

Bowled Over by Picasso

Create a brightly glazed bowl in the style of Pablo Picasso's ceramics

Most of us are familiar with the paintings and drawings of Pablo Picasso, but he also did many works in clay! Picasso discovered ceramics in 1947. A few years later, he met ceramic artist Jacqueline Roque at Madoura Pottery. She soon became his wife. Picasso continued creating ceramics until his death in 1973. His ceramic work stood out in his time due to its sense of freedom in brushwork, economy of line, and use of vibrant color.

Just as Picasso made many paintings during his lifetime, he also enjoyed painting on ceramics, producing more than 2,000 pieces. His pieces utilized new forms, techniques, and color that hadn't previously been seen in ceramics. He sought to create editions of his ceramics very much like an original print may be created in a limited edition. In working with Madoura Pottery, Picasso was able to create limited edition ceramic pieces.

Although ceramics are often deemed a craft, Picasso viewed the plates, jugs, vases, and other vessels he created as a type of canvas that curved. He playfully experimented with the union of decoration and form, and left his mark in the world of ceramic art.

GRADES 3-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. View the ceramic pieces of Pablo Picasso.
2. Provide at least 2 pounds of white clay per student.
3. Cover tables with canvas; provide rolling pins and clay thickness strips.
4. Gather or make plaster hump molds, or containers suitable for use as a hump mold.

Process

1. Select a plaster hump mold, or make your own. A hump mold is a mold that a rolled clay slab is placed over, rather than inside (this is called a slump mold). A plastic bowl or container works well for this process. Simply thinly brush a mold release agent or dishwashing detergent onto the interior of the bowl, and pour plaster into it. Once the plaster hardens, remove it and let it dry completely.



Materials (required)

Blick Stoneware Clay, 50 lb (30517-1050); share one bag across class

Blick Medium Weight Cotton Canvas Rolls, Unprimed, by the yard (07309-); enough to cover tables

Wooden Rolling Pin, 10" (30345-1010); share five across class

Potter's Throwing Ribs, style 1 (30301-1001); share five across class

Amaco Lead-Free Velvet Underglazes, 2 oz (30411-); share at least five across class

Amaco Lead-Free Clear Transparent Glazes, Pint (30406-1026); share three pints across class

Princeton Hake Brush, 1" (05415-1001); share 10 across class for glazing

Winsor & Newton Bamboo Brush, Size 2 (05886-1002); one per student for brush work

Plastic or paper bowl for creating a mold, or for using as a hump mold, one per student

Optional Materials

Mayco Slump and Hump Molds (30391-)

Castin'Craft Mold Release and Conditioner (33588-1004)

Clay Thickness Strips (30323-1009)

Blick Pottery Plaster No. 1 (33536-)

Process, continued

Other options for a hump mold might be a sturdy paper or plastic bowl turned upside down. Be sure to remove the clay as soon as it is stiff so that it can continue to dry (and shrink) off of the mold.

2. Roll a uniform slab on the canvas-covered table using a rolling pin and thickness strips. Make a slab large enough to drape over the mold easily, and about 1/2" thick. Use a rubber or wooden rib to smooth both sides of the slab, using a spritz of water if necessary.
3. Carefully lift the slab and place it over the hump mold. The slab can be trimmed into a shape before placing it on the mold, or trimmed while it is on the mold. Using a slightly damp sponge, smooth the slab onto the mold, pressing down firmly to coax the slab to take the shape of the mold. Add a foot ring by rolling a coil and attaching it to the bottom of the bowl shape, or add feet. If the bowl is to be a wall piece, make two holes through the foot ring for hanging later. Let dry to a leather hard stage, and remove from the mold to continue drying.
4. Imagery can be added with underglazes and a brush when the piece is leather hard, bone dry, or bisque fired. Simplified, abstracted imagery works well and can be executed using simple line and color. Consider the way the imagery might follow the curve of the inside or outside of the bowl, and also how it fits within the confines of the form.
5. Once the bowl is bone dry, bisque fire to cone 04. Apply three brushed coats of clear glaze, and fire to cone 6. Once fired, this piece is functional and can be used with food. Hand-washing is recommended.



Step 1: Allow a uniform slab to set up on a hump mold form to create a bowl shape.



Step 2: When leather hard, bone dry, or bisque fired, apply underglazes with a brush. Bisque to cone 04.



Step 3: Apply three brushed coats of clear glaze. Fire to cone 6.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 3:

Refine and complete artistic work.

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.

K-4 Students describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses..

5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.

9-12 Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes they use.

Content Standard #4 — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

K-4 Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures.

5-8 Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts.

9-12 Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places.