



Poeta, Dear Diary and Honored Guest

Artist: William King, American, b. 1925
Title: Poeta, Dear Diary and Honored Guest, 1985
Media: Cast aluminum
Dimensions: Each figure is 6' tall
Owner: Collection of Chesterfield Arts, Gift of Louis Sachs 2002

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LOOKING AT ART:

- Seeing this sculpture for the first time, who do you think these people are? What are they doing? How do you think the title, **Poeta, Dear Diary and Honored Guest**, applies to the group?
- Describe the figures and decide if the artist intended for them to be realistic or more like caricatures and why.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

- Through the ages clothing styles have changed. Can you tell from their clothes if these figures represent a certain time period? Make an illustrated chart showing the major changes in America's clothing styles since 1800.
- Diaries are written for various purposes. Lewis and Clark kept a detailed diary during their trip West, and Ann Frank kept a diary during World War II. Research and write a short paper comparing an excerpt from each diary. Include historical legacy, content, purpose, voice, and style.

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- What does the posture and body language tell you about each of the figures and their relationship to one another? Write an imaginary dialogue between the three characters, **Poeta, Dear Diary and Honored Guest**.
- Imagine you are the figure in the group who is holding the journal in his hands. Using the first person, write a diary entry from the point of view of that figure.

SCIENCE/MATH/TECHNOLOGY:

- Research the use of recycled aluminum for casting functional products and artwork in the US. Write a report.
- Thirty years ago, aluminum cooking pans were being produced and were in common use. Research the history of the aluminum pan in the past 30 years.

PERFORMING ARTS:

- Refer to the first Language Arts Activity, then have three students at a time sit in three straight back chairs assuming the posture and character of the figures. Have a spontaneous two-minute dialogue between the characters.
- Use the same activity described above and enact the scene in various settings both inside and outside your school building. How does the setting or site of the dialogue effect the conversation? Example settings could be the library and the school cafeteria.

ART PROJECT IDEAS:

- Like characters in a *single frame cartoon* the figures in this sculpture are three-dimensional *caricatures* in a one-frame setting. They are *abstracted* yet retain certain *realistic qualities* as well. Define and discuss the three italicized concepts as they apply to Poeta, Dear Diary and Honored Guest. Look at examples of one-frame cartoon drawings from newspapers, "The New Yorker" magazine, etc. Discuss.
- In addition to the above, the three figures are very gestural in style—that is their posture and body language communicate their attitudes to the viewer. Working in groups of three, use modeling clay to form three gestural figures that comprise a group. Display the groups of three as a class