

Kids @ CAM – At Home Family Projects

Spotlight on CAM's Collection

Audrey Flack

About the Artist:

"Art is a calling. Artists are not discovered in school. Artists do not just paint for themselves, and they don't simply paint for an audience. They paint because they have to. There is something within the artist that has to be expressed. Every creation reveals something more about the universe and about the artist." – Audrey Flack

Audrey Flack (1931) is an internationally recognized painter and sculptor and a pioneer of photorealism. Her work encompasses painting, sculpture, and photography. Flack enjoys the distinction of being the first photorealist painter whose work was purchased by the Museum of Modern Art for its permanent collection. Audrey Flack is best known for her photo-realist paintings and was one of the first artists to use photographs as the basis for painting. The genre, taking its cues from Pop Art, incorporates depictions of the real and the regular, from advertisements to cars to cosmetics. Flack's work brings in everyday household items like tubes of lipstick, perfume bottles, Hispanic Madonnas, and fruit.

She is self-taught in sculpture. She incorporates religion and mythology into her sculpture rather than the historical or everyday subjects of her paintings. Her sculptures often demonstrate a connection to the female form, including a series of diverse, heroic women and goddess figures. These depictions of women differ from those of traditional femininity, but rather are athletic, older, and strong. As Flack describes them: "they are real yet idealized... the 'goddesses in everywoman'." Flack lives and works in New York City and East Hampton. Her work can be found in the MOMA, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the National Museum of Women in the Arts. Additionally, she is the first woman artist, along with Mary Cassatt, to be included in Janson's *History of Art* text.



ART AT HOME – Clay Medea Head

What You'll Need:

- Air Dry Clay
- Surface cover to work on (newspaper, canvas, plastic table cover, etc.)
- Tools to sculpt clay (forks, spoons, carving tools, etc.)
- Wipes/towels for cleaning

Look at Flack's 'Medea' as well as her other work for inspiration before beginning. Look at the details of the faces and think about how you can create different facial expressions using your hands and whatever other tools you have at your disposal.

- Step 1 – Take a portion of the clay and begin to form it into the head. You can do this by rolling it into a sphere shape (it does not need to be a perfect circle). You can roll it between both hands or against your work surface.
- Step 2 – Using your hands and the tools you have gathered to manipulate the clay, begin to form the details of the face (cheekbones, lips, eyebrows, etc.) You can always smooth it and begin again if you don't like the way something looks at first.
- Step 3 – Begin rolling coils to create the hair. Take smaller portions of clay and roll them into snake like shapes. Start with a small amount of pressure and slowly increase it. Do your best to keep the coil an even thickness throughout.
- Step 4 – Carefully apply the ends of the coils to the top of the head. You will need to press down firmly to make sure the coils have attached.
- Step 5 – Place your Medea head somewhere safe to dry and clean your work area and supplies.

Tips:

- The best part about working with clay is that you can easily experiment with how the clay is shaped. It is a forgiving medium in that you can manipulate it easily. This project is an introduction to experimenting with clay so have fun and try out different methods!
- When using air dry clay, remember that it slowly dries while it is exposed to the air. Keep clay that you are not using in a container or wrapped up well, so it maintains moisture. While you can dip your fingertips in water to keep the clay slightly wet, use very little water otherwise it will become too muddy to use easily.
- Air dry clay can become brittle when it dries, so it is common for smaller parts to break off. With the coil hair, make sure the coils aren't too thin. If they break off after drying, you can use hot glue (or any other strong glue) to reattach the pieces.

Questions To Ask One Another:

- How does it feel to work with clay?
- Look at the face you created. List five adjectives that describe her expression.
- Write a paragraph describing what she is thinking.

Follow Up Project Suggestion:

- Choose your favorite mythological character, or write your own, and create their face using clay.