**BIG IDEA: STORY**

Sharing stories is a way students can gain a better understanding of the world around them. Oral and written narratives are common ways of telling stories. In addition, we can look to the art-environment builders’ work as visual ways to tell stories.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:**

- What are ways to tell a story and what makes a compelling story?
- How can learning a story inform your perspective or understanding?
- Why are stories important?

**LESSON OVERVIEW:**

Inspired by the work, stories, and folklore of Levi Fisher Ames, students will sculpt an imaginary beast-in-a-box using a clay medium. Using the who, what, where, when model, each student will develop a story to bring their beast to life.

**OBJECTIVES:**

*(Organized by National Core Arts Standards Artistic Processes)*

**Connecting:** Students will understand how visual works of art can be used to enhance or tell a story.

**Responding:** Students will analyze and discuss the work of Levi Fisher Ames and his "L. F. Ames Museum of Art."

**Creating:** Students will use their imaginations to invent an animal and effectively use clay mediums and techniques to sculpt it.

**Presenting:** Students will convey a story related to their animal.
DISCUSS:
- Discuss the idea of story with the students.
  - What are the parts of a story? What makes a good story?
  - Why do people tell stories? What is the importance of storytelling?
  - What stories do you know? What is your favorite story and why?
  - How do pictures, images, or objects influence or enhance a story?
- Introduce, view, and discuss the work and life of Levi Fisher Ames. Ames created a vast wooden menagerie made up of 600 animals and characters from life, legend, and folklore. He displayed these works in custom-built wooden boxes and traveled around to regional fairs and celebrations sharing stories of his creatures.
  - What do you notice about Ames’s animal creations (real, imaginary, extinct, existing, folkloric, regional)?
  - How do you imagine Ames bringing his creatures to life through storytelling?
  - Why would storytelling be important to the work in the "L. F. Ames Museum of Art"?

CREATE:
1. Students will imagine and create a small-scale “beast.” Invite students to combine a variety of mammal, reptile, fish, insect, or bird features to create a unique creature.
2. Demonstrate effective clay techniques. For air-dry clay, demonstrate the use of an armature and encourage students to incorporate a range of found objects and materials.
3. Like Levi Fisher Ames, students may display their creatures in a small box.

REFLECT:
Write a short description of the history or story of the discovery of your creature. Note who discovered the creature, details about the creature, what makes your creature unique, where and when was it discovered, and why was the discovery significant, etc. Consider displaying writing components with “Beast-in-a-Box” or ask students to create a newspaper headline story announcing their discoveries. Students might also incorporate oral storytelling, acting, or dance.