

GREAT ART IDEAS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

DECORATIVE BLUE AND WHITE PORCELAIN PAINTINGS: INSPIRED BY ASIAN ART

YEAR 3–4

OVERVIEW

In this activity students will develop their knowledge of Asian art, including traditional practices of brush and ink style painting as well as making blue and white porcelain. They will also enhance their perceptual skills by exploring examples from Asian art history and practically applying them in their own painted designs.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Use the designs, motifs and decorations applied to Asian porcelain pieces with underglaze blue as inspiration to create decorative paintings.
- Experiment with brush and ink to produce line, shape and tonal variation in artworks.
- Design and create a unique decorative painting on a porcelain vessel-shaped template.
- Share their ideas with their classmates about the expressive choices they made in their own work.

STUDENT EXAMPLES



Made by students during a workshop at the NGV

RELATED ARTWORKS



Chinese

Vase Qing dynasty, Kangxi period 1662–1722
porcelain
50.4 x 18.9 x 18.7 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of J. T. Hackett, 1924

Description: Square with trumpet neck. Each side with a panel of figures in interiors or landscapes; birds and flowering plants at neck; auspicious objects on corner shoulders. Porcelain, underglaze blue on white on buff body.



Japanese

a18th century
porcelain (Hirato ware)
9.0 x 8.6 cm diameter
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1921



Korean

Dragon jar 18th century
porcelain
42.7 x 33.0 cm diameter
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, NGV Foundation, NGV Supporters
of Asian Art and the Lillian Ernestine Lobb
Bequest, 2007

DISCUSS

Blue and white pottery includes a wide range of white pottery and porcelain that is decorated under the glaze with a blue pigment, generally cobalt oxide. The decorative designs are usually applied by hand, traditionally by brush painting. Look at the related porcelain pieces from Asia and use the following discussion prompts to explore examples of blue and white pottery with your class:

- Looking at the time and place of creation, how would these pieces have been used when they were first created? What clues can you see in the artwork about where it was made, who by, and why?
- What are the key motifs (or ideas) expressed in these paintings on porcelain? What do they have in common and how are they different?
- Describe the quality and character of the lines evident in the decorative design painted on one of the pieces. *Are the lines thick or thin? Are they continuous or broken? In which direction do they move? How do they guide your eye around the piece?*
- Look for areas of tonal variation. Discuss why the artist applied the underglaze blue lightly in some areas and darker in others. What effect has this approach had on the overall presentation of the design?
- Which tools and techniques might the artist have used to achieve the aesthetic qualities in their painted designs?

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- Porcelain vessel templates (draw the outline of a selection of jugs, pots and vases onto watercolour paper)
- Drawing paper
- Extra watercolour paper for testing and sampling ink
- Blue (indigo) ink
- Brushes
- Palettes
- Water
- Scissors

CREATE

Students design and create their own two-dimensional ink painting on a paper vessel template using the following steps:

1. Choose some examples of Asian blue and white porcelain as inspiration for the painting. *Think about the idea or story being told on the porcelain and consider the ideas and stories you might tell through your own painting.*
2. On a piece of drawing paper, sketch out a plan for your design. *Think about the motifs you might use to tell your story as well as other decorative patterns to include on your template.*
3. Before you move onto your final presentation, experiment painting parts of your design with the blue ink on spare pieces of watercolour paper. *Use a variety of brushes to produce a range of lines (thick, thin, straight, curved, continuous, broken etc.) and achieve varying degrees in tonal variation.*
4. When you are ready, paint your unique and decorative design with blue ink onto the template.
5. Allow the paint to dry
6. Cut around the template so the shape of the painting follows the outline of the pot.

PRESENT & REFLECT

Students share their work with a partner, in a small group or to the class:

- Describe the design you painted on to your template. What inspired your choice of decoration?
- Recall at least two different techniques you applied to the artwork to achieve different results.
- Reflect on a part of the process that was challenging and a part that was rewarding.

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