



Textures in Art with Antoni Gaudí

Created by Mindy Kirton

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Motivation

Inspired by the textures found in the architectural designs of Antoni Gaudí, students will explore creating actual texture on a clay surface. They will make the clay by combining flour, salt, and water and lay it out on a piece of cardboard. Texture will be enhanced by adding tiles, beads, or glass pebbles and paint.

Student Objectives

- Introduce students to the ornate architectural designs of Antoni Gaudí
- Learn to create actual texture, emphasizing balance and harmony.
- Demonstrate skill in use of tools and process: clay and tilework.

Historical and Cultural Connections

Antoni Gaudí i Cornet was a famous Spanish Modernist architect born June 25, 1852 in Catalonia, northern Spain and was the youngest of 5 children. He had really bad health when he was younger, so he spent a lot of his time alone or outdoors studying nature. When he got older he was apprenticed at a textile mill. Later he moved to Barcelona to study architecture. He graduated in 1878 and went to work as a draftsman drawing buildings for various architects and construction contractors. His first designs were for lamp posts and his first house design, the Casa Vicens is considered one of the first significant buildings in the Art Nouveau movement.

His buildings go beyond just simple structures and every inch of the outsides and much of the insides were usually carved, twisted or covered in colorful tilework of glass, ceramic, marble and stone called *trencadís* (or chopped) mosaics. Because most of his designs are curved, cutting tiles and placing them by hand was impractical. The story goes that one day Gaudí visited the ceramics workshop of Lluís Bru and, when he saw how slowly he was putting the [tile] pieces in place, Gaudí got impatient, grabbed a tile, broke it and said: "We have to put them on by the handful, like this, or we'll never finish!" The rough mosaic allowed Gaudí to use tiles flexibly even on rounded shapes. It also allowed him to recycle and reuse materials.

He was inspired by oriental arts in India, Persia and Japan, the Moorish influence of art in southern Spain, and later was influenced by then neo-Gothic movement in France which was in fashion at the time. His later more organic style of work was inspired by nature, and many of his details were whimsical and unexpected.

He paid attention not only to the form of the building, but to each of the details including the ironwork, carpentry, stained glass, ceramics, plaster and window placement for optimal lighting. Every part had to be harmonious to other pieces and well-proportioned including the furniture and lighting fixtures on the inside of the buildings and the landscaping outside. He also designed outdoor public places such as the Parque Güell which was commissioned by his rich patron Eusebi Güell who discovered Antoni and his work at the World's Fair in Paris In 1878.

Gaudi never married and devoted his entire life to his work. He received many honors for his unusual building designs, but his greatest accomplishment was his work on the Basilica la Sagrada Familia, in Barcelona. From 1915 until his death* in 1926 he devoted himself entirely to the project. Several of Gaudi's buildings including Casa Batlló known by the locals as the 'house of bones' because of its organic structure, have been granted World Heritage status by UNESCO and each year since 2013 on June 10, the day Antonio died, the World Art Nouveau Day is celebrated. He is one of the world's most notable modern artists.

(*He was hit by a street trolley on his way to work and was knocked unconscious. Everyone thought he was a beggar and didn't offer aid until someone finally called him a taxi to the hospital where he was recognized by one of the ministers at the Sagrada Familia who knew him. He passed away two days later – but best to leave this part out for younger kids.)

Vocabulary

Art Nouveau: In architecture, this style is defined by its ornate paper mâché or terra cotta decorations, often times painted pastel colors, covering a building or surface.

Balance: The way in which the elements in visual arts are arranged to create a feeling of equilibrium in a work of art. The three types of balance are symmetry, asymmetry, and radial.

Contrast: The arrangement of opposite elements to create an effect. For instance, dark and light, smooth and rough, or large and small.

Harmony: The way all elements in a design flow together peacefully and support each other.

Modernism: An art style inspired by the industrial revolution's technological advances.

Neo-Gothic or Gothic: The revival in architecture used pointed arches, fancy carvings, elaborate spires, and steep roofs.

Organic: Art that shows movement, twists and natural curves and edges.

Positive and Negative Space: Art that uses both the shape of the main object (positive space) and the area surrounding it (negative space) as part of the interest in the artwork

Texture: The way the surface of a work of art looks or feels smooth, rough, shiny, fuzzy, etc.

Tilework: The use of small pieces of colored glass or ceramic to cover a surface.

Supplies:

Air dry clay or Salt dough (recipe to follow)

Mosaic tiles (rounded not sharp glass)

Cardboard carton board

White glue

Watercolor or acrylic paints

Brushes for glue and paint

Water container

Paper towel

Pencil

Assorted items to create texture: rocks, beads, brushes, combs, roller, etc.

Scissors

Salt Dough Recipe:

- 1 cup flour
- 1/4 cup salt
- 1/2 cup water

Mix together and knead for 1-2 minutes until smooth. Dough should not be sticky or crumbly, modify small amounts of water/flour as needed. Will make one project.

Set-up: Video Instruction:

- Ingredients for salt dough
- Cardboard: Cut square or rectangle from a carton (about 8" X 10")
- White glue and brush
- Assorted items to make textures
- Assorted tiles, beads, and stones
- Watercolor paint, brush, water container, and paper towel
- Access to artist's video
- AAYF project label cut out

Step-by-Step:

1. Complete the AAYF project label:
 - Cut out the label, following shape lines as a guide.
 - Holding the cardboard horizontal, glue the label onto the board.
 - Turn cardboard over.
 - Set scissors aside.
2. Start artist's video: Pause the video whenever additional time is needed to complete a task.
3. Coat the cardboard in glue.
4. Place a flattened lump of clay in the middle of the cardboard and squish flat to ¼ inch around the board. Trim off excess clay.
5. Use the tools to make impressions in the clay, pinch parts upwards or use extra clay to create ridges to divide the art into sections. Focus on balance and harmony as well as contrast in creating the patterns.
 - Include gemstones, crystals, or mosaic tiles. Glue in place if necessary.
 - Paint the clay using different colors in depressions or on ridges. If you are using watercolor it can be done immediately or after it dries. If you are using acrylic, wait until the artwork dries completely. Use glue to fix any bits that don't stick.
6. Once dried, art can be sprayed with clear acrylic spray and mounted on black museum board with foam tape, or hung as is.

Project Notes:

- Drying time on this project varies depending on the clay and the humidity. If the clay isn't dry in 3 days you can place the art on a baking sheet and place in a low oven (under 200 degrees) for 30 min to an hour.
- Salt dough will feel rubbery even when dry in thicker areas of the artwork.
- Keep students from pressing the dough all the way to the cardboard.

Additional Resources:

<https://www.biography.com/artist/antoni-gaudi>

<https://www.casabatllo.es/en/antoni-gaudi/>

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/320/>

Who is Gaudi? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EF-xx2grnkY>

Time documentary Sagrada Familia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4GXJS547q>

Aesthetic Valuing

1. What was your favorite tool for making texture?
2. What shapes and colors did you repeat to create harmony?
3. Did you enjoy the process of making your own clay?
4. Would you like to live in a house designed by Gaudi?

About Mindy Kirton, Presenting Artist

Mindy Kirton has been drawing and painting from a very young age and loves color and the creative process. She graduated with a degree in Graphic Design and Advertising from Utah State University and currently runs her own freelance design business. She has lived in California for 7 years and for most of that she's volunteered as the project manager for the Art to Grow On program in San Pedro. She loves teaching art to students and watching as they create something beautiful.

Art At Your Fingertips is a Palos Verdes Art Center school-based outreach program in partnership with the Palos Verdes Unified School District and the Palos Verdes Library District. Founded in 1976, this volunteer program annually brings quality visual arts education to almost 7,000 transitional kindergarten through fifth grade students at public and private schools on the Palos Verdes Peninsula as well as schools and organizations beyond the Peninsula.

We thank PTA, PTO, and Booster Club for their support.

Antoni Gaudi

Learn more about the artist's imagination
and craftsmanship.

You can find these materials in one of the Palos Verdes Library District libraries

Building on Nature: the life of Antoni Gaudi

J Bio GAUDI, A. RODRIGUEZ

Discover how Gaudi's childhood love of nature inspired his journey to become an architect.

Sagrada Familia: The Astonishing Story of Gaudi's Unfinished Masterpiece

Adult Nonfiction 726.64 VAN HENSBERGEN

An illuminating biography of one of the most famous--and most famously unfinished--buildings in the world, the Sagrada Familia of Barcelona.

Gaudi: Visionary Architect

Adult Nonfiction 720.924 THEIBAUT

Antoni Gaudi was at the forefront of the art nouveau movement in Barcelona. This is an introduction to all of Gaudi's designs, technological innovations and building methods.

A Dragon on the Roof: A Children's Book Inspired by Antoni Gaudi

J Picture ALIX

Set in Casa Batlló, one of Antoni Gaudí's most renowned buildings, this joyful story introduces young readers to the architect's work, inciting their curiosity and imagination along the way.

Sagrada: The Mystery of Creation

DVD Nonfiction 726.5 SAGRADA

This documentary examines the history of the "Sagrada Família" in Barcelona, an unfinished Roman Catholic church originally designed by Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí.

Around the Internet

Gaudi House Museum Virtual Tour

<https://bit.ly/3gqF9Tn>

History of the Sagrada Familia Temple

<https://bit.ly/39Stprp>



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