

Exploring Stories and Talavera Pottery

Talavera is a pottery tradition from Talavera de la Reina, Spain. Plates, bowls, jars, and other household objects are hand-thrown on a potter's wheel, glazed, and then painted. In addition to the brightly colored decorative ceramics created in the 1600s, this plate offers a story painted across the plate. In this activity, learn to create your own colorful plate, as inspired by the exhibition *Glory of Spain: Treasures from the Hispanic Society Museum & Library*.

Time: 45 minutes to paint
3 days to dry

Difficulty level: Moderate

Messy level: Moderate to high



Above: Talavera de la Reina, *Plate with Jonah and the Whale*, 1600, tin-glazed earthenware, New York, the Hispanic Society of America, LE2407.

This exhibition is organized by the Hispanic Society of America, New York.

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To view an image of this work and to hear from Christine Gervais, the Museum's curator of decorative arts and the director of the Rienzi house museum, [click here](#).

Investigate the Work of Art!

1. How does the artist tell a story across the plate?
2. How does the artist use color and pattern to help tell a story?
3. Many artists had never seen a whale in real life. How does the whale depicted on this plate resemble an actual whale? How is it different? Why would this depiction look so different?

Let's Make Some Art!

Gather These Art Materials

- Sketch paper
- Pencil
- Glazed or unglazed white ceramic plate
- Various paintbrushes (make sure to have a thin brush for fine details)
- Porcelain paint

Step-by-Step Artist Instructions

1. Think of a story you would like to tell on your plate.
2. Trace your plate on paper and make a sketch to practice.
3. Lightly draw your sketch onto the plate using a pencil.
4. Use the thin paintbrush to paint your image with the ceramic paints.
5. Allow painted items to dry for 24 hours, then bake them in your home oven at 300°F for 35 minutes for a finish that's as permanent as fired enamel.
6. Your plate is dishwasher safe. You can hang it as a decorative work of art.

Please note: The paints are non-toxic but not recommended for use on surfaces that come in contact with food.

