



snow city arts
virtual
learning

VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Workshop:

If I Were A Bird...

Learn how to sculpt a 3D clay bird with paper wings that incorporates global flags. You will also learn about bird migration and female aviators Bessie Coleman and Amelia Earhart.

Teaching Artist:
Allie Spicer

Workshop duration: 30 - 45 minutes



Transcript

I am Allison Spicer from Snow City Arts. I use the pronouns she/her/hers. I am going to teach you how to make a clay bird today.

In this video, you will learn how to make a clay bird with wings that illustrate a country's flag—a country's flag of your choosing. Here's an example of a bird done by Ayden. The wings are the colors of the Japanese flag. First, I will show you how to make the wings. In the second part, I will show you how to make the clay bird.

All right, so before we get started, let's make sure we have all of the materials we need. You're going to need: two packages of Model Magic in white; one pack of markers of various colors (try to make sure you have the primary colors which are red, yellow, and blue); and one piece of paper.

The first step to this project is turning our rectangular piece of paper into a square. This is a good skill to have just in life. And we're going to do it without scissors; we are going to use all tearing techniques.

So what you're gonna do is take your bottom right corner and fold it so that it lines up with the edge of the paper. You're creating almost a diagonal with the sheet of paper.

Give it a good crease as well.

The next thing you want to do is you're going to turn your piece of paper over, and we're going to now fold back this rectangle, because this is like our excess paper that we're going to take off. So I'm just folding it back and lining it up. I think you can see here, you're lining it up with this edge here.

Again, a good crease. And with this crease, we actually want to crease it both ways. So go ahead and unfold your paper and you'll have one diagonal line, and you'll have one vertical line. So with the vertical line, I want you to fold back that piece of paper on that same crease. Again, give it a really good crease.

And we're going to now tear off this excess rectangle, so that we have a square piece of paper. How I do it is I usually hold my finger in the corner, and I just very slightly begin to tear down.

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It's not going to be a perfect tear, but that's okay, because actually, this edge of the paper is going to be hidden in our final project.

So now you have a square piece of paper, and this is just for the trash or recycling!

The next step is to choose a flag.

When choosing a country's flag, think about either a place you'd like to travel to, a country where your family comes from, or a flag whose design and color you just think are really cool.

After choosing a country, use Google to look up what that country's flag looks like.

Let's pause here. I'm going to look up the Italian flag because that is where my grandmother is from. What flag are you going to look up?

You're going to use Google Maps to find out where your country is located.

Once you are in Google Maps, you are going to hit the magnifying glass, which is the search icon, and type in the name of your country.

A map of your country should pop up.

Zoom out, so that you can see the entire map of the world.

What we're going to do now is figure out where we are at, in relationship to our country.

So you're going to find your country first. I know that Italy is shaped like a boot.

Now we're going to find Chicago.

I know that Chicago is located on Lake Michigan. I also know that Chicago is in the state of Illinois. So Chicago is on the northeast side of Illinois. I asked Google, about how far is Chicago from Italy? The answer is about 4,796 miles, as the crow flies. That term as the crow flies means, if a bird were to fly from Chicago, Illinois to the country of Italy, it's about 4,796 miles.

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Once you have chosen your flag, begin drawing it on the piece of paper.

[music]

The next step is going to be for us to actually split this paper into half and create two wings. And we're going to use our diagonal line that we've already folded.

So you're going to go ahead and fold your paper almost—I like to say like a taco, because it looks like this. It's a taco. And again, we're going to crease it really well on one side, and we're gonna flip it over and crease it again really well again. So using your nails—sometimes I'll use like a pencil—or maybe the side of the marker if you don't have the strength in your fingers right now.

So, right now we have one piece of paper. We're going to take this, and now tear this just like we did to create the square piece of paper. So we're going to tear it into two parts. And for all of you math geeks out there, we are basically creating a fraction really. You'll have one-half for each wing.

Just trying to get it started. So the way that I just got it started was, I just kind of like tore the pieces, like, back and forth. And then eventually once you get it started, it should rip really nicely. I definitely recommend moving slowly, but again, we're not really going to see this edge so much. So don't be too, too worried that you're not, you know, doing it “right.” Because it is going to be our bird's wings and no birds have two perfectly symmetrical wings. So we went from one part to two parts, and now we have our bird wings. Okay, this next step we're going to actually work one wing at a time. So I'm going to set this wing aside, and I'm only going to work on this wing right now.

So what we have is one triangle. And we're going to now fold this triangle in half.

So, the next step is going to be, we're going to actually fold this wing down. And I would say, I'm going down, I would say about half of an inch. And I'm going to do something called an **accordion fold** where I'm going to now fold it back and I'm going to line it up to this edge. So, it's going to look like this.

And you just go back and forth, until one side of the piece of paper is completely folded like an accordion.

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You notice that on the triangle this line is still lining up, so I'm really paying attention to lining that up, more so, than like, how large of a space I'm folding. That's kind of the key, key element here.

So we're just folding it back and forth. I love that this is an accordion fold because Italy actually makes beautiful accordions. All right, so we now have one half of our wing folded we're going to now turn this piece of paper over and do the same thing on this side. I'm lining up my first fold to the other side. And I'm folding it back and forth. And remember, the goal is to keep this really well lined up. So take your time. There's no rush. If it doesn't line up, then you're—it's—the bird wing isn't going to work so well.

So again, I'm just going back and forth lining up, in an accordion-like fold.

All right, so eventually you will have something that looks like this. But if we were to spread it, pinch it on one side and spread it out, it's gonna look like a wing.

So we're going to do this same thing on the other side. So we're going to put this one aside. And we're going to do the same thing on this side.

Take your time. And as you fold your wings we are going to learn about **migration** and human flight.

One sound I love is chirping birds when I wake up in the morning. For me, this is a sign of Springtime. The birds have migrated from the South to the North after a long winter.

The word migration means to move from one place to another, in search of better resources like food or safe shelter. People migrate as well.

For birds, migration requires strong wings and long flights.

Thinking about wings, I want to introduce you to two American female pilots that were pioneers in aviation. I have often dreamed of having my own set of wings. So these two women are fascinating to me. The ability to fly feels like freedom. Would you like to take flight?

The first pilot I want to introduce you to is **Amelia Earhart**. You might already be familiar with her. But she was the first American female pilot to fly solo

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across the Atlantic Ocean.

The second pilot I want to introduce you to is **Bessie Coleman**. Bessie was the first black and Native American female pilot in the United States. She actually lived in Chicago. She was five years older than Amelia, but did not receive the same recognition as Amelia did in American history books. Challenge yourself to think why not. Bessie Coleman was the daughter of a sharecropper. She was not allowed to get her pilot's license in the United States and had to go to France to train. She ended up becoming a stunt pilot.

All right. So the next step is for us to make our clay bird. So you're going to go ahead and take your two clumps of Model Magic and knead them together. The importance of kneading is to make sure that all becomes one unit. So I encourage you to stretch it, and also use kind of the back of your palm, like right here, to kind of knead it like so. So I'm just pressing in, and picking it up, and kneading it.

Go ahead and stretch it. So I'm going to do this for a few minutes and we'll be right back.

[music]

So once you're done kneading it, you're gonna make sure that you start with—basically, a sphere. It doesn't have to be a perfect ball, but using your hands, you can make a sphere, just one unit.

If you can't use both hands, you can also use one hand. So using the table, I'm just gently rolling on top of the table surface, using it as like my second hand. And once you have a pretty good shaped ball, you're going to go ahead and take that ball and roll it back and forth. And it's going to look like—I call it like a big Tic Tac.

So you're turning your sphere into like an oblong-shape. And then from here what we want to do, is we want to pinch off the head of the bird. So on one end, you're going to just use your thumbs to start to **sculpt** the head of the bird.

So it should look something like this.

And then on the other end, we're going to make the feathers of the bird, or the tail. And you're just going to kind of use your hands to pinch out. So if you can

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see I'm kind of just pinching it out into a tail-like shape. So, eventually, it'll look like this.

And the next step is to make a beak, so using your fingers again we're just going to kind of pinch out the nose or the beak part into a triangular shape.

And again, your bird isn't gonna look like mine, because no two birds look the same. Your bird probably is looking a lot better than mine!

And once you have your bird shape, which is very, just rudimentary, right, rudimentary meaning really basic. We're going to now go ahead and stick the wings into the bird.

So what we're going to do is, go ahead and set your bird down so that it is freestanding. Freestanding means that it will stand on its own, or sit on its own without any props or any need for armature to hold it up. So what we're going to do next is take our one wing, and we are going to go ahead and stick it into the side of our bird.

And the great thing about this clay is that it dries, self-dries, on its own. And it almost has like an adhesive in it, so that it will actually, if you take the clay and kind of put it around the bird's wings. It'll actually glue the wing of the bird into the side of it for you. So you don't even need glue. We're gonna do the same thing on the other side. So again, I'm just sticking it in, kind of being careful not to change the shape of the bird that I've already made. But if I do, just making slight adjustments back to keeping the bird still in its shape.

And this is really all you need to do!

Now you're going to want to let it dry. We want to let it dry for, oh, I would say at least 24 hours. And, when I say let it dry, like don't play with it for 24 hours, and it'll actually harden up so that you can hold it just like a model airplane and fly it around your room.

If you do see kind of—the head might start to like fall a little bit—if you do see that starting to fall a little bit, you can always put like a prop underneath it. A lot of times I'll use the actual foil that the paper came in, to place like underneath the head, just so that it stays up while it dries. This gives it just a little bit of structure so that it dries with the head facing up. But do remember that gravity is going to want to pull it down. And gravity is the force that keeps us from

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flying away, keeps our feet on the ground. So just make sure that you kind of check in on your bird, make sure that it's not, like the tail isn't falling, or the head isn't falling. And that is your clay bird!

After your bird has dried at least 24 hours, maybe even 48, you can go back onto your bird, and you can use markers again, to draw like eyes or decorations down the back, maybe some feathers, making your bird very unique and something that you're very proud of.

So just a quick review of what we learned today. We learned how to sculpt a clay bird using basic hand-building skills, and Model Magic, and paper. We learned about different countries and their flags. We also learned about birds and migration.

And the last thing we did was we created a project that is something that is personal for us and that we can fly and play with!

If you are interested in receiving school credit

for the work you have completed in this workshop, or if you would like to have your work **displayed in a Snow City Arts exhibition space or virtual gallery:**

Visit <https://snowcityarts.org/consent-releases/> to learn more.

Contact us at programs@snowcityarts.org if you have questions, would like to offer feedback, or would like to continue working with us virtually.



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