

# 'Pinch Pot Portraits' Clay Activity



An easy guide to  
making faces  
with clay



# What does an artist LOOK Like?

Jean Dubuffet often challenged the idea that an artist had to possess formal training and credentials to create great work. He collected the work of Art Brut artists who were self-taught and created brilliant artworks using sculpture and modelling.

He was also a fan of experimenting with everyday materials and techniques in his own practice.

Using both of these principles, try making your own artistic portrait from clay and celebrate your own creativity!



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## You will need...

Air drying CLay

Shaping Tools

PLastic Bag



\*Tip – if you can't get any clay try using playdough





# Start...

1

Grab enough clay to fit in the palm of your hand.



2

Pat the clay into a rough ball or roll it between your hands.



3

Cup the clay in one hand. Push the thumb of your other hand into the centre of the ball.

4

Start pinching. Each time you pinch, turn the clay so that you are gradually working your way around the ball, thinning the wall. Don't rush!



5

Repeat until you have a small pot.

**PRO TIP!**  
Your thumb on the inside supports the clay and gently pushes out. Your fingers on the outside gently pinch the clay up.





# Shape...

Ideas

USE YOUR  
IMAGINATION

## 'Draw' on the clay

Score the clay to make patterns and marks. Draw features (eyes, nose, ears, etc) onto your pot. Use the modelling tool or anything you have lying around (eg, pencil, matchstick). Don't rush!



## Sculpt and mould the clay

Squeeze and smooth the clay with your fingers. Explore what happens when you push the clay out from the inside, or in from the outside. Try to form a nose this way, or eye sockets?



## Use your fingers as a tool

Shape clay between your fingers to form ears and a nose. Roll small coils of clay to make moustaches and specs. Use your fingers or modelling tool. Immediately attach any extra clay to your pot. Score the attachment area for better adhesion.







# Dry and Share...

## Dry your pot **slowly**

Wrap it loosely in the plastic bag. Drying slowly prevents cracks. You know it is dry when it is slightly lighter and looks dusty. Put any extra clay in your plastic bag to store and keep soft to make more pinch pots!



## Share your work

When you have finished your Pinch Pot Portrait, take a photo and share to the Padlet page <http://padlet.com/Accumulate/PinchPotPortrait>

Or share on instagram and tag:

[@Accumulate\\_Ldn](#) [@barbicancentre](#) [@headwayeastlondon](#)



## Fix it...

TROUBLE  
SHOOTING!

### Got cracks as you're pinching?

Don't panic! This is just the clay starting to dry. Rub your finger over the cracks until they disappear and carry on pinching. The more you handle the clay the drier it becomes and the more it will crack. So, if you're getting lots of cracks, try to handle the clay less (you could even wear plastic gloves). You can also occasionally spray the clay with water (but don't go overboard, as too much water can also cause cracks!)

### Flopping pots?

If your pot feels a bit wobbly and starts to flop, put it to one side to dry a little. Once it feels more stable, you can either pinch some more (if your walls are still very thick) or start to sculpt and decorate.



### If all else fails...

There is no such thing as a disaster. You can always squash your clay up and give it another go. On your next go, try keeping the walls a bit thicker and think about pinching the clay up rather than outwards.





# Thanks to...

## Submit to Love Studios

is home to a group of artists living with a brain injury. We work collectively in an open studio environment and help bring out the best in each other. The act of making is an empowering and hopeful one. In making something, you're discovering – new gifts, new culture, new connections and new identities. That's why our mission is "discovery through art". Art that is by everyone, for everyone. All artists are members of Headway East London in Hackney – a local charity supporting brain injury survivors, their families and carers. Headway East London and Accumulate, 'The Art School for the Homeless', are both community partners of the Barbican. Thanks to Billy, Chris, Stuart and Phil - artists from the studio who created this activity.



## Want to Know More?

Want to join in more Accumulate creative activities? please email [info@accumulate.org.uk](mailto:info@accumulate.org.uk) or message us at [@accumulate\\_ldn](https://twitter.com/accumulate_ldn)

Want to know more about the Barbican? Visit [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk) or email [community@barbican.org.uk](mailto:community@barbican.org.uk)

Barbican Creative Learning pioneers new models for cultural learning across the art forms. Our mission is Creative Skills for Life and in 2019/20 we delivered more than 40 programmes and events alongside 150 partners to over 29,000 participants.

**Accumulate**  
The Art School for The Homeless



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