

Story Vessels

An online ceramic workshop inspired by pieces in the gallery's collection by Marianne Huhn to celebrate *International Women's Day* at the Devonport Regional Gallery.



Online workshop
4 March-31 March 2021

Task:

Come and see the display of works at the Devonport Regional Gallery to celebrate *International Women's Day*.

Claiming Space

3 March – 30 March 2021 Gallery Foyer Space

While visiting the gallery collect some clay from the creative Space to take home and use to create a vessel (bowl, cup or shape to hold something) out of clay. Scribe a word or words into it that represent some part of yourself, your dreams or your thoughts.



Think of the body as a vessel that contains all of your thoughts, emotions and memories.

If you were to create a vessel out of clay to represent this body, what words would you put into it or on it that represent you, your life, your thoughts, dreams and/ or hopes? Perhaps it is just one word, or a series of words? Create a ceramic vessel that tells a story about you/ a part of you or simply creates wonder and interest in others who view it. Your word (s) need no explanation, they become their own meaning to each individual observer.



CLAY
CREATE
BEING
EARTH
ART

Some inspiring words from the artist Marianne Huhn...

"I shape these into objects for you to use every day, to eat or drink from, to play with or simply ponder.

I use Limoges, porcelain for my thrown forms and porcelain paper clay for my hand built shapes. My ideas range from personal thoughts and observations to politics and the world we live in.

I also like to include text in my work, either on the surface of a pot or in the titles. This adds another layer of meaning or maybe another layer of ambiguity, to my work.

Maybe the objects you choose can add to the story of who you are and reflect your dreams and thoughts".....

My commitment to making functional objects is because I believe in the role these objects play in our lives, to reflect ourselves, our thoughts and fears, to hold or contain our memories and to remind us that tangible forms can anchor us".

Marianne Huhn from her website: <https://www.mariannehuhn.com/biography/>



*Edges, Boundary, My House Has Many Doors,
Marianne Huhn, 2011*

Due date to bring your ceramic pieces in for drying and firing: 31 March 2021 by 2pm!

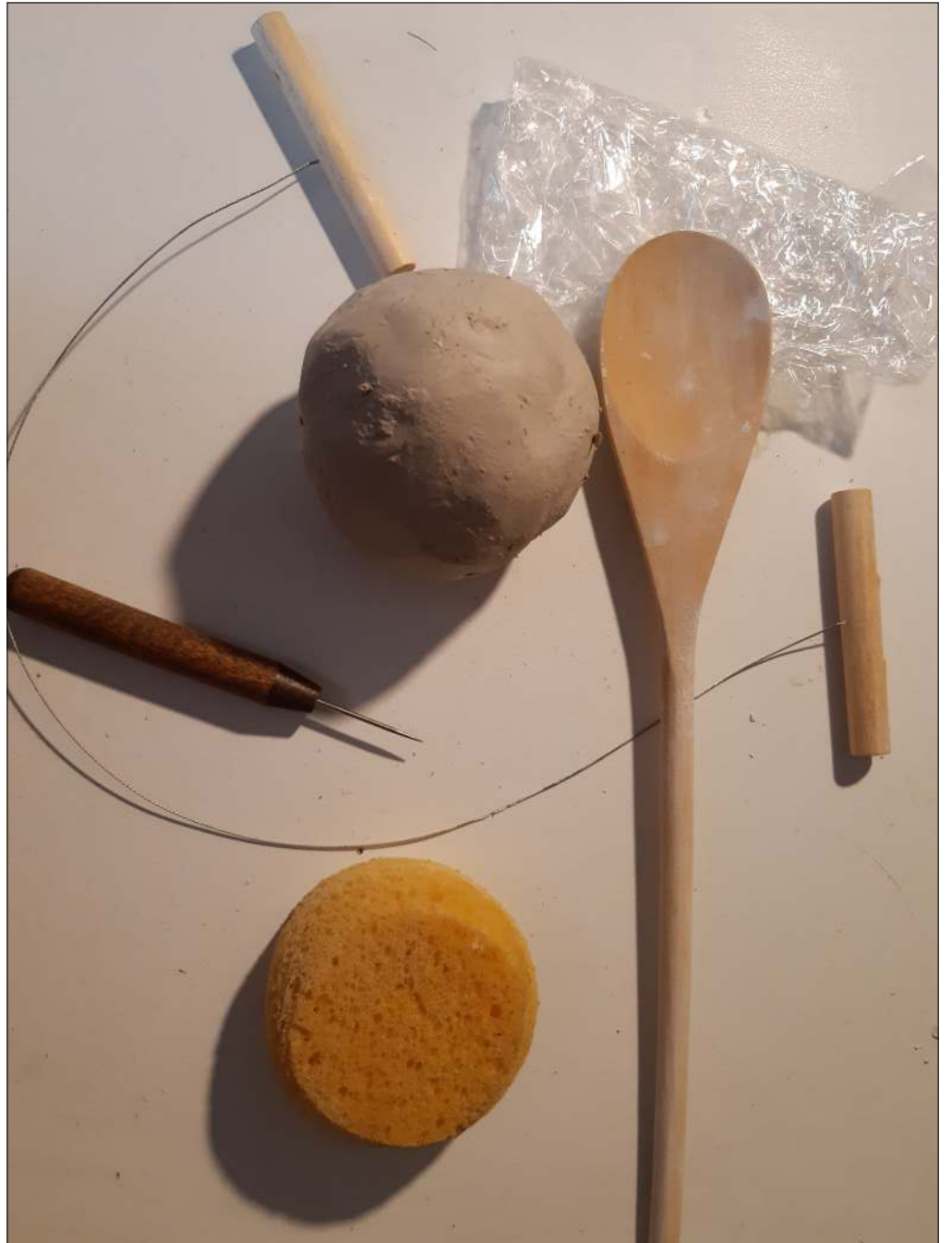
Clay is a dense material that takes some time to dry. It is important to let your clay work dry slowly to avoid cracking. The thicker your clay the longer it will take to dry out. Bring in your work to the Devonport Regional Gallery to dry over the easter break with your name and contact details. It will then be fired once dry and you will be contacted when ready for the next step... decorating!



Ceramic vessels in a kiln ready to be fired

You Will Need:

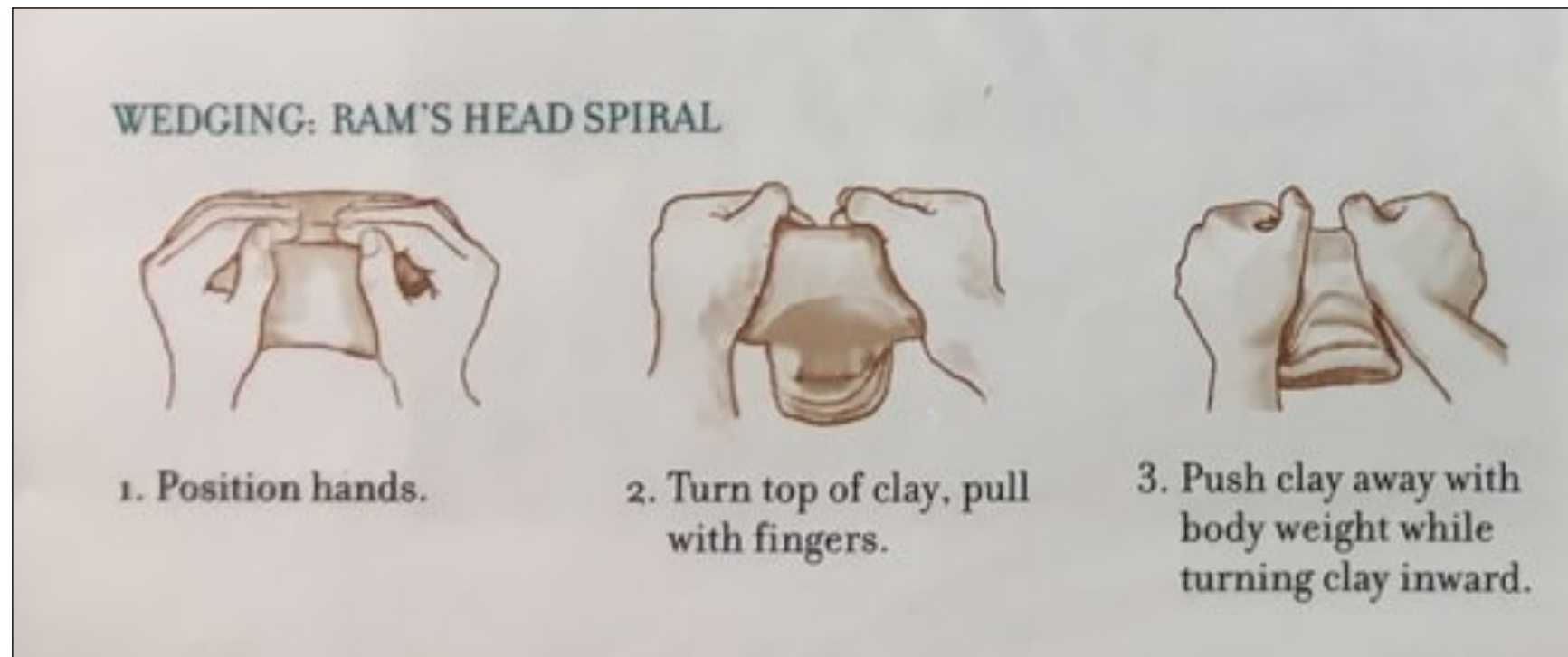
- Portion of clay (limited quantity available in free art packs from the Creative Space at the Devonport Regional Gallery)
- Flat solid bench or work space
- Container with water and sponge
- Skewer, toothpick or sharp object for scribing into leather hard clay
- Wooden spoon (optional)



Step 1: Prepare the clay

Set up your work area (you will need a sturdy solid surface), wipe down if dirty and let surface totally dry.

Clay is made up of lots of minerals. It is important to mix these together while avoiding pockets of air (any trapped air pockets in your clay could lead to your work exploding in the kiln as it heats up and the air expands). To avoid this and mix your clay together, throw it down on the table a few times carefully. Then you will need to wedge it. This is kind of like kneading bread. See picture below. Use your body weight to help you. You need to wedge your clay for a few minutes to remove any trapped air pockets (see how in tutorial video on page 8).



Step 2: Start shaping with your hands– Pinch Pot Method

When you have finished wedging your clay decide how big you want your vessels to be and what shape. Do you want to create a shallow bowl or dish shape? Or perhaps a deeper narrower shape such as a cup. Keeping this shape in mind begin to shape your clay using your hands (you might like to divide your clay in half and have a go at two or three different shapes). In its wet stage clay is quite soft and sticky to work with. Shape it into a ball in your hand, then use your thumb to push a dent into the centre of it. From here you can start to pinch the sides while continuously moving the clay around and around in your hand to shape it. Keep supporting the clay in your other hand. See demonstration video below...

Watch instructional

[Video here](#)

**for how to wedge your clay and make
simple pinch pots.**



Step 3: Work until Finished

Continue pinching and shaping your clay until you are happy with its shape. As you work it try to keep the edges of your vessel the same thickness all around and as even as possible. If you are not happy with it you can squash it back down, re wedge it to get out air pockets and start again. Work slowly and consistently.



Step 4: Smooth Surface (optional)

When you are happy with your pinch pots shape you can lightly tap its outer side all around using the back of a wooden spoon. This helps to smooth out some of your finger marks that are a natural occurrence of creating pots this way. It is up to you if you want to smooth the surface or not. You might like the very hand-made impressions of the finger marks, after-all this is a Story Vessel made by you about you!

If smoothing with the back of the spoon tap lightly moving the spoon all over the surface evenly. Keep lightly tapping all over until you have achieved the desired result. You can also use a damp sponge to smooth the surface.



Step 5: Let it dry to a “Leather Hard” state.

Once you are happy with your pinch pots shape and surface texture let it harden off slightly for a couple of days. Keep it somewhere cool and dark to avoid it drying out too much too quickly. For the next step you want your clay to be leather-hard. This is the stage between wet and dry when the clay can still be manipulated, but it is starting to stiffen and dry out. It should be a similar texture and feel to leather, the stickiness gone. The surface becomes easier to smooth and work with when it is in this stage.



Step 6: Scoring/ Surface Decoration

While still leather-hard use a sharp pointy object such as a skewer or toothpick to score into the surface of your vessel. Think back to Marianne Huhn's pieces and her comments about incorporating text into her work. Have a think about what words or text you could include on your clay surface to add interest and intrigue and create your Story Vessel. Use the sharp tool to carefully scratch and score the letters, patterns and decoration into your clay.



**PLEASE NOTE: It is important to scribe your name or initials onto the bottom side of your pots so they can be easily identified.*



Think about the different ways you can scribe words into your story vessels. Think about different lines you can create.

**NOTE: when you scribe into your clay you may notice that lots of little bits of clay get stuck in the lines. Try not to touch them too much, they will sand out when dry/ bisque fired.*



Step 7: Bring In Your Finished Work

Bring your finished Story Vessels into the Devonport Regional Gallery (145-151 Rooke Street Devonport), for drying and firing.

**PLEASE NOTE: This process can take a few weeks as it is important to let clay dry slowly to avoid cracking. Please leave your name and contact details (email address) with your work when you drop it off so you can be contacted regarding pick up and the final decoration steps for your work.*

Due date: *Wednesday 31 March 2021 by 2pm!*





DEVONPORT
REGIONAL
GALLERY

IS WHERE THE 'ART IS

An exhibition of works produced at home throughout the 2020 pandemic lockdown via online art activities produced by the Devonport Regional Gallery.

Little Gallery, 29 January- 13 march 2021

DON'T FORGET you only have one more week to visit the gallery and check out the Home Is Where the 'Art Is exhibition of participants works from the 2020 projects, ON NOW Until 13 March!