The Art of Tea!  
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High School 9-12

One 45-minute class period

**Overview**

Students will explore and discover the ancient art form of tea through discussion and transformation of clay into teacups or tea strainers. Tea has been described as meditation in action, and it is steeped in history. We will begin the lesson with a quick discussion of the meaning and history of tea, how artists like Carn Griffiths revolutionize the use of tea as an art form. And how ceramicists like Arakawa Akira create Japanese style teacups that draw historical connections. This lesson will encourage students to take a closer look around them to discover that objects can be both functional and beautiful.

**Standards Covered**

* Visual Arts (VA:Cn11.1.HSI) Synthesize. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.
* Visual Arts (VA:Cr3.1.HSI) Reflect, refine, continue. Apply relevant criteria from traditional and contemporary cultural contexts to examine, reflect on, and plan revisions for works of art and design in progress.
* Visual Arts (VA:Cn10.1.HSII) Interpret. Utilize inquiry methods of observation, research, and experimentation to explore unfamiliar subjects through art making.
* Visual Arts (9.1.12.H) incorporate the effective and safe use of materials, equipment and tools into the production of works in the arts at work and performance spaces.

**Objectives**

The student will learn the cultural significance of tea ceremonies throughout art and culture.

The student will experiment through different ceramic techniques to create individualized pieces of art that double as aesthetically pleasing and functional.

The student will discover the many ways tea can be used as an art form through Carn Griffiths’s work.

**Instructional Procedures**

1. Begin by introducing students to the world of tea!! Describe its deep cultural history, its significance in the world of art, and the act of tea preparation as meditation.
2. Describe the origin of tea, and a few important facts. Such as the difference between herbal infusions and plain tea (which originates from the Camellia Sinensis plant)
3. Quickly familiarize students with the contemporary artists who utilize tea as inspiration for their art forms (Carn Griffiths, Arakawa Akira ...etc.)
4. Demo how to create a small teacup influenced by Japanese culture and ancient tea ceremonies. If students wish to pursue an alternative path, offer instructions on how to create a small tea strainer.
5. Encourage them to think about elements and principles of design: an art piece can be functional yet aesthetically pleasing.
6. To end the lesson, allow students to make their own tea!! Bring dried herbs such as mint and chamomile.

**Materials Needed**

1. Dried herbs (chamomile or mint)
2. Hot water
3. Clay
4. Slip
5. Clay modeling tools
6. Power point or instructional video concerning history of tea
7. Examples of contemporary artists

**Assessment**

Students will be assessed through multiple criteria: in-class participation, respect for one another in the classroom environment, creation of a small teacup or tea strainer that utilizes the elements and principles of design, and the knowledge of one or more facts about the history of tea and its significance in many cultures.

This can be gleaned through a quick exit pass - students will write down at least one fact they remembered about tea or one thing they loved about the contemporary artists shown.