

## Pop Art Clay Portraits

Transfer a “selfie” or favorite celebrity onto a slab, then take inspiration from Andy Warhol with wild color!

Andy Warhol was a key figure in the mid-20th century Pop Art movement. Warhol created several “mass-produced” silkscreened images from photographs of celebrities such as Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, and Jackie Onassis. His uses of repetition as well as bold and non-representational color choices were inspired by popular culture, rather than his own interior life, and became an iconic style.

Students can create their own Warhol-style portraits on a very different medium — clay! Start by choosing either a self-portrait or a photo of a favorite pop icon, then transfer an image onto a slab following the simple technique described in this lesson plan. Use firing clay or air-dry clay, and add color with ceramic glazes or paint. Students can experiment with repetition and learn how various color combinations affect an image, just as Warhol did.

**GRADES 3-12** Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

### Preparation

1. Students select a photograph of themselves or a pop icon. Make copies approximately 5" x 7" by ink-jet printing or photocopying (not laser printing). Digitally posterized the image to make the lines easier to follow.
2. Divide the clay (need approximately 1 lb per student).
3. Cover tables with unprimed canvas.

### Process

1. Roll a slab of clay approximately 1/4" thick by 6" wide by 8" long. Lift and move it to a board.
2. Simplifying the detail, trace the lines of the printed image with a watersoluble marker. These lines will transfer to the clay.
3. Lay the printed image face down on the slab and smooth to ensure good contact. Allow 30–60 seconds for ink to transfer. If clay is too dry, mist paper with water.



### Materials (required)

Printed or photocopied image, one per student

[Blick Broadline Waterbased Markers](#), Black (21224-2001); one per student

[Mini Ribbon Tools](#), Set of 6 (30397-9339); share four sets across class

### For Kiln Firing:

[Blick Talc-Free White Firing Clay](#), 50 lb box, (30544-1050); share one across class

[Amaco Lead-Free Velvet Underglazes](#), assorted colors, 16 oz (30425-); share Black and at least six colors across class

### For Air-Drying:

[Amaco Stonex White Self-Hardening Clay](#), 25 lb bag (33247-1025); share one across class

[Blick Studio Acrylics](#), assorted colors, 250 ml tubes (01637-); share black and at least six colors across class

### Materials (optional)

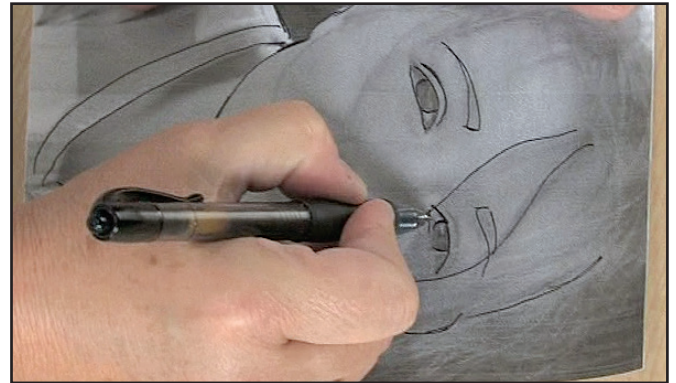
[Activa Plus Clay](#), Black, 2.2 lb (33275-2051)



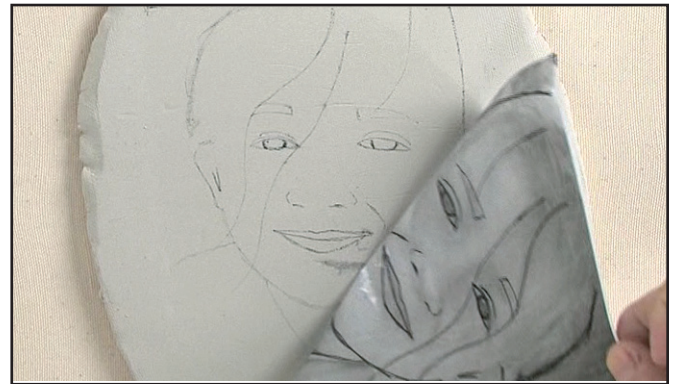




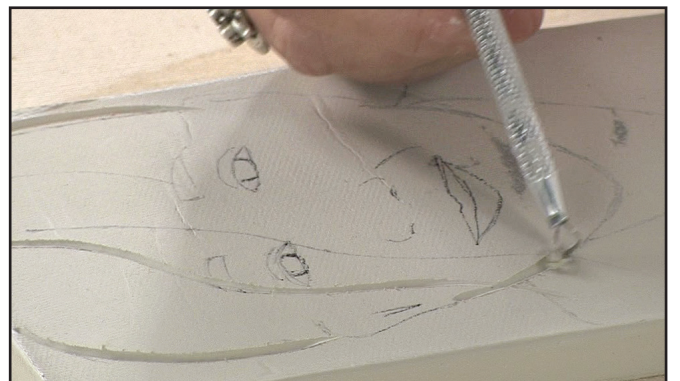
*Step 1: Roll clay into a slab slightly larger than the image.*



*Step 2: Using a waterbased marker, trace the main features of the image.*



*Step 3: Place the image face down onto the clay. Lightly rub over it and wait 60 seconds for transfer.*



*Step 4: Carve the lines with mini loop tools or by placing a clear plastic bag over the tile and tracing with a pen.*

### Process, continued

4. Use a ruler to cut it into a tile, just slightly larger than the image. Wet fingers and smooth sides.
5. After the tile has dried slightly, carve or incise the dark lines of the transfer by:
  - a) Using a triangular-shaped mini-ribbon tool or other small modeling tool.
  - b) Placing a clear plastic bag over the image and tracing the lines with a ballpoint pen.
6. After carving, sponge lightly over the surface to smooth and remove remaining transfer. Dry slowly on the board, turning occasionally.
7. Bisque fire the tiles to Cone 04 or 1915°F, if using firing clay.
8. After the tiles are bisqued or dry, use ceramic underglazes or acrylic paints. Brush black into the carved lines first, then sponge any excess away from the surface of the tile and allow to dry. Add brighter colors, starting with the lightest. If using underglazes, the tile must be re-fired to bisque temperature.

### Options

- Make a series of two or more tiles and vary the color to see how it affects the image.
- If using air-dry clay, black clay may be used so that incised lines will not require filling with black paint.

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## National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

### Creating

**Anchor Standard 1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

**Anchor Standard 2:** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

### Responding

**Anchor Standard 9.1:** Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

