

## Cold Porcelain Clay

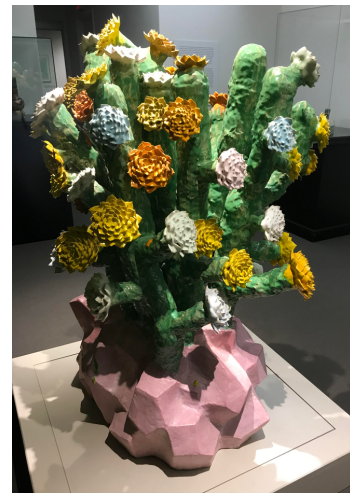
Lesson plan prepared by Lux Habrich for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

### Suggested Grade/Age Levels

Primary – High School, ages 5 – 18. Requires microwave and adult supervision. Can be performed with younger ages with adult support.

### Subject Areas

- Visual Arts
- Social Studies
- Art History
- Language Arts
- Problem Solving



Matt Wedel, *Flower Tree*, 2009

### Introduction

**Inspired by the work of Matt Wedel:** This is a fun and simple activity that can be done from home with very few supplies, that can offer a range of results and possibilities. Directly inspired by work from the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia's Permanent Collection – *Flower Tree* (2009) is a life-sized, hand-built and glazed free-form ceramic sculpture that can be experienced in the round. Wedel, an American contemporary sculptor, has been exploring his interests in geology, landscapes and farming, to merge simplified forms into massive fantastical pieces, with thick and wild, painterly coloration. He uses his hands as his main building tool and starts with a general idea but allows the artworks to manifest through the process and act of making itself.

## Set Up

- large, flat surface area that can get dirty
- Microwave required

## Materials

- Cornstarch
- Vegetable oil or baby oil
- Lemon juice or white vinegar
- Hand cream or petroleum jelly
- White glue
- Resealable bag or air-tight container, plastic wrap for storing
- Microwave safe bowl
- Measuring cup
- Mixing spoon
- Building tools: scissors, toothpicks, utensils
- Optional: acrylic paint, paintbrushes, water container, paper towel

## Cold Porcelain Recipe

### Self-hardening, paintable clay - similar to polymer clay:

- Cornstarch (1/2 cup)
- White glue (1/2 cup)
- Vegetable oil / baby oil (1tbsp)
- Lemon juice / vinegar (1tbsp)
- Hand cream / petroleum jelly as needed



Mix all ingredients except the hand cream/petroleum jelly in a bowl. Microwave mixture on high at 30 second intervals, stirring in between. Depending on microwave strength and quantity mixed, it can take 1min – 1:30 min. Spread cream on surface area and sprinkle cornstarch on table and hands to knead mixture until it is a clay-like consistency. Desired consistency is perfect tear drop shape when pulled.

- Store in saran wrap coated with layer of hand cream, then enclose in resealable bag / air-tight container
- Let rest for 24 hours before using
- Dries uncovered in 24 – 48 hours

## Process



### Step 1

Mix all of your ingredients together (except hand cream) and microwave on high at 30 second intervals, stirring in between, until the texture is similar to mashed potatoes. Knead into clay.



### Step 2

Let rest for 24 hours before using. Making sure you've lathered your clay with hand cream, and it is properly wrapped and sealed.



### Step 3

This clay recipe mimics commercial polymer clay in texture and use. No slipping and scoring are needed to attach clay parts to each other. Use hand cream to keep clay hydrated.



#### Step 4

Wait for clay to fully dry before painting to avoid cracks (24–48hrs). Works can be painted with acrylic paint.



#### Step 5

Works can be sealed with 2-part white glue / 1-part water mixture (homemade varnish). This will add a protective layer, sealing and strengthening the pieces.

### Tips

- Your clay mixture needs to be cooked longer if it is still sticky
- Your clay mixture is overcooked if it is crumbly
- The shorter the sculpture, the more stable it will be
- It is best to paint works when sculptures are completely dry to avoid cracks and better adherence
- Sculptures can be sealed with 2-parts white glue, 1-part water mixture as a homemade varnish
- Consider painting your pieces with acrylic paint.

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### Resources

- <https://www.mattwedel.com>