

## Mask of Our Alter Ego

<b>Essential Question</b>	How were masks used in the Andean past? How do they help to conceal the identity of the wearer?
<b>Grade</b>	4th
<b>Time</b>	50 minutes
<b>Art Concepts</b>	Symmetry, found objects, three-dimensional (3-D), texture
<b>Materials</b>	Cardboard, construction paper, found objects, scissors, pencil, glue, stapler, tape, ruler, paper
<b>Artwork in Focus</b>	<a href="#">Mummy Mask, 1100–1440 by Artist Unknown</a>
<b>Talking about Art</b>	<p>The Chancay culture (1200 to 1450) developed mainly in the valleys of Chancay and Chillón on the middle coast of Peru. While they are well known for their textiles, these people were also master wood carvers. Chancay wood carvings are characterized by their simplicity and use of shapes from nature.</p> <p>For the Chancay people, wooden masks had simplified features, often represented with wide, diamond-shape eyes and long straight noses, as well as frequently including a “wig” of hair that hangs down on either side of the face. Inspired by a human face, this mask has <b>symmetry</b>—that is, it is the same on the right side as the left side.</p>

Like other Chancay masks, the wooden mask in LACMA's collection that is demonstrated here may have served to crown the mummy of an important dignitary, or as a mark of their deity or mythical ancestor status, which they believed they would acquire after death.

Today, masks are used in a variety of settings and for different purposes. In theater, for example, masks have been used to represent theatrical characters. During special holidays like Halloween, masks are used to entertain, scare, and mimic people. Masks are even used to represent one's alter ego, or "one's other self."

If you could create a mask that represents some aspect of your alter ego, what would your mask look like? What would it represent? What materials would you use to make it? Where and when would you use it?

## **Making Art**

Now that we have learned about Chancay mummy masks, we will create our own **three-dimensional (3-D)** mask of our alter ego using paper and **found objects**, or things that were made for one purpose that you are going to use for a new purpose: art! These found objects can be feathers, yarn, sticks, leaves, flowers, or anything else you think works.

Before you begin, think about what characteristics you want to highlight on your mask and the types of objects you may include. Consider how you could combine your face with an organic or man-made form that enhances qualities of your alter ego—facial expressions, lines, **textures**, shapes. Will

you be a hero, a villain, or another character? Will you have special powers? What aspects of your identity will this alter ego represent?

1. On a piece of paper, write three or four personality traits about yourself that people do not see. These could be things you like: colors, an animal you identify with, or abilities you would like to achieve.
2. Identify some characters from stories, historical figures, sports stars, artists that you identify with.
3. Draw a sketch for a face that combines your ideas together. Think about what the eyes, mouth, eyebrows, and other facial features can communicate about a person.
4. Measure and sketch with a pencil the size of your face onto a piece of thin cardboard (such as a cereal box). Mark the area where your eyes and nose are located.
5. Cut out the mask and mark with a pencil the areas where you will add the extra elements of found objects that you have gathered.
6. Begin designing the mask by adding shapes and forms with colored construction paper. These shapes and forms should identify aspects of your personality that you wrote on the paper. These shapes and forms can also be layered or 3-D.
7. Once you have added the shapes, you can add found objects to your mask by adhering them with glue. Make sure the objects are not too heavy and can be easily attached with glue!
8. To make the mask 3-D, make two one-half-inch slits at the top center and bottom center of the mask. Grab the

ends of the slit in each area and fold them over each other. Then, tape the ends together at the back of the mask. This will give your mask volume.

## **Reflection**

Now that you have created a mask of your alter ego, let's reflect on the art-making process.

What was the most challenging part about building a 3-D mask using paper and found objects? What does your mask look like? Why did you choose to add these specific found objects to your mask?

## **Curriculum Connections** California Arts Standards for Public Schools—Visual Arts

4.VA:Cr2.1: Explore and invent art-making techniques and approaches. 4.VA:Re7.2: Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages. 4.VA:Cn10: Create works of art that reflect community cultural traditions.

Prepared by Wenceslao Quiroz with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)  
Education Department