

Clay is all around us, even if we don't always realize it. If you live in a brick house or apartment, then your home is actually made of clay! Now that spring is in full bloom, you may also start to see lots of clay flower pots in your neighbourhood. For today's activity, you'll be decorating your own flower pot before breaking it and putting it back together like a puzzle. Or you can stop after the decorating phase if you can't bring yourself to crack your creation.

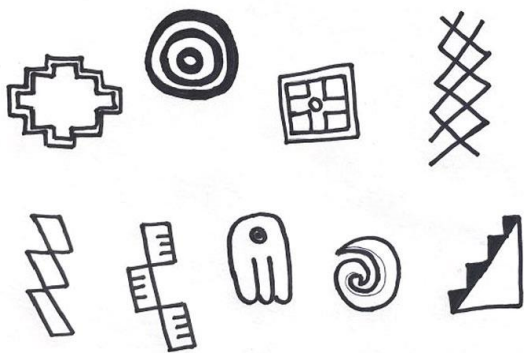
At the Gardiner, we have over 4,000 pieces of pottery. Some are containers for holding things, while others are for decoration. Some are very old, while others were made recently. Some of our oldest pieces may have been cracked or broken when they were first collected, but they've been conserved, or put back together—just like the pot we're going to make!

### Materials:

- Small clay pot (you can get these from the dollar store or a garden nursery)
- Paint (we suggest acrylic)
- Paint brush
- Hammer
- Paper or plastic bag, or a pillowcase
- Glue
- Masking tape

### Instructions:

Use your paint to decorate your pot with any design you want. You could paint a spring scene with flowers or a favourite animal. We took our inspiration from the Gardiner's Ancient Americas collection, which you can [explore online](#).



We used red and blue paints since they're nice and bright. Once you finish painting your pot, let it dry completely before moving on to the next step.



Now it's time to crack your painted pot. Don't worry! We'll be putting it back together. Or you can stop here and simply enjoy your beautifully painted design.

**These next steps require the help and supervision of an adult...**

Put your pot in a bag or pillow case and tap it gently with a hammer to break it apart.



Now see if you can match up the pieces. We always start with the largest ones and work our way to the smaller bits.

Put some white glue on the edges that match and stick them together. Then put some masking tape over the cracks to hold them together until the glue dries.



Keep repeating this until your pot is whole again. You'll probably notice that there are still some small gaps, which is normal. Not long ago, conservators (the people who fix broken artworks) used to fill these holes in with a paste to hide the cracks and then paint over them. Now most conservators leave holes and cracks so visitors get a truer sense of how the piece looked when it was collected.



Don't forget to take a picture of your pot and share it using **#GardinerFromHome**.

