

Ocarinas

Objective: Students will use “pinch pot” construction to make a clay a whistle while incorporating the body and mouth piece into their original design.

Vocabulary: pinch pot, coil, slip, score, underglaze, cone, fire

Materials: White clay, color underglazes.

Tools: Needle tool, slip, coffee stir.

Historic/Cultural Background:

Ocarinas are wind instruments that are like vessel flutes. Even though each individual ocarina is different and varies in style, a typical ocarina is an enclosed vessel with four to twelve finger holes and a mouthpiece. The traditional material used to make ocarinas is clay or ceramics, but nowadays many people produce them using plastic, wood, glass, metal, or even bones.

The ocarina is related to instruments that were created over 12,000 years ago in both China and Mesoamerica. A Chinese instrument called *Xun* is related to the ocarina, which was used for festivals with dance and music. However, *Xuns* must be blown across the outer edge while ocarinas have internal ducts. In Japan, the ocarina is called *tsuchibue*, which means “earthen flute”. European explorers, especially Cortes, brought the ocarina to Europe back from Mesoamerica. The Aztecs showed the explorers the cultural uses of ocarinas as used in songs and dances. The earliest use of ocarinas dates back to the 19th century in Italy. An inventor by the name of Giuseppe Donati changed the ocarina, which originally only played a few notes due to its function as a toy, into a more complex instrument. “Ocarina” in Bolognese dialect means “little goose”.

All ocarinas work in the same basic way: a musician blows air through the mouthpiece and then the wind way of the ocarina, the air strikes the labium and produces sound, the air vibrates throughout the inside of the ocarina, and covering holes lowers pitch while uncovering holes raises the pitch.

The most common way for writing music for ocarinas is by sheet music. Archives of sheet music are specifically written for the instrument, or adapted from piano sheet music. Ocarinas are fully chromatic, so they can easily be played alongside other professional instruments in genres including classical and folk. Another way for writing ocarina music is expressing musical notes as numbers. This is only used for beginner musicians who do not know how to read sheet music. The final method is using a pictorial tablature that is similar to the ocarina’s finger hole pattern in which filled holes represent which holes to cover. This results in an easy and fun way to read ocarina music, which is most suitable for beginners.

The various types of ocarinas have different shapes and the number of holes. The first one is called Transverse, also known as the Sweet potato ocarina. It is the most common style, and has a rounded shape which is held with two hands horizontally. They typically have 10 or 12 holes.

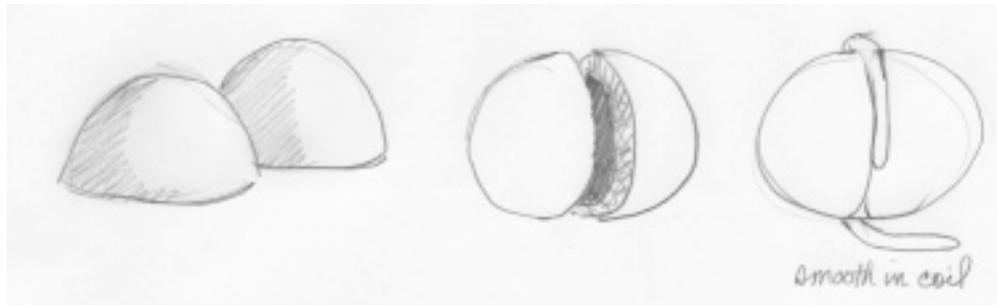
Instructions:

Day 1

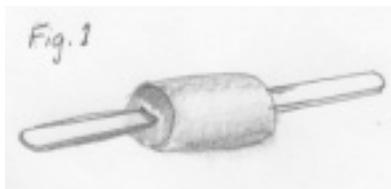
1. Form 2 matching pinch pots, cover lightly.

Day 2

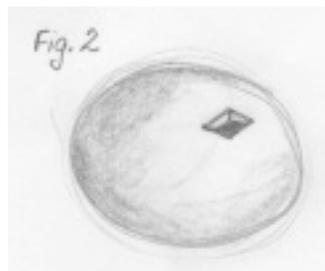
1. Join pinch pots (after leather hard) by scoring both sides along edges, press together.
2. Roll thin coil, enough to fill dip at joint, press and smooth into joint (score only if too smooth).



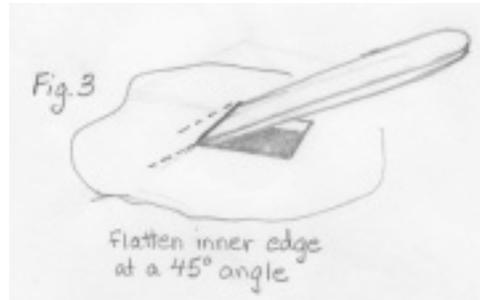
3. Paddle into desired shape and smooth. Cover and set aside.
4. Roll a thumb size mouth piece. Insert the coffee stir down the middle creating an opening for air to blow through.



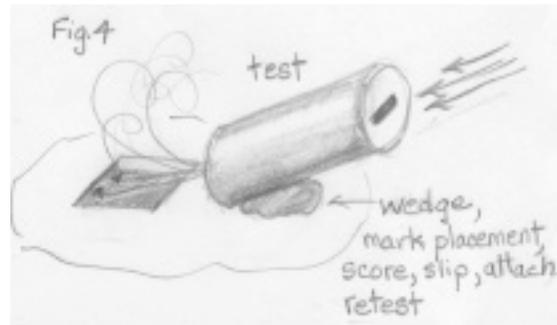
5. Take the body sphere and cut a small square between center and end with coffee stir.



6. At a 45 degree angle, cut a "reed" toward center of sphere.



7. Test whistle with mouthpiece adjusting angle. Place a wedge of clay under mouthpiece to mark angle. Score, slip and attach mouthpiece and wedge. Retest and adjust if necessary.



8. Cover. Draw some ideas.

Day 3

1. Create attachments that transform whistle into an animal or object using texture, coils, pinching and cutouts.

Day 4

1. Enhance features with color underglazes.







