Greek Architecture - Clay Columns

Every student (even those who are usually apathetic!) enjoyed this project.

Curriculum/State Standards
27.B.2 Investigate how the arts reflect different cultures, times, and places.
26.A.2f Describe or demonstrate various processes that can be used to create sculpture (e.g., clay)

Overview
Students will learn about ancient Greek architecture by creating a column in one of the Greek orders: Doric, Ionic or Corinthian in clay. They will develop skills working in a 3-D media. This was a hands-on way for students who are studying Ancient Greece to learn about the art and architecture of Greece. Kinesthetic learning is a great way to reach students who would otherwise be disengaged from learning. Making the columns helped them understand the different styles of Greek architecture. My students also made many connections to our present day architecture and how it was influenced by the ancient Greeks.

Project Objectives
• The students will know the three orders of Greek architecture and their cultural and architectural significance.
• The students will know how to create a sculpture out of clay using, slab, coil and carving techniques.
• The students will learn clay vocabulary and tool names and uses.

Materials
clay (approx. 1 lb. per student), clay tools, (kiln) storage area (with some type of trays and plastic to wrap clay), water cups/buckets, glazes, brushes, images of Greek architecture styles, drawing paper

Readiness Activity
Students will be shown images of Greek architecture used in Chicago and will discuss them in small groups.

Strategies/Activities
• Show images of Greek Architecture-compare and contrast styles, make connections to present day architecture discussion
• Sketching: the three orders of Greek columns

Clay Hands-on days:
Demonstrate briefly each process and introduce vocabulary and tool names. Also demonstrate how to properly store art- I put plastic on lunchroom style tray, put art on top, then wrap with dry cleaning bag tucking it in carefully so no air gets in during the time we are not working on this.

The base:
• Make 3 round balls- small, medium and large
• Make them into clay slabs to stack for the base
• Cut a hole in each piece in the center to limit the thickness of the final column
• Score and slip the pieces and put them together

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“Greek Architecture - Clay Columns” project continued...

**Strategies/Activities**

*The shaft:*
- Roll a coil for the column shaft, poke a hole in it to limit the thickness of the final column
- Use a carving tool to carve fluting on the shaft of the column
- Add shaft to base by slipping and scoring

*The capital:*
- Make a Doric column by using the same techniques used in making the base, but stack in reverse order, make an Ionic column by making a rectangular slab (thin) and rolling up each side to make it into a scroll shape, or make a Corinthian column by making “leaves” and adding them to the top of the shaft.
- Use a little water as needed and fingers to “clean up” column

*Glazing:*
- After firing, glaze columns, then fire a second time

**Clay Vocabulary:**
- slab- a flat pancake shape made by hitting the clay gently with the palm of the hand
- coil- a snake-like shape made by rolling the clay back and forth with the palm of your hand
- score- scratch (with a fork)
- slip- wet the clay to “glue it” to another piece of clay

**Vocabulary:**
- Column: a vertical post that holds up parts of a building (often around a doorway)
- Fluting: vertical lines carved in a column - Doric, Ionic, Corinthian order (see picture handouts)
- Score & Slip: scratching (with a fork) & wetting the clay to join 2 pieces of clay together
- Coiling: shaping the clay by rolling it back and forth creating a snake-like shape
- Slab: a shape created by gently flattening the clay with the palm of your hand to create a pancake-like shape
- Carving: removing clay using a tool to carve away areas of a sculpture
- Glaze: when painted on the sculpture and fired (heated) in the kiln (special oven for clay), it turns into a shiny coat of glass.

**Culminating Activity**
Display art at school with activities and writings about ancient Greece.

**Evaluation Method**
Rubric.