

# 4<sup>th</sup> Grade LWSD Art Docent Project: Slab Box with Lid

## Element of Art: Clay Form

**Objective:** To construct a clay slab box with lid and to demonstrate the subtractive and additive techniques.

**Artistic Influence:** Oceania, particularly the Lapita culture (1500-500 B.C.). Students also learn about contemporary artists: Molly Morning-glory (NC, USA), Nathan Youngblood (NM, USA), and Vaughan Nelson (CA, USA).



### Materials:

- Clay (cut the block lengthwise, slabs should be a little thicker than  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch)
- Slip or Water
- Pattern
- $\frac{3}{4}$  in. thickness guide sticks
- Scoring tool
- Scraper
- Wooden modeling tool
- Roller
- Sponge
- Work surface

### Definition(s):

- **Scoring** – scratching the edges of clay before joining them together. Refer to slides 16-19.
- **Slip** – water and clay mix that is used to join clay pieces and for surface decoration. Refer to slides 16-19.
- **Additive technique** – processes that involve adding, attaching, or joining a form to, or pulling or extending a form from a surface. Refer to slide 25-26.
- **Subtractive technique** – the process of taking away; carving or cutting away from a surface. Refer to slide 25-26.

### Instructions and notes:

1. Study the paintings in the PowerPoint beforehand so you can bring some of your own insights and questions about them. It is always a good idea to do a sample of the lesson so you have experienced the process of the project yourself.
2. Slide 2: Have this slide up while students are transitioning and getting ready to begin art.
3. Slide 3: Briefly explain the artistic element of form.
4. Go through the steps in the PowerPoint slide deck.
5. Slide 4: pronunciation of Oceania [OH] + [SEE] + [AA] + [NEE] + [UH]. Make sure you have read this slide ahead of time so you can quickly explain the information to the students.
6. Slide 13: If the pattern is too large for the clay, make sure the student has rolled the clay out all the way.
7. Slide 16: Make sure to emphasize that the scored marks need to be rough so the clay will stick and hook together like Velcro.
8. Slide 17: Remind the student to dab the slip or water on with one finger. If they smooth out the lines, s/he will need to score the area again.
9. Slide 22: The students will need to make a “catch base” so the lid doesn’t slide off the box.
10. Slide 26: The boxes can be used to store treasures, a bank or if the students cut out a hole in the box, it can be used as a tealight candle holder.
11. Distribute parent information page for students to take home. You may want to print the information, if displaying the projects. See following page.
12. Please complete the brief [LWSD Art Docent Program Feedback Survey](#) for this lesson.
13. Thank you for supporting our elementary students’ visual arts education.

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## LWSD Art Docent Program Project: Slab Box with Lid

The goal of this 4<sup>th</sup> grade lesson was to construct a clay slab box with lid and to demonstrate the subtractive and additive techniques.

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Lapita Pot, Oceania, 1500-500 B.C.



Nathan Youngblood



Vaughan Nelson

### WA State Visual Arts Standard

Demonstrate safe and proper procedures for using materials, tools, and equipment while making art. (VA:Cr2.2.1)

In this art lesson taught by volunteer art docents, students first explored the history of slab pottery in the Oceania that covers thousands of islands in the east-central Pacific Ocean. They specifically learned about the Lapita culture from about 1500 B.C. showing carved designs. Students were exposed to contemporary artists who also use these same hand-building techniques: Molly Morning-Glory (NC, USA), Nathan Youngblood (NM, USA), and Vaughan Nelson (CA, USA). Students also learned that “form” is a three-dimensional object that has height, length, width, and depth.

The students used clay to make slab boxes with lids, focusing on the technique of scoring to adhere two pieces of clay together. By using a pattern, the students created a box by scoring each side of a corner together to connect them. Then they used the box as their pattern to make a lid. They used the subtractive and additive methods to embellish each box for a specific purpose, such as a coin bank, treasure box, or a tealight candle holder.

# Pattern

The pattern can be traced onto tag board or plastic sheeting.  
Each section of the plus-sign pattern is 2 ¼ inches.

