

WORKSHOP: "PAPER CLAY BOWLS"



Summary: Participants create a bowl over an existing form using recycled egg cartons or cotton linter. The paper in either form is soaked for a day before the workshop and then pulped in class by blending small quantities at a time with water in a blender on a chop setting. The as much water as possible is pressed out of the pulp a pinch at a time and then it is patted in place over the form. Colourful napkins can be laminated onto the surface for pretty colours and patterns.

Materials and Equipment:

2 egg cartons	paint brushes
sludge primer	long thin palette knife
acrylic paint	foil or plastic lids
mod podge	plastic bowl
drywall compound (not DAP)	water container
mod podge	t-shirt scraps
white glue PVA	scissors
2 matching colourful napkins	spatula
acrylic varnish	measuring cup
optional: paper yarn	metal spoon
access to water	compostable sponge
blender	2 buckets (mixing and soaking)
extension cord	sandpaper
smock	strainer
table cover	vinyl gloves
instructions/idea sheet	artwork samples

Class Plan:

1. Cover your work surface, wear a smock or old clothes and tie back loose hair to avoid getting glue on it.
2. Gather egg cartons for making paper clay. Other materials work well too like soaked and shredded toilet paper or cotton linter for a more archival finish.



3. Rip up the thick paper part of two paper egg cartons into small pieces.



4. Soak your egg carton pieces in water for a few hours.



5. Place small clumps of egg carton pieces and enough water to cover them into a blender. The water is essential or the blender will just push the pieces up and then spin without cutting them up.



6. Put the lid on the blender and blend on a medium speed for about 10 seconds. Repeat if the paper is not fully pulped. Use short blender bursts to dislodge stuck papers.



7. Unplug the blender, remove the jug from the unit and take off the top.
8. Pour the blended pulp and water into a strainer over a bucket. Use a spoon to dislodge any remaining pulp because the blades at the bottom can be sharp.



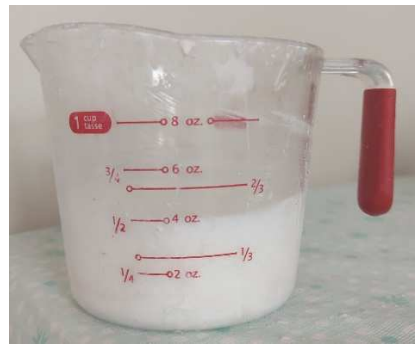
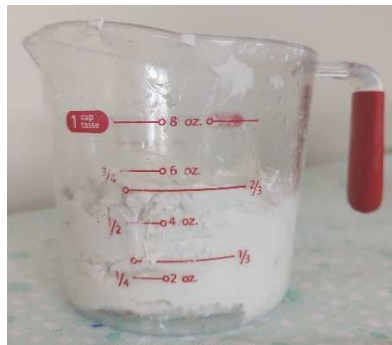
9. Strain your blended contents to remove the bulk of the water. Gently press the pulp against the edges of the strainer to remove more water.



10. By hand, squeeze out as much water as you can from the paper pulp and transfer it to a container to mix with the other ingredients.



11. Wear reusable waterproof gloves to keep the drywall compound from drying out your hands.
12. Mix according to the recipe:
1 cup shredded paper pulp
2/3 cup drywall compound
1/2 cup PVA (regular white) glue



13. Mix ingredients together with a mixer reserved for non-food projects or with a spoon. A spatula helps with scooping it out of the bowl.



14. Smooth this mixture about 3/8" thick onto the inside of a plastic bowl. We worked on the inside of the bowl so the paper clay will be smooth on the outside. It also shrinks a bit as it dries, making it easier to remove the plastic bowl if the clay is on this inside of it.



15. Dab the paper clay in position and smooth with a compostable sponge.



16. Allow the bowl to dry for a few days or more depending on the paper clay thickness. We allowed a week between classes to be sure. The faster this dries the better, to avoid it becoming musty with too much moisture. Place it outside in the sun if the season/weather permits.



17. Remove your paper clay bowl from the plastic bowl by gently squeezing it at the rim in each direction.
- a. The paper clay naturally shrinks a small amount during drying, helping with separation from the mold.
 - b. If needed, use a non-food butter knife or long thin palette knife to aid in the separation, being careful not to damage the surface of the bowl.



18. Holes can be filled with small amount of paper clay, but covering it with a laminated napkin in the following steps is easier.



19. Any rough spots can be gently sanded with about 120 grit sandpaper.



20. Optional: Paint the dry bowl with a coat of white primer, and then a coat of white paint.
21. Choose a decorative paper napkin and remove the plain layer(s) if there are multiple layers.



22. Laminate the decorative layer of the paper napkin to the surface of the bowl.
- Apply a layer of “mod podge for paper” or acrylic gel medium with an old paint brush to the inside surface of your bowl and rim, and to the back of the decorative napkin.



- Smooth your paper napkin face up over inside of the bowl. Apply mod podge to the decorative size of your napkin and to fill any folds, gently pushing it into position in the bowl.



- Apply mod podge to the outside of the bowl where the napkin extends beyond the edge and fold it over the edge applying more mod podge to the top of the napkin to secure the corners. Alternatively, corners can be trimmed off with scissors.



- d. Stand your bowl to dry right side up, not touching the wet parts so it can dry.
23. Repeat the previous decorative napkin application method for the outside of your bowl and allow it to dry.



24. Optional: apply 1-2 thin coats of non-yellowing varnish to your bowl or sculpture when complete and allow it to dry.



25. This bowl is not food safe and should not be exposed to water, but it is excellent for storing art supplies and other items.
26. Happy creating, and please send us photos of your creations if you feel comfortable sharing.

Useful Information/Adaptions/Variations:

- Try making a wire form and fill it out by wrapping wadded foil around it. Apply your paper clay over this, smoothing it with clay working tools. Allow it to dry, touch up any areas needed and smooth with sandpaper. It can be painted with acrylic paints and varnished after. This can be another whole project.
- A sponge is very useful in helping to smooth the surface of the bowl, dabbing but not wiping the paper clay.
- Applying paper clay unevenly on a board with the bowl face down gives the opportunity to create artistic bowls with irregular shaped rims.
- The bowl rim can be further decorated by placing objects around the bowl and applying paper clay over them to embed them in a wider bowl rim.
- Light weight objects can be stitched through the dry paper clay or glued to the outside of the bowl for embellishments instead of or as well as using a napkin for decoration.
- The paper napkin laminating section can be replaced with just painting the bowl with acrylic paints instead.

Trouble Shooting:

- Leaving too much water in the pulp will result in it taking a very long time to dry and then smelling moldy. If this happens it is best to try again with a new bowl.
- Some recipes call for the optional addition of 1 tbsp mineral/baby oil. We did not do this because we wanted to paint the bowl and were concerned the oil might prevent the acrylic paint from sticking to it.
- We tried a recipe with flour that still wasn't dry after 4 days and went moldy. This is the recipe: soak 2 egg cartons a few hours, blend in a blender, squeeze out water, add 1 cup flour and a sprinkle of salt, knead into a dough and press over a plastic covered bowl. This could be tried again with more water squeezed out at the forming stage. However, the recipe in the main section above worked, so we went with that.
- If you have trouble removing your paper clay bowl from the plastic bowl mold, try applying a small amount of talcum powder to your plastic bowl as a mold release before applying paper clay to it.