

LESSON PLAN

HOME TWEET HOME BIRDHOUSES

Suggested Age Group: Elementary, Middle, or High School



In this lesson, learn to put your own twist on a slab-built birdhouse with personalized decorations that show your style.

Birdhouses, also known as nest-boxes or bird-boxes, are man-made structures that provide shelter to birds. Used since the Roman times, early birdhouses were woven or made of clay. Historically, birdhouses were used to trap birds for meat and eggs or to keep birds from nesting in places where they would be a nuisance. In modern times, however, birdhouses are used to attract songbirds for their beauty and to help stabilize bird populations threatened by habitat destruction.

OBJECTIVES

I CAN... construct a functional and decorative birdhouse using design skills, slabs and textures.

I CAN... use proper slab building techniques to create a sound structure.

I CAN... follow directions to design, build and glaze my birdhouse

NATIONAL VISUAL ART STANDARDS

- Use multiple approaches to begin creative endeavors
- Document the process of developing ideas from early stages to fully elaborated ideas.
- Describe how knowledge of culture, traditions and history may influence personal responses to art.

MEET THE MASTER



Alexander Calder

1898 - 1976

Best known for his creation of the mobile, Alexander Calder is one of the most influential artists of the twentieth century. He was an American sculptor and pioneer of kinetic art, inventing the mobile and abstract sculpture that moves. Alexander's take on Birdhouse with Birds has a playful element as do many of his wire sculptures. Consider the idea of a ceramic birdhouse meshed with the style and playfulness of Alexander Calder or Calder's Circus in clay.

“To most people who look at a mobile, it’s no more than a series of flat objects that move. To a few, though, it may be poetry.”

- ALEXANDER CALDER



SUPPLY LIST



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BIRDHOUSE

Supplies

- 2lbs Lowfire clay
- Toothpick
- Found objects (plants)
- Bowl of water
- Paper towels
- RB144 #4 Soft Fan Brush
- RB100 10/0 Detail Liner
- Various Stroke & Coat® glazes



MIDDLE SCHOOL BIRDHOUSE

Supplies

- Low fire clay
- Clay Cutter
- Assorted Wooden Pottery Tools
- Needle Tool
- Assorted Rib Tools
- Cotton Swabs
- Small Real Leaf
- Sponge
- Toothbrush
- RB106 #6 Script Liner Brush
- Rb116 #6 Round Brush
- RB118 #8 Round Brush
- RB140 #8 Soft Fan Brush
- RB144 #4 Soft Fan Brush
- Various Stroke & Coat® glazes



HIGH SCHOOL BIRDHOUSE

Supplies

- Smooth midrange clay
- Clay Cutter
- Assorted Wooden Pottery Tools
- Needle Tool
- Rib Tool
- Pencil
- Pen
- Sponge
- RB106 #6 Script Liner Brush
- Rb116 #6 Round Brush
- RB144 #4 Soft Fan Brush
- Various Stroke & Coat® glazes

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIRECTIONS

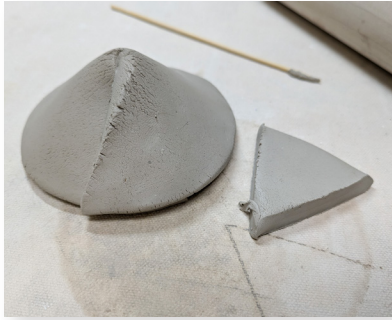


1. Cover pop can with paper towels or plastic wrap
2. Roll out a slab of fresh clay.
3. Cut a vertical line through the end of the clay to create a right angle.
4. Place pop can horizontal on clay slab at the cut end.
5. Hold edge of slab on one side and roll pop can until the cut edge of the clay begins to touch the rest of the unrolled slab.
6. Slice off the slab about half an inch excess from the cut slab on the can.
7. Press and smooth out the seam of the clay with a finger to connect.
8. Slice off any excess clay at the bottom of the can to create a flat surface.



9. Set the can and clay upright on the excess part of the clay slab.
10. Cut a circle at the base of the can about a half inch larger than the bottom diameter of the clay wrapped can.
11. Remove excess clay from around the circle.
12. Smooth the overhang clay on the base circle up onto the clay wrapping the can to form an enclosed clay base.
13. Cut a hole about 2/3 the way up the can for the entrance to the birdhouse.
14. Using the clay cut from the hole, cut out a right triangle.
15. Attach the triangle below the hole to serve as the perch.
16. Press found objects into the clay walls of the birdhouse.
17. Poke a small hole at the bottom of the piece to release suction and remove the can.
18. Set aside the birdhouse and cut a large circle out of the leftover clay slab.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIRECTIONS CONTINUED



19. Cut a triangle out of the circle to make it look like a Pac-Man.
20. Overlap the cut edges onto each other so the circle forms a cone shape.
21. Press and smooth the cut edges together to make a seamless roof for the birdhouse.
22. Attach the roof to the top of the birdhouse.
23. Let clay dry to a leather-hard stage.



24. Apply 1-2 coats of SC045 My Blue Heaven with a fan brush to the background of the birdhouse, avoiding the impressions.
25. Fill in the found object impressions with one thick coat of SC027 Sour Apple using a detail brush.
26. Apply 1-2 Coats with a fan brush to the top of the birdhouse with SC027 Sour Apple.
27. Use fingerprints to create bugs and other critters, and a detail brush to add the legs and other parts:
28. For the bees, make one thick fingerprint of SC055 Yella Bout It. Add stripes, wings, and legs with SC015 Tuxedo.
29. For the lady bug, make one thick fingerprint of SC074 Hot Tamale. Add lines, legs, spots and antenna with SC015 Tuxedo.
30. For the caterpillar, use fingertips with alternating colors of SC101 Spruce It Up, SC102 Just Peachy, and SC103 Lavendear. Use SC015 Tuxedo to add legs and antenna
31. For the ant, use fingertips to apply three dots of SC103 Lavendear, apply SC015 Tuxedo for legs and antenna.
32. Make sure no glaze is on the base of the birdhouse.
33. Allow birdhouse to fully dry.
34. Single fire to cone 04.

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTIONS



1. Determine the size of your birdhouse and roll out a slab of clay to around a quarter inch thick and large enough to make the side wall and bottom. Smooth with a rib to compress the clay.
2. Use a wood tool or needle tool to cut a single slab for the side wall. Stand the slab of clay up and cut out a "V" shape at the joint so the flower top to slope down. Score where the slab will attach to make a cylinder shape.
3. Apply slip made with the clay body you are working with to the scored area and create your cylinder. Work the clay well with a rib where the parts meet to smooth.
4. Place the cylinder on a clay slab and cut the circular bottom. Score and slip to attach the cylinder to the bottom clay. Work the joint with a rib tool.



5. Roll a slab of clay a quarter inch thick and use a wooden or needle tool to cut out flower petal shapes to the appropriate size so the completed flower will hang over the cylinder bottom. Pinch the very edges of each petal so they are thin but leave the central part thick. Lay the petals in a circle so each petal overlaps and press together in the middle. If you work the center together, no scoring or slip are needed.
6. Roll a ball of clay and flatten for the center of the flower. Score the center area of the flower and the back of the flattened center, slip, and attach. Press to remove any air traps.

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTIONS CONTINUED



7. Use the end of a wooden tool to poke texture into the center of the flower.
8. Cut a hole for an opening in the birdhouse appropriate to the size birds that might visit the house. Do not cut the hole larger than it should be.
9. Roll a small coil of clay for the perch. Taper both ends and use a wooden tool to scratch in texture and give it a little twist. Poke a hole where you want the perch to attach, slip, and insert one of the ends in the opening and give it a little twist to make sure it attached well.
10. Press a real leaf into a small slab of clay to make the little roof over the top of the hole. Pinch the edges of the clay around the leaf to taper the clay edge, so it is not so thick. Use a needle tool to remove the leaf from the clay. Bend the leaf to make a domed shape and score the area of the leaf that will attach and the area where it will attach. Slip and attach the leaf.
11. Place the flower top on the birdhouse and allow it to dry. It is easier to paint if you do not attach the flower to the top. Clean up any imperfections with a damp sponge.
12. After allowing sufficient drying time. Fire the birdhouse with the flower sitting on top to cone 04.

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTIONS CONTINUED



13. Use a damp sponge to remove any dust.
14. Use a large fan brush to apply three coats of Old Lace to the cylinder part of the birdhouse.
15. Use a large fan brush to apply two coats of Just Peachy to the flower top and three coats to the bottom side. After the first two coats have dried on the top, do the following to one petal at a time. Apply Just Peachy to one side of the petal and immediately use the smaller fan brush to apply Melon Choly to the other side and blend the two colors wet into wet so you have a gradual fade from one color to the other. Continue this with each petal as you go around the flower.
16. After the Old Lace is dry, sketch on some leaf designs coming down the sides from the top. Use a round brush to paint them in with two coats of Sour Apple and paint the little leaf roof with two coats of Sour Apple as well. Using the round brush apply a third coat of Sour Apple to one leaf at a time then pick up some Green Thumb with the other round brush and blend into the Sour Apple to create shadows where the leaves overlap and along the outer edges.
17. Use a round brush to apply three coats of Yella Bout It to the center of the flower.
18. Use a round brush to apply one coat of Java Bean to the perch. Use a damp sponge to wipe it back so the color stays heavier in the grooves.
19. Use the liner brush to apply dots of Java Bean around the center of the flower and allow some graduated dots to work into the center. Pull fine lines of thinned Java Bean to create the veins in the flower petals. Always work from the center outward to get fine lines.
20. Thin a little bit of Green Thumb with water and outline the leaves and make veining. Pull up lines from the bottom of the birdhouse to create grass and stems for the flowers. Use a combination of Sour Apple and Green Thumb, not washing the brush between strokes and picking up the next color, giving a blend of the two greens in each stroke.
21. Use a cotton swab to pick up Hot Tamale and press five dots of color in a circle at the tops of some of the blades of grass to make flowers. Do the same with other colors of choosing, including Just Peachy, Melon Choly, and Lavendear. Tap in some clusters of little flowers randomly in the grass with the same colors. Add some little dabs of Java Bean to the centers of the flowers.
22. Optional: Load a toothbrush with Tuxedo and add speckles of black over the cylinder part of the birdhouse.
23. Stilt and fire to cone 06. The flower top can be placed on top of the birdhouse cylinder during firing if you want the parts to fuse together.

HIGH SCHOOL DIRECTIONS



1. Compress a $\frac{1}{4}$ " slab of clay to construct a cylinder by slipping & scoring bevel-cut edges. Weld seam. [Tip: When compressing seams and smoothing edges, avoid using water in favor of using fingers and smoothing tools instead. This keeps your vessel strong and even in hardness.]



2. Slip and score the mouth of the cylinder into an X shape. Flip it over, adding coils into the inside seams of the "X", weld the inside seams of the "X".



3. Flipping it over again, add arced coils around the four feet, welding the arced coils down into the feet with fingers.

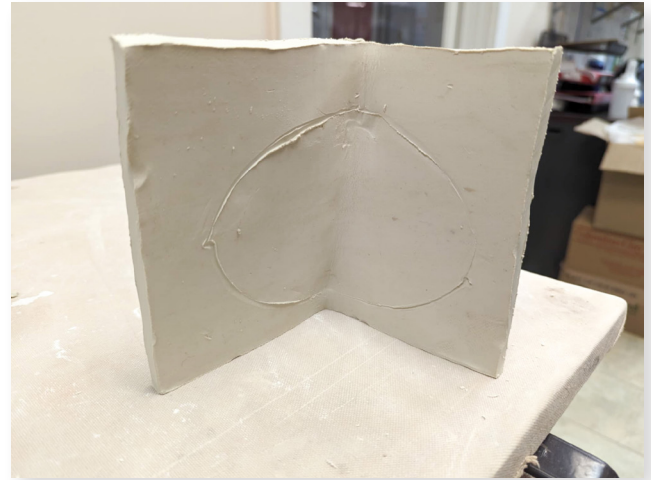


4. Press fingers upward along the edge of the arced coils and drag them down, creating petal shapes. Use a wooden knife or loop tool to refine the petal shapes. Compress seams of feet to avoid cracking. Augment or "belly out" the shape using gentle rubs with a damp sponge.

HIGH SCHOOL DIRECTIONS CONTINUED



5. Cut the roof section away and lay a slab over the cut walls. Mark where it touches the walls.



6. Attach the roof slab by scoring marked areas. Trim roof into desired shape, augmenting and softening edges. [Tip: When slab-building, aim to cut all components from slabs rolled at the beginning of the process. This helps to ensure that parts being attached are the same hardness of what they are being attached to.]



7. Mark the entry hole with a found object and cut it away. Use the found object to create a coil ring in the same size and attach it around the entry. [Tip: try to keep it partially covered to avoid uneven drying (drying = shrinking; uneven drying = cracking)]. Press fingers into the ring around the entry to match the petal shapes in the feet.



8. Bevel-cut and soften an organic triangular shape to create a leaf and attach it over the opening. Using a dull pencil to carve lines into the leaf shape.

HIGH SCHOOL DIRECTIONS CONTINUED



9. Make a tiny cylinder by wrapping a slab around a finger or tool, bevel-cutting and joining it together. Add a coil ring around the top and press into it like the coil ring around the entry hole. Attach chimney to the roof and compress the seam. Create a second leaf for the chimney and attach.



10. Create flowers by rolling balls of clay, slicing into the sides, flattening them, softening edges with gentle pinches, and pressing into the centers with a pen cap. Attach flowers.
11. After allowing sufficient drying time, fire the birdhouse to cone 04.

HIGH SCHOOL DIRECTIONS CONTINUED

TIP: When fired to midrange temperatures, Stroke & Coat® remains highly stable. However, glaze design with Stroke & Coat® will blur if colors are layered or overlapped. Because of this, overlapping colors should be avoided where crisp definition is desired.



12. Using SC055 Yella Bout It, apply 3 full coats on the body of the birdhouse with a CB602 #2 Soft Fan Brush.
13. Using SC091 Seabreeze, apply 3 full coats on the feet using an RB118 #8 Round Brush. There is no need to reseed application; Stroke & Coat does not run when used alone.
14. Using SC027 Sour Apple, apply 3 full coats on the leaves using an RB-118 #8 Round Brush.
15. Using SC102 Just Peachy, apply 3 coats on the pinched coil trim using an RB116 #6 Round Brush.
16. Squirt a small amount of SC101 Spruce It Up into a cup. Thin with water to the consistency of milk and swirl it inside the piece to evenly coat the inside with glaze.
17. Glaze the flowers: Using AC219 Designer Bottles and a RB100 #0 Detail Liner Brush, apply the following colors on the flower petals, being careful to not overlap colors: SC002 Melon-choly, SC100 Makin Me Blush, SC101 Spruce It Up, SC102 Just Peachy, S091 Seabreeze.
18. Apply SC055 Yella Bout It in the centers of the flowers with a Designer Bottle.
19. Use SC103 Lavendear to fill in any unglazed areas on the roof with a Designer Bottle.
20. Use an RB100 #0 Detail Liner Brush to refine any edges.
21. Fire to cone 6.

EXTEND THE LEARNING *using Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory*

LINGUISTIC (Word Smart)

Make a list of birds and the size of opening needed in a birdhouse. Read books about birds, ex "The Blue Wings" by Jef Aerts, "The Raven Heir" by Stephanie Burgis or "Homer on the Case" by Henry Cole. Answer questions or journal about project or birds and their houses.

SPATIAL (Picture Smart)

Sketch a birdhouse with dimensions or study and sketch with symmetry.

INTERPERSONAL (People Smart)

Elbow Partners to draw and measuring a bird house.
Building a house together.

BODY KINESTHETIC (Body Smart)

Take your class outside to birdwatch or nest hunt.
Create a map or scavenger hunt with clues about birds and their houses.

NATURALIST (Nature Smart)

Naturalist field trip bird watching (binoculars)
Garden store to look at birdhouse designs.
Look at egg color and egg size vs bird relationships.
Take your classroom outside!

LOGICAL/ MATHEMATICAL (Word Smart)

Measure and draw a house to create a paper template.
Find the surface area/volume of a house you draw and design.
Use real world application or word problems

INTRAPERSONAL (Self Smart)

Read independently
Reflection sketchbook activity
Ask a question or offer a writing prompt to journal about. ex, what is your favorite bird and why?

MUSIC (Music Smart)

Have background "Nature" music playing
Use the app "Merlin Bird ID" for identification of song birds.

RUBRIC

	RIGHT ON!	GETS THE POINT	NEEDS SOME UMPH	BARELY HANGING ON
CRAFTSMANSHIP & CONSISTENCY	The service is smooth and prepared perfectly for glaze. Edges are appropriately handled.	The surface is prepared well but there is a slight lack of neatness in some areas.	There are many areas of poor technique in the service is not prepared well for glaze.	Minimal effort or concern with craftsmanship.
CREATIVITY & ORIGINALITY	Demonstrates creative and unique approach to design.	Somewhat creative and some uniqueness to design.	Lacking creativity by trying.	Complete lack of uniqueness, obvious use of others' ideas.
PROJECT REQUIREMENTS (Wall thickness, slip & score, smooth)	All Requirements met and exceeded expectations!	Requirements met.	Few project requirements met.	No evidence of any project requirements being met.
COOPERATION & COLLABORATION	The student worked toward goals. Performed a variety of roles in class.	The student somewhat worked toward goals. Some input in class oriented work.	Student allow others to do most of the work only taking part in some ways.	Student made no effort to be cooperative or collaborative in the classroom
SKILL GROWTH	Obvious growth is taking place.	Student has shown some growth.	Shows no growth from previous projects but trying.	Shows no growth.

FINAL GRADE	COMMENTS
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