

# Art and the Curriculum

## AT SUMMERFIELD WALDORF SCHOOL & FARM

In 2021, as we return gratefully to our campus and to in-person learning, we are continually building a vessel in which we can connect. This vessel is made of our daily rhythms, festivals and rituals; it is made of singing, grieving, gathering food, sharing stories and poetry, and admiring and reflecting the beauty of the world. We do all of this—together—to invite the experience that we are not alone, but inextricably connected.

As individuals, we need to be able to have separation but, to understand the world and other people, we need to experience, practice and exercise connection. To be free, whole human beings, we need to consciously work with both separation and integration. Waldorf education is the practice and skill development of the will activity of connection—a capacity essential to meet our times.

The child experiences: “I look into the world and find myself; I look into myself and find the world.” This weaving leads to understanding, which does not come from being told something by a teacher, but through connectivity like a chemical reaction occurring between nature and the human soul. The conduit or vehicle of this weaving activity can be understood as love. This activity and reaction in the soul is the foundational heart of our education. The Arts Calendar reminds us all of why we come to Waldorf Schools and what the interconnected and planned evolutionary span of the education from early childhood to twelfth grades means to our development as human beings.

At Summerfield, here in Sonoma County, where we have a farm and the opportunity to meet in person at the current time, we have discovered the importance of engaging with the earth, with the sense-based world. In farming, practical arts, fine arts and crafts, students learn directly from the world around them. They exercise the creativity muscles needed to find new forms, to think in new ways, and to experience beauty. We, as teachers, are striving in this time to cultivate agency, independence and self-knowledge in our students, as we take up the task of re-imagining culture in our communities.

Rudolf Steiner, founder of the Waldorf schools, suggested that teachers begin the first day of first grade by introducing children to their hands, saying “You have two hands... These are for working. You can do all kinds of things with them.” He explained that this could form an introduction to their very first drawing lesson, a chance to demonstrate how skillful their hands can be. He went on to explain that our hands are more free than all the other parts of our bodies, and so they can work not only for us as individuals but, more importantly, to help others and indeed be of service to the whole world.

We are grateful for these seeds planted in 1919 by founder Rudolf Steiner, and we celebrate that Waldorf teachers continue to renew, till and tend this educational impulse throughout the world. As teachers, we engage with the life force that is alive in these ideas each time we work with them. We are constantly in the process of ‘becoming’ as we meet the children anew each day.

Waldorf schools everywhere emphasize the importance of teaching in an artistic way, not so much to educate children to become artists or musicians but to feed the imagination, to deepen empathy, and to develop freedom in thinking. We see that the practice of making art awakens our intelligence to the full experience of being human.

Our intention here at Summerfield is that the arts create a foundation for all of our programs and offerings, from a full range of academics and practical arts to a working, certified Biodynamic farm on campus where food is grown and where children are a part of the annual cycle of sowing and reaping.

By being a part of this community from early childhood all the way through high school, students learn how to do work in the world, whether in farming, arts and crafts, scientific pursuits, or serving others in the community. Through the arts, students discover how their hands can produce what their minds can imagine and their hearts can intuit as good, beautiful and true. When they apply these same principles to their science and humanities studies, their schoolwork has real meaning, feels connected and whole, and helps them to actualize their ideals in society as they go out in the world.

These aspects of Waldorf education shine through all the work of the students, and it is this that inspires us to share their art with you.

— The College of Teachers 



Top: ‘Looking Back and Into the Future’ by Holly Sparks (Class Ten)  
Bottom: ‘Fox in the Snow’ — Artist Unknown



Top: ‘Ma Yuan Landscape’ by Vida Lopez de San Roman (Class Nine)  
Bottom: Trees by Phelan Mecklenburg (Class Eight)

### EARLY CHILDHOOD

A mood of calm industry and a cocoon of warmth and rhythm characterize the early childhood classroom. Work comes naturally to young children, and the setting eases them into a love of working with their hands. Painting is a feast for the senses at this age. The wet-on-wet painting style provides a dreamy delving into primary colors, which holds the children in rapt silence. The youngest children learn experientially, through the free act of swirling and blending colors, how primary colors become secondary colors, and so on. In this way, a foundational artistic technique is introduced through joy and play.

### FIRST GRADE

Children cross the threshold into the grades with a first handshake with their teacher and set off on a journey during which they will not only learn many new skills but become aware of the strengths and treasures waiting to be discovered in themselves and in each other. Now imagination and story nourish the child’s soul/psychological self and become seeds for free independent thinking to emerge in future years. Drawing in first grade often starts with the exploration of two basic forms: the straight line and the curved line. Children might draw in the air, on the floor, in the sand, on each other’s back, and finally on paper. Working with lines that do not depict an object but meet the impulse for movement within the children develops their feeling for form and flow and thus prepares them for writing letters and numbers. Every form is introduced as a picture brought out of a story which children might hear in a rolling three-day rhythm: a story is introduced (often from nature or a fairy tale); on the next day the story is reviewed by acting it out or making a drawing; on the following day the teacher might lead the children to discover the shape of a letter in the drawing and to hear and ‘taste’ the sound of the letter. In weekly painting lessons, the children work on wet paper, which allows the color to move with ease. Through color stories, the children get to know the characters of the three primary colors and how they interact.

### SECOND GRADE

Second graders continue to live through imaginative pictures and story but begin to transition away from ‘dreamy’ early childhood. A shift occurs where the child no longer sees the world only in its wholeness but has a dawning awareness of life’s dualities. Poised between his/her animal and angel natures, the second grader discovers deep truths through the contrasts of the curriculum which meets this stage of development with legends of the Saints on the one hand, and Fables on the other. The Saints bring pictures of human beings who experienced a transformation in their life after which they devoted themselves to serve the highest good. This is contrasted with the Fables, in which the children recognize their own shortcomings. Often they are shown, in a humorous way, the scale of justice with which Mother Nature balances her affairs. This sense of duality and a quest for balance between extremes is typically complemented by exercises involving symmetry and the drawing of mirror images. It is also a year in which children begin to add their own creative elements to compositions, rather than merely copying the teacher. Students continue to paint with the wet-on-wet technique, working in the realm of pure color, experiencing the living quality of each color as well as the colors’ relationships to one another.

### THIRD GRADE

Third grade typically sees children undergo the Nine-Year-Change, a stage of development in which the child experiences a growing awareness of being separate from his or her surroundings. This awareness brings with it a sense of loss and loneliness but also the first conscious joy in solitude. This shift is sometimes referred to as the “Fall from Paradise,” or an awakening of the individual. Through studies of shelter, measurement, building, farming, cooking, and fiber, third graders make a stronger connection to the earth. They hear the story of Adam and Eve who needed shelter and clothing to protect themselves. The Old Testament, with its laws and guidance in a time when the Hebrew people were wandering in search of a new home, typically provides the story material throughout the year, and this is often the inspiration for artistic work. It is also a year of physical work to help children make the shift from their spiritual origins to a more earthly being. In art, they often draw themes connected to their practical activities with tools, animals, clothing, food, farming and shelter construction. Form drawing also continues, typically with explorations of balanced forms and more complex symmetries.

### FOURTH GRADE

Rudolf Steiner compares the experience of the fourth grader with that of an orphan. This process of loosening the connection with the past (the parents) continues in the fourth grade year and is necessary for the child to meet his or her own path in life, to become a personality. The stories for fourth graders tell of a time when the spiritual world was withdrawing, no longer dwelling among humans or protecting and guiding them. It was now up to human heroes to develop in themselves courage and wisdom, thus the Finnish tales of the Kalevala and the Norse myths are often studied. Mapmaking introduces children to the relationship of objects to each other, and the birds-eye perspective comes in through the study of local geography. In the studies of the Human Being and the Animal Kingdom, contrasts and comparisons are made that deepen the child’s understanding of how animals have specialized and how the qualities of the animal world are combined in the human being. Animals are studied in drawing and watercolor painting, with the form arising from the colors.

## The Practical Arts

In working with the crafts, we bear witness to the creativity of the human spirit carried out by our hands. In Waldorf schools, the education of the head, heart and hands has the specific purpose to develop the imagination and harmonize the unfolding will and feeling life. The enhancement of these faculties forms the basis for an active thinking life.

Rudolf Steiner said: “*The more we take into account ... that intellect develops from the movements of the limbs, from dexterity and skills, the better it will be.*”

Our purpose therefore, in the practical arts, is not to train knitters, weavers, potters, etc., but rather for the students to practice such work and thereby be able to stand more securely in the world with a confidence for managing the affairs of life. The skills, although important, are secondary to the inner capacities being developed.

An underlying principle behind all the crafts is that students gain a real appreciation of the material, how it is transformed to create something new. Students produce objects that have a practical use with real value. This helps them understand that their work is important and brings an awareness that they have a place and responsibility in the world.

### HANDWORK

In their first craft classes, the children progress from the wonder and glee of discovering slipknots to making their own knitting needles. Knitting and sewing skills follow and, through the creation of simple but useful items such as washcloths and knitted cases for pentatonic flutes, they develop fine motor skills, laying the groundwork for the more artistic crafts to come. Purl stitch comes in second grade; the crochet hook in third. Working with fibers in third grade, students experience carding, spinning and dyeing.

Cross-stitch is introduced in fourth grade, with its mirroring picture designs. This exercise in symmetry parallels students’ growing awareness of the two sides of the self. Cross-stitching also requires imaginative thinking as the children picture the needle underneath their work and move it to the proper place. In fifth grade, the year-long project of knitting socks with four needles is tackled. Creating stuffed animals is a sixth grade task in which planning the design and cutting out a pattern precedes the sewing, introducing cause-and-effect. In this project, students experience the process of turning inside-out, mirroring the developmental stage of externalizing their inner being for the first time.

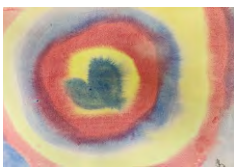
In seventh grade, students engage in the ancient technique of felting. This tactile process is fun and fairly simple, relying on wool, water, soap, and will power. Slippers, hats, bags, balls, and even puppets, are made and later embellished with embroidery. The use of the sewing machine complements



Fawn by Chloe Sierra (Class Six)



Llama by Lucia Rademeyer (Class Six)



Watercolor Painting by Sovana Shick (White Rose Kindergarten)



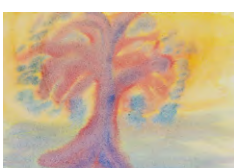
Watercolor Painting by Evelyn Johnsen (Yellow Rose Kindergarten)



Spiral by Annie Corrigan (Class One)



Color Play with Yellow and Blue by Eleanor Philp (Class One)



Tree by Aspen Revallo (Class Two)



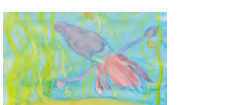
Color Study by Alora Jordan (Class Two)



California Poppies by Olive Nebesky (Class Three)



Moses Parting the Red Sea by Maris Corrigan (Class Three)



Cuttlefish by Gavin Rider (Class Four)



Strawberries by Bobby Rey Schmidt (Class Three–Farm Classroom)



‘Darkness Into Light’ by Everly Chairez (Class Four)

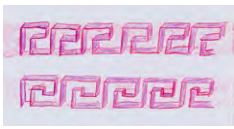


Plum Blossom by Ella Stepanek (Class Four–Farm Classroom)





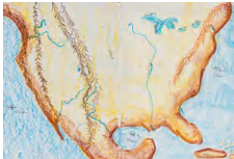
Botany Illustration by Indie Blue Woods (Class Five)



Greek Key Form Drawing by Juliette Gibbons (Class Five)



Daedalus & Icarus by Katy Grattan Teater (Class Five)



North American Geography by Liam Gannon (Class Five)



Color Wheel by Enzo Bass (Class Six)



Shepherds by the Fire by Chloe Sierra (Class Six)



Geometry Form by Lian Murphy (Class Six)



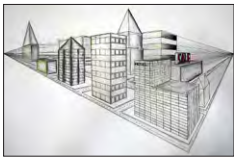
Detail from Renaissance Painting by Ellen French (Class Seven)



Lorenzo de Medici by Antonia Campanelli (Class Seven)



Age of Exploration by Addison Wardlaw (Class Seven)



Perspective Drawing by Callie Johnson (Class Seven)



Woman in Kimono by Aimira Leuzinger (Class Eight)



African Woman by Gianni Caiazzo (Class Eight)



'Shelter' by Stella Wardlaw (Class Nine)



Block Print by Nayeli Sierra (Class Nine)



'Leaning on Each Other' by Mina Gortinsky (Class Ten)



Veil Painting by Rowan Smith (Class Ten)



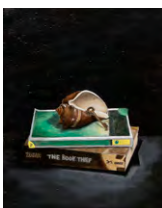
'Looking in the Darkness' by Adam Persinger (Class Ten)



Yellow/Red Color Exercise by Rowan Smith (Class Ten)



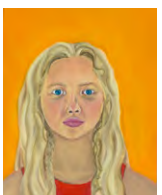
Life Drawing: Dancer Bowing by Theo MacKinnon (Class Eleven)



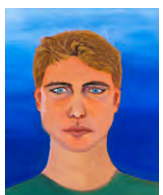
Still Life in Acrylic by Petal Held (Class Eleven)



Life Drawing: Foot by Farranika Barnum (Class Eleven)



Self-Portrait in Oils by Uma Baker, Joss Smith, Petal Held (Class Twelve)



## FIFTH GRADE

The fifth grade year is the heart of childhood. The children have attained a new kind of harmony. The proportion of head, trunk and limbs is balanced, with breath and pulse near the adult ratio. The children's movement is beautiful. They love life on earth and are eager to experience the world with all their senses.

In Waldorf schools worldwide, fifth grade sees the study of ancient civilizations in a transition from mythology to actual historical events. History, telling of mankind's deeds and strivings, stirs the children to a more intense experience of their own humanness. The curriculum covers a span of many thousands of years, from 7000 B.C. in Ancient India, to 300 B.C., the time of Alexander the Great. The study of Ancient Greece forms part of the preparation for the Greek Games. All these main lesson blocks offer rich themes for art, where the emphasis at this age is on strength and lightness of color. Shaded drawing is done with colored pencil.

Fifth grade is also characterized by the study of the plant kingdom, which provides ample material for careful observation, and drawings and paintings are intended to capture the gesture of the plant, flower or tree.

## SIXTH GRADE

The sixth grade is a year of polarities. On the one hand, the sixth grader is becoming a "citizen of the earth", incarnating ever more fully into the physical body. On the other hand, there are stirrings of a life of ideals and of perfection that can be attained only in thought. These two forces within the sixth grader are met in the curriculum. Geology, Physics, Roman History and Business Math reflect the earthly pole and the descent into matter; whereas, Astronomy, Geometrical Drawing, and the ideals of knighthood in Medieval History meet the student in their striving to reach for the stars.

Art in the sixth grade typically complements the introduction of science blocks, from geology to astronomy, and in physics, the study of light, color, acoustics, heat, magnetism and electricity. Students delight in the fascination of geometric drawing; they learn about the properties of light and shadow with pencil drawings of still-lives; and in painting, the color wheel is often studied. Veil painting may be introduced in this year (or in seventh) and requires patience and endurance as very pale layers are added successively over a period of time. In addition, main lesson books are suffused with art from scientific experiments and from the main geography block, map-making.

## SEVENTH GRADE

The seventh grader is characterized by an active interest in and an appetite for knowledge of world phenomena as well as an emerging capacity for reflection. Seventh grade is a tender year. The tension between what the child perceives in the world and a longing for a deeper understanding of the inner workings of the outer world becomes an important dynamic. The themes of the seventh grade curriculum mirror the students' outer exploration of the world and their inner journey.

Seventh grade sees the introduction of perspective drawing in tandem with the study of the Renaissance. The challenge of creating two-dimensional drawings from three-dimensional shapes forces students to develop a feeling for space and to will their thoughts into deeds. Students are undergoing puberty and discovering their intellectual abilities: it is as if they experience a 'rebirth' (renaissance) in their own lives and, as a result, are fascinated to encounter the era of exploration that was the Italian Renaissance and the Age of Discovery.

## EIGHTH GRADE

Eighth graders are now truly 'adolescents' and have reached a completion point of their schooling. They are ready to take on the world of ideas and begin to question things in a new way. They are also dealing with turbulent emotions and trying to understand their responsibility in the world.

In the eighth grade, the students study the skeletal structure of the human body. White chalk on black paper is used to explore the mechanics of the movements of the human body. Bones are also sculpted in clay. Themes from main lesson (Revolutions, Meteorology, Anatomy, World Geography) provide inspiration for paintings (wet-on-wet or wet-on-dry techniques) and drawing (pastel, pencil).

Typically, a dedicated drawing block is provided in which the students learn about the color wheel, become familiar with color perspective, composition, and contrast through color, and discover how to identify primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries. Drawing is deepened through careful observation and broadened by the introduction of pastels, in which they learn techniques for building, blending and creating soft ground color, working up to a more detailed, finished focus. They work with the discipline of projects requiring restricted palettes of warm, cool, and complementary colors.

## NINTH GRADE

Waldorf schooling honors the tradition of apprenticeship in ninth grade—the year is spent learning how to tackle various disciplines and acquire new skills. The underlying emphasis is on the importance of observation and description. "What?" is the main question. Ninth graders live through extremes, a clash of opposites, both emotional and intellectual. The curriculum focuses on polarities: in physics, students study heat and cold; in chemistry, contraction and expansion; in history, revolutions.

Art teachers bring black and white, light and dark, to help students find the nuances of grey that lie in between. Students work from still lifes—glass, bones, geometrical shapes—capturing the light reflections with white pastel on black paper. Later projects might explore draping and perspective, and then perhaps the study of clouds. Pastel, graphite and charcoal are the mediums used. Some Waldorf school ninth grade projects include interiors—of caves, dungeons, cathedrals—building to an apprentice task of copying from a great master, perhaps Dürer's *Melancholia* or *St. Jerome*. A History of Art course looks at "What" is art and how it has manifested itself through the ages. Polarities of black-and-white are also pursued through linoleum block printing, introduced in ninth grade. Students sketch and draw out of imagination and perception, leading into generating an image and a composition, including the three basic types of imprint: the positive, the negative, and the line.

## TENTH GRADE

Tenth graders are coming through the chaos of early adolescence and are now interested in process, development, synthesis—the path to balance. Their primary question now is "How?" How did the world come to be as it is? How did governments form? How do things work? We return to Ancient Greece and *The Odyssey* to support form and order in the tenth grader's thinking. In science, the focus is on motion: organic processes in chemistry, mechanics in physics, fluids in biology.

Students are in a journeyman stage—they have new skills but must now practice and perfect them. Block printing continues and develops: students work with three different layers, exploring color, texture design and composition. The three blocks printed together synthesize into one balanced image. In drawing, color is reintroduced with focus on the three primaries and the color wheel. Matching still-life sketches in warm and cold tones allows students to "see" the tonality and value. Veil painting returns and offers a test of patience and will power. Transparent surfaces of watercolor are layered on paper, with the need to wait for every layer to dry before the students can continue or even see the result of their work.

## ELEVENTH GRADE

Eleventh graders seek insight: their primary question is "Why?" They are ready to push themselves to their limits and challenge all the accepted customs. This is a year when students experience that they can transform themselves through something unseen that comes from within. The curriculum turns its attention to the unseen forces, encouraging students to develop a new type of thinking not restricted to the physical senses. In chemistry, they study the atom; in physics, electricity; in astronomy, the heavens; in literature, *Parzival* with its Grail quest to unknown realms. A History Through Music class provides another window into the pursuit of the infinite, or the divine, and can aid the soul life of the student at a time often characterized by existential doubts.

In eleventh grade, students often produce their finest artwork in an apogee of creativity and skill that they experience as their own unseen forces coming from within. Pastel or charcoal studies of the human body and its proportions from birth to adulthood train the students in their powers of observation while they ponder the mysteries of the living human being. Students enjoy quick sketches of young children on the playground whose constant movement arises from their inner source of energy. Acrylics come in as a new medium with very different qualities. Elements of patterns, texture, and shading are now considered, along with color to capture the human life force. Projects often include still-life masterpieces or plein-air impressionist landscapes. Throughout the year, there is a flowering of varied projects prior to the contraction and focus demanded of the senior year and the self-portraits they will create.

## TWELFTH GRADE

The twelfth graders now seek freedom: their main question is "Who?" Who is really behind this way of thinking, that personality, those statements? At this age, students are ready to confront good and evil, questions of destiny, evolution, and identity. Teachers challenge students to work independently—to analyze and synthesize their own thoughts, round out their personalities, and find the inner freedom to be prepared to meet the world.

The main artistic challenge of the senior year is the self-portrait, in both clay bust form and in painting. Looking into a mirror, students examine closely the proportions of the human face, its bone structure and tonality. For the first time, students use oil paint for its luster and vibrancy, a fitting medium for this culminating fine arts project that completes their journey through the grades. Students are ready to look at themselves, reflect back on their lives, and go out into the world and contribute to it from the new sense of who they truly are.

the study of the Industrial Revolution in eighth grade. Students master a straight stitch, make a handwork bag for a first grader from pattern-drafting to completion, move on to a pair of drawing pants and, finally, collaborate on a class quilt to donate to a hospital or present to their teacher as a parting gift.

By tenth grade, students are ready to use the loom. As well as understanding the basic technology, they design and weave beautiful and functional fabrics, such as a scarf or a tablet-woven band. In this culminating handcraft project, students learn that the creative design process is as important as the end result and that craftsmanship requires effort and careful attention to detail.

## WOODWORK

Third graders learn all about measurement, complemented in woodwork by making their own ruler which they will use in the construction of birdhouses. They gain familiarity with basic hand tools as they saw, sand, nail and glue their birdhouse pieces. Using an old hand auger, the students bore just the right sized hole for the tiny Nuthatch that will eventually live in their creation, do a final sanding, and apply a sealer coat to protect the wood from the sun and rain.



Carved Wooden Bowls (Class Six)

The sixth grader takes up the task of hand-carving a spoon or bowl from a rough log. Great satisfaction comes from balancing the inner (scoop or hollow) and outer (shape and handle) forms. Once in eighth grade, students are ready to tackle a three-legged stool. They study grain direction and learn to understand how grain relates to the structure of wood.

By tenth grade, the work becomes more complex, with students' clarity of thought enhanced and refined through the process of creating a dovetailed box. This practical work helps the students practice objectivity and distance themselves from the unstable emotional forces often prevalent in tenth grade. They now have considerable knowledge of the different woods, a grasp of accurate design and layout, confidence in sawing and chiseling of more complex joints, and accuracy in applying the surface treatment and final finish.

## METALWORK

From soft wool to wood to copper, the increasing hardness of the materials and their resistance to being shaped corresponds to the developmental stages of the students. The first metalwork block comes in seventh grade and acquaints students with the divisibility and elasticity of copper. The tasks of copper bowl-making are rhythmical, promoting perseverance and rhythm over strength—it is not hefty hammer blows but sensitively-felt fine hammering that is essential. Full concentration is demanded so that not even one square millimetre is overlooked. The accurate bending of the material develops a feeling for symmetry and refines the capacity for finding form.

Ninth graders at Summerfield are taught blacksmithing, using a coal-fired forge. Students must maintain the forge fire at an even and constant temperature in order to transform a round steel rod into a well designed and balanced fire tool. This class meets the need for balance between the polarities of the ninth grader in a direct and uncompromising way. By contrast, the eleventh grader is ready for—and needs—finer work, which comes with the manual fabrication of jewelry, using sheet and wire. With the students' new sense of self and an increasing interest in the world around them, the technical and detailed work of jewelry is appealing and satisfying, and the quality of what they can make in class is such that they recognize themselves as becoming real producers in the adult world.

## BASKETRY

Students are introduced, both in eighth grade and in a high school elective, to a number of materials, both store-bought and gathered from nature, in order to learn to shape a basket through the weaving of these materials. They learn different styles, shapes, forms and patterns and, as they define the interior/exterior of their baskets, come to a deeper awareness of their own inner and outer space.



Basket by Olive Milcoff (Class Eight)

## BOOKBINDING

In eleventh grade, students learn the history of printing and bookbinding, and then print on paper they make themselves, using either the wheat paste technique or marbling. They start with a clipboard, exploring the grain line and the handling of book-binding glue and cardboard. A simple Japanese booklet is next, involving bookbinding linen and hinges. A far more complex project follows: a portfolio with various flaps, plus spine and clasp. The work hones their fine motor skills and challenges their three-dimensional thinking.



Bookbinding Design by Fredi Mrazik & Zoey Sugino (Class Eleven)

## STONEMWORK

Complementing the study of great masters like Michelangelo, seventh graders hand-carve a sculpture out of alabaster or other soft stone. Starting with a rough-cut block, they first study the nature of stone (its fault lines and grain patterns) and then sculpt with bow saws, claws, chisels, gouges, mallets, rasps, files, sandpaper and polish. This project offers an artistic experience that tests the will and develops dexterity and precision in the hands.

## MODELING/CLAY/POTTERY

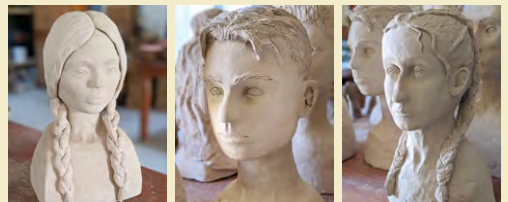
Modeling helps with hand-eye coordination, establishes a language of form, and sharpens awareness of experience of the third dimension. Discovering forms from a soft ball of beeswax in the first grade introduces modeling, with the hands as the only tool. With clay, from second grade on, more challenging tasks come, such as making spheres—sometimes one-handed—and the modeling of humans and animals. Often the student is asked to recall a story from an earlier main lesson and challenged to test his/her own inner picturing to model the figure from the story.



Coil Pots (Class Ten)

By eighth grade, students are led into transforming a sphere into the five platonic solids. A breathing-out follows this work when students go outside to dig clay and proceed through all the steps it takes to transform the rough material into usable clay and then into a small pinch-pot. Sculpting life-sized bones complements the main lesson's study of anatomy. Ninth graders tackle hand-built pottery in earnest, using the coil method to create a large vase with an even-wall thickness throughout; it must be smooth, symmetrical and well balanced. This class addresses the ninth graders' swing between inner polarities through their work with an endlessly yielding material, which requires a new sensibility. In tenth grade, students begin use of the potter's wheel. Developmentally, this is a tumultuous and uncertain period where the students feel they have no stability or control, and being able to center the clay on the wheel brings lawful order to the inner and outer world. As well as manipulating the clay, they learn the processes of preparation, glazing and firing.

For the twelfth grade, the students are asked to sculpt in clay a likeness of themselves. The students are familiar, from years of painting, with the task of creating the illusion of form, of putting into two-dimensions that which they see in real life. However, with clay, the form must be built up and this sculpting activity requires them to experience and understand depth and how they are in space for the first time. There is no boundary of a plane: the sculpture is visible and must be accurate from all sides, but the student, when looking in a mirror, can view only one perspective at a time. This concluding senior year project requires students to engage with questions of identity: "Who am I?", "How am I seen?" and, most importantly, "What is my place in the world?"



Self Portraits in Clay by Uma Baker, Joss Smith, Petal Held (Class Twelve)