



Majolica Goblets

Cross-Curricular – Art & Social Studies Grades 4–12

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Description

Majolica pottery demonstrates that a beautiful idea can travel the globe! During China's Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), potters used cobalt, an Arabian mineral, to create a dark blue glaze to contrast with China's white porcelain clays.

Later, Islamic potters mimicked the look with their reddish, iron-rich clays by painting bright oxides and stains on a tin-glazed, opaque white background. Their wares became as popular as Chinese Ming pottery and often were shipped from Spain to Italy via the port of Majorca, an island off Spain's eastern coast.

Pottery painted with colors over a white base became known as "majolica" and was widely produced in Italy during the Renaissance. Florentines Lucca and Andrea de la Robbia were the best-known majolica clay artists, creating large religious relief sculptures glazed with bright colors on a gloss-white base.

To this day, Italian potters still produce beautiful majolica – and your students can, too!

Objectives

Students will create a food-safe majolica goblet by placing a pinch bowl atop a coiled base. Students will explore the movement of art concepts through different geographies and across cultures.

National Standards

Content Standard #1: Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes

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

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

Directions

Teacher preparation: Gather photographs of Ming Dynasty pottery as well as Islamic and Italian pottery in the majolica style. Display in the classroom resources that explain the style's movement across cultures.

With the students:

- 1 Start with a baseball-sized lump of clay (about 1 pound) for a small goblet and an orange-sized lump (about 1 ½ pounds) for a larger one.
- 2 Make a pinch pot:
 - Roll less than half of your clay between your palms or against the tabletop into a perfectly round, egg-sized ball.
 - Push your thumb about halfway into the center of the ball and turn it, pinching the clay gently between your thumb and fingers. Focus on the thick parts, pulling upward and inward to create uniform walls and a tall tulip shape (not a cereal bowl). Keep the rim thick enough to prevent cracks.
 - Tap the bottom of the pot gently on a table to flatten it slightly.
 - Invert the pot on a small board or piece of cardboard.
- 3 Roll the remaining clay on the tabletop into several ropes the diameter of your little finger. Set aside the best rope for the rim, covering it with plastic.
- 4 Score and slip the bottom of the pinch pot. Then score and slip the ropes and coil them atop it, pressing them gently together. Make the coils close and tight near the pinch pot, where fingers will grip the goblet, and coil the ropes upward to the goblet's desired height.
- 5 Turn goblet right side up. Gently tap the base coil flat so the goblet is stable and the rim is parallel to the tabletop.
- 6 Score and slip the pinch pot rim and place the reserved rope atop it. With a wooden tool or your finger, gently smooth the joint, affixing the rope firmly and tidily to the rim.
- 7 Texture, stamp and sprig goblet as desired. Support goblet gently with your fingers as you texture or stamp it; score and slip any sprigs and clay pieces you add to the goblet.
- 8 Turn goblet upside down to dry. Check that the base is parallel to the tabletop.
- 9 Decorate the goblet with the majolica technique:
 - Brush two to three coats of lead-free Amaco Opaque White (LG-11) using a wide brush. Glaze evenly onto cone 04 bisque-fired goblets. Glaze may be applied onto bone-dry greenware (without bisque-firing first) but beware as the pieces would be very fragile.
 - Paint images and designs by brushing one to three coats of Amaco Gloss Decorating Colors over the dry Opaque White Glaze to emulate true majolica. Fewer coats give a translucent, watercolor effect.
 - When dry, fire to cone 05. Do so slowly if you have applied glaze to bone-dry greenware.

Materials

Amaco® Clay, Red Clay, 67-M
8-351476-705

Amaco® Clay, White Art 25-M
8-351452-705

Amaco® Designer Push Molds, Tribal theme
9-407809-705

Amaco® Designer Push Molds, Moon Theme
9-407807-705

Amaco® Designer Push Molds, Sun Theme
9-407808-705

Amaco® Tri-Bead Rollers
9-405657-705

Amaco® Opaque White (LG-11) Glaze, 1 pint
9-351785-705

Amaco® Gloss Decorating Colors, 16-color
starter set
9-1299480-705

CJOP Sticks
9-408670-705

Student Modeling Tools
9-402381-705

