# Lesson 1: Tactile Artmaking (Middle School)

## Objectives:

This lesson introduces contemporary artists’ use of non-traditional and everyday materials and processes for artmaking. Students can engage processes of repetition and their impact in terms of accumulation, erosion, construction, and destruction. In this lesson, using contemporary artists for framing, students who are blind/visually impaired will interact and experiment with nontraditional sculpture materials in nontraditional ways. Additionally, they will develop, discuss, and apply non-visual aesthetic descriptions and criteria for tactile artworks.

## National Arts Standards:

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

* VA:Cr2.1.6a: Demonstrate openness in trying new ideas, materials, methods, and approaches in making works of art and design.

Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

* VA:Re9.1.6a: Develop and apply relevant criteria to evaluate a work of art.

## Essential Questions:

* How do artists work? How do artists and designers determine whether a particular direction in their work is effective? How do artists and designers learn from trial and error?
* How does one determine criteria to evaluate a work of art? How and why might criteria vary? How is a personal preference different from an evaluation?

## Materials:

* Bars of soap
* Clay/Play-Doh
* Chocolate blocks/bars
* Pieces of wood/board
* Files, toothpicks, pencils, spoons, butter knives, clay sculpting tools
* Tape
* Sample everyday objects (beverage can, milk jug, fruit, potatoes, towel, gum)
* Glue

## Directions:

1. Review traditional Western art concepts of sculptures and sculpting.
2. Introduce idea of sculptors/artists using non-traditional materials.
3. Nick Cave “Soundsuits” (Art21)

<https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s8/nick-cave-in-chicago-segment> and <https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/nick-cave-thick-skin-short>

1. Janine Antoni and her works, including “Lick and Lather”

<https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.206257.html> and <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s2/janine-antoni-in-loss-desire-segment>

1. Discuss purposes and processes for using different sculpting material.
2. Present students with selection of materials and tools.
3. Have students feel and discuss their shape, feeling, and possible purposes.
4. Ask students to select a material and a tool.
5. Have students use the tool to sculpt the material.
6. Circulate and ask students about their ideas, choices, actions, and hypotheses.
7. After time to work, have students pause for an informal studio walk + talk, where students travel to each work station and the artist shares and then discusses their work. Students can listen to the information, feel the object(s), ask questions, and offer responses and ideas.
8. After completing the walk + talk, a whole-class discussion can provide the opportunity to synthesize what students noticed and learned during the process. Topics might include what aesthetic qualities are important in works made by and for an audience of people who are blind/visually impaired; what materials yield what kind of results; and how spatial organization impacts experience.

## Extension Activity Ideas:

1. After the walk + talk and discussion, students can continue to work on their pieces, incorporating feedback and salient points as appropriate.
2. After students complete their works, the works can be displayed as an interactive show, within a single classroom or made more widely available/accessible.
3. Students can gather feedback on audience engagement and interpretation.
4. Students can create active or interactive pieces to include in the display for other outside viewers/audiences to engage.
5. Students can create an audio tour to accompany their gallery exhibit.
6. Images with descriptions and the audio tour can be uploaded onto the Internet and made available for wider audiences.

Reference:

Visual arts at a glance. (2021, November). <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Visual%20Arts%20at%20a%20Glance%20-%20new%20copyright%20info.pdf>