

LESSON PLAN

LEO CARRILLO HISTORY & ART PROGRAM

Project Title: Saddle Up to Foil Embossing!

Theme: Saddles as Art & Artifact

Age/Grade Level: 9-10 years old/Fourth Grade

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Students will learn a brief history and purpose of a saddle in the life of a Vaquero/Cowboy. A saddle often represented a status symbol with the distinctive designs, making it a work of art in itself. Craftsmen and Blacksmiths were sought out to produce hand-made quality saddles with embossed leather and metal adornments. Students will consider their own leather and silver design for a saddle. When making choices about their artwork, students will think about how and why their design is meaningful to them.

"No hour of life is wasted that is spent in the saddle." – Winston Churchill

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: (read or discuss)

Leo Carrillo was best known for being an actor on the very popular show called "The Cisco Kid" where he played a character named Pancho. He lived close to the Hollywood area. He had a special ranch here in Carlsbad, CA he called "Rancho de los Quiotes" which translates "Ranch of the Spanish Daggers". He would come often to the ranch to relax and get away from the hustle and bustle of the Hollywood lifestyle.

Today the Leo Carrillo Ranch is 27-acres, and is a historic site protected by the state of California. But when Leo Carrillo had the ranch it was roughly 1600 acres and it was a working cattle ranch, with close to 600 head of cattle.

Leo Carrillo wasn't able to live at his ranch full time because of his acting career, so he had to have special workers live here to run the ranch and to ensure its success. He would hire **Vaqueros**.

- What is a **Vaquero**? A cowboy.

Leo Carrillo had many Vaqueros work for him at the ranch. Leo was the "Dueno", or owner of the ranch, but he loved horses and working on the ranch. He too was a vaquero himself, he loved the lifestyle and when he was here, he worked the ranch hand-in-hand with all the other ranch workers.

Consider and Discuss:

- *What do you think it is like to be a Vaquero?*
- *What do you think Vaqueros did on a daily basis here at the ranch?*
- *What were their different job duties?*
- *How does that compare with what you do daily?*

Vaqueros would tend to the cattle, fix fences, take care of the horses and other farm animals, work in the gardens, use their special skills to cook, fix and clean the Haciendas, take care of the grounds etc.

LESSON PLAN

Vaqueros rode horses almost every day as part of their job, this was the main way they got around the large ranch. Saddles (particularly the western saddle) were a very important accessory to the Vaqueros as they used them every day. Each Vaquero typically had their own saddle and they took very good care of it to make sure it stayed functional and in good working order.

Their saddles typically had many designs and adornments on them. (See Fig. 1: Western Saddle)

- *What do you notice about the Western Saddle?*
- *What images do you see in the design?*
- *What do you think saddles are made of?* (leather, wood, metal decorations)

Many Vaquero's saddles had unique decorative designs specific to the owners. How decorative a saddle was, was up to each individual Vaquero. Common themes for the western saddles were: flowers, leaves, acorns, basket weaving, rope, geometric shapes, swirls, and patterns for decorative borders. Flowers were the most popular image used; poppies, daffodils, orchids, irises, sunflowers, lilies and morning glories. (See Fig. 2: Floral Inspiration)

Saddles back then were handmade, not mass-produced from a factory. You can imagine how long it would take to create. Vaqueros would hire blacksmiths and leather artists to create custom saddles, and they would become functional individual works of art themselves.

Blacksmith:

A person who makes and repairs things in iron and metal by hand. Leo Carrillo had a blacksmith shop on his ranch. Some blacksmiths had special skills and created metal adornments or ornaments.

- **Metal embossing** means to carve, mold, or stamp (a design) in a relief on the surface of a metal object, being convex (raised) or concave (pressed in). It was common that the western saddle had metal embossed pieces on it.
- **Conchos:** a silver adornment, are decorative with engraved designs and are traditionally used by Vaqueros to dress up items. In addition to saddles, they are seen on horses' bridles, clothing, hats, and belts. (see Fig. 3: Concho Inspiration)

Leather Artists:

- **Leather Tooling** or **Leather Sculpting** is an art where leather artists create design in leather by using special tools to press into the leather creating shadowing and depth. (See Fig 4: Leather Design Inspiration)

Students will be creating a work of art that directly relates to this historic ranch and is inspired by the **silver metal embossing of the conchos** and the **leather sculpting design** of the Vaquero Western saddle.

PROMPT QUESTIONS:

- What if you were a Vaquero who wanted to create a unique concho and leather design for your personal saddle?
- What would you envision it to look like?
- What images would you use?

LESSON PLAN

VOCABULARY:

Shape- the external form or appearance characteristic of someone or something; the outline of an area or figure or a geometric figure such as a square, triangle, or rectangle

Line- a long narrow mark or band

Composition-the artistic arrangement of the parts of a picture

Embossing (convex; raised, concave; pressed in)-carving, molding or stamping a design on a surface

Patterning- decorating with a recurring design

PROJECT MATERIALS: (supplies should be able to be found at home)

- White Paper
 - Cardstock would work best, but any paper will work
 - 12"X12" is ideal, but any size will work
- A piece of heavy-duty aluminum foil (roughly 12"X12")
- Magazine (for embossing)
- Embossing Instrument: a very dull pencil or knitting needle work well
- Double-sided Tape or Glue
- Brown Tone Colored Pencil, Marker or Crayon
(If you do not have a brown tone, a regular pencil, or writing tool of your choice will do)
- Pencil
- Eraser

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. View the Art Project Example (See Fig. 5: Art Project Sample)
 - What do you notice?
 - The center section of the art project represents the metal embossed conchos of the saddle.
 - The outer edge of the art project represents the leather sculpting part of the saddle.
2. Begin by focusing on the metal embossed, centerpiece, of your artwork. You will be creating and embossing your own metal concho design.
3. Start with the planning sheet (attached), students will use their pencil and draw two different ideas in the provided 5"X5" squares. They will choose the one they like the most to work with.
 - The design needs to be outlined images that are bold and simple, considering the elements of art; shape and line.
 - Students are encouraged to use some of the traditional images discussed and used in the Vaquero saddle (flowers, swirls, patterning, geometric shapes etc.)
 - Students can create their own round concho or have their metal design go all the way to the edges.
 - Students will visualize a plan for their artwork, but ideas can change and evolve as the student works.
4. Once the design is selected, students will take a 12"X12" piece of heavy-duty foil and fold it in half. Then fold it in half again, so it is a 6"X6" square (the foil piece should have four foil layers). Fold the

LESSON PLAN

remaining rough edges in so the square is approximately 5"X5" and all the edges have a clean fold. (If you do not have heavy-duty foil, use a larger piece of foil and fold several times to size 5"X5", to create multiple layers and a thicker base to emboss.)

5. Turn the foil piece to the smooth side and place face-up on a magazine. Students will then use their drawing tool (a very dull pencil) to free draw their chosen design in the foil, using very gentle pressure as they press into the foil with the drawing tool.

- **IMPORTANT:** *Work slowly*, take care to *not press too hard* or the foil might tear. You are trying to create just a *slight* indentation to form your embossed design. If your foil tears, either continue to experiment with the amount of pressure to use or get another piece of foil and try again.
- Consider adding texture and details by creating patterns, lines, dots, circles etc.

6. When finished with the foil embossing, students will use double-sided tape (or glue - but let dry) to secure the foil embossed piece in the center of their white paper.

7. Students will then work on the outside area of the white paper, using a brown toned colored pencil or marker. Students will create their leather sculpting design considering patterning and images used in the Vaquero saddle.

- Students can choose to repeat some of the same images from their foil embossed design or create something completely new.
- Students should be mindful to fill in some areas in their design solid, as this creates the impression of shadowing and depth in leather sculpting.

8. When students are completed with their art project, have them reflect and share:

- What do you like best about your artwork?
- What were you thinking about when you were creating your artwork?
- What do you want people to notice about your work of art?
- What did you learn from creating this work of art?

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES:

Artful Thinking:

- **Comparing and Connecting;** Connect/Extend/Challenge
 - The routine helps students make connections between new ideas and prior knowledge. It also encourages them to make a personal connection to an artwork or topic.
- **Questioning and Investigating;** See/Think/Wonder
 - This routine helps students make careful observations and develop their own ideas and interpretations based on what they see.

California Dept. of Education:

- **Continuity and Change;** 3.3, 3.4, 3.5,
- **California: A Changing State;** 4.2, 4.4

Studio Habits of Mind:

- **Envision:** Imagining new artworks and steps to bring them to life.
- **Understand Art Worlds:** Students forming connections between themselves and art worlds.

LESSON PLAN

ART INSPIRATION:

Fig. 1: Western Saddle



Fig. 2: Flower Inspiration

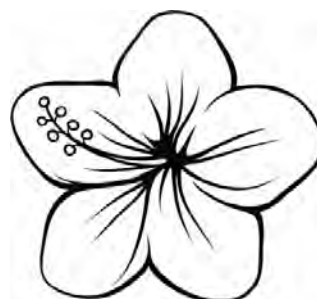
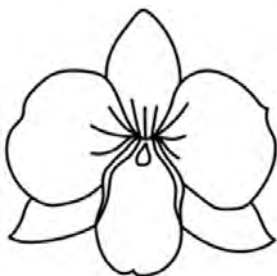
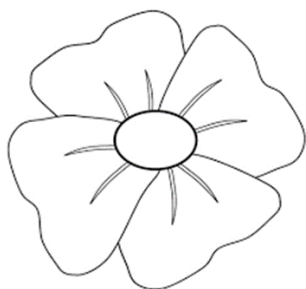
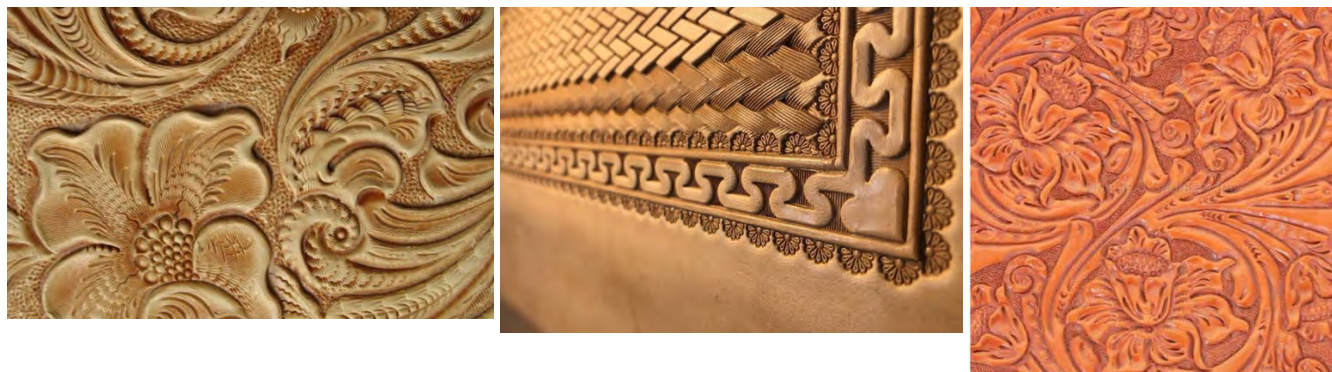


Fig. 3: Concho Inspiration



LESSON PLAN

Fig. 4: Leather Sculpting Inspiration

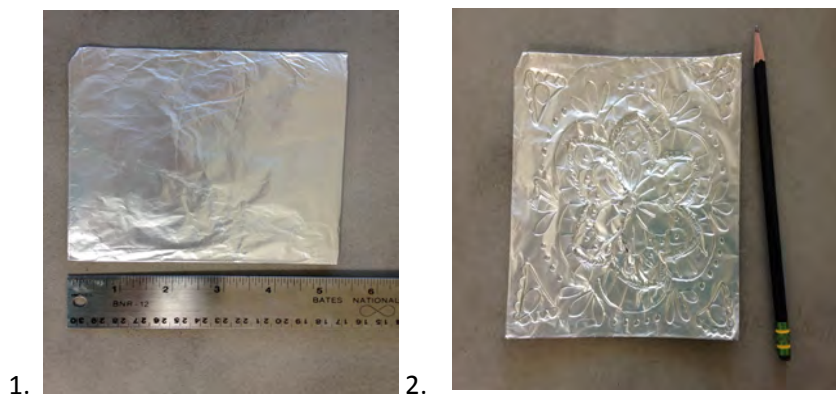


ART PROJECT EXAMPLES:

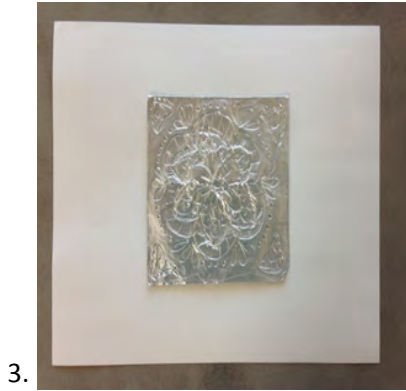
Fig. 5: Art Project Example



Fig. 6: Visual Step by Step



LESSON PLAN



LESSON PLAN

Metal Emboss Planning Sheet

