

## Clay Head Sculpture lesson plan



### National Curriculum: KS3 Art

Dora Gordine was a famous female sculptor of her time and made many portraits of famous and not so famous people in her studio at Dorich House in London. These were mostly modelled in clay on a wire armature a technique that is still used by artists today.

Find out more about how they were made and give your class the opportunity to work in exactly the same way as Dora Gordine by watching the videos on the lesson plan page.

<https://www.culturestreet.org.uk/lesson.php?id=34>

### Learning Objectives

Pupils should increase their proficiency in the handling of different materials. In addition students can gain knowledge and understanding of the work and approaches of artists, craftspeople or designers from contemporary and/or historical contexts, periods, societies and cultures. Students can refine their ideas as work progresses through experimenting with media, materials, techniques and process.

## Overview

This lesson plan can be used:

- To start a sculpture project.
- To develop ideas and understanding of processes and materials.
- As part of study of any artist using armature building, modelling or lost wax casting as part of their process.
- As part of individual study

## Suggested Classroom Activity

### Part 1.

#### Background - **Sculptor Dora Gordine**

Dora Gordine modelled heads of famous people, friends and locals at her studio in Dorich House. Her sculpture was made by modelling clay on a wire armature and was later cast into bronze or plaster. In the video Glyniss Lipscombe from Dorich House Museum describes how she worked.



There is a longer version of this film elsewhere on CultureStreet where a Year 9 group find out about Dora Gordine, Dorich House and her other sculpture.

## Part 2.

### Modelling in clay on a wire armature

This short time-lapse video shows the making of a basic wire armature and the addition of clay to make a simple sculpture of a head.



This is a low cost workshop that anyone can try by watching the video a few times and seeing how the artist works. If you follow our top tips you will have success.

### What you will need

To make a clay sculpture in response to the brief you will need:



-Some bendable sturdy wire and a small piece of chicken wire for the armature and a piece of chipboard with four holes drilled in it. Ready made armatures for heads are available to buy but they tend to be expensive so we made our own.

-Clay. We used the cheapest terracotta clay but any grey pottery clay will be fine. We used a basic pottery clay tool set but you can use plastic cutlery or anything else you can find.yourself.

## Development Activity

There are a number of other resources on CultureStreet about artists and sculpture using clay that can be used to support this lesson plan. You could start with CultureStreet's section on Halima Cassell and the clay workshop inspired by her work. In this workshop Carving Clay Halima describes a sculpture project she was set at art college that inspired her and you can try the same project.

Andy Goldsworthy uses clay to cover a wall at Yorkshire sculpture Park

There is also a more basic an artist led workshop Clay workshop where students make animal themed clay pots which is more suited to whole class activity or a younger group.

