



MUSEUM  
**WITHOUT WALLS™** AUDIO  
A program of the Association for Public Art

## LESSON PLAN

### *Iroquois*

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*Iroquois* (1983-1999)  
Mark di Suvero  
Photo: Gregory Benson

**TOPIC:** An Introduction to Public Art in Philadelphia for 4th/5th Grade

**Audio slideshow on TeacherTube:** <http://bit.ly/IroquoisTeacherTube>

**Downloadable audio program online:** <http://bit.ly/MWW-AUDIO-programs>

#### I. LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Goals: To acquaint students with one example of public art in Philadelphia, and introduce the idea of creating works intuitively with teamwork
2. Objectives:
  - A. The students will have a basic understanding of *Iroquois*, including how and why it was created.
  - B. Students will have a basic understanding of what the sculpture represents and how.
  - C. Students will explore the process of using teamwork to create something collectively and intuitively, and the potential this process can provide.

#### II. VIDEO INTRODUCTION (5 mins)

Begin by having the class watch the Association for Public Art's online audio slideshow for *Iroquois*:  
<http://bit.ly/IroquoisTeacherTube>

#### III. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK (10-20 mins)

*Iroquois* is a large-scale sculpture formed with industrial steel, created by internationally acclaimed artist Mark di Suvero. It was acquired by the Association for Public Art with the support of philanthropist David N. Pincus, and was installed in its current location on Philadelphia's Benjamin Franklin Parkway in June 2007.

As listeners to the audio program learn, di Suvero continually alters his sculptures as he works, allowing each step in his process to inspire his next one. Although he begins with drawings on paper, he continues to alter the design until it is finally all welded together. Welding metal is an ancient technique that has become far more popular with the incorporation of electricity in the 19th and 20th centuries. Welding is done by heating two pieces of metal and then laying molten metal in the joint to make a strong bond as the metal cools.

The sculpture *Iroquois* is over 40 feet tall and weighs 35,000 pounds. Because it is so large, the artwork must be both aesthetic and structural – like a building. The artist, di Suvero, works with the same industrial materials used to construct homes and skyscrapers. His monumental sculptures can be walked around, under, and through, creating a complete space of their own. Unlike architects and builders, though, di Suvero does not rely on a

model or blueprint to guide his construction. However, similar to a skyscraper, the artist relies on his construction manager and a team of installers to help build his massive sculptures.

#### V. CLASS DISCUSSION (10-20 mins)

1. Have the class look at the sculpture/image. Begin by encouraging general conversation, for example by asking (2 mins):

- What do you see?
- What is being depicted; is anything being depicted?

2. If the class is familiar with the elements of design, discuss how these elements are being used in the sculpture (3 mins):

- Is a form being depicted? (non-figurative abstract form)
- Where are the visual points in the sculpture? (the “central knot,” points of the legs, etc)
- What are the basic lines of the sculpture? (long diagonal lines, vertical lines)
- Color, texture, plane, value also could be discussed.

3. Have the class discuss the artist’s process (3 mins):

- How does this image vary from building construction sites you’ve seen?
- What is the role of the “central knot?” (The central knot shape and brilliant red color suggest a Chinese influence.)
- Do you think there are advantages to working intuitively like the artist does?
- Do you think there are disadvantages?
- Do you think the artist would be able to create this piece without help?
- What role do you think teamwork played in the process?
- This piece is non-figurative, but it has a very specific process for its creation. Do you think this process is communicating a theme as well as the image itself?

4. If the class has previously looked at other public works, compare with them the different goals of the sculptures and formal techniques utilized to achieve these goals (4 mins). (This lesson can be paired with the lesson plan for *Kopernik* or *Jesus Breaking Bread*.)

#### V. ACTIVITY: BUILDING AND TEAMWORK (10-20 mins)

MATERIALS:

- Large “Gumdrops” or gummy candies (such as orange slices)
- Small “Gumdrops” or gummy candies (such as spice drops)
- Toothpicks/ Wooden Skewer
- Scissors

Divide students into groups of about four to six. Provide each student with a small amount of toothpicks/skewers (2-3, ideally in different sizes) and a small amount of gumdrops (1-2). Provide each group with one large gumdrop.

Instruct groups to create a “central knot” or joint with the one large gumdrop by having each student place a toothpick/skewer into it where they desire. Once each student has contributed to the central joint, have students take turns using their gumdrops as welds and their toothpicks as beams, and have them intuitively add to the sculpture. Remind the groups that structure, as well as aesthetics, should be considered.

#### VI. CLEAN UP (5-10 mins)

## VII. STATE STANDARDS

### Arts and Humanities

9.1.3.A: Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.  
Elements (Visual Arts): color • form/shape • line • space • texture • value

9.1.3.B: Recognize, know, use, and demonstrate a variety of appropriate arts elements and principles to produce, review, and revise original works in the arts.  
Elements (Visual Arts): paint • draw • craft • sculpt • print • design for environment, communication, multi-media

9.1.3.C: Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the art forms.

9.1.3.I: Identify arts events that take place in schools and in communities.

## VIII. EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT:

1. Was student attentive during video/historical background?
2. Did the student participate in class discussion? Did this participation reflect attentiveness during video? Did this participation reflect application to previous lessons?
3. Did the student participate in activity?
4. Was student respectful to other students' opinions and work during lesson?

## IX. PRE/POST-VISIT MATERIALS

1. This lesson can be paired with the lesson *Introduction to Public Art*
2. This lesson can be paired with the Association for Public Art's lesson for *Jesus Breaking Bread*. Related themes include:
  - attempts to create images that represent our community
  - comparison of formal elements
  - comparison of figurative versus abstract sculpture
  - comparison of calculated versus intuitive processes
3. This lesson can be paired with the Association for Public Art's lesson for *Kopernik*. Related themes include:
  - similar formal elements
  - abstract public art
  - metal sculpture
  - comparison of formal elements

## X. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Resources for teaching about modern art: Museum of Modern Art's Teacher Resources Page:  
<http://www.moma.org/modernteachers/>

The Association for Public Art: <http://www.associationforpublicart.org>





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How to request hi-res/additional images:  
<http://associationforpublicart.org/image-requests>

