

Rainsticks

Objective: Students will construction a rainstick from clay. The resulting piece will imitate the sound of rainsticks made from cactus. They will decorate their stick with designs and images reflecting their own creativity.

Vocabulary: Slab, score, slip, cone, fire, underglaze

Materials: White clay, underglaze colors.

Tools: Needle tool, slip, slats, rolling pin, canvas, paper, pencil, plastic condiment cup, baggie, newspaper, paper towel roll

Historic/Cultural Background: Example of real rainstick. Peruvian CD/Music, possibly using a rainstick.

A rainstick is a traditional musical object that was invented by Aztecs that was used to bring more rainstorms. It is a long, hollow tube that is partially filled with small pebbles or beans. It also has small pins or thorns on the inside surface. Thus, when the rainstick is turned upside down, the pebbles or beans fall to the other end of the tube, which makes a sound resembling rainfall. The rainstick is considered as a percussion instrument.

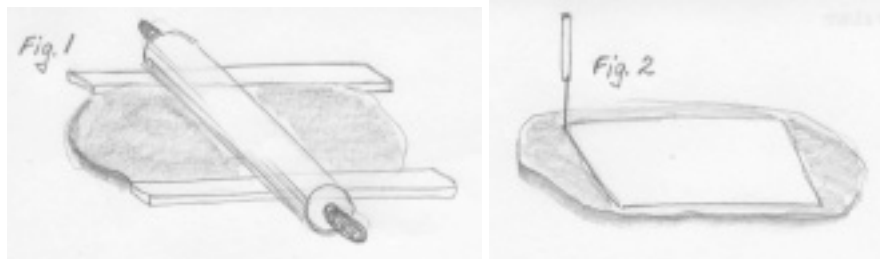
Rainsticks are usually made from cactus which is dried in the sun. The cactus spikes are removed and driven into the dried cactus like nails. The pebbles go inside the tube, and the ends are sealed. Although this is the traditional way of making rainsticks, they are also made with paper towel tubes and toothpicks or nails. The nails are driven into the tube, which is then filled with uncooked rice. The ends are sealed with thick paper and masking tape. Many vendors in Latin America and the Southern area of the United States sell these “mock” rainsticks to tourists.

Some artisans in modern-day Chile produce traditional rainsticks made from dried cactus. The process includes stripping away a couple inches of the bark, wringing out the soft center using a steel bar and inserting a round eucalyptus plug. Then the cactus spikes are driven into the cavity to form a lattice work for the pebbles to create a rain sound. For every four inches of the rainstick, an estimated one second of rain sound is created.

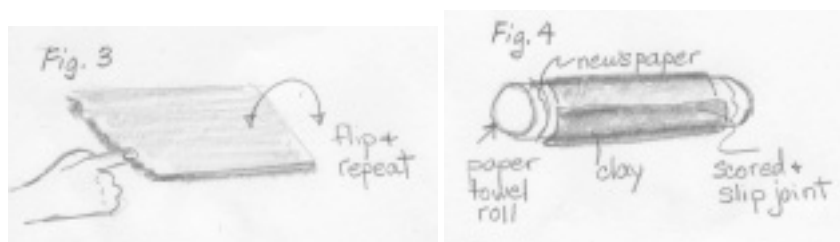
Instructions:

Day 1

1. Roll and cut slab. (3/8"). Cut with template rectangle to form cylinder.



2. Wrap paper towel tube with newspaper. Test size of rectangle; trim if necessary for an overlap of 1/2 inch.
3. Flatten edges to be overlapped, score and slip, wrap around tube, smooth seam, and remove from tube.



4. Wrap overnight.

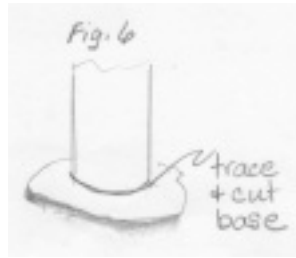
Homework: Send a small lump of slay home in a baggie with a plastic cup. Have the student fill the cup with small balls the size of seeds.

Day 2

1. With a sharp pencil, poke holes spiraling up the side of the cylinder. Insert cones of clay the shape and size of a sharp pencil point. Smooth over the holes and cones.



2. Trace and cut a base using the cylinder as a pattern. Score, slip and attach.

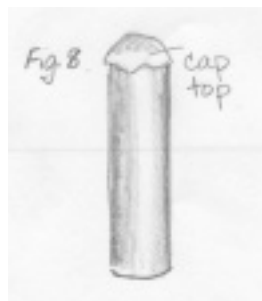


Day 3

1. Wrap the balls in a tissue, insert into cylinder, close top with slab of clay.



2. Decorate the surface with cut outs and/or patterns and designs using underglazes.









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