

## LESSON PLAN

# NATURE'S PALETTE: FALL EDITION

Suggested Levels: Grades 5th-advanced

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*Students will create ceramic fake food items inspired by fall harvest foods, utilizing vibrant glazes from Mayco's Stroke & Coat® line that reflect the colors of autumn. This project will enhance their skills in hand-building techniques, glazing, and understanding the thematic representation of seasonal change.*

*This project draws inspiration from Claes Oldenburg's iconic Pop Art, where everyday objects—like oversized sculptures of food—are transformed into playful, thought-provoking pieces. Through the lens of the fall harvest, students will create their own "fake food" sculptures, capturing the vibrancy and abundance of the season while exploring the intersection of art, culture, and environment in a Pop Art style.*

## OBJECTIVES

**I CAN...** create ceramic representations of fall harvest foods, inspired by Claes Oldenburg's exploration of exaggerated scale in art, learning how to transform ordinary objects into monumental, playful sculptures.

**I CAN...** add detailed textures to fake food sculptures, replicating the look and feel of fall harvest foods while experimenting with surface textures and glazes to enhance realism and visual interest

**I CAN...** reflect on how Oldenburg's work gives everyday objects deeper significance and consider how my own sculptures can represent the abundance of fall.

## NATIONAL VISUAL ART STANDARDS

### Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

- Combine ideas to generate an innovative idea for artmaking. Students brainstorm and sketch various fall harvest foods to develop creative, ceramic sculptures.

### Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

- Experiment and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches. Students use hand-building and glazing techniques to construct realistic or exaggerated representations of fall harvest foods.

### Perceive and analyze artistic work.

- Compare one's own interpretation of a work of art with the interpretation of others. Students discuss how their fake food sculptures are inspired by Claes Oldenburg's playful use of everyday objects and how their peers approached the theme.

### Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

- Identify how art is used to inform or change beliefs, values, or behaviors of an individual or society. Students reflect on the significance of fall harvest in culture and history, and how their sculptures can represent themes of abundance, celebration, or the importance of food in society.

## MEET THE MASTER



### **Claes Oldenburg** 1929-2022

was a Swedish-born American sculptor best known for his large-scale public art installations of everyday objects. A key figure in the Pop Art movement, Oldenburg created soft sculptures and monumental works that transformed ordinary

items—such as hamburgers, clothespins, and ice cream cones—into playful, oversized forms. His work often explored the relationship between art and consumer culture, blending humor with a critique of mass production. Notable works include “Spoonbridge and Cherry” in Minneapolis and “Clothespin” in Philadelphia. Oldenburg’s imaginative and accessible art made him one of the most influential sculptors of the 20th century.

*“I like to work in both directions, to make big things out of little things and little things out of big things.” — Claes Oldenburg*





# SUPPLY LIST

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## CLAY

- 5 lbs of claybody of choice

## BRUSHES AND TOOLS

- Rolling pin
- Texture tools (e.g., stamps, leaves, or other natural items)
- Various carving tools



## COLORS BY MAYCO

This lesson plan features Mayco's [Stroke & Coat® Kit 1 \(SC-KIT1\)](#). Stroke & Coat® is a highly versatile glaze with a wide firing range and can be used in every decorative way imaginable!

## ACTIVITY

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1. **Brainstorm:** Students will sketch their ideas for their ceramic fake foods, focusing on the shapes and colors they want to create.
2. **Select Foods:** Encourage students to choose their favorite fall harvest foods as inspiration.
3. **Building:** Students will use the chosen techniques to create their ceramic pieces, ensuring they capture the details of their selected food items.
4. **Texturing:** Students can use natural items (leaves, twigs) or tools to add texture to their pieces, making them more realistic.
5. **Drying:** Allow the pieces to dry completely before bisque firing in the kiln.
6. **Glazing:** Once the pieces are bisque-fired, students will apply glazes in bright colors representing fall.

### **TEACHER TIP:**

*Use a large plastic container with a lid as a damp box during the building process to keep all the small pieces together and prevent them from drying out.*

## DIRECTIONS

1. Begin with two round, golf ball-sized pieces of clay. Shape both pieces into pinch pots, ensuring they are as close in size as possible.
2. Score and apply slip to the edges of each pinch pot.



3. Carefully join the two pots together, as shown in the reference photo, and smooth the seam to make it less visible. Use a clay rib, card, or any flat surface to refine the seam.



4. Observe real fall foods for inspiration on texture and detail, incorporating those elements into your piece.



5. For the finishing touch, refer to the colors of real fall foods and use Stroke & Coat glazes to mix the perfect fall hues.





## EXTEND THE LEARNING *using Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory*

### LINGUISTIC (Word Smart)

Have students write reflective artist statements that describe their creative process, the meaning behind their sculptures, and how they've been influenced by Oldenburg's style, using formal art vocabulary.

Have students describe their ceramic food sculptures using rich, sensory language. Encourage them to explore how adjectives like "plump," "crispy," "juicy," or "decadent" can evoke the experience of the food they're representing.

### SPATIAL (Picture Smart)

Incorporate a mapping activity where students research and create visual maps of local farms, markets, or areas known for their fall harvests. They can represent these locations with symbols related to their ceramic pieces, linking geography to their art.

Host a virtual gallery tour where students can showcase their work online. They can create a digital layout that represents how their sculptures would be arranged in a physical space, considering sight lines and the flow of movement for viewers.

### INTERPERSONAL (People Smart)

Organize "artist talks" where students present their work and creative processes to the class. This encourages public speaking skills and fosters a supportive environment where students can celebrate each other's artistic endeavors.

Host a class event where students bring in food items related to their sculptures (real or replicas) to share with peers. This can foster discussions about cultural significance, personal connections to food, and how these elements can influence artistic expression.

### BODY KINESTHETIC (Body Smart)

Teach students a simple dance routine that incorporates movements representing food preparation or harvesting. As they learn the choreography, discuss how rhythm and movement can relate to the artistic process and the theme of abundance in their sculptures.

Set up stations with different materials that mimic the textures of various fall foods (e.g., rough bark, smooth glass, soft fabric). Students can explore these textures through touch and movement, discussing how texture influences their sculpture design.

### NATURALIST (Nature Smart)

Organize a class trip to a local farm or community garden during the fall harvest season. Students can observe and participate in harvesting crops, learning about the relationship between food, the environment, and art.

Assign students to research the origins of specific fall foods (such as pumpkins, apples, or corn). They can present their findings, discussing how these foods are grown and harvested, linking natural processes to their artwork.

### LOGICAL/ MATHEMATICAL (Word Smart)

Have students conduct a survey of favorite fall foods among their classmates or family. They can collect data, create charts or graphs to represent the results, and analyze the findings to see trends and preferences related to seasonal foods.

Introduce a budgeting exercise where students estimate the cost of materials needed for their sculptures. They can research prices for clay, glazes, and tools, then calculate a total budget, fostering practical math skills in a creative context.

### INTRAPERSONAL (Self Smart)

Ask students to reflect on how food is connected to their personal or family traditions, particularly during the fall harvest season. They can express these connections through their sculptures, making their art a personal representation of cultural identity.

At the end of the project, have students conduct a self-evaluation, assessing their creative choices, technical skills, and how effectively they conveyed their intended meaning. This helps them reflect on their growth as artists and individuals.

### MUSIC (Music Smart)

Examine traditional music associated with fall harvest celebrations from various cultures. Students can research and present different musical styles, instruments, and dances, discussing how these cultural elements are linked to food and harvest traditions.

Have students create soundscapes that represent the fall harvest season. They can incorporate sounds of nature, like rustling leaves, wind, and animal calls, as well as food-related sounds (e.g., chopping, boiling). This can help set the mood for their artistic process.

# RUBRIC

GRADING SCALE	RUBRIC COMMENTS
<p>EXCELLENT (16-20 POINTS)</p> <p>PROFICIENT (11-15 POINTS)</p> <p>DEVELOPING (6-10 POINTS)</p> <p>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (1-5 POINTS)</p>	<p>This rubric evaluates students based on creativity, construction techniques, detail, color usage, and overall effort, providing a comprehensive assessment of their work on the ceramic fake food project.</p>

	4 - EXCELLENT	3 - PROFICIENT	2 - DEVELOPING	1 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
CREATIVITY & ORIGINALITY	Demonstrates exceptional creativity and originality; the piece is unique and reflects thoughtful design choices.	Shows creativity and originality; the piece is interesting and well-designed.	Some creativity is evident; the piece is somewhat typical in design.	Lacks creativity and originality; the piece is very basic or unoriginal.
CONSTRUCTION & TECHNIQUE	The piece is well-constructed using appropriate hand-building techniques; all parts are securely attached and well-defined.	The piece is mostly well-constructed; minor issues in attachment or definition.	Construction shows basic understanding; some parts may be poorly attached or lack definition.	The piece is poorly constructed; significant issues with technique and attachment.
DETAIL & REALISM	Contains exceptional details that enhance the realism of the fake food; textures and features are well-represented.	Contains good details that add to the realism; most textures and features are present.	Some details are included; the piece lacks realism in certain areas.	Lacks details; the piece does not resemble the intended food item.
USE OF COLOR & GLAZING	Glazing is vibrant and well-executed; colors are bright and reflect the theme of fall harvest beautifully.	Glazing is good; colors are bright and appropriate for the theme with minor issues	Glazing is present, but colors may be dull or not fully reflective of the theme.	Glazing is poorly done or absent; colors do not reflect the fall harvest theme.
EFFORT & PARTICIPATION	Demonstrates outstanding effort and enthusiasm throughout the project; actively participates in all activities.	Shows good effort and participation; engages well with the project and classmates.	Displays some effort; participation may be inconsistent.	Shows little effort; limited participation in the project and activities.

FINAL GRADE	COMMENTS
	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>