



COAT OF ARMS UNIT: CONCEPTS

1. Art always comes from a cultural context. To understand a piece of art, you must understand its function. In the case of this unit, students use the genre of Heraldry to express personal identity.
2. Good composition requires that all elements within the piece integrate, do not compete for attention, but support each other into an integrated whole.
3. A medium must be suited to its task. For instance, painting on paper would not make this unit successful. Stenciling using printmaking ink would not distort the paper it is on so it is an appropriate medium. Students learn to use appropriate mediums and methods by allowing a medium to do what it does well, not what it does badly.
4. The negative space within a composition is just as important as the positive space because both are equal to the eye.

VOCABULARY

Negative space: what students refer to as “background space.”

Heraldry: Heraldry is the art and system of designing, displaying, and interpreting coats of arms and other symbolic emblems used to identify individuals, families, institutions, or groups.

Rubber cement: the medium used to adhere paper that does not wrinkle the paper. Also rubber cement can be removed after it dries by rubbing on it.

Color contrast/value contrast: Color has a hue, but also a value, which is the degree of light and dark it would have in a black and white photo. Students must be aware of the value as much as the color of the elements they use.

Paper with a “tooth”: Paper that has a rough surface, holds dry media better than smooth paper.