

Landmarks Guide for Older Children



Frederick Kiesler

American, born in Austria, 1890–1965

Winged Victory

1951

Bronze

Subject: Symbolism

Activity: Experiment with symbols

Materials: Modeling clay

Vocabulary: Organic, mood, symbolism

Introduction

Frederick Kiesler is a sculptor from Austria. He uses organic forms to represent larger ideas about humanity and life. Because wings are used for flying, they are often a symbol of freedom. The title of this work, *Winged Victory*, contradicts what we see. Instead of looking like freedom or the power that comes with victory, we see crumpled metal. If these are wings, as the title suggests, they are wings that might not fly very well.

Questions

Do these wings look victorious? What kind of victory could they represent?

What is the mood of this sculpture? Happy? Sad? Proud?

If they do not represent victory, what might they represent?

Activity

Think of an item that is used as a symbol for a larger idea. For example, wings may be symbolic of freedom; the color blue we often take to mean sadness; the heart is a symbol for love; and the moon is a symbol for the night. Using modeling clay, make several versions of the same symbol. Experiment by making them larger or smaller, whole or broken, or in different colors. How does the meaning of the symbol change when you alter how the symbol looks?



Vocabulary

Organic - Looking like shapes found in nature

Mood - Mental or emotional state or disposition

Symbolism - Representing an idea or concept through images