

Commissioner-Artist-Model-Sculpture Art Activity

Explain: To become a well known sculptor like Saint-Gaudens, first you have to win a major commission.

1. What is a commission?
2. How would you win a commission?
3. What does it mean to be a commissioner?

Explain: A commissioner decides **who or what** he or she wants a sculpture of, **how large it** will be, what it will be **made of**, when it **needs to be done** by, and where it will be **placed**.

1) Sculptures come in different sizes.

- a) If a figure is created life- sized, it is called a life- sized sculpture.
- b) If it larger than life, it is called heroic.
- c) If it is really large, it is called colossal.
- d) And if it is smaller than life -size, it is called a reduction.

2) Sculptures can be made out of different materials.

- a) What materials might be considered for a large outdoor sculpture? Why?
- b) What materials would break down over time outside? What materials would last for centuries? (*David* by Michelangelo, in Rome; *The Thinker* by Rodin, in Rome)
- c) Can you think of any sculptures that have been around for thousands of years? (Buddhas carved in the cliffs of Afghanistan; buried soldiers guarding an ancient emperor's tomb in China)
- d) Some environmental sculptures are meant to change with the weather and seasons. (Andy Goldsworthy)
- e) Would you rather outlive your sculptures or have your sculptures remain hundreds of years after you've died? Why?

- Divide students into groups (minimum in a group-4)

Explain: There are commissioners on the grounds right now and sculptors who will try their best to win a commission. There are models whose fine features will be immortalized for all time, and there are materials that will come to life under the sculptor's hands.

Divide up roles in the group.

1) 1 commissioner-

- a) Announces that he or she wants a sculpture to commemorate _____ (a historical event, an important person, or an allegorical figure.- i.e. a figure to represent truth, courage, friendship, victory, or some other virtue or ideal.)
- b) The commissioner decides how big the sculpture will be and what it will be made of.

2) 1-2 sculptors-

- a) The sculptor(s) draw sketches and make models to submit to the commissioner.

3) 1 or more models-

- a) The models take the poses that the sculptor requires.

4) 1 or more to be the sculpture-

- a) The sculpture (person) allows themselves to be moved and posed to mirror the pose of the model.

If there are enough staff, have the rangers do an example.

Instructions:

- 1) The Commissioner will decide what is to be commemorated and makes an announcement about a competition. "I am looking for a sculptor to make a memorial to _____"
(Event, Person, or Ideal)
- 2) The whole group can talk about where their sculpture will be placed. (e.g. in a city park, inside your state house, on the top of Mt. St. Helen, in the children's ward at Dartmouth Hitchcock)
- 3) Artists get busy thinking about how they would complete their project and submit their ideas to the Commissioner.
- 4) The Commissioner accepts or rejects ideas, and finally chooses the entry he or she likes best.
- 5) Once the Commissioner has chosen the sculptor and approved his or her ideas for the project, they will give the sculptor an allowance in order for them to get the sculpture started.
 - a) What would the sculptor need money for? (Food, rent, models, materials)
- 6) The Sculptor then hires a model, and tells them how to pose. FREEZE
- 7) Next the Sculptor gets his or her materials out and creates the sculpture. FREEZE

Each group will announce to the larger group who or what their sculpture is about, what size it is, what it is made out of, and where it will be placed.

Visit the Farragut

Explain that the memorial to Admiral David Glasgow Farragut was Saint-Gaudens' first major commission. It brought him notoriety, and allowed him to get many more commissions and to get married. An image of the Farragut monument can be seen at the webpage below.

<http://www.forgottendelights.com/images/Photos%20for%20NYsc%20index/Farragut.jpg>

Glossary

Commissioner: an official chosen by an association to exercise broad administrative or judicial authority. An art commissioner would choose the artist to execute the piece of art work they wanted done.

Commission: a task or matter committed to one's charge; official assignment..

Sculptor: an artist who creates 3 dimensional art work, or bas relief.