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Greek Pottery Scratch Art Craft Kit (Pk/24)

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Kit may contain silicone gel packets, which should be removed before use.



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Greek Pottery Scratch Art Craft Kit (Pk/24)

PLEASE READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE STARTING



YOUR KIT CONTAINS:

- Scratch Art Vase Shape
- Scratch Art Tool

YOU WILL NEED:

- Scrap Paper
- Pencils
- Flat Work Surface

EACH PERSON SHOULD HAVE:

- A Scratch Art Vase Shape
- A Scratch Art Tool

AGE GROUP: 8 and up
PROJECT TIME: 45 minutes

ABOUT GREEK POTTERY:

There are many different shapes of Greek pottery vessels. The shape often reflected the purpose of the vessel. Larger pots were used to carry and store more common liquids (water) and the smaller vessels were to hold more expensive liquids (like perfume oils). A narrow necked pot was designed to pour liquids (like olive oil) slowly and a wide neck vessel made it easier to pour items quickly.

Our "life size" scratch art vase is in the shape of a Hydria, which was a larger vessel used primarily for getting and carrying water. A Hydria has 2 horizontal handles, 1 on each side and a vertical handle at the back for dipping and pouring. If the 3rd handle is missing, the vessel is called a Kalpis. The vessels were often made of a terracotta clay and the designs on a pot often illustrate its use. In Ancient Greece, women were responsible for getting and carrying water so many designs incorporate women and decorative details. In the figure below, you can see the large scene on the body of the vase and a smaller scene on the shoulder of the vase. The main scene shows women filling their water vessels at a fountain house. The shoulder of the vessel shows a 4 horse race. Artwork like this offers us a glimpse into what life was like in ancient Greek times.

This design was applied using the black figure vase painting method. In this method, designs were applied with a clay "slip" that turned black during firing. Then around 525 BC, the red figure technique was invented in Athens and it is the inverse of black figure vase painting. Each technique had a complicated firing process which contributed to the way the designs were created. For the black figure vase designs, not only did the pots have to be stacked in the kiln in a specific manner, but the conditions inside had to be precise.



1. The temperature was stoked to about 800° centigrade and vents allowed for an oxidizing environment. At this point, the entire vase turned red in color.
2. By sealing the vents and increasing temperature to around 900-950° centigrade, everything turned black and the areas painted with the slip "vitrified" (transformed into a glassy substance).
3. In the last stage, the vents were reopened and oxidizing conditions returned inside the kiln. At this point, the unpainted zones of the vessel became red again while the vitrified slip (the painted areas) retained a glossy black hue. Through the introduction and removal of oxygen in the kiln and, simultaneously, the increase and decrease in temperature, the slip transformed into a glossy black color.

Our scratch art project is inspired by the black figure vase painting technique. Everyone will scratch designs into the black coating which reveals the red color of the base layer.

PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Have everyone use a piece of scrap paper to sketch out ideas for their vessel. These could include figures and/or decorative linework and shapes.

Tip: Before starting to draw on the scratch paper, make sure everyone removes any bracelets they are wearing so they don't accidentally scratch up the black coating. A large piece of scrap paper can cover and protect the area that is not yet scratched. Simply have everyone move the scrap paper down as they complete their drawing.

2. Everyone should carefully start drawing at the top of the shape and work their way down to the bottom.

Tip: Pick up the scratch art vessel and gently tap the sides to help remove the black coating as the designs are scratched.

Once all vessel designs are complete, show them off in a display case or along a wall for others to see.

Resources:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ancient-art-civilizations/greek-art>

<https://www.metmuseum.org>

www.mfa.org/collections/object/water-jar-hydria-with-women-at-the-fountain-153445