



## Caduceus

**Artist:** James Muir, American  
**Date:** Caduceus, 1997  
**Media:** Bronze  
**Dimensions:** 12' h., 9' w.  
**Owners:** St. Louis University

# St.L PACK

## Teaching Suggestions

### Caduceus

#### LOOKING AT ART:

- As you walk around and look at this piece, what do you notice? Muir incorporates symbols as a part of his allegorical art. What recognizable objects and symbols can you find? Make a list. How do the familiar symbols add to your understanding of the piece?
- How are line, repetition and direction used in this sculpture? What is the overall shape of the sculpture? How do you think that relates to the image of a winged figure?

#### SOCIAL STUDIES:

- This was created as a part of John Muir's quest for world peace and his hope that there will be a **Caduceus** sculpture on every continent. What ideas do the monuments in your neighborhood, town, or city reflect? Are any dedicated to peace? Select several monuments to write about, and then describe how you would design a monument to peace.
- Discuss the role of myths, symbols, and allegory in culture. What is a mythic figure? How does the ordinary become mythic? Can you think of contemporary figures that have become myths or legends? What were the circumstances?

#### LANGUAGE ARTS:

- **Caduceus** has her arms raised in a dramatic pose. If she began talking, what would she say? Write either (1) a short monologue in the first person—her perspective as the angel of healing, or (2) her “poem to the world.”
- Find examples of allegorical art and allegorical writing. Discuss these works. Why do you think these artists choose to use allegory as a part of the expression?

#### SCIENCE, MATH, AND TECHNOLOGY:

- Discuss proportion and scale and how they are used in this sculpture. Do all parts of the sculpture use the same scale? Explain. Write a short essay on how scale relates to the expressive qualities of this work of art.
- What roles do numbers play in this sculpture? (Think about the points of stars or the four elements as expressed by the four spouts, etc.) Make a chart listing the number of related symbols; include written explanations.

#### PERFORMING ARTS:

- Based on the types of symbols and imagery used in this sculpture, discuss what musical qualities might “match” or seem to reflect them. Try to find one that does.
- Develop the writing activities under the Language Arts section into a performance piece. Consider repetition, voice modulation, or even adding a chorus of voices.

#### VISUAL ARTS:

- Find images of healers in everyday life. Create a bulletin board display. Compare and contrast discussing expressive qualities and the use of elements and principles.
- Group project: Create a wall-hanging using repetition and borders that incorporates the symbols and imagery from the sculpture. Have each student design a modular section, determine color and pattern, then, using poster paint or markers on fabric or Kraft paper, create your banner. Discuss the use of symbols in communicating ideas.