

Art Appreciation



Chinese Guardian Lions

Today your child learned about Chinese Guardian Lions in Art Appreciation. These symbols of luck and protection were first sculpted around 2000 years ago and continue on today. The example on the poster was sculpted during the Tang Dynasty over 1000 years ago. They are often sculpted out of marble, bronze, and stone.

We referenced how they can be both realistic and stylistic in their appearance and noted where in Illinois we may see lions used as an example of a Chinese Guardian Lion. We discussed their origin and meaning within the Chinese culture of animals symbolizing different meanings and their relationship in the Buddhist religion (Buddha was said to be a lion among men and spoke with the voice of a lion). They are set in pairs with the male to the right and female to the left. The male lion will have his right paw on a ball or globe, representing his feeling the “pulse of the earth”. The female lion will have her left paw on a cub, representing the “cycle of life”. In essence, it is viewed as the male protects the structure of the dwelling, and the female protects those within. Chinese Guardian Lions are often shown looking away from each other. They may have their mouths closed as thought to keep in good spirits or open to scare off demons.

We finished the presentation with the class sculpting Chinese Guardian Lions of their own.