

Duncan ColorWorks

Octopus Project Ceramic Art Lesson Plan



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Octopus - - Ceramic Art Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 9-12

By Carol Sconyers

Introduction:

The octopus, which is also called “devilfish,” is a predatory mollusk with a pouch-shaped body and eight powerful arms with two rows of suction discs on each. It also has an ink sac, which it uses to darken the water when it senses danger. Octopuses are related to squids, cuttlefish, nautili and other mollusks such as snails, mussels and clams. They can creep over hard surfaces using their arms; when they travel through water they move by jet propulsion, taking in water and ejecting it forcibly through a funnel as their muscular mantle contracts. They vary in size from a few centimeters to the giant octopus of the Pacific Ocean, which can grow to over 10m. When threatened, octopuses will often try to escape by releasing a cloud of purple-black ink to confuse the enemy. Its body will change color, release an ink cloud and jet away to safety. Several blotches of ink can be released before the ink sac is empty. The ink is toxic to an octopus in a confined space such as in a cave with little water current or in captivity. If the octopus cannot escape the ink, the octopus will become ill or perhaps die. The eyes initiate color change in octopuses. If an octopus is disturbed, special pigment cells in the skin will be activated in an attempt to blend in with the surroundings. The special pigment cells consist of three bags containing different colors, which are adjusted individually until the background is matched. Coloration reflects mood, white for fear, red for anger, brown is the usual color.

Educational Objectives:

This lesson provides opportunities for students to:

- Learn how to form clay with your hands from a chunk of clay.
- Learn to build on a clay structure.
- Learn to make a small pinch pot.
- Learn to roll clay coils and add to a mass of clay.

References:

Octopus is Amazing – Holly Keller

Gentle Giant Octopus – Karen Wallace and Mike Bostoch

Octopus – Diane Swanson

Phantom of the Sea – Mary M. Arullo, Jeffrey L. Rotman

Web – www.marinelab.sarasota.fl.us
www.nature.ca/notebooks

Teaching Tips:

Octopus can be used as a decoration or a paperweight.

Other ways of decorating:

- Fire to shelf cone 04
- Brush on Concept colors of your choice. (2-3 coats)
- Let dry and dip in CN 2000D
- Fire to shelf cone 06



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Duncan Materials:

For 30 Students

E-Z Stroke™ Translucent Underglazes:

- E-Z Stroke, assorted colors

Concepts™ Clear Dipping Glaze:

- CN 2000D

Brushes:

- BR 585- #6 Sabelina or
- BR 529- #4 Sabelina Round

Miscellaneous Materials:

- 50 lbs. of clay
- Workboard to model the clay
- Plastic knife
- “Bic” pen top or similar
- Plastic spoon
- Water container
- Plastic plates to hold color

Step-by-Step:

1. Using a 25lb. Bag of clay, cut about a 2” slab of clay.
2. Form the clay into a large ball about the size of a grapefruit.
3. Flatten one side of the ball by laying it down on the workboard and pressing with your hand to flatten one side.
4. Hollow out the bottom (or flattened side of the clay) for quicker drying time with a plastic spoon.
5. Make a small air hole through to the top of the rock.
6. Turn rock shape over and place on the workboard and texture with your fingers, plastic spoon and or plastic knife making indentations and pinching the clay together to provide grooves, etc.
7. Take a small piece of clay and form a pinch pot for the head of the Octopus.
8. Add the pinch pot to the top of the rock forming the head of the Octopus using slurry to attach (*see how to make a pinch pot*) and smoothing the head down into the rock with your fingers or plastic spoon and or plastic knife.
9. Place an air hole in the back of the head where the head meets the rock for the gases to escape.
10. Make 8 coils for the legs of Octopus.
11. Divide the coil rope into 8 sections, all of equal length to form the 8 legs of the Octopus.
12. Add the coils to the Octopus by attaching them with slurry (*see how to make slurry*) to the head of the Octopus and arranging them on the rock in different positions.
13. Add the coils to the head of the Octopus by scoring the coils with the plastic knife and brushing them with slurry in order to attach. Smooth the head and the coils together.
14. Using the top cap of a “Bic” pen or similar pen make indentations in the legs of the Octopus.
15. Using a handle of the brush make two small eyes for the Octopus.
16. Dry completely. This will take several days.
17. Brush the Octopus and the rock with E-Z Stroke™, colors of your choice.
18. Fire to shelf cone 04.
19. Dip in CN 2000D.
20. Fire to shelf cone 06.



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How to make a pinch pot:

Roll clay into a round ball. Using your fingers make a dent in the middle of the ball. Push your thumb downward at the dent expanding the dent to form a hole. While holding the clay ball with one hand place your thumb of your other hand inside the hole. Pinch the clay between your finger and thumb while rotating the clay slowly to form the pot.

How to roll clay coils:

Cut a piece of clay about 5" x 3". Squeeze the clay into a rope by wrapping your fingers around the clay. Place the rope of clay on the workboard. At the center of the clay spread your fingers and with a downward pressure roll the clay back and forth against the palm of your hand. While rolling move your hands from the center to the ends of the clay rope to make the coil thinner and longer.

How to make slurry:

Take a small amount of clay and place in a cup. Add a little water to form a paste. Slurry is used for clay attachments.

Project Closure:

Language Arts connection and project closure

- Write and illustrate a brief description of this project, include detailed descriptions of the materials used and what happened during this project.

National Standards for the Arts:

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ArtsStandards.html>

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Standard.asp?SubjectID=13>

State Standards:

<http://edstandards.org/Standards.html>

Or refer to the Dept. of Education for a specific state.

Please visit www.duncanceramics.com, Art Educators tab, Learning tab to view the Standards based Vocabulary and Language Instruction, Art Project Rubric, and Writing Rubric documents.