
Art Masterpiece - "Giant Hamburger" Claes Oldenburg

Keywords: Scale, Shape, Texture and Soft Sculpture

Grade: 5th

Activity: Soft Sculpture

Objective: Making familiar objects "larger than life"



Meet the Artist:

One of the original Pop artists, Claes Oldenburg was born in Stockholm the son of a Swedish diplomat, and spent his early years in Stockholm and Oslo until they moved to Chicago in 1937. He attended Yale University, then returned to Chicago, where he worked for a newspaper and also attended drawing classes at The Art Institute. Oldenburg moved to New York in 1956. In 1961 he rented a storefront on the Lower East Side and sold brightly painted plaster objects, three dimensional and wall reliefs, based on hamburgers, pastries, men's and women's clothing, and other commodities derived from his surroundings. The signature soft sculptures followed, objects of commonplace household objects made of vinyl or canvas stuffed with kapok. The soft sculptures transformed the medium, and they are intended as sensual experiences and commentary on our material world of objects and our relationship to them.

Oldenburg realized his first outdoor public monument in 1967; Placid Civic Monument took the form of a Conceptual performance/action behind the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, with a crew of gravediggers digging a six-by-three-foot rectangular hole in the ground. About that same time he also proposed colossal art projects for several cities, and by 1969, his first such iconic work, Lipstick (Ascending) on Caterpillar Tracks, was installed at Yale University. Most of his large-scale projects were made with the collaboration of Coosje van Bruggen, whom he married in 1977.

Over the past three decades, Oldenburg's works have been the subject of numerous performances and exhibitions, including the 1964 Venice Biennale. In 1985, *Il Corso del Coltello* was performed in Venice. It included the Knife Ship, a giant Swiss Army knife equipped with oars; for the performance, the ship was set afloat in front of the Arsenal in an attempt to combine art, architecture, and theater. The Knife Ship traveled to museums throughout America and Europe from 1986 to 1988. Oldenburg was honored with a solo exhibition of his work at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1969, and with a retrospective organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, in 1995. Oldenburg lives in New York.

Activity: Soft Sculpture

Supplies:

- *Giant Hamburger* art print
- Two, 2'x 2' sheets of white butcher paper (pair for each student)
- Markers or Crayons
- Staplers and box of staples
- Clean grocery bags (you can find a box of bags under the counter by the window)
- Copies of sheets with pop-culture images (1 per table) or you can bring in items such as soda cans, candy wrappers, t-shirt with pop-culture image, etc...

Process:

- Look at pictures of Claes Oldenburg's sculptures and talk about Pop Art.
- Ask the students what objects they think a pop artist would choose to represent today.
- Pass out Pop-Culture Image sheets and/or items you've brought, and ask students to choose a simple item or package of food or drink that appeals to them. It can be a carrot, a chocolate-chip cookie, a slice of pizza, an ice cream cone, a box of cereal, or any other common edible object, or wrapping for such an object.
- Ask students to think about the shapes of the items they have chosen. The carrot, for example, has a long, narrow triangular shape, the cookie is round, and so on.
- Give students two large sheets (2'x2') of butcher paper and have them enlarge their choice of subject. Make it "larger than life".
- Have students color in their art with crayons - the brighter and bolder the better.
- Students may color image on both sheets of paper, but one side is okay too.
- When they have cut out both front and back pieces, they can staple them around the perimeter of image, leaving an open space (3-5 inches) to stuff with plastic bags or newspaper to create a "pillow" or Soft Sculpture.
- For stapling: Put staples no more than an inch apart for best results.

Note: While cutting out their image, they should cut $\frac{1}{2}$ inch around the perimeter of the image, leaving enough space to staple around their drawing.



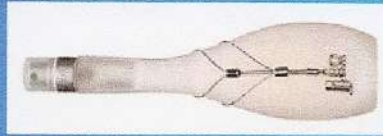
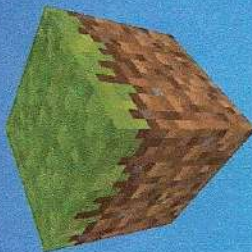
Pop-Culture Image Sheets

SPORTS

ELECTRONICS/ENTERTAINMENT

SOCIAL MEDIA

FASHION & BEAUTY



FAVORITE RESTAURANT LOGO'S, DRINKS & FOODS

