

Papier-Mâché Vessel

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

Suggested Grade/Age Levels

Primary - High School, ages 5 and up. Can be performed with younger ages with adult support.

Subject Areas

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

Introduction

Inspired by the works of Walter Ostrom:

This activity is inspired by the works from the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia's retrospective exhibition "Good Earth: The Pots and Passions of Walter Ostrom". Ostrom, an American-born ceramic artist, has been teaching at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design since 1969. His 50-year career of making and teaching - has been featured and exhibited worldwide. Ostrom is regarded internationally as a technical and academic expert in low-fire maiolica production, an ancient pottery technique of painting



Walter Ostrom
*Flower Brick with Baskets and
Woven Stands Decoration, 1988.*

Fish Vase with Greek Pot, 1990.
Both Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

coloured tin-glaze on a white background to depict historical scenes and stories. He is referencing the history of pottery directly in the surface design of the pieces, encouraging us to consider the vast and longstanding history and the social and functional use of ceramics.

Set Up

- A large flat surface area that can get dirty

Materials

- Flour or white glue
- Masking tape / painter's tape
- Mixing bowl
- Measuring cup
- Mixing spoon / whisk
- Newspaper / scrap paper
- Pencil / Permanent Marker
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Recycled materials: plastic containers, cardboard (e.g. boxes, toilet paper rolls, egg cartons)
- Acrylic paint, variety of paintbrushes sizes, water container, paper towel

Recipe

Hardening and paintable once dry:

- Flour or white glue (1/2 cup)
- Water (1 cup)

Mix thoroughly until all lumps are gone.

Use less water if in a humid environment or use white glue instead of flour.

- Can be stored in the refrigerator for a week
- Dries in 24 hours



Process

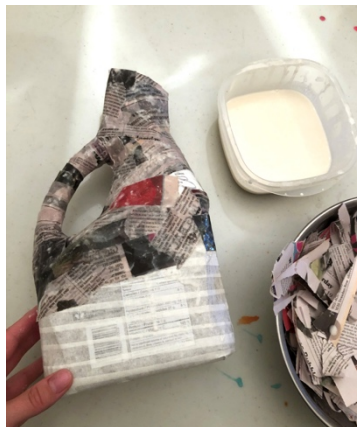
Make your own sculptural vessels

Step 1: Gather a variety of recycled materials so you have many forms and textures to choose from.

Step 2: Assemble the containers to create the general form of your vessel. Cut sheets of cardboard as needed to attach parts together and create your desired form. Tape parts together with masking tape.



Step 3: Papier-Mâché has a difficult time sticking to plastic, so it is important to cover any plastic with masking tape, so the mixture adheres.



Step 4: Before covering your piece in papier-mâché, be sure to have your strips of newspaper pre-torn (large and small pieces). Cover the entire form with papier-mâché strips, making it as smooth as you can. Let dry for 24 hours before painting.

Step 5: Once the papier-mâché is completely dry, your vessel will be stiff and strong. Cover your form entirely in white acrylic paint for a neutral surface. You can sketch out your design once the white paint layer is dry - consider a design that wraps around every side.



Step 6: Acrylic paint can be applied in layers for an engaging and complex design. Consider watering down colours to play with transparency and opacity.



Tips

- Wait until papier-mâché layer is completely dry before painting so paint adheres well
 - Remember to paint all sides of the vessel so it can be experienced in the round
 - Consider a repeat pattern design following the form of your vessel
 - Consider an abstract design
 - Sculptures can be sealed with 2 parts white glue, 1-part water mixture as a homemade varnish
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Resources

<https://saidybronfmanaward.ca/walter-ostrom>

<https://lunenbugarts.org/programs/everything-you-always-wanted-to-know-about-pots/>