images or person who challenges or disregards cherished beliefs or traditions

**Memorabilia**

Objects or things worth remembering Objects which trigger memories

**Meticulous**

Careful, accurate, scrupulous attention to detail

**Mold**

Hollow vessel in which fluid or plastic or clay is shaped or cast

**Porcelain**

China, ceramic, pottery

**Radiant**

Bright and dazzling, as from the rays of the sun

**Render**

Reproduce, portray, translate, turn into

**Replicate**

Duplicate, imitate, reproduce

**Trompe L’Oeil**

Literally means "trick the eye," and refers to an artistic technique that creates and employs an apparently realistic image as a type of optical illusion. A style of painting that gives an illusion of photographic reality .

**Whimsy**

Daydream, flight of the imagination, fancy, "castle in the sky"

## SECTION V – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

### STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES & DISCUSSION POINTS

#### Media Matters

Screen the SPARK story for students once all the way through, allowing time to absorb the story and understand what it is about. Ask students to note down their thoughts and responses.

Initiate a general discussion about:

- purpose of the segment?
- intended audience?
- intent of the program (persuasive, informative, etc.)?

Suggest that students work in pairs to share their responses, and discuss the ways in which their ideas are the same or different from their partner's. Ask them to think about why they may respond differently to artwork. What factors shape how we view artwork?

As a whole group share these exchanges and then explore the following factors in terms of how they impact individual responses to art and differing notions of "good taste". Apply each factor to the work of Richard "Shaw as the discussion progresses.

- Knowledge – knowledge of art, artist, art form, or particular artwork content
- Experience – experience seeing and/or interacting with art and artists
- Culture – cultural background, attitudes, assumptions, and difference(s)
- Gender – relationship to particular art, artist, or artwork content
- Age – relationship to particular art, artist, or artwork content
- Context – environment, place and time in which the work(s) were experienced
- Class - - relationship to particular art, artist, or artwork content

Ask students to write a critical piece on:

*Viewing artwork: the factors that determine "taste."  
Respond with reference to the work of Richard Shaw.*

#### Looking at & Responding to Sculpture

Ask students to watch the Richard Shaw story closely. Pause the video on some of the sculptures as they are shown, and also locate further examples of his work on the Internet using the **Resources** section of this Guide.

Working in small groups, invite students to examine a singular piece or group of pieces and discuss:

- the likeness of Shaw's sculptures to "real" objects
- the meaning of the fact that the sculptures are NOT the "real" object, but ceramic sculpture
- whether this makes a difference in terms of how we perceive the object?
- why Shaw chooses to create trompe l'oeil works?

Move on to ask the groups to focus on the initial impact of Richard Shaw's work by asking students to consider detailed questions in relation to the singular piece or group of pieces they are examining. They should look at size, scale, surface texture, patterns, composition, color, etc. What is their first impression?

Share the response of the groups in a general discussion.

With student's working individually, ask them to choose one particular work and examine it in detail taking notes on their observations. They should describe exactly what they see – can they identify narrative details, characteristics of the natural world, expressions and/or features, realistic color, abstract elements, invented forms or shapes? How do these individual elements work with each other? How do

they contribute to the overall effect of the sculpture? What feelings, moods, or atmospheres do the sculptures evoke? How do the different visual characteristics and elements express different attitudes, moods, and/or emotions? What creates these moods?

It may be interesting to consider the relationship between sculptures and viewers by referencing the work of Viola Frey. (An innovative ceramic artist in California and the world, Frey constructed large-scale figures – See Viola Frey on SPARK at: <http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/spark/profile.js?essid=4954>) What is different about the scale relationship in Frey’s work compared to others? How does size make the sculptures unique? What does size have to do with their presence?

Invite students to share their responses with the entire group. Finally ask them to write 500 words about one or more of the sculptures using the questions above as a framework.

### Art versus Craft

In the narration in the SPARK story Shaw refers to his work simply as art as opposed to ceramics.

Initiate a conversation with students about ceramics. Ask students to name different types of ceramics (such as utilitarian forms - pots, bowls, commemorative works, abstractions, figures, landscapes, etc.), writing a list on the board. Brainstorm specific examples of sculptors known by the group to illustrate each type.

For each sculptor named, ask students about the work they have seen and where they saw it. Have they seen examples recently and are there good examples of each type in galleries or public locations they know of in the Bay Area? Encourage students to visit the galleries or museums listed above in BAY AREA FIELD TRIP LOCATIONS - *Galleries & Museums Showing Ceramic Art* to find examples of each category.

### SPARKLER:

- \* One of the differences between art and craft has been use – art is not utilitarian, craft is utilitarian. In art, because of the long history of the use of clay to make utilitarian objects, ceramic artists encountered significant challenges when trying

to break with tradition, and trying to receive critical attention for their work. Talk about the differences between what society has generally regarded as high art (painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking) and low art (collectibles, comic books, utilitarian pottery). Ask students to create a list of objects that they consider “high” and another list of what they consider “low,” then review and discuss the items on each list and why the students made the assignments.

### Trompe l’oeil – Fooling the Eye

Introduce students to the concept of trompe l’oeil explaining the way this art technique creates an optical illusion or provides a visual joke. For example, if there were a door on one end of a wall, a trompe l’oeil painting might create the effect of someone peeping through it; or a blank wall might be painted to represent a view and create the illusion of a landscape.

Trompe l’oeil can also be found painted on tables and other items of furniture, where it may create the illusion of cards in a game which is being played out, but in reality the eye is being tricked with an image. This is exactly what Richard Shaw has done.



Richard Shaw, *House of Cards*. Glazed porcelain  
Still image from SPARK story, 2005.

Ask students to think about whether they have seen this effect on a painting, mural or commercial and talk about these examples. Assemble materials and challenge students to work in groups to design an effect for a mural that combines key elements of trompe l’oeil style. They should draw a sketch of their idea. Encourage each group to paint a collaborative mural on white craft paper the size of a mural; the mural should offer the illusion of reality in the style of trompe l’oeil. Display the murals around the room and ask students to review the

work they have created.

### **SPARKLERS:**

\* For other lesson plan ideas using clay see <http://www.bigceramicstore.com/Information/lessonplans.htm>

### **Trompe l'oeil – Fooling the Eye**

#### **For 9-12<sup>th</sup> grades**

The tradition of trompe l'oeil extends back in history to the European Renaissance, when realism dominated painting and sculpture in the styles of classicism and naturalism. The affection and support for representational styles and techniques such as trompe l'oeil are rooted in the philosophies of the Enlightenment, including Humanism, a philosophical approach that favored human solutions to problems through rational arguments without recourse to superstition, gods or goddesses, sacred texts or religious beliefs. Artists working in this period from the late 14<sup>th</sup> to the early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in history in Europe created stunningly complex and realistic paintings depicting a range of subject matter.

This style of art dominated the Western art world until the advent of Modernism in the late 1800s when many artists openly rejected this form of realistic representation for a diversity of forms that expressed ideas, concepts and beliefs, and offered new ways of looking at and responding to the visual world. One important characteristic of Modernist art that differentiated it from previous movements was the combination of disparate, often seemingly contradictory elements into a singular work of art.

Consider Shaw's artwork against this landscape. Ask students to articulate how Shaw's work relates to both Renaissance ideals and Modernist concepts. How does Shaw combine these ideas? How does our knowledge of other art movements impact upon how we see Shaw's work?

### **Working with Clay**

Encourage students to research local clay studios to observe the artistic process. Local schools with art departments or the galleries listed above would be a good place to start. Arrange for students to visit a studio or workshop.

Using self hardening clay or kiln fired clay if there is access to a kiln, or plasticine if clay is not available, ask students to fashion a figure reflecting their

culture. It can be an interpretation of the way they see their culture and does not need to strive for realism. In addition the objective of the exercise is to work with limited materials to hand-build a sculptural form, although if modeling tools are available this helps to bring texture and expression to the piece. Students may want to paint the figurines when they are dry.

Stand the figures on a table and ask students to think about their work.

- Did their piece say what they wanted?
- Can a person's life be expressed in artwork?
- Can the artist transfer his experiences to the artwork?
- Is realism necessary to communicate a culture?

### **3-D Collage and Assemblage**

Assemblage is the fitting together of parts and pieces. Suggest that students select three or more objects from everyday life. These could be memorabilia, such as inspires Richard Shaw or objects taken from the natural environment such as a stone, a leaf, a twig, a shell etc. They could also be objects with little in common or they could be similar in some way.

Challenge students to put them together and in so doing unify them into a coherent object. Possible ways of approaching this could be through using surface alterations such as texturing or painting the objects. Alternatively they could unify the objects by simply tying them together, wrapping them together with string, nailing them together or positioning them on the floor in a unifying pattern etc.

## Construction and Assemblage in Sculpture

*Adapted from an activity included in the Stanford University Sculpture program – The Ordinary and the Extraordinary*

Part of the language of sculpture is how forms meet and the method used for this joinery.

Ask students to find something that is broken and to think about reconstructing it, repairing or healing it. The connection should be fashioned in such a way that it forms an integral part of the piece. The object can be taken from any source, but preferably should be an ordinary everyday object. Examples of materials that can be used for attaching or repairing the object can include: wrapping paper, bubble gum, staples, string, thread, plaster cast etc.

Review this activity and talk through the challenges it presents.

### RELATED STANDARDS VISUAL ARTS

Grade 4

#### 1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

1.5 Describe and analyze the elements of art (color, shape/form, line, texture, space and value), emphasizing form, as they are used in works of art and found in the environment.

Grade 6

#### 2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

2.1 Use various observational drawing skills to depict a variety of subject matter.

Grade 8

#### 1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

1.1 Use artistic terms when describing the intent and content of works of art.

#### 4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

4.2 Develop a theory about the artist's intent in a series of works of art, using reasoned statements to support personal opinions.

4.3 Construct an interpretation of a work of art based on the form and content of the work

### RELATED STANDARDS - VISUAL ARTS

Grade 9-12 – Proficient

#### 1.0 Artistic Perception

1.3 Research and analyze the work of an artist and write about the artist's distinctive style and its contribution to the meaning of the work.

1.5 Analyze the material used by a given artist and describe how its use influences the meaning of the work.

#### 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

4.1 Articulate how personal beliefs, cultural traditions, and current social, economic, and political contexts influence the interpretation of the meaning or message in a work of art.

Grades 9-12 – Advanced

#### 1.0 Artistic Perception

1.6 Describe the use of the elements of art to express mood in one or more of their works of art.

#### 2.0 Creative Production

2.4 Demonstrate in their own works of art a personal style and an advanced proficiency in communicating an idea, theme, or emotion.

2.5 Use innovative visual metaphors in creating works of art.

#### 3.0 Historical & Cultural Contexts

3.2 Identify contemporary artists worldwide who have achieved regional, national, or international recognition and discuss ways in which their work reflects, plays a role in, and influences present-day culture.

### RELATED STANDARDS LANGUAGE ARTS

Grades 9 & 10

#### 1.0 LISTENING AND SPEAKING STRATEGIES

1.1 Formulate judgments about the ideas under discussion and support those judgments with convincing evidence.

#### 1.0 WRITING STRATEGIES

1.1 Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing.

## Looking at & Responding to Sculpture

Ask students to watch the Richard Shaw story closely. Pause the video on some of the sculptures as they are shown, or locate works of art on the Internet using the **Resources** section of this Guide. Invite students to examine a singular piece or group of pieces and, working in small groups, discuss the following:

Consider the likeness of Shaw's sculptures to "real" objects. Discuss the meaning of the fact that the sculptures are NOT the "real" object, but ceramic sculpture. What difference does this make on how we perceive the object? Why does Shaw choose to create trompe l'oeil works?

Following, broaden discussion to consider:

Study a particular work or group of works and think about the initial impact. Look at size, scale, surface texture, patterns, composition, color, etc. What is the first impression that it/they makes?

Look closely at a particular work and examine it in detail. Describe exactly what you see – can you identify narrative details, characteristics of the natural world, expressions and/or features, realistic color, abstract elements, invented forms or shapes? How do these individual elements work with each other? How do they contribute to the overall effect of the sculpture?

What feelings, moods, or atmospheres do the sculptures evoke? Discuss how the different visual characteristics and elements express different attitudes, moods, and/or emotions. What creates these moods?

Consider the relationship between sculptures and viewers. What is different about the scale relationship in Frey's work compared to others? How does size make the sculptures unique? What does size have to do with their presence?

Invite students to share their responses with the entire group. Finally ask students to write 500 words about one or more of the sculptures using the questions above.

### Art versus Craft

In the narration in the SPARK story Shaw refers to

his work simply as art as opposed to ceramics. Initiate a conversation with students about ceramics. Ask students to name different types of ceramics (such as utilitarian forms (pots, bowls, etc.) commemorative works, abstractions, figures, landscapes, etc.), writing a list on the board. Brainstorm specific examples of sculptors known by the group to illustrate each type. For each sculptor named, ask students about the work they have seen and where they saw it. Have they seen examples recently and are there good examples of each type in galleries or public locations they know of in the Bay Area? Encourage students to visit the galleries or museums listed to find examples of each category listed.

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\* One of the differences between art and craft has been use – art is not utilitarian, craft is utilitarian. In art, because of the long history of the use of clay to make utilitarian objects, ceramic artists encountered significant challenges when trying to break with tradition, and trying to receive critical attention for their work. Talk about the differences between what society has generally regarded as high art (painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking) and low art (collectibles, comic books, utilitarian pottery). Ask students to create a list of objects that they consider "high" and another list of what they consider "low," then review and discuss the items on each list and why the students made the assignments.

### Trompe l'oeil – Fooling the Eye

The tradition of trompe l'oeil extends back in history to the European Renaissance, when realism dominated painting and sculpture in the styles of classicism and naturalism. The affection and support for representational styles and techniques such as trompe l'oeil are rooted in the philosophies of the Enlightenment, including Humanism, a philosophical approach that favored human solutions to problems through rational arguments without recourse to superstition, gods or goddesses, sacred texts or religious beliefs. Artists working in this period from the late 14<sup>th</sup> to the early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in history in Europe created stunningly complex and realistic paintings depicting a range of subject matter.

## RELATED STANDARDS

### VISUAL ARTS

Grade 9-12 – Proficient

#### 1.0 Artistic Perception

1.3 Research and analyze the work of an artist and write about the artist's distinctive style and its contribution to the meaning of the work.

1.5 Analyze the material used by a given artist and describe how its use influences the meaning of the work.

#### 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

4.1 Articulate how personal beliefs, cultural traditions, and current social, economic, and political contexts influence the interpretation of the meaning or message in a work of art.

Grades 9-12 – Advanced

#### 1.0 Artistic Perception

1.6 Describe the use of the elements of art to express mood in one or more of their works of art.

#### 2.0 Creative Production

2.4 Demonstrate in their own works of art a personal style and an advanced proficiency in communicating an idea, theme, or emotion.

2.5 Use innovative visual metaphors in creating works of art.

#### 3.0 Historical & Cultural Contexts

3.2 Identify contemporary artists worldwide who have achieved regional, national, or international recognition and discuss ways in which their work reflects, plays a role in, and influences present-day culture.

This style of art dominated the Western art world until the advent of Modernism in the late 1800s when many artists openly rejected this form of realistic representation for a diversity of forms that expressed ideas, concepts and beliefs, and offered new ways of looking at and responding to the visual world. One important characteristic of Modernist art that differentiated it from previous movements was the combination of disparate, often seemingly contradictory elements into a singular work of art.

Consider Shaw's artwork against this landscape. Ask students to articulate how Shaw's work relates to both Renaissance ideals and Modernist concepts. How does Shaw combine these ideas? How does our knowledge of other art movements impact upon how we see Shaw's work?

For more information about SPARK and its educational content, including the Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the Web site at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/education>



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