



PRESENTS

# KIDSEUM AT HOME

*Creative fun and learning for the entire family,  
all from the comfort of home!*

INTRODUCTIONS

To

LESSONS

ON

INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLE OF  
MEXICO



# 1

# MAP OF MEXICO

## AGES

K - 2

## LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Beginner

## DESCRIPTION

For this project we will be making a topographic map of Mexico using clay and identifying major landforms and cities.

## MATERIALS

Cardboard	Mexico Template*	Model Magic Clay
Markers	Toothpicks	Scissors
Sticker Labels	Clay Tools* / Brush	

*Materials with an (\*) are optional, use only if available.*

## Background

**Mexico** is a North American country that lies south of the United States of America. Mexico, much like the US, is made up of several **states**. There are 31 states in Mexico, each having their own customs, traditions and **terrain**. The land of Mexico has very diverse physical beauty like deserts, coastal regions, **mountains**, **volcanoes** and **plateaus**. Mexico is also home to many natural sites such as caves, beaches, jungles, islands, lakes and coastal rock formations.

As mentioned before, the land of Mexico has several mountain ranges and volcanoes. This is because it makes up part of the pacific **'Ring of Fire'** which is a highly active **tectonic** site. The constant moving and shifting of the surrounding tectonic plates, such as the North American, Pacific, Cocos and Caribbean plates, has also helped form the mountainous land of Mexico.

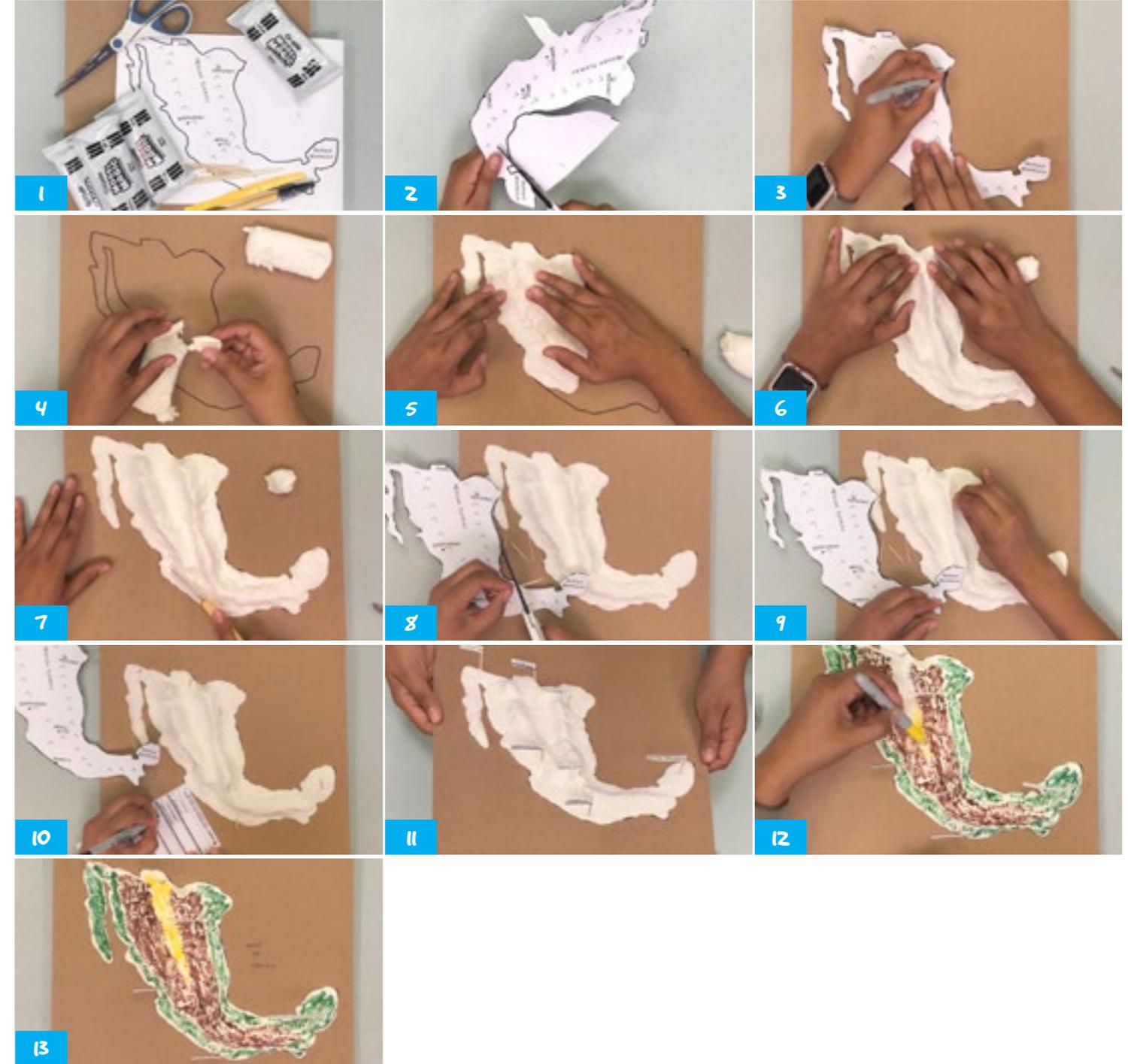
Mexico is also divided into 9 different regions of varying **climate** and terrain. The **Sierra Madre** Occidental and Oriental take up the majority of the central land in Mexico, spanning from north to south, moving east and connecting with the **Cordillera Neo-Volcànica**. The mountain **elevation** in this region is around 9,000- 12,000 feet and is considered an extension of the Rocky Mountains. In the center of the Sierra Madres lies the Mexican Plateau, which is a flat area of land and the most densely populated area of Mexico. Several major states lie on the Mexican plateau, such as Chihuahua, Zacatecas, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Hidalgo and Mexico City. To the east and west of the Sierra Madres lie coastal regions that contain many lagoons, swamps and plains. There is also the **Yucatán Peninsula** that lies east to the Cordillera Neo-Volcànica region. This area is made up of mostly **limestone** and is home to many **cavern** and cave systems.

The land of Mexico is very diverse in both culture and terrain and **possesses** beautiful natural and man-made sites that are wondrous and **intriguing**.



## Procedure

1. Take your Mexico template and cut it out.
2. Once cut, place it over your cardboard and trace it with a marker.
3. Open up your clay and begin pressing clay onto the cardboard, staying within the lines.
4. Continue to fill the shape with clay and forming mountains by pinching the clay.
5. Add more clay as needed to create mountains and other forms on your clay.
6. Use a clay brush or toothbrush and tap it on the clay to give it texture.
7. Use scissors and carefully cut a toothpick in 2, repeat this until you have 7 small pieces.
8. Take your sticker labels and write in the names of the major cities and regions on the Mexico template.
9. Attach the labels to the end of each toothpick piece and stick them onto the clay as seen on the Mexico template. Leave it to dry and clean up.
10. Optional: You can color in your map using colored markers (only after the clay has dried).



## Key Vocabulary

<p><b>Mexico</b> a North American country south of the United States.</p>	<p><b>State</b> a specific area of land that with other such areas forms a federation.</p>	<p><b>Terrain</b> the natural surface features of a tract of land, esp. considered in relation to some use or activity.</p>
<p><b>Mountain</b> a geological formation or land mass with great height and steep sides that is higher than a hill.</p>	<p><b>Ring of Fire</b> a long horseshoe-shaped seismically active belt of earthquake epicenters, volcanoes, and tectonic plate boundaries that fringes the Pacific basin.</p>	<p><b>Tectonic</b> of or pertaining to changes in the earth's crust.</p>
<p><b>Sierra Madre</b> the main mountain system of Mexico, extending for 2500 km (1500 miles) southeast from the N border: consists of the Sierra Madre Oriental in the east, the Sierra Madre Occidental in the west, and the Sierra Madre del Sur in the south.</p>	<p><b>Volcano</b> a vent in the earth's crust through which molten rock, ash, gases, and the like are expelled.</p>	<p><b>Plateau</b> an elevated, relatively level area of land.</p>
<p><b>Climate</b> a region defined by generally similar weather conditions.</p>	<p><b>Cordillera Neovolcanica</b> also called Eje Volcánico, a relatively young range of active and dormant volcanoes traversing central Mexico from Cape Corrientes on the west coast, southeast to Jalapa and Veracruz on the east coast.</p>	<p><b>Yucatan Peninsula</b> a peninsula in SE Mexico and N Central America comprising parts of SE Mexico, N Guatemala, and Belize.</p>
<p><b>Cavern</b> a large cave.</p>	<p><b>Limestone</b> a sedimentary rock of calcium carbonate formed mostly from animal remains such as shells and used in building and in manufacturing cement, lime, and carbon dioxide.</p>	<p><b>Possess</b> to have as a characteristic or quality.</p>
	<p><b>Intrigue</b> to strongly draw the interest of; puzzle; fascinate.</p>	

Source: History. Mexico City (Distrito Federal) <https://www.history.com/topics/mexico/distrito-federal>. Accessed September 2, 2020.

Image source: Historical Map of Mexico (1909). Hammond's Handy atlas of the World, p. 71 [1]. C.S. Hammond & Company. 2 January 1909. [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/98/Historical\\_Map\\_of\\_Mexico\\_%281909%29.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/98/Historical_Map_of_Mexico_%281909%29.jpg)

# 2

## CLAY SHARDS

### AGES

Grades 1 - 3

### LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Beginner

### DESCRIPTION

For this project we will be using inspiration from Aztec artwork to create ceramic shards.

### MATERIALS

Scissors	Aztec Artwork Samples*	Model Magic Clay
Markers	Toothpicks	Popsicle Sticks
Cardboard Pieces	Clay Tools* / Brush	Yarn* / Beads*
Sponge	Acrylic Paint	Palette / Paper Plate

Materials with an (\*) are optional, use only if available.



Tripodal Bowl Fragments, 15th to early 16th Century Aztec culture; State of Mexico or Morelos, Mexico  
Ceramic; 3 3/4 x 8 3/4 in.  
96.37.17  
Gift of Mr. Carlos Von Son

### Background

Mexico is home to many archeological sites, many which have yet to be uncovered. However, most of these sites have been lost or destroyed during colonization and urban development. Many of these sites were created by the Aztecs who were the most dominant indigenous people of Mesoamerica. Other indigenous people of the region include the Toltec, Olmec, Zapotec, Mixtec and Maya; however none were as prominent as the Aztecs. The Aztec people created an artificial island in Lake Texcoco because they believed their god had given them a sign. This sign was that of an eagle eating a snake while standing on a cactus. This inspired them to create their capital on this island and it came to be later called Tenochtitlán. When the Spaniards conquered the Aztecs, they built their capital over the ruins of Tenochtitlán, which is where modern Mexico City stands today.

In fact, many modern buildings in Mexico were actually built over Aztec ruins, which have made it both difficult and dangerous to excavate. It is dangerous because since Tenochtitlán once stood on a lake that has since been drained, any movement to the soil may cause sinkholes to occur. Excavating is difficult because archaeologists will have to remove layers of constructions that lie on top of these sites, which is also very costly.

Unfortunately, there is still much we don't know about these civilizations due to the arrival of Hernán Cortés and the Spanish. This is because upon arrival the Spanish overthrew the Aztec empire, capturing many and using them for labor. Cortés also captured their emperor Moctezuma II with the aid of a native woman and Aztec enemies. The Spanish also had more advanced weapons which easily hurt or maimed many Aztec warriors, and caused many to succumb to their wounds. Aztec nobles were murdered by the Spaniards as well, including Moctezuma II. The remaining Aztec people were captured and forced to adopt the Spanish language and forget their culture. However, diseases brought by the Spanish caused many more to die from Smallpox, Mumps and Measles, leaving very little survivors.

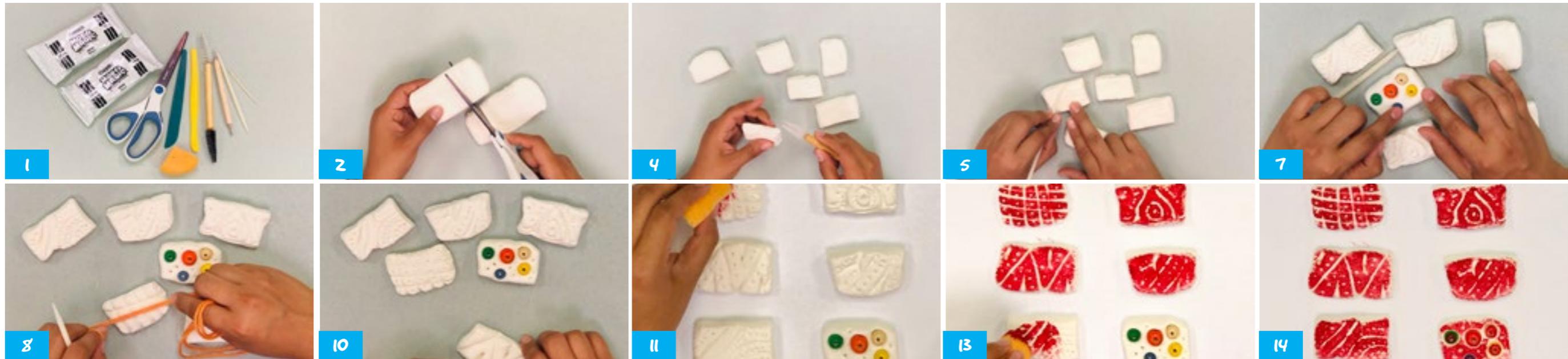
Fortunately, those that lived were able to preserve parts of their culture, language and traditions. Not only did the people survive but they also left behind many artifacts that have slowly been unearthed. These objects include structures, clothing, ceramic wares and weapons. Since time has worn them down, many of them are disintegrating or have broken. This is why a large majority of Aztec objects in our collections are broken ceramic vessels or shards. Yet, these finds still teach us a lot about the Aztec people and inspire their predecessors. Many Mexicans of Aztec descent have passed these objects and traditions down to their children and the generations to come. This has brought back a sense of pride to the Mexican people and the desire to continue and share their cultural traditions.

### Fun Facts

- The Aztec language is called Nahuatl.
- Many Nahuatl words were used by the Spanish and later incorporated into English.
- Nahuatl words include Chili, Avocado, Chocolate, Coyote and Guacamole.
- When Hernán Cortés arrived Moctezuma II welcomed him because he thought he was the prophesied Aztec god Quetzalcoatl.
- Quetzalcoatl was depicted as light-skinned, which benefited Hernán Cortés in his deception and conquest.
- The woman that aided Hernán Cortés came to be known as Malinche.

## Procedure

1. Gather all the necessary materials.
2. Open your clay packets and cut your clay into 3 pieces using scissors.
3. Using a clay brush or toothbrush tap the clay edges to give it texture, like that of broken clay shards.
4. Using clay tools, toothpicks or Popsicle sticks create designs or shapes on the surface of your clay pieces.
5. Press beads into the clay if available.
6. Press yarn strands onto the clay to create texture.
7. Continue to decorate your remaining clay pieces and leave them to dry.
8. Once dry take a sponge and dip it into any paint, then gently tap the clay pieces.
9. Continue to paint the rest of your pieces.
10. Leave them to dry and clean up.



## Key Vocabulary

<b>Archeology</b> the systematic and scientific study of past human life and culture using information gained from the analysis of their artifacts, such as pottery, tools, buildings, and the like.	<b>Colonization</b> the act or process of forming colonies.	<b>Dominant</b> most in control; ruling; leading.
<b>Indigenous</b> having origin in a country or locality; native	<b>Prominent</b> widely recognized; eminent.	<b>Aztec</b> a member of a native group of people who had an advanced civilization in central Mexico before the Spaniards conquered them in 1519.
<b>Artificial</b> created by human beings.	<b>Tenochtitlan</b> the capital of the Aztec empire: founded in 1325; destroyed by the Spaniards in 1521; now the site of Mexico City.	<b>Ruins</b> complete destruction or decay.
<b>Excavate</b> to expose by digging away overlying material; unearth.		

Source:

History.Aztecs. <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-americas/aztecs> Accessed September 1, 2020.

Ancient History Encyclopedia.Aztec Civilization. [https://www.ancient.eu/Aztec\\_Civilization/](https://www.ancient.eu/Aztec_Civilization/) Accessed September 1, 2020.

Tripodal Bowl Fragments, 15th to early 16th Century Aztec culture; State of Mexico or Morelos, Mexico Ceramic; 3 3/4 x 8 3/4 in. 96.37.17 Gift of Mr. Carlos Von Son

## Key Vocabulary

<p><b>Civilization</b> the culture and achievements characteristic of a society that has reached such a level of development.</p>	<p><b>Moctezuma II</b> the last Aztec emperor in Mexico who was overthrown and killed by Hernan Cortes.</p>	<p><b>Maim</b> to cripple or disable, usually by destroying or rendering useless a limb or extremity.</p>
<p><b>Succumb</b> to give in or give way to a fatal illness, superior force, overwhelming desire, or the like; yield.</p>	<p><b>Disease</b> an abnormal physical or mental condition that causes an organism to function wrongly; illness; sickness.</p>	<p><b>Unearth</b> to dig up out of, or as if out of, the earth.</p>
<p><b>Disintegrate</b> to come apart; break down into component parts or fragments.</p>	<p><b>Pride</b> an inherent feeling of dignity and worth.</p>	<p><b>Sinkhole</b> a depression or cavity formed in the earth when underlying material collapses.</p>
<p><b>Hernan Cortes</b> Spanish conquistador who's subsequent actions ultimately led to the fall of the Aztec world. By all accounts, he was arrogant, defiant, self-serving, greedy, and generally indifferent to the indigenous people he sought to conquer.</p>		

## State and National Standards

### Maps of Mexico

California Content Standards:

**HSS-7.7.1**

Study the locations, landforms, and climates of Mexico, Central America, and South America and their effects on Mayan, Aztec, and Incan economies, trade, and development of urban societies.

Visual and Performing Art Standards.

**1VA.Cr2.3**

Demonstrate beginning skill in the manipulation and use of sculptural materials (clay, paper, and papier maché) to create form and texture in works of art.

**2Va.Cr2.3**

Depict the illusion of depth (space) in a work of art, using overlapping shapes, relative size, and placement within the picture.

### Clay Shards

State Content Standards:

**HSS-7.7.1**

Study the locations, landforms, and climates of Mexico, Central America, and South America and their effects on Mayan, Aztec, and Incan economies, trade, and development of urban societies.

Visual and Performing Art Standards.

**1VA.Cre2.1**

Use texture in two-dimensional and three-dimensional works of art.

**1VA.Cre2.3**

Demonstrate beginning skill in the manipulation and use of sculptural materials (clay, paper, and papier maché) to create form and texture in works of art.

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