

# OFF CENTER

blue line arts

Grades  
9-12

An International Ceramic  
Competition

## Tour Talk & Create

### Exhibition Background

Off Center is an international ceramic competition featuring ceramic artists from all over the world. This exhibition showcases ceramic sculptures that vary in method, technique, and artistic ideas and expression. Before viewing the Off Center show, this worksheet will help you prepare your students with brief information on ceramics, relevant terminology, and the basic understanding of elements of art and principles of design. During the show, we will discuss the different technical methods and expressive content used in each ceramic piece and their relation to one another. Your students will then be able to use this information to create their own work of art during an instructional step by step video after viewing the gallery tour & discussion video.



This lesson plan features the following National Core Standards for Visual Arts for Grades 9-12: VA:Cn11.1, VA:Cr1.1, VA:Cr1.2, VA:Cr2.1, VA:Re7.1, VA:Re8.1, VA:Re9.1

### Touring + Connecting

During the first part of the video, students will be able to watch a tour of the show to see and respond to a variety of ceramic works and identify several different artistic techniques and practices, hosted by one of our Teaching Artists. They will be able to **evaluate the works** through guided questions, such as **How do the techniques and methods used to create a piece relate to the expressive content?** Students will be encouraged to **perceive, analyze, and interpret artworks** firsthand before creating their own project inspired by the show.

### Talking + Responding

During the tour of the Off Center exhibition, students will be encouraged to brainstorm different ideas and questions they may have about a work of art. The video will have moments of silent footage focused on each piece to allow for **discussion among the class** and can be paused at any time for longer discussion needs. Students can also use the paused time to connect with one another to share ideas and questions about the exhibit or about ceramics in general.

### Creating + Presenting

During the hands-on art making session video, students will use the **materials and tools** provided to explore different techniques and styles of ceramic arts that they saw used in the Off Center show to create their own expressive work of art. This video can also be paused at any time, while students follow along and build their creations. This activity is curated and taught by one of our Teaching Artists and is tailored to the grade level of your class. Students will be able to engage artistically with the ideas and art works they have discussed and seen. This project will focus on the relationship between the use of **technical methods and expressive content**, allowing students to create their own form of symbolism and meaning through specific techniques and methods. After students have completed their art project, we encourage teachers to have students **present their work** to each other so that they can share what they enjoyed and learned about the creative process.

For more information or questions, please contact: [programs@bluelinearts.org](mailto:programs@bluelinearts.org)

### Art Terms

**Elements of Art:** The seven basic components of art: line, shape, form, space, texture, value, and color.

**Principles of Design:** The organization of elements of art: balance, contrast, dominance, emphasis, movement, repetition, rhythm, subordination, variation, unity.

**Expressive Content:** The presence of feeling, mood, and ideas to represent meaning in art.

**Symbolism and Visual Metaphor:** Ideas and meaning represented in expressive characteristics in the form of symbols and images.

### Ceramic Firing Techniques

**OXIDATION:** The increased use of oxygen during the firing stage, which causes unique reactions with the clay and glaze, such as breakage and cracking.

**REDUCTION:** The decreased use of oxygen which causes other gases to build up and creates a unique reaction with the clay and glaze, affecting the color and texture of the piece.

**RAKU FIRING:** The technique of removing ceramic pieces from high heat during a firing and placing it in a cooler temperatures, causing a "thermal shock" reaction, which can cause crazing and cracking of the glaze and clay.

**WOOD FIRING:** A laborious firing technique that includes the burning of wood over several days in a multi-chambered brick oven. The ash and chemical reactions that take place in the oven create unique and individual pieces each time.

### From the Show!



**Wood-fired Bucket**  
**Eric Ordway**  
**Stoneware w/ Flashing Slip,**  
**Wood-fired, Cone 12**

Artist Statement:

"The work consists of stoneware clay that has been fired at high temperatures in atmospheric and gas kilns... The drama of these surfaces are used as a metaphor, that of a relationship with a Divine Mystery."

### Questions to Consider

- How are principles of design and elements of art used in this piece?
- What sort of symbolism or visual metaphor can you identify?
- How do the techniques and methods used to create this piece relate to the expressive content?