

# Free Form Vessel

## (art + history)

It is very empowering to create a hand built bowl or vase. Building a vessel is a natural process developed with the purpose of adapting material to function. A solid base, pleasing shape and an overall sculptural presentation represents both art and function. Hand built vessels are usually very earthy and not in the same class as fine porcelain. Early vessels were developed as needed for the function of daily life. As the years progressed, life became less complicated and techniques became more sophisticated. Craftsmen began to decorate and change the shapes to enhance the beauty of the vessels. Cultures used the decoration applied to depict stories. Study the Native American pots and Egyptian urns. What other cultures have left behind rich histories in functional artifacts?

Hold a discussion comparing early bowls of clay taken from camp fires or vessels carved from trees. Review methods of constructing functional vessels. Note the difference between porcelain and raku. Current trends push the limits of technology and create crude examples of clay construction for art's sake.

## Grade Levels 5-12

*Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.*

## Process

1. Find a base suitable to hold a balloon. The base can be heavy cardboard, plastic, or metal. Selected item can be trimmed to change the height or shape. The base does not need to be weighted. It will act as a support for the balloon and will be removed after the Sculptamold is dry. Attach the Mylar® balloon to the base with as much masking tape as necessary in order to have a secure and stable base. The Mylar® balloon will stay inflated for days. This will allow the vessel to dry completely and keep its shape.
2. Cover the work area with plastic. Using the gallon zip-close bag add three cups of dry Sculptamold compound and about a cup of water. Close bag and allow extra air to escape and knead. Mix until it is the consistency of brownie mix. Lay the base and balloon on it's side. Support it with wads of newspaper. Apply the Sculptamold using the plastic painting knife.



## Materials

Amaco® Sculptamold® (33104-1003), 1 to 1-1/2 lb per piece

Blickrylic™ Student Acrylics (00711-), assorted colors, distribute throughout class

Blick Studio® Metallic Tiles

Dew (61151-7050) and Jade (61151-7240), divide one package of each color between 8 students

Burlap (63202-8036), brown. Pull 1-yard apart for strings, distribute throughout class

Weldbond® Glue (23819-1105), 8-oz

Plastic Painting Knife (03105-0020) one per student

Blick Scholastic White Bristle Flat (05949-1010) Size 10, one per student

Blick All-Use Masking Tape (23006-1000), 3/4" Zip-close plastic bags, gallon

Mylar® Balloon

Sturdy box, small coffee can, nut can or milk jug for base

## Process, continued

Cover as much of the sculpture as possible. If Sculptamold slides off wait until dry then reapply and repeat as many times as necessary in order to cover the balloon. Leave a opening one half or a third of the way up the balloon. Don't forget to turn and cover both sides. This whole process may take several days.

3. After the vessel is covered and dried, snip the balloon to deflate. Remove the balloon and any excess tape not needed. Apply Sculptamold to the area where the balloon was removed. The vessel will be heavy.
4. Embellish the vessel using glue. Set objects like tile with small amounts of Sculptamold. If objects do not adhere use Wellbond it secures most surfaces. Apply the burlap strings to connect areas and add texture.
5. Paint the surface with Blickrylic use the elements of design to connect all areas of the vessel. Consider the three dimensional piece a sculpture.

## Options

- Make smaller pieces and create sets of two or more

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## National Standards

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

**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 #2** — Using knowledge of structures and functions

**5-8** Students generalize about the effects of visual structures and functions and reflect upon these effects in their own work

**9-12** Students create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems

**Content Standard #3** — Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

**5-8** Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks

**9-12** Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks

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

**5-8** Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures

**9-12** Students differentiate among a variety of historical and cultural contexts in terms of characteristics and purposes of works of art