

Hermansburg Potters

Indigenous Art Football and Community Making Pots



Unfinished pots

Hermansburg Potters studio,
Ntaria, Northern Territory, 2015
Photo: Tobias Titz



Photography: Tobias Titz

The Hermansburg Potters belong to a small community 130 kilometres south-west of Alice Springs. They are famous for their colourful terracotta pots which tell stories about their culture and where they live: their Country, the mission days, bush tucker and, of course, football! During footy season the Hermansburg community get together to watch AFL on TV and on weekends many make the trip to Alice Springs to support local teams.

This resource is part of a package of resources that introduce you to the Hermansburg potters, their art, their community and their love of football.

In this resource the Hermansburg Potters demonstrate the different techniques they use to make their celebrated terracotta pots.



Photography: Tobias Titz

2015 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Hermansburg Potters at Ntaria (Hermansburg). This is the studio where the potters work.



Photography: Tobias Titz

The Hermannsburg Potters are at work in their studio. The artists spend weeks in their studio creating each of their spectacular pots.



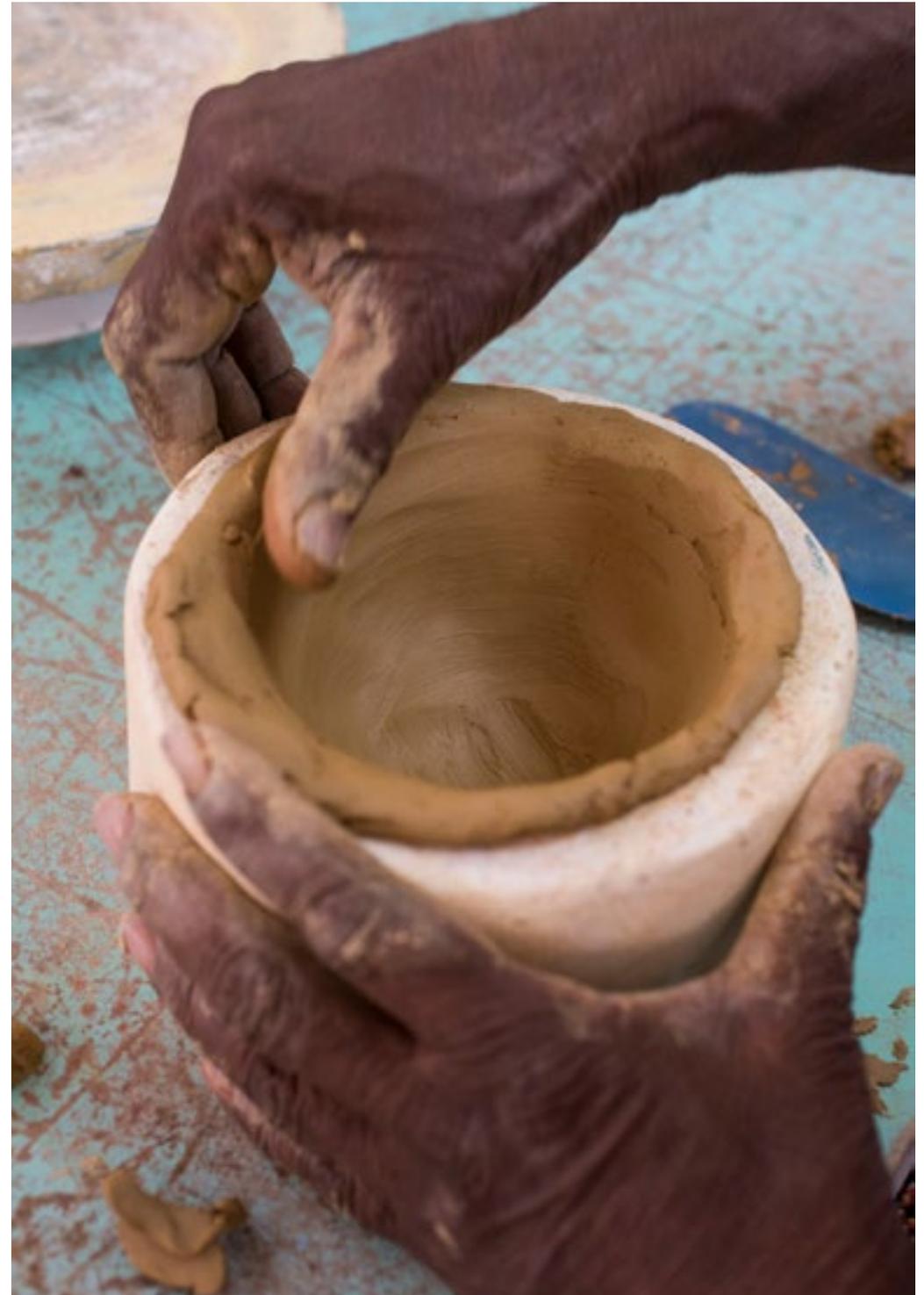
Photography: Tobias Titz

The Potters begin with a slab of clay.

The artists use different techniques to start building the body of the pots.

Moulds

One technique is to push the clay into a mould to shape the base of the pot.



Once removed from the mould, the clay is trimmed and the base of the pot is smoothed flat.





Photography: Tobias Titz

Pinch Pots

Another way to start a pot is to 'pinch' it by moulding the clay between the thumb and fingers.

Coils

Next, pieces of clay are rolled into thin coils.





Photography: Tobias Titz

The coils are then laid one on top of another and are blended together to create a smoother surface.

When this pot is finished it will be left to dry and then placed into a pottery kiln for firing. Firing is the term given to the process of baking the clay.

A kiln is a type of oven which has been made so it will reach extremely high temperatures.

Clay becomes hard when it is fired in a kiln.

The Hermannsburg Potters use terracotta clay. To fire terracotta clay, kilns are heated to around 1100 degrees celsius.

Compare this temperature with the highest temperature on your oven at home.



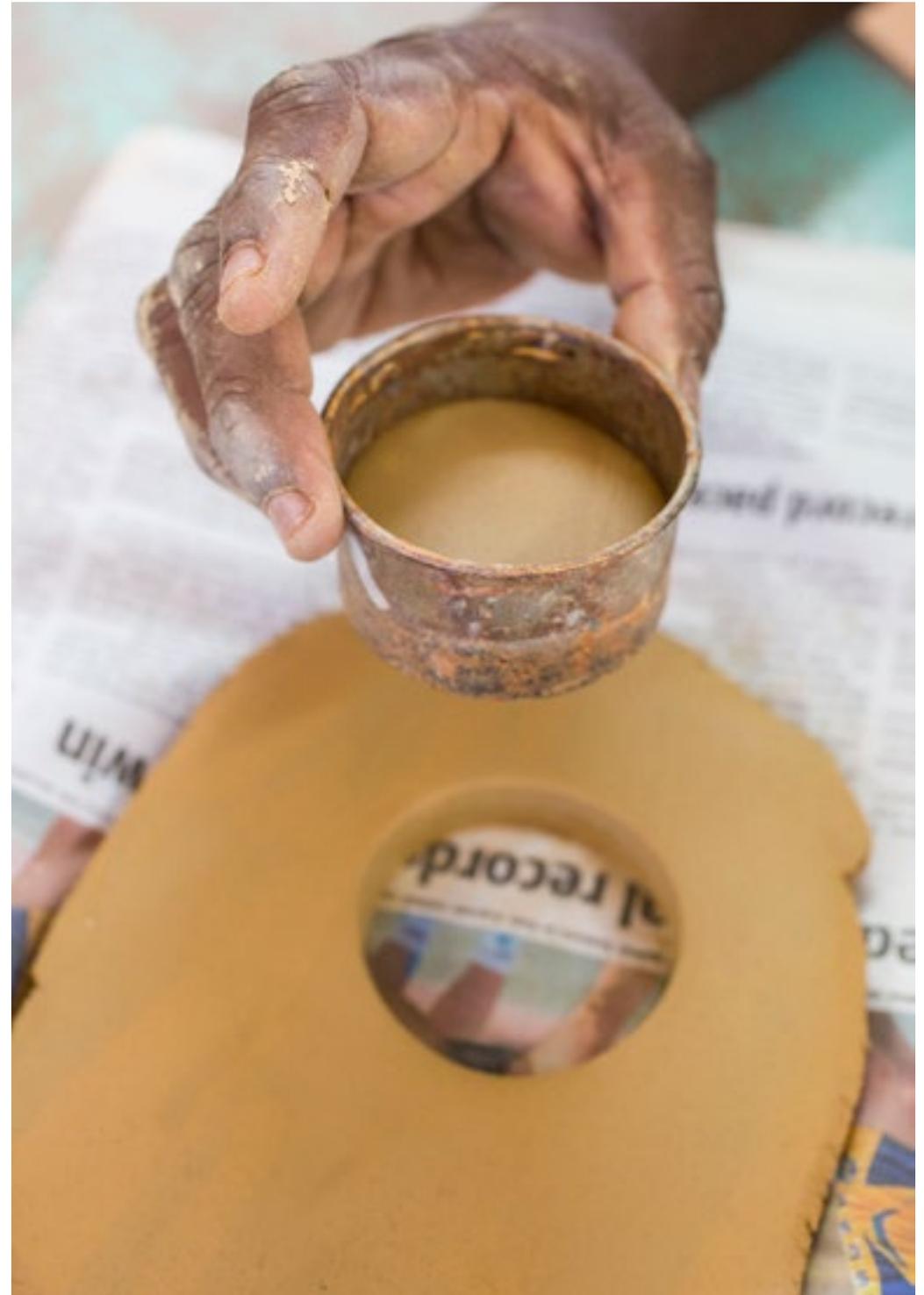
Lids

The lids of the Hermannsburg pots are often the most fascinating part of their pots.

The first step is to roll the clay flat.



Next a lid shape is out of the slab of clay.





Photography: Tobias Titz

This artist has pressed the lid shape onto the opening of a fired pot. The mark made will show her where to place a thin coil.



Photography: Tobias Titz

A fine coil of clay is being rolled. This will be placed on the inner circle of the lid shape.



Photography: Tobias Titz

Slip is a mixture of clay and water. Slip is like 'glue' and is used to join pieces of clay together. This will be placed between the lid and the coil.



Photography: Tobias Titz

Once the slip has been applied between the lid and the coil, a fine wooden tool is used to secure the join.



Photography: Tobias Titz

Water and fingers are used to smooth the surface of the lid.

The models which sit on top of a lid are hand-shaped from coils or balls of clay.





Making Pots



Photography: Tobias Titz

Rolled clay and a knife are used to make delicate pieces.



Photography: Tobias Titz

To join the models to the lid, surfaces are scratched with a sharp tool.

Slip is then applied to the scratched surface.

Models are joined to the lid using fine clay tools and a paint brush with water. Artists work carefully to smooth the surface of the lid, ready for firing.



After the pots have been fired in the kiln, underglazes are applied to the pots just like the ones shown here.

Underglaze is a mixture of clay slip and colour.

When the underglaze has dried, the pots are fired again in a kiln.



The final firing brings out the brilliant colours of the underglazes.

Artist Lindy Panangka Rontji has been inspired by the Greater Western Sydney footballer Curtly Hampton. Hampton is an Arrernte man.

Can you see that Panangka Rontji has featured Hampton and a Sydney Swans player tackling each other on the top of her pot?

Look how Panangka Rontji has included other scenes from the match on the body of the pot.



Lindy Panangka Rontji
Western Arrernte born 1962
The tackle (Curtly Hampton),
covered vase 2015
Hermannsburg, Northern Territory
earthenware
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for
Living Australian Artists, 2015
Copyright courtesy of the artist

**Hermannsburg Potters:
Indigenous Art
Football and Community**

To find out more about the Hermannsburg Potters and their work you might also be interested in looking at other resources in this package.

These include

- Explore and Create
- Look and Explore
- Bush Foods
- Mission Days
- Language

Rona Panangka Rubuntja
Western Arrernte born 1970
*The Crow (Andrew McLeod),
covered vase 2015*
Hermannsburg, Northern Territory
earthenware
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for
Living Australian Artists, 2015
Copyright courtesy of the artist

