

The Harlin Museum History Works Project

November 1, 2, 3, 2006

Art Sessions Report

by teaching artist Pat Hight

GOAL

Our goal for the art activity portion of History Works was to introduce the children to the materials and techniques that L.L. Broadfoot used in 1930 to 1942 when he produced more than 130 portraits of then living early pioneers of the Ozarks.

ART ACTIVITY

The art portion of History Works focused on students learning some new drawing skills using charcoal pencils and charcoal sticks.

The students learned:

- * about different grades of charcoal that give lighter or darker lines and tones.
- * how to hold the charcoal, which is softer than graphite, and avoid pressing too hard and breaking the charcoal.
- * about erasing and blending charcoal to create tones from gray to black, and the usefulness of that skill in creating forms that appear to have volume.
- * the basic proportions of the human face necessary to create believable portraits.

The children had two sessions in art. In the first session they were taught the above techniques and put them to use in a drawing of a pumpkin, and in drawing each other's portraits. In the second art session the children viewed a selection of the Broadfoot portraits and selected an element of their choice and copied it. Some of those drawings are displayed next to the portrait from which they were copied.

Teachers were invited to draw and provided with materials in both sessions. Students and teachers both enjoyed drawing and all worked intensely and quietly and many produced excellent drawings. A selection of work from both sessions was displayed at the Harlin Museum in its own section of the Broadfoot exhibit.

MATERIALS

Each student was provided with a kit that had one kneaded eraser, one paper blending stomp, one blending rag, four pencils: one white charcoal pencil and three black charcoal pencils HB, 4B, 6B, one square soft charcoal stick, 4 sheets of inexpensive manilla paper with good tooth, and 2 pieces of medium quality white charcoal drawing paper. Students were provided with a masonite drawing board and 2 clothes pins to clip down their paper.

PERSONNEL

Volunteer artists were recruited to teach these sessions. Two art teachers were needed for the introductory session, and one art teacher for the second art session. Several helpers were needed to hand out supplies that

were organized on a table the children had to pass by on their way into the session. Three or four helpers were kept busy tearing paper into the required sizes, keep pencils sharpened, and keep kits complete. In one full day and two half days we served 300 fourth grade students. At the end of the last day, it took all the teachers and helpers to sort and select the drawings for display. Gallery carpets required cleaning as expected!

EVALUATION

Given the time restrictions of half-hour sessions, I think we did a good job of presenting a large amount of information and offering a chance to practice the lesson. As I said above students and teachers both seemed well focused on practicing techniques and making drawings. The overall quality of the drawings indicates success. Display of the children's drawings at the Harlin has been very popular.

I loved the sessions and the children's efforts and attitudes, which were excellent.

THINGS I WOULD CHANGE

*I would offer fewer pencil choices and another stick charcoal choice. Having 3 different grades of charcoal pencils didn't really mean much to fourth graders.

*I would also eliminate the paper stomps as they weren't very effective on the charcoal pencil marks, and order fewer cans of fixative as it became apparent that not all drawings would be kept. At least one more volunteer would be needed to keep up with fixing the drawings.

*I would also have all paper torn to size and kits made up before the event begins.

*In this program we moved the children for the second session. I would rather have a one-hour session with no moving in order to have the extra time for drawing.

*The other change I would make is some way to return some of the children's drawings to them.

ITEMIZED SUPPLY LIST

210 charcoal pencils
70 pieces jumbo charcoal sticks
70 kneaded erasers
70 paper blending stomps
1000 18x24 sheets of rough manila paper
200 sheets of medium quality white charcoal paper
5 cans fixative

Total materials cost: \$400

Some paper was left over, plus all other supplies except for the charcoal sticks, which were mostly used up. Expenses will be much less next year when we repeat this program, because we already have most of the supplies.