

The Legacy of Joe Fafard



A Teacher's Guide

MacKenzie Art Gallery

Cover: *Mon Père*

...in Joe's portrayal of his father, Léopold sits on the edge of his kitchen chair, obviously talking or, rather, listening. He is very present, but he sits as a man who works with his hands and is used to moving about. There is a certain sense that he is present but could also get up and be absent. The figure has authority, a paterfamilias quality, but there is vulnerability, or hesitancy or perhaps gullibility, in the stance as well. The chair leans back and would have welcomed him to recline and relax, but he is perched on the edge, ready to say the next thing, ready to move on. It is a respectful representation of his father, but one that limits closeness to the roles of father and son, leaving the viewer with the understanding that there is an unexplored potential for intimacy.

Terrence Heath¹

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Introduction

In my work as a Gallery Educator I often hear students express the opinion that artists live lives of privilege. They will tell me that artists are well-off and that they don't really have to work very hard. I hear comments such as: *an artist can paint a stripe down the middle of a canvas, call it art, and make a million dollars*. In 2007, artist Joe Fafard was named Regina's Citizen of the Year; he was also the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan's Lifetime Achievement Award; and was recognized with a major retrospective exhibition co-produced by the MacKenzie Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Canada. In 2007 Joe Fafard would indeed appear to lead a privileged life.

In this resource we will attempt to provide a more accurate look at the life of this artist, his opportunities and challenges, his early influences and later choices. We will also examine those areas in the life of the artist that connect well with established curricula. Through this process we hope the students will gain a better understanding of the life and work of Joe Fafard, and that assumptions will be replaced with knowledge and understanding.

The process of developing this Guide started with the work of a research team that went into the community, and into the curriculum, to gather information. It is our hope that this resource will provide information and suggestions to allow a unit of study based on the life and work of this remarkable artist.

Special thanks to Sylvie Fletcher, Mathieu Pepin, and Alicia Toscano for their invaluable contributions to *The Legacy of Joe Fafard: Teacher's Guide*.

Wendy Winter
Gallery Educator: School and Youth Programs
MacKenzie Art Gallery

Learning to Look

Begin by looking at a good variety of artworks by Joe Fafard. These can be found online, or in the biography. The biography is available through the MacKenzie Art Gallery Gift Shop.

The Saskatchewan Learning website, Arts Education 10, 20, 30 has a very helpful section entitled *Responding to Arts Expressions*. Here you will find suggestions for viewing and responding to works of art.

An easy approach is to make a thought-map. Draw a circle on the board and write *Joe Fafard* in the circle. Draw lines out from the circle, add more circles and fill these in with the ideas and responses generated from viewing the art work.

From here you may wish to start at the beginning of this guide and do the activities in chronological order, or find a section that relates to the ideas generated from the thought-map.

Ste. Marthe: Identity, Language, Culture

Joseph Hector Yvon Fafard was born in Ste. Marthe on September 2, 1942. His mother, Julienne, gave birth to him in a log house on a farm very close to the Manitoba border. He was the sixth child of twelve, and he was brought up in a large, close, devout Roman Catholic family. His father, Léopold Fafard, farmed the land on which the log house was located. The Fafard children spoke only French until they went to school, a one-room building that Joe attended until he was fourteen. These are the facts of his early days: they both conceal and reveal much about his later life and his work as an artist.

Terrence Heath ²

- What does this tell us about Joe Fafard?
- Where is Ste. Marthe, Saskatchewan? (See the map on page X)
- Why did the Fafard children speak only French?
- Are there other French speaking communities inside Canada, but outside of Quebec?
- Do you think our family histories and childhood experiences have an impact on how our identities evolve? In what way?



Joe astride the calf with cousins Diane and Regis Cantin



Who Am I Now? Identity Portraits

To make your own Identity Map and create an Identity Portrait you will need:

- Large sheets of heavy drawing paper
- An assortment of drawing and collage materials, construction paper, sketch paper
- Glue
- Pencils, felt markers or pencil crayons

What is the meaning of the word **identity**? Chart out a personal Identity Map by drawing a circle in the middle of a piece of paper. Draw lines out from the circle and add more circles. Write *me* in the centre circle and fill the outer circles with many of the components that make up your identity.

Make a representation of yourself based on your Identity Map. Use drawing, painting, collage, and even photography – whatever you wish.

You can also:

- Write a letter to your future self. Communicate something about yourself at the present time, and how you might see this impacting your future choices.
- Write an illustrated story about a member of your family who has an interesting identity.

A Little Ste. Marthe History

The Ste. Marthe into which Joe was born was a natural extension onto the prairie of the settlements that had grown up around a fur-trading post, Fort Ellice, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and of St. Joseph's Mission, which had been established in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Forts were the hubs of the fur trade, supplying not only storage and transportation depots and some military protection, but also acting as centres for settlements of both First Nations and the growing number of farmers who were moving west. Many of the Franco-Canadian fur traders – first from Montreal and then from Fort Garry (near present-day Winnipeg) – intermarried with the Aboriginal people, and large numbers of their offspring, the Métis, established their families on small farms in the valley. With water, wood and protection from the prairie winds, it was an ideal valley for wintering and, gradually, it attracted newcomers from Quebec, France and the eastern United States who were seeking land, a new life or simply adventure. The number of people in the Qu'Appelle Valley grew quite dramatically during the 1870s, which marked the decline of the great buffalo hunts on the prairies and forced many hunters to turn increasingly to farming. Immediately after the Métis uprising on the Red River in 1869 and at Batoche in 1885, many Métis sought out other French-speaking settlements where they would be accepted and could make a new beginning.

Terrence Heath³

French and Métis Culture

The Fafard family boasts thirteen generations in Canada, and Joe is intensely aware of having played a role in the history of the country. “Remember,” he will say, “we have struggled for three generations to keep the Franco-Canadian reality alive outside of Quebec, and we worked for ten generations before that to establish it in Quebec.”

Terrence Heath⁴

Who are the “we” to whom Fafard is referring?

How does Joe Fafard feel about his “Franco-Canadian” heritage?

What is special about a French Canadian Community?

How many French communities can you find in Saskatchewan (or your home province)?

The area around Ste. Marthe was also home to many Métis families and, in fact, Joe has stated:

“I’m just as Métis as anyone... I grew up with them, identify with them, participate in their sense of humour.”

Joe Fafard in conversation with Terrence Heath⁵

Research Métis and Franco-Canadian language, culture and identity. What similarities can you find? Draw two overlapping circles and write Métis in one and Francophone in the other. Add the word “similarities” in the overlapping section. Try to fill in the three areas of this diagram.

Animals and Agriculture

I now suspect that if we work with machines the world will seem to us to be a machine, but if we work with living creatures the world will appear to us as a living creature.

Wendell Berry⁶

It was to a great degree normal on the farm to work [and] make things with one's hands. One could say that is the work I still do now. It is a little like a continuation of that. At that time one worked on the farm at the tasks of the farm. That has changed; now you drive machines, work with mechanical things, but at that time one milked the cows by hand, one carried out all sorts of jobs, such as butchering... things like that. One studied anatomy without even knowing it. That became a way of working that was mostly with the hands in order to form things. That seems completely natural to me. I think even more [that] my hands... are there in order to act, to handle tools.

Joe Fafard⁷

In this quote Joe brings up two important concepts: a) that farming has changed considerably due to the advancements of technology; and b) that working on the farm was important to his basic understanding of anatomy.

Consider these two concepts further:

- a) Joe Fafard was born in 1942: what do you imagine has changed in farming since that time? Divide a paper into two columns: write 1942 at the top of one, and Today at the top of the other. List all the changes you can imagine, or find through research.
- b) How is the study of anatomy important to the work of Joe Fafard? What does he mean when he says he studied anatomy without knowing it?



Albert and Victoria, 1988

Look at any cow sculpture or drawing by Joe Fafard. Is his knowledge of anatomy in evidence? In what way?

Early Art Instruction: Clarence Tillenius

In a small community such as Ste. Marthe there was not much opportunity for art instruction. Joe Fafard recalls having art period at his elementary school on Friday afternoons and that there was no curriculum. To Joe, “*art meant freedom.*” He felt that the teachers had not been trained to teach art and therefore the art period lacked serious instruction. However, Joe did find other sources of inspiration.

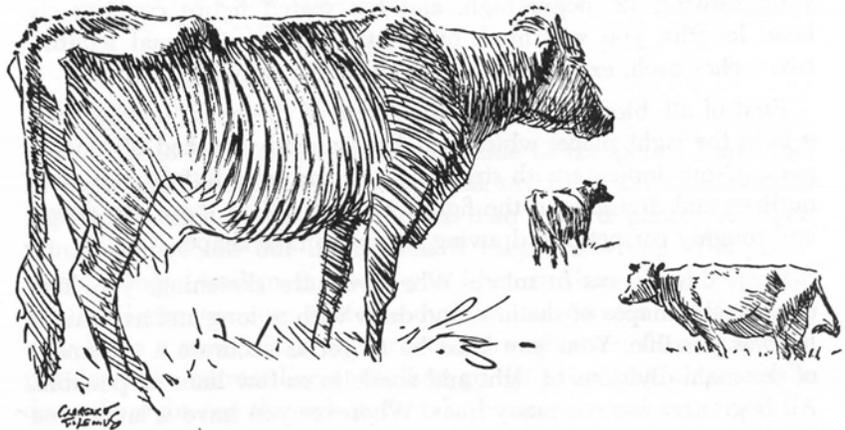
Throughout his teenage years, Joe’s true art teacher was an artist interested mainly in depicting animals, and he taught not in the schools but through the columns of a weekly agricultural newspaper. Clarence Tillenius, a native Manitoban born in the Interlake Region of the province in 1913, taught the skills and pitfalls of drawing animals, the use of materials and the basic concepts of art making. Joe recalls: “We got the Country Guide every week and he had a column there. I used to, you know, read it first thing – well, after the comics.”

Terrence Heath⁸

In 1956 a small collection of articles by Clarence Tillenius, previously printed in *The Country Guide* was published. Here are two short excerpts from *Sketch Book Out-of-Doors*.

What to Draw?

Every student asks this: the answer is, draw whatever catches your eye. If it looks interesting to you, you can make an interesting drawing of it. What is needed – more than all else – is practice, familiarity with drawing, ability to present by means of marks on paper what you have seen in reality. If you are a beginner, draw actual objects: draw things you can see until you begin to understand form: from this understanding comes the ability to create pictures in your mind.



Four Legged-Models

Placid and bony: two good qualities in a model: an old cow has both. Desirable, (1) because a nervous or active animal is hard to catch – with halter or pencil, and (2) in a bony animal the skeleton, which makes the form, shows up strongly. This is important because without some understanding of the skeleton and how the bones work together it is practically impossible to draw an animal to look convincing.

An old cow or horse is better than a whole art course in this respect: you can follow her (or him) about through a whole summer and fall, and fill a book – or better still, several – with hundreds of sketches in every conceivable position. Many of these sketches will be poor, but you can take those poor sketches and when the animal is in the same position, analyze them and correct your drawing.

A few summers of this will teach you much about the construction and habits of your animal models and – important – you get used to your sketching materials and how they behave. Not to speak of fresh air and outdoor exercise into the bargain.

Clarence Tillenius⁹

Draw a Horse Step by Step

Joe has become known as the “cow man”, and from what we have already learned about his childhood, farm experiences, and informal art instruction, this seems a natural outcome. However, Joe says that when he was young he preferred to draw horses.

Let’s give it a try.

Step 1 – A Basic Frame

First draw a square, as big as you want the back of the horse to be. Make it a little wider for a short-legged pony, taller for a leggy thoroughbred. Draw two ovals as shown, a horizontal one for the barrel of the chest, and a sloping oval for the hindquarters.

Step 2 – The Key Points

Draw a triangle for the neck, a circle for the horse’s cheek and a square for the muzzle. Draw two straight lines, for the forelegs, two bent ones for the back legs, with balls at the joints as shown. Draw short sloping lines for the horse’s fetlocks (ankles) and triangles for the hooves.

Step 3 – Filling Out

Add lines to fill out the legs, with a big inverted triangle for the upper part of the back leg, all the rest pretty straight. Join the square at the nose to the cheek-circle to form the horse's head. Add the ear(s). Draw a curvy line joining the cheek to the neck, making the bottom of the neck-triangle a little fatter too, and square off the chest at the top of the foreleg. Draw a curved, arching crest over the neck. Join the chest and hindquarters on top and underneath with lines that curve in slightly.

Step 4 – Draw the eye – basically a circle with a right-angled roof over it. Add the mouth, nostril, mane and tail. Finish the hooves by drawing a line to 'cut off' the back corner of the triangles. Draw a line near the top of each triangle to form the top of each hoof.

Step 5 – Erase your construction lines, make any corrections and there you go! You've drawn a horse.

Helen South¹⁰

Inspiration at School

Joe attended elementary school in Ste. Marthe and high school just across the border at St. Lazare in Manitoba. His high school teacher, Sister Anastasia, (who taught all four grades in one room) recognized and encouraged his interest in art, and helped him apply to the Winnipeg Art School at the University of Manitoba.

Going to the Art School in Winnipeg was a big step. Joe, with two small exceptions, had never before been to a city; and it was the early 1960s, a time of folk singers, hippies and peace rallies.

At art school, Joe received professional instruction in drawing and design as well as introductory courses in art history.

The two hours a week of art history slides were extremely important.... It was his introduction to the world of art, and the works he saw were not like the vernacular art with which (he) was familiar as a youth. Here, not only was art an accepted profession, indeed even a lucrative one, but he saw that his desire to be an artist had been embraced by thousands of individuals over thousands of years.

Terrence Heath¹¹

In 1966, Joe graduated from the University of Manitoba with his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. From there he applied to the Masters program at Pennsylvania State University. Pennsylvania, being fairly close to New York City, provided more opportunities to expand his knowledge of the history of art by visiting art museums. He recalls seeing a painting by Picasso on one of his visits:

"I remember that painting like it was yesterday. It is called Girl Before a Mirror. I'd always skipped over Picasso's work in reproduction. I didn't realize just how incredible his work is. The Painting is luminescent. It lulled me into a state like a religious experience. I sort of lost sense of where I was, of looking at art, you know. It absorbed me completely. It was really things like that that got me through graduate school.

Joe Fafard in discussion with Terrence Heath¹²

Look at a variety of art work by Picasso. Review the Thought-Mapping on page X, and try it with Picasso. Can you find any similarities between Joe Fafard and Picasso?

Thinking Like Picasso

This is a group activity.



For this activity you will need:

- Wide-tip watercolour markers in a variety of colours
- Chalk pastels
- 12" x 18" drawing paper
- newspaper
- drawing boards (or clip board)
- masking tape

In groups of four give each person a drawing board, one sheet of drawing paper, and a short piece of masking tape to secure paper to board. Everyone should select three different coloured markers.

Before you begin consider this: many people draw what they THINK they see and not what they REALLY see (symbols of trees, hearts, etc. rather than observational drawing.) Blind Contour Drawing is a way to improve observational drawing skills.

Blind Contour Drawing is a technique to develop skill at observational drawing. It may be tough and intimidating at first, but FUN!

Select a starting point on the paper, place the marker at that point and without ever lifting the marker from the paper, begin to make a contour drawing without looking at the paper. Don't scribble and draw BIG!

Each person will act as a model at one time. Choose the first model, choose one marker, and in a short timed session (2 minutes), everyone except the model will complete a Blind Contour Drawing.

Call time and then everyone breaks for a moment, laughs and groans at the results.

Now change models - and on the same piece of paper, using a different colour of marker, begin the exercise again, drawing right on top of the first sketch.

Repeat the exercise until each person has an overlap of at least three drawings on the page.

Discuss how the overlap of drawings represents three visual points-of-view. Notice how new and interesting shapes are created from the overlapping contour drawings. Re-examine the Cubist images of Picasso and discuss how Picasso attempted to show multiple viewpoints in a single artwork.

Use chalk pastels to fill in the various shapes formed by overlapping the contour drawings until you have created a single, combined artwork.

In *Thinking Like Picasso* we create an image that may be unrecognizable - Blind Contour Drawing, however, is an excellent exercise for training oneself to truly look at the subject of one's drawing.

Adapted from Mark Alan Anderson¹³

To consider this further, take a piece of drawing paper and draw a cow from memory. Compare this drawing to any cow, sculpture or drawing, by Joe Fafard. What are the similarities and differences? What is your opinion of Joe Fafard's skill with observational drawing?

Life After School: Regina

Upon completion of his Masters of Fine Art Program in 1968, Joe was hired as Instructor of Sculpture in the Department of Art at the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus.

Regina in the 1960s offers a tale of two art communities and two competing visions of contemporary art. In the first half of the decade, the city had witnessed the dramatic rise to prominence of a group of abstract painters known as the Regina Five. They and their contemporaries had established through the university art school an approach to painting and sculpture that was internationalist in outlook and modernist in its belief in a set of higher cultural values.

However, in 1969 when American artist David Gilhooly accepted an invitation to teach in Regina, the conditions were ripe for a ceramic revolution. Gilhooly brought with him an irreverent, anti-institutional outlook on life and art. It was in Regina that Gilhooly began to create a full-fledged parallel “Frog World” containing everything from tableaux-topped casseroles to busts of famous figures, including his first frog Queen Victoria.

Gilhooly had an immediate impact, especially on fellow faculty member Joe Fafard, who had been hired a year earlier. Inspired by Gilhooly’s attitude that art should be personally meaningful and fun, Fafard abandoned the minimal kinetic sculpture of his graduate days at Pennsylvania State University and he began a series of plaster busts of his fellow professors, a “rogues gallery,” which he unveiled before an unsuspecting art department in January 1970. For the next two years, Fafard continued creating caricatures, launching satirical barbs at the entire Regina art community in plaster and clay. In addition, Fafard voiced criticism of what he perceived was an excessive reliance on imported styles and opinions, by stating, “We should abolish the reverence that we have for outsiders, just because they are outsiders, or because they are making it on the New York scene.”

Ideological differences and personality clashes created a flashpoint over teaching and grading practices, with the newer faculty being accused of disregard for traditional academic discipline. Gilhooly’s teaching position was not renewed for the 1971-72 academic year; isolated, but defiant, Fafard held on for another three years before resigning.¹⁴

What can you discover about the painters known as the Regina Five?

Find images of paintings by Ronald Bloore, Ted Godwin, Douglas Morton, Art McKay, and Kenneth Lochhead. What are the similarities? Differences? During the 1960s the Regina Five painters were known for their abstract impressionist style. What do you

think that means? David Gilhooly has been linked to the California Funk artists. What can you discover about the California Funk Movement?

Go to www.davidgilhooly.com

How is the work of artist David Gilhooly different from the work of the Regina Five painters?

David Gilhooly and Joe Fafard: Compare and Contrast

Take a good look at *Fertility Goddess*, by artist David Gilhooly.

Take a good look at *Hijack Over Saskatchewan Cup* by Joe Fafard.

What are the similarities?

What are the differences?



Hijack Over Saskatchewan Cup, 1973



David Gilhooly, *Fertility Goddess*, 1972

Joe Fafard has said that, “I don’t put any humour into my work, I just don’t take it out.”

What do you think this statement mean? What is the difference between putting humour in , or not taking it out?

Alley Haynee

Another important stage of Joe Fafard's development as an artist occurred while he was still at the College.

When I was working at the art college in Regina in 1971, I became friends with the caretaker, Alley Haynee. One day he was telling me about a lot of people writing to him and to his father in order to do an oil painting, a portrait of the old man. So I quizzed him about why this was so, and it was just then that Alley told me how old his father was. He was 107.

So Alley also wondered that since all these artists were interested, would I be interested, and I said, "Sure, I've never met a man who's 107. Ah, I've got to meet him." So Alley arranged it, and we went over one afternoon, had tea with the old man, and he was sitting there just as I remember him, just as I see him sitting here now, very stoic and solid, sitting on a chair, holding his fine cane that he had with a duck's head at the end, and his pipe, and his hat on his head and a scarf around his neck.

We got into a little conversation. It was a little difficult because he was a little deaf, but Alley could make himself understood. I asked him how far back he could remember. The old man said, "oh, over a hundred years." And we carried on that way.

Well, when I came back, I had been doing these portraits that were more satirical, of people, but I felt I couldn't deal with it in quite that way. That somehow the respect that the old man had inspired in me, I did it in a more dignified way, where I would show the solidity of the man. And the courage and the graceful resignation in later years. I treated the whole subject quite seriously, and it got me going, ah, in a whole new vein of sculptures."

Joe Fafard in discussion with Terrence Heath¹⁵



Michael Haynee 107 Years Old, 1971

Look closely at the portrait of Michael Haynee. How would you describe this portrait? How do you think Joe Fafard created this impression?

Pense Portraits



The Merchant of Pense, 1973

In the 1970s Joe moved to the small town of Pense just west of Regina. It was there that he gained recognition for his small clay portraits of his family, friends and neighbours. In 1977, Suzanne Zwarun, writing for MacLean's, described some of the intriguing stories of that time and place. For example, Fafard had created a sculpture of a local resident named Hank.

The real Hank, the unwitting model for the sculpture, was tilting back a few beers in the Rouleau, Sask., beer parlour the day Fafard wandered in. Fafard was new to the prairie southwest of Regina but he'd already discovered that a slight shaggy-bearded artist was as out of place there as a forest in a wheat field. The usual snorts of derision followed Fafard through the tavern but he pretended not to notice...this time it didn't work. Hank, the loudest of the good ole boys gathered 'round, wasn't to be ignored. He ambled over to Fafard's table, settled down without an invitation and challenged: "Don't you think you'd make more money working than on welfare?"

"Tell you what," Hank finally proposed. "I'll let you make a picture of my horse."

Fafard declined that offer but Hank stuck in his head on the way home to Pense. Working from memory, in a day-long burst of creativity, Fafard captured a foot-high Hank in ceramics. From the boots, from the red nose to the watery blue eyes, it looks just like Hank and like a generation of latter-day prairie pioneers, whiling away the hours over draft beer, venting their frustrations on passing hippies."

The article concludes with another little story, this time of Eva Bradley.

Eva Bradley, former café owner, probably sums up Pense. Fafard did her as one of his first works and exhibited the sculpture in the local horticultural show. Eva's friends pulled her away from work and dragged her off to see herself. Did he sell those things? She asked. Fafard, who had a buyer willing to pay \$200, offered to sell Eva to herself for half price. "A hundred dollars," she sputtered. "I'm not worth that alive."

Suzanne Zwarun¹⁶

Why do you think Joe Fafard create the sculpture of Hank? Do you think Hank ever changed his opinion of Joe Fafard? In your opinion, do people generally understand and appreciate the work of artists?

If you were Eva Bradley, would you have purchased your portrait from Joe Fafard? Why, or why not?

Why do you think Joe wanted to portray the rural people of Saskatchewan?

Aboriginal Subjects: Big Bear



Big Bear, 1975

[Joe Fafard's] sculptures of Aboriginal people are the most powerful portrayals [he] has done. And yet none of them is modeled from a real person; all are inspired by photographs and stories. They have such a strong presence that they bring with them the realization that Joe's portraits are not about likenesses. They are about imagination, about projecting one's sensibilities and understanding into another's life to create visually the strengths and weaknesses of that person's character, the impact of that person's life in their stance, body configuration, facial expressions and presentation.

Terrence Heath¹⁷

Find out who Big Bear was and what was significant about his life? Why is he holding a chain? Why do you think Joe Fafard created this portrait? How would you describe it?

Aboriginal Subjects: Manitoba



Manitoba, 1975

Manitoba... is a highly political piece of art, presenting the Métis as the natural ruler of the Prairies, not a victim, not the Other to be stared at as a sort of sideshow freak. I might not even be too far afield to remember that the word Manitoba comes from the Cree work Manitou, or Great Spirit, creator and ruler of the world. At one time in the history of the Prairies, the Métis were, indeed, kings of their domain.

Terrence Heath¹⁸

Joe Fafard grew up in a mixed Franco-Canadian and Métis community. The quote names the Métis as the “*natural rulers of the Prairies*”. Have the First Nations and Métis always received this form of respect? Why do you think Joe Fafard felt it was important to depict Aboriginal subjects?

Joe Fafard created sculptures of the people in his life, past and present. Let’s examine one more source of his inspiration.

Vincent Van Gogh and Joe

In the early 1980s Joe Fafard came across the published letters artist Vincent Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo. These had a profound effect on Joe Fafard. His interest in Van Gogh inspired him to such an extent that he has created over fifty sculptures of this artist.



Dear Vincent, 1983

Compare *Dear Vincent* to other small clay portraits by Joe Fafard. What is distinctive about *Dear Vincent*? Look closely at paintings by Van Gogh. How is this sculpture by Joe Fafard similar to the paintings by Van Gogh?

Make a Van Gogh-Style Self-Portrait

Before you begin to make your self-portrait in the style of Van Gogh review some of the characteristics that make up a Van Gogh painting.

Plan to make two self-portraits (Van Gogh made 36!) on different days to show two different sides or moods of yourself. Try to answer these questions in each one:

- Who am I? (*review your Identity Map and Portrait*)
- How am I changing from day to day?

To work like Van Gogh, you must include these two essential qualities:

1. Complementary colours are placed next to each other:

Complementary colours

Red-green

Blue- orange

Purple- yellow

Choose one set of complementary colours for the background, and another for your clothes.

2. Distinctive Van-Gogh-style brushstrokes are placed side by side.

To do this activity you will need a photograph of yourself, and:

- use of a photocopier
- scissors
- cardboard backing
- glue
- paintbrushes
- tempera, poster or oil paint or oil pastels.

Photocopy a photograph of yourself (such as your school or sport picture). You may want to enlarge it, so that you'll have plenty of space for your "Van Gogh" brushwork.

Cut out your photocopied portrait to make a silhouette. Now paint the entire background paper with your first set of complementary colours and type of brushstroke.

Glue your cut-out self portrait onto the painted background, and using different complementary colours and brushstrokes, paint your face.

Using a third set of colours and brushstrokes, paint your clothes.

Repeat this process a second time, on another day. Follow the same instructions, but change the colours and types of brushstrokes to show a different side of you. Compare the two paintings. Do they each express who you are – on different days, in different moods? How does colour and pattern affect your self-portrait? ¹⁹

To read some of Van Gogh's letters on line, visit: <http://webexhibits.org/vangogh/>

Defining Sculpture: Clay

What is clay? “Clay is a fine grained rock which when suitably crushed and pulverized, becomes plastic when wet, leather hard when dried and on firing is converted to a permanent rock-like mass.” (W.G. Lawrence, Ceramic Science for the Potter, Chilton Book Company, 1972, p. 33)

Where is clay?

Clay is formed by the erosion of rock over long periods of time. Some clay was formed as long as 300 million years ago. Clay is found in many places where erosion occurred. Today you might find earth which has some clay-like qualities in your garden, by river banks or even under the sand in your playground. In Saskatchewan we know that there is clay in Eastend and at Claybank, near Moose Jaw, the site of the Claybank Brick Plant. Different kinds of clay are found at different locations.

Clay to Pottery: Ceramic

When clay objects are put into a kiln and fired to temperatures above 1100° Fahrenheit (590° Celsius), they change from clay to pottery. If dry clay objects are put into water, they will break down into a clay slip. If pottery objects are put into water they will not break down.

Firing

Clay is heated, or fired, in a kiln which is an oven or furnace made of heat resistant materials. There are different types of kilns, which use different forms of energy to create different effects.

How to Work With Clay

Suggested Materials

Fish line – to cut clay into blocks

Tools for drawing or carving in clay (could use plastic knives or popsicle sticks)

Rolling pins/ containers for water

Found objects – buttons, shells, Lego

Texturing materials – pieces of burlap, lace, mesh screen

Clay – most schools have access to clay through their school board office; a low fire clay will work, such as Plainsman L-211 or L-210

SPACE

Methods

These are basic hand-building methods.

If you start with a box of clay that has two separate blocks in it, you can use the fish line to cut it into blocks, squares or slabs.

If you are starting with recycled clay, it can be kneaded and formed into blocks, small or large.

Coiling

Form clay into a thick rope using both hands.

Using the palms of both hands, roll the coil back and forth gently from the middle outward to each end.

Pinching

Start with a ball of clay large enough to fit in the palm of one hand, use the thumb from your other hand to press a hole in the centre of the clay, making sure not to go through to the bottom.

Starting at the bottom, use your thumb on the inside and other fingers on the outside to turn and pinch the clay, using small, even movements – pinch out to the rim.

Slabbing

There are two ways to make a slab:

Using a rolling pin, take a ball of clay and roll it from the centre outwards and back again, then turn it over and repeat until the desired thickness is achieved.

Using a fish line, cut a thick slice from the block of clay, then using the palm of your hand push clay out starting from the centre to make an even flat surface.

Add on or Take Away

To create a sculptural form, you can use one of two methods:

Add-on – starting with a base of clay, add on pieces of clay smoothing them into each other to build up the desired shape.

Take-away – starting with a block of clay and using wooden tools such as popsicle sticks, wooden sculpting tools or hands, take away clay from the block to create the desired shape.

Note: If sculptural pieces are to be fired and are very thick, holes should be made in the bottom of the piece to make sure there is even drying.

Drying

All clay work should be allowed to dry thoroughly before any type of finish is applied.

Different kinds of finishes

Unfired clay or greenware.

Greenware can be left in its natural state.

Greenware can be painted with acrylic paints.

Greenware is more fragile than clay objects that have been fired.

Fired clay with glaze.

Commercial glazes can be used on clay objects to give colour and shine.

Glaze can be used on clay works that have been bisque fired.

Make sure that you are using a glaze that is compatible with the clay you are using, and that the glazed object is fired to the proper temperature.

Pizza and Cake

Discover the qualities of clay through tactile exploration.

To do this activity you will need:

- clay
- found objects

Take a ball of clay and squeeze it, poke it, and pound it. How does it feel?

Make a clay pizza or cake and add textures by pressing found objects into the clay.

Textures and Patterns

Explore different shapes and textures in clay.

To do this activity you will need:

- clay
- plastic knives
- found objects
- water

Take two pieces of clay that each fit comfortably in your hand. Flatten one piece with your hand and cut that piece into a shaped tile (square, triangle, circle, etc.)

Draw into the tile using different tools – plastic knife, pencil – to make different types of lines (squiggly, straight, etc.)

With the second piece of clay make various shapes, then add them to the surface of the flat clay tile by putting a little bit of water onto the shape before attaching.

Press found objects into the tile to create more textures and patterns. Let dry and paint.

Ceramic Birds

Explore basic clay techniques by creating three-dimensional forms.

To do this activity you will need:

- clay
- tempera paint
- clear spray paint

Divide a ball of clay into three portions. Use the pinch pot technique to create a nest from one piece of the clay. Draw into the clay nest to create texture, and print your name into the base.

Form the birds by pinching and pulling.

(Optional) Create some eggs. Fire in the kiln. Paint them with tempera paint and spray paint to seal them and give them a shine.

Self-Portrait Pots

Explore basic clay hand-building techniques.

To do this activity you will need:

- newspaper
- clay
- garlic press
- glazes

Make a newspaper hump for the shoulders. Then build up the shoulders section with coils (draped slab could also be used).

Make a coil pot head (small balloons could be used to guide size/ shape). Or, as an alternative, you could choose to make a pinch pot head.

Attach the coil pot head to the shoulders with a wide flat coil (use rolling pin and 3/8" guide stick to roll out coil). Be sure to score and slip the joint thoroughly.

Make facial features and face - approximating proportions.

Optional: put a slab bottom on the shoulders and put a hole in the bottom of the head so air is not trapped. Use a garlic press to make hair – apply with slip.

Allow to get bone dry – bisque fire, and brush on choice of underglazes. Allow to dry – brush on clear glaze. Fire.

Defining Sculpture: Bronze

While Joe Fafard was working on his portrait series of Vincent Van Gogh it occurred to him that he wanted to work bigger. He built a large Van Gogh head in clay, left it overnight, and returned the next day only to find that it had collapsed. It was his desire to make larger sculptures, and his frustration with the size limitations of working in clay, that influenced his decision to start casting his work in bronze.

From lost wax to bronze beauty

One of Regina's best-known artists is Joe Fafard, and the type of art he is most famous for is bronze sculpture. You may not be aware that he operates his own foundry for making those sculptures, out at Pense. In fact, artists from across Western Canada bring work to Pense for casting.

About a year and a half ago I had the pleasure of visiting the foundry at Pense on one of the MacKenzie Art Gallery's summer "Twilight Tours," conducted by local

artists. I found it fascinating, not least because the procedures being used in Pense are essentially identical to those used thousands of years ago on the other side of the world. It's intriguing evidence of the way art links cultures, continents and even centuries together.

The basic method of casting bronze used in Pense is the "lost-wax method," which first appeared sometime before 2000 B.C. It literally gave birth to the Bronze Age: it was used to make sculptures, weapons, tools, jewelry and household utensils all over the world, from China to India to Africa to Greece. In all the thousands of years since, it has changed little. Today we even use variations of it to cast complex devices like superchargers and gas turbines out of special high-temperature alloys.

A bronze sculpture begins with a sculpture in some other medium. Fafard uses a special type of wax that softens under a heat lamp, but you could also use clay or wood, or even cast a natural object such as a branch or bird's nest (as Regina artist Vic Cicansky often does).

The first step of the casting process is to create a rubber mold. The original sculpture is painted with a thin layer of rubber, one side at a time. When the rubber dries, a protective mold of reinforced plaster is built around it. You end up with two rubber molds, one for each half.

Next, the insides of the rubber molds are carefully painted with liquid wax, creating a wax shell "like a giant chocolate Easter bunny," as Fafard describes it. The wax shells from the two half-molds are joined together to create a complete wax copy of the original work.

Square tubes and a large cup that look like a cowbell, also made of wax, are then added to the sculpture. Eventually, this plumbing will be used to remove the wax and pour in the bronze, so it has to be very carefully positioned.

Next the wax sculpture is "invested," covered with a rock-hard shell. For most of history, investment has consisted of a thick layer of plaster, sand and water. In the last 15 years, however, a new technology called ceramic shell has taken over.

To create a ceramic shell around the wax sculpture, it's first dipped into a special slurry, then into a bath of fine silica sand. Then it's allowed to dry. After several repetitions, a hard sandy shell a centimetre or so thick forms.

Once dry, the shell is heated in a kiln. The wax quickly melts and flows out through the tubing. (It's very important that it all escapes: any that is left could explode when the hot bronze is poured in.) Then the temperature is boosted even higher to turn the sandy shell into ceramic.

The next step is to pour in the bronze. In Pense, bronze ingots are melted in a large crucible in a furnace in the foundry's floor. The crucible is lifted out by two workers (using very long handles, because the bronze is well over 1000 degrees C), and poured into the sculpture, which is held in a metal rack, through the attached cup. This has to be done quickly, while the bronze is still fluid enough to fill every nook and cranny.

It only takes about an hour for a newly cast piece to cool enough to handle. The investment, which usually cracks as the bronze cools and shrinks, is removed. The tubing and cup are cut off, and small pieces that were cast at the same time are welded into place to fill any holes. Other imperfections must also be corrected. Sometimes, with large pieces--such as one of Fafard's monumental cows--the sculpture must be assembled in sections, each cast separately.

The final step is patination, chemically applying colour. Three water-soluble compounds form the basis for most colors. Ferric nitrate produces reds and browns, cupric nitrate creates greens and blues and sulphurated potash produces black. Although patination looks like paint, it's not; the colors aren't just slapped on the surface of the bronze, but are really a form of corrosion, the result of the bronze reacting to the patinating chemicals.

It's intriguing to think, as you look at a work by Joe Fafard, or another artist, of the age-old technology behind it. So elegant is it that millennia from now, when our own vaunted 20th-century technology has long been forgotten, some artist somewhere will probably still be using the lost-wax method to create works of art.
Edward Willett²⁰

Cows and Horses

As successful as Joe's portraits have been, he is better known as the "cow man". Throughout his career, from the late 1960s to the present day, a major part of his interest has been in making sculptures of animals, especially cows and bulls. At first many people associated them with David Gilhooly's signature frog series, which has a cosmology, mythology and history and is designed to comment on social situations, poke fun at ideas and sharply critique society or individuals. In fact, Joe's cows – though they are often critiques and share the qualities of humour, play and absurdity – are serious representations of animals. They are his way of engaging with le discours de l'époque, the major topics of the era. In his view, cows are part not only of farm life but also of the very basis of a settled society that could build cities and roads, pursue fixed economic and social programs and project a planned, sustainable life for large groups of people. The history and fate of the domesticated animal and the human are interlinked at the deepest levels of survival and symbiotic development.

Terrence Heath²¹

Why has Joe Fafard become known as “the cow man?”

Do you consider Fafard’s sculptures of cows and horses to be portraits?

What does Joe Fafard mean by a “settled society?”

In what ways are cows, horses and humans interconnected?

Conclusion

In what ways have Joe Fafard’s family history and childhood experiences impacted his career as an artist?

Joe Fafard’s work is widely exhibited and collected. In your opinion, what explains the popularity of his work?

Does the work of Joe Fafard help us gain a better understanding of the history of the Canadian Prairies? How?

Which is your favourite Joe Fafard artwork, and why?

Images

Joe Fafard

1. Mon Père, 1972

earthenware, acrylic, glaze

34.1 x 35.4 x 35.4 cm

Collection of Joe Fafard, Artist

2. Albert and Victoria, 1988

bronze, patinated, 5/5

41 x 53 x 36 cm

Private Collection

3. Hijack over Saskatchewan Cup, 1973

earthenware, glaze

12.9 x 15.1 x 17.7 cm (approx.)

Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa: Gift of Philip Fry, 1995, in Memory of Jacqueline Fry

4. Michael Haynee, 107 years old, 1971

earthenware, glaze, acrylic

37.1 x 19.1 x 27.8 cm

Private Collection

5. The Merchant of Pense, 1973

earthenware, acrylic, glaze, wood

40.6 x 25.4 x 38.1 cm

Collection of Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta

73.9

6. Big Bear, 1975

earthenware, acrylic, glaze, nails

50.5 x 17.5 x 34 cm

The Saskatchewan Arts Board Permanent Collection, Gift of Victor Cicansky
1994-100

7. Manitoba, 1975

earthenware, glaze, acrylic

33.0 x 67.0 x 20.0 cm

Collection of Joe Fafard, Artist

8. Dear Vincent, 1983

earthenware, acrylic

63.4x 26.2 x 40.7 cm

Collection of Joe Fafard, Artist

David Gilhooly

9. *Well Balanced Fertility Goddess*, 1972

clay

78.7 x 29 x 22.5 cm

MacKenzie Art Gallery, University of Regina Collection

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Notes

¹ Terrence Heath. *Joe Fafard*. Vancouver and Ottawa: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd. and National Gallery of Canada, 2007. p. 97.

² Terrence Heath. *Joe Fafard*. p. 11

³ Terrence Heath. *Joe Fafard.*, p. 16

⁴ Terrence Heath. *Joe Fafard.*, p. 166

⁵ Terrence Heath. *Joe Fafard*. p. 118

⁶ Wendell Berry. Crop Science Society of America.

<http://crop.scijournals.org/cgi/content/full/45/3/1103#RFN> (July 5, 2007)

⁷ Interview with Joe Fafard, from Lorian B elanger

Joe Fafard: Sculpter les Origines (Gatineau: PRB Media Productions, 2002)

⁸ Terrence Heath. *Joe Fafard*. p. 32

⁹ Clarence Tillenius. Sketch Pad out-of-doors. Winnipeg. Trails of the Interlake Studio., 1956. p. 4-5.

¹⁰ Helen South. Drawsketch.about.com. http://www.drawsketch.about.com/library/bl_step_horse.htm (July 6, 2007)

¹¹ Terrence Heath. *Joe Fafard*. p. 45

¹² Terrence Heath. *Joe Fafard*. p. 58

¹³ Mark Alan Anderson. Princeton Online. <http://www.princetonol.com/groups/lad/lessons/middle/Mark-cubism>.

¹⁴ MacKenzie Art Gallery. Virtual Museum Canada.

<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/ReginaClay/english/history>. (July 6, 2007)

¹⁵ Terrence Heath. *Joe Fafard*. p. 94.

¹⁶ Suzanne Zwarun. *McLean's*. July 25, 1977. p. 22-24,28.

¹⁷ Terrence Heath. *Joe Fafard*. p. 110.

¹⁸ Terrence Heath. *Joe Fafard*. p. 113.

¹⁹ National Gallery of Art. Washington D.C.. <http://www.nga.gov/education/classroom/self-portraits/pw1>

²⁰ Edward Willett. *Edward Willets Intergalactic Library*.

<http://www.edwardwillett.com/Arts%Columns/castingbronze.htm> (July 5, 2007)

²¹ Terrence Heath. *Joe Fafard*. p. 134.