

BYU MUSEUM OF ART

SEPTEMBER 2022
OPEN STUDIO- OF SOULS
& SACRAMENTS

In today's open studio, we'll be looking at how the symbols used in the art throughout this exhibit help us better understand what the piece is about. We'll pay special attention to works that are three-dimensional to gain inspiration for the project we will work on in the studio. Let's get started!

First, find the work entitled **The Nativity**. The painting shows a quiet scene after the birth of baby Jesus. Notice all of the details that contribute to the feeling of the moment: the subdued lighting, the warm colors, and the adoring faces of the onlookers. Next, look at the frame surrounding the painting.

Why do you think paintings have frames?

Frames help to hang a work, to protect a work, to set the work apart from the wall, but they can also emphasize the work and add to its meaning! What details do you see in this frame? What might some of the symbols mean? Find the examples listed below and then ask yourself- how does this frame affect or enhance the message of the painting?



Angels- indicate heavenly presence at Christ's birth.

Dove- indicates the presence of the Holy Ghost at this sacred event.

Golden rays of light in clouds- indicates presence of God the Father

Flowers- could symbolize new life, both the birth of Christ and foreshadowing the new life he will offer as sacrifice

Laurel leaves- represent victory- Christ's birth is the beginning of victory over death



Several other works of art in this exhibit also have ornate decoration and symbolic motifs in their frames. Can you find these other works? What types of symbols do you see in these frames? How would the painting change if placed in a different frame?

Now see if you can find these three-dimensional artworks within the exhibit!



These three-dimensional works were made by a subtractive method called carving. The artists, Stanislaw Duzynski and Roman Sledz, hand carved these pieces out of wood. The figures in each work represent the people and symbolically represent stories from the life of Christ.

What do you notice about the surface texture of each piece? Are they rough? Are they smooth? What significance does the texture add to the mood or meaning of the scene?

What difference do you notice between the three-dimensional carvings and a painting? What emotions do you see on the faces of the figures? How do the emotional gestures and facial expressions of the carved figures change what you feel about the piece?

Now that we've looked at some three-dimensional pieces and talked about how symbols help us make and understand meaning, let's head up to the studio to begin the project!

OPEN STUDIO PROJECT

SUPPLIES:

- BAR OF SOAP
- CARVING TOOLS



Get inspired by some of these symbols, or think of one on your own!

Art has the important task of visually portraying concepts that are not tangible, like feelings, ideas, and experiences through the use of symbols. Symbolism can be something depicted both two dimensionally and three dimensionally.

In this activity, you will be using symbols we looked at in the gallery to create a work of art.

Get creative! Take a bar of soap and think about what symbol you'd like to make. If you've never carved soap before, you may want to choose a simple symbol, like a leaf or a bird. If this is not your first time, feel free to try something a little more challenging!



Instructions: Select a bar of soap and your tools! It can help to gently carve away the soap logo to have a blank workspace. Tools with larger metal hoops will make it easier to remove larger bits of soap, while smaller hoops will be better at creating small details. Carve the soap to the shape of your liking! Be careful when carving deeply into the soap, as the metal tools are sharp!