

## GREAT ART IDEAS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

# DECORATIVE POTS: INSPIRED THE HERMANNSBURG POTTERS

YEAR 3–6

### OVERVIEW

In this activity you can introduce students to the work of the Hermannsburg Potters from Central Australia. They will develop their knowledge of how Aboriginal artists' history, culture and personal stories are expressed through art objects. Students will reflect on their own experiences and express those stories through a decorative design.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Identify and describe the characteristics and subject matter of works made by the Hermannsburg Potters.
- Research the history and culture of the Hermannsburg community and some of the individual artists to inspire their own expression of ideas.
- Create a decorative design related to their own experience.
- Share their ideas with their classmates about the expressive choices they made in their work.

### STUDENT EXAMPLES

Made by students from St Theresa's Primary School at *Our Land is Alive: Hermannsburg Potters for Kids* workshop at the NGV (past exhibition).



## RELATED ARTWORKS



**Judith Pungkarta Inkamala**  
*Imurra (Possum)*, covered vase 2002  
 earthenware  
 (a-b) 46.9 x 37.9 cm diameter (overall)  
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.  
 Purchased with funds donated by Supporters  
 and Patrons of Aboriginal Art, 2002 © Judith  
 Pungkarta Inkamala/Licensed by Copyright  
 Agency, Australia



**Irene Mbitjana Entata**  
*Imanka (Mission days)* 2000  
 earthenware  
 (a-b) 28.3 x 20.3 cm diameter (overall)  
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.  
 Purchased with funds donated by Supporters  
 and Patrons of Aboriginal Art, 2001 © Irene  
 Mbitjana Entata/Licensed by  
 Copyright Agency, Australia



**Hayley Panangka Coulthard**  
*A deadly mark (Cyril Rioli)*,  
 covered vase 2015  
 earthenware  
 (a-b) 58.1 x 29.5 cm diameter (overall)  
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.  
 Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living  
 Australian Artists, 2015 © Hayley Panangka  
 Coulthard/Licensed by Copyright Agency,  
 Australia

## DISCUSS

The Hermannsburg Potters belong to a small community in Western Ararnta, 130 kilometres south-west of Alice Springs. They are famous for their colourful terracotta pots which are crafted by hand, the body from coiled clay and the lid by hand modelling. Clay is important for Ararnta people, traditionally used for ceremonial and medical purposes. Many of the women in the community still use “healing clay”, and consider their current practice as continuation of traditional practices.\*

The Hermannsburg Potters, as they are now known, began as an outstation project in 1990. The community has embraced this art form and its potential for introducing a new language to communicate, share and celebrate Aboriginal culture. They are decorated with designs which tell stories about their history, country, community, daily life and sporting heroes:

- Judith Pungkarta Inkamala's *Imurra (Possum)*, covered vase, 2002, is decorated with a possum with its baby peeking out of a hole in a tree amongst the landscape where they live.
- Irene Mbitjana Entata's *Imanka (Mission days)*, 2000, is painted with the artists memories of earlier times in her community, showing people and animals gathered around the mission buildings.
- Hayley Panangka Coulthard's *A deadly mark (Cyril Rioli)*, covered vase, 2015, shows Cyril Rioli, an indigenous footballer from the Tiwi islands, taking a mark for Hawthorn in the 2014 AFL Grand Final. It also depicts other scenes from the match.

Share the related works of art with students and ask:

- What details do you notice? Which figures or scenes can you identify? Why do you think the artist chose this design?

*Notice how the figure on the lid of each pot relates to the painting on the body. The design wraps all the way around the body of the pot.*

- What can we learn from the designs about where the artists live, their stories, or what is important to them?

For more information download the Hermannsburg Potters Indigenous Art Football and Community Explore and Create resource:

[https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/school\\_resource/hermannsburg-potters-indigenous-art-football-and-community-education-resource/](https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/school_resource/hermannsburg-potters-indigenous-art-football-and-community-education-resource/)

Find out more about the history and art of Hermannsburg:

<https://hermannsburgpotters.com.au/about/history-of-hermannsburg/>

\*From *Make: Hermannsburg Potters*, NGV Magazine, Jul-Aug 2015

## RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- A3 craft paper/card
- Coloured pencils
- Black fine liners
- Felt tip pens
- Grey lead pencils
- Scissors
- Glue
- Template of a pot shape (A3)

## CREATE

Students design and create their own pot design using the following steps:

1. Choose a celebration, event, occasion, animal or place that is important to you to represent on a design for a pot.

*Think about a key character or figure to feature on the lid, and a scene that gives more information or context for the body of the pot.*

2. Trace the pot template or draw a pot outline onto an A3 sheet of craft paper.
3. With grey lead pencil, draw the figure on the lid and the scene on the body of the pot.
4. Outline the drawing with felt tip pen or fine liner.
5. Add colour using coloured pencil or felt tip pens.
6. Cut carefully around the outline of your completed design.
7. Glue the pot design onto a backing sheet of A3 cover paper (optional).

## PRESENT & REFLECT

Students share their pot with a partner:

- What event, character or place does your pot celebrate?
- Explain the details and features of your design.

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