

The Forgotten Land

Nomadic tribes began to arrive in North America around 20,000-30,000 B.C. from Asia across the Bering Strait, a strip of land that connected Alaska to Russia forming a land-bridge. Countless communities flourished throughout the continent with populations that, at times, rivaled European cities of similar eras. When Christopher Columbus landed in the Caribbean in the 1490's looking for trade routes to India, he "discovered" North America (and its people) for the European culture



Traditions of Craftwork

Art expression in Native American cultures revolves around useful objects and religious rituals. Natural fibers and materials have been used for generations to make everyday items beautiful. The term **Craft** refers to creating hand-made, useful pieces of art that serves a purpose, but is also attractive. Each tribe have developed a style of visual expression that defines themselves apart from others by region, lifestyle and history.

Working with clay

Two pieces will be required for this unit: A bowl and a figure

ALWAYS START BY KNEADING THE CLAY TO GET ALL BUBBLES OUT

- 1) **The bowl:** A "pinch pot" is made by rolling a lump of clay into a ball.
 - Press your thumbs into the center of the ball while gently squeezing the outside with your fingers.
 - Form the shape of the pot by pulling up and smoothing the sides.
 - Add a coil of clay for the bottom. (coils can be applied to the sides for texture, handles, or additional height)
 - Designs should be applied when the clay is moist.

All pots should have some textural quality!
- 2) **The Mask:** An animal or "creature" mask can be created by combining pieces of clay with slip.
 - Design a mask that can be created easily in clay.
 - Roll a slab of clay, cut it, and form the base of the mask over a 1/2 bottle.
 - Attach eyes, nose, lips, etc. using **slip** (runny clay) and scoring the two pieces to be attached (Nothing should be thicker than 1/2 inch to avoid cracking).

Both pieces are considered **greenware**, and will need approx. 5 days to dry prior to **firing** (baking in the kiln).

A **bisque** firing will be done first to harden the clay, then **glazes** will be added for color.