



Lucy Martin Lewis (Acoma Pueblo). *Ceramic seed jar*, 1968. Clay and pigment. Minneapolis Institute of Art, The Patricia and Peter Frechette Endowment for Art Acquisition and gift of funds from Constance Kunin, 2018.5

There are 573 recognized tribal nations in the United States, with over 634 First Nations in Canada. Women are cultural and creative leaders within these diverse communities. They not only are considered “vessels” for giving life, but also hold a significant place in keeping distinct traditions alive.

Exhibition connection

Lucy Martin Lewis lived and worked during the 1960s in one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in North America, Acoma Pueblo. She is considered one of the most important Native potters of all time; her influence can still be seen in the work of Pueblo potters today.

Pueblo potters developed large storage jars, called *ollas*, to hold food and water.

Vocabulary words

clay slab ollas rim

Suggested reading and viewing

For younger participants:

- At FristKids.org, look under “Activities + Videos” for “Inspired by Nature” to learn more about how nature inspires artists today.
- *Grandmother Spider Brings the Sun: A Cherokee Story*, by Geri Keams. A narrated version is available at youtu.be/ok_b46A9hvE

**Frist Art
Museum**

919 Broadway
Nashville, TN 37203
FristArtMuseum.org/arttrunks

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Lesson 1: Create and decorate a clay bowl

Objective

In this lesson, inspired by Lucy Martin Lewis's *Ceramic seed jar*, you will create a clay bowl, using a bowl as the mold.

Note to Art Trunk leaders

Before beginning this activity, measure out a half-pound of clay for each participant.

Materials

- ½ lb. clay per participant
- paint brushes
- sponges
- black paint
- paper towels
- water
- bowls
- pencils

Steps

- 1: Knead the clay.
- 2: Roll the clay into a small ball, and then flatten the ball between your hands to make a **clay slab**. (Pretend you are making a clay tortilla.)
- 3: Lay the slab on a paper towel. Carefully press the slab and towel into a bowl so that it has the same shape.
- 4: Create holes around the **rim** of your bowl by twisting the sharp end of a pencil into the clay. Make the holes one finger width apart.
- 5: Let the clay dry completely (this will take about two days). Then remove it from the bowl. With a damp sponge, wipe at any rough or uneven places, especially around the rim and the holes.
- 6: Time to decorate! Gently pencil a design inside or around your clay bowl. You can also lightly paint a pattern on it with black acrylic paint.

Important! Dry clay is VERY fragile. Be careful as you draw and paint on it. Too much water or pressure can damage your artwork.

If you paint a design on the bowl, let it dry for a day before continuing to Lesson 2.

