

Exploring Imagery and Creating a Contemporary Vase

This activity will guide you in exploring the imagery and form of *Blow Away Vase* while working together to create a unique piece of ceramic art. This activity is inspired by the exhibition *Between Sea and Sky: Blue and White Ceramics from Persia and Beyond* on view through May 31, 2021.

Time: 1 hour plus dry time

Difficulty level: Moderate

Messy level: High



To view an image of this work, visit the [MFAH Collection online database](#).

To view an image of the work from the design house [Front Design](#), visit [here](#).

Investigate the Work of Art!

1. Ceramics are made when an artisan shapes clay and then fires, or bakes, the object at a high temperature in a kiln. Look around your home. Do you have any ceramics?
2. Look at *Blow Away Vase*. Have you ever seen a vase that looks like this?
3. A section in the exhibition *Between Sea and Sky* highlights the creative mixture of Chinese dragons, Persian blues, shapes, and motifs that were made between the 15th and 17th centuries. Although this particular vase was made in the 21st century, what motifs and imagery from the past do you see in *Blow Away Vase*?

Let's Make Some Art!

Gather These Art Materials

- Air-dry clay
- Rolling pin
- Blue acrylic paint
- White acrylic paint
- 1 small paintbrush
- 1 medium paintbrush
- Various clay tools for scoring and smoothing
- Water cup
- Paper towels
- Paper plate or painter's palette
- Cardboard wrapped in parchment paper and stapled to the back, or a plastic placemat, or a slab mat
- A small cup, jar lid, cookie cutter, or anything that could be used to create a circle

To purchase some of the recommended art materials, visit dickblick.com.

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Step-by-Step Artist Instructions

1. Find a clear spot at home with a hard surface to work on.
2. Working on the wrapped cardboard or placemat, roll the clay into a slab (flat piece) that is about 1/4-inch thick.
3. To get clean edges, use a ruler and clay tools to cut off raw edges.
4. Slice your clay into two pieces.
5. Use half of your clay to create the circular base of your vase. You can use your clay tool to slice by hand or use something like a cookie cutter to punch out your circle shape.
6. The second piece of clay will become the sides of the vase. Pick up the clay and place it on the base/circle to make sure it fits around it well. If it is too big, trim it with the clay tool. If it is too small, make the base/circle smaller.
7. You are ready to connect the base to the sides. To make them stick together, score (roughen up) the connecting edges using your clay tools.
8. Dip your finger in water and lightly wet the scored edges.
9. Connect the two clay pieces.
10. Smooth out any rough or uneven areas using your fingers.
11. Shape the vase to look like the wind has blown it.
12. Allow vase to harden and dry overnight.
13. While waiting for the vase to dry, as a group, visit the exhibition [Between Sea and Sky](#) on the Museum's website to look at the different motifs, designs, and images on the ceramics throughout the exhibition. Talk about the variety of images and have everyone pick a favorite.
14. Once the sculpture is dry, paint the vase white inside and out. Allow to dry.
15. Take turns using blue paint and a small brush to apply your selected motif somewhere on the vase.

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