

LESSON PLAN

BREEZE BENT ARCHITECTURE

Suggested Levels: Grades 7th-advanced
Designer: Tabitha Lusk



In this lesson, students will design and build a ceramic house that looks altered by wind. Using slab-building techniques, they will create a basic house form, then distort the shape to reflect the effects of wind, such as bending walls or tilting roofs. Students will also add textures to mimic weathering and erosion, exploring how natural forces impact architecture. After constructing their piece, they will glaze it to enhance the wind-blown effect, resulting in a creative and dynamic interpretation of nature's influence on buildings.

This project is inspired by Peter Voukos, whose dynamic abstract forms embody the concept of a wind-blown ceramic house. Though this artist created literal wind-blown houses, his work inspires designs influenced by environmental forces and his raw textures suggest the chaotic influence of wind.

In this project, students will create Wind-Blown

Ceramic Houses that reflect the impact of wind on architecture. They will start by brainstorming and sketching ideas, then make paper templates before working with clay to manipulate textures and shapes.

As they explore balance and proportion, students will push the boundaries of traditional ceramics, resulting in unique sculptures. The project culminates in a gallery exhibition where students showcase their finished pieces, celebrating the connection between art and nature while enhancing their creativity and technical skills.

OBJECTIVES

I CAN... design and construct a ceramic house using slab-building techniques that reflect the influence of wind on its form and structure.

I CAN... manipulate clay to create dynamic textures and shapes that evoke the effects of natural forces, such as wind erosion and weathering.

I CAN... apply glazing techniques to enhance the visual impact of my ceramic piece, emphasizing the theme of a wind-blown house.

NATIONAL VISUAL ART STANDARDS

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

- Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

- Engage in making a work of art or design without having a preconceived plan, exploring spontaneous and intuitive decisions in the process. Students will generate sketches and concepts for their wind-blown ceramic house, thinking creatively about form and environmental impact.

Refine and complete artistic work.

- Reflect on, revise, and refine works of art or design considering traditional and contemporary criteria. Students will evaluate their work during the construction process and make adjustments to enhance the "wind-blown" aesthetic.

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

- Interpret an artwork or collection of works, supported by relevant and sufficient evidence found in the work and its various contexts. Students will reflect on how their wind-blown house expresses the concept of environmental forces acting on architectural forms.

MEET THE MASTER



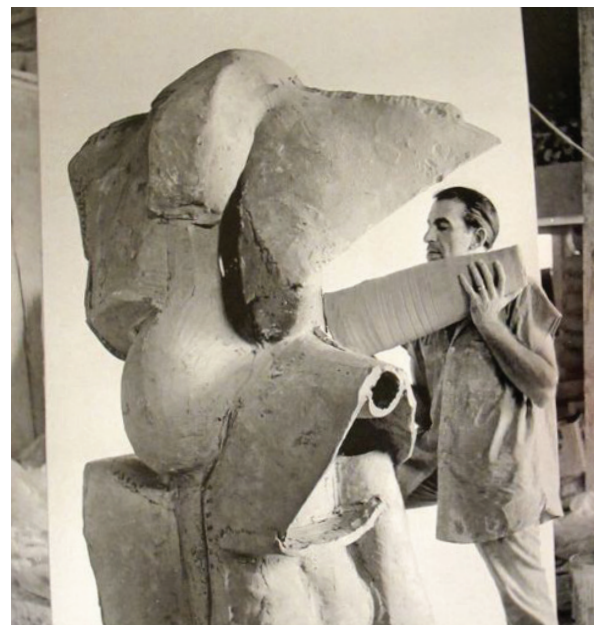
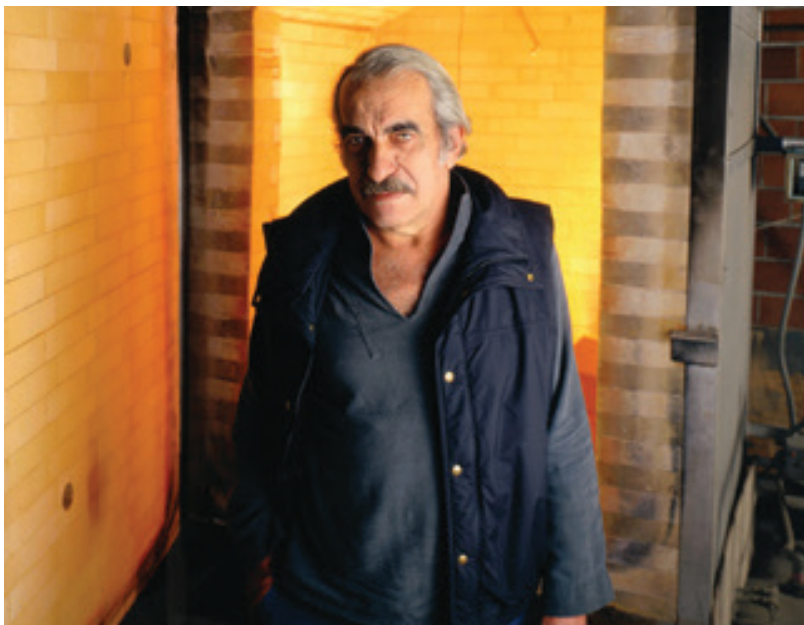
Peter Voulkos

1924-2002

was a groundbreaking American artist known for transforming ceramics into an art form. Born in 1924 in Montana, he didn't just make traditional pottery—he created bold, abstract sculptures. Voulkos loved experimenting with clay, adding rough textures and

unique shapes to his pieces, making them stand out from anything seen before. His work showed that with creativity, you can turn something as simple as clay into a powerful form of expression! His work helped ceramics gain respect as fine art, and he taught many young artists to think creatively. Though he passed away in 2002, his influence is still felt in museums and galleries today.

“I don't think clay is an easy material to work with. It's very demanding, and it takes a long time to understand.” — Peter Voulkos



SUPPLY LIST

CLAY

- Clay body of choice

BRUSHES AND TOOLS

- Rolling pins and guide sticks or a slab roller
- Clay cutting tools
- Canvas sheets
- Slip containers and scoring tools
- Sponges
- Modeling or loop tools
- Wire brushes
- Sponges and rags
- Wooden dowels, tubes, or molds



COLORS BY MAYCO

This lesson plan features Mayco's [Foundations® Glazes](#). Foundations® glazes are perfect for this lesson for many different reasons! They're user-friendly for beginners and are versatile, working with a variety of clay bodies and firing ranges. They also dry quickly, allowing immediate additional decorating and same day firing.

Foundations® glazes are available in gloss opaque, gloss translucent and matte finishes and are offered in a broad color palette. They are also intermixable, giving students the freedom to experiment with creating their own custom colors.

These glazes also deliver consistent, predictable results, making them practical while offering both creative and educational value.

ACTIVITY

Steps to Create a Wind-Blown House Using a Paper Template

1. Sketch the Design

- Begin by sketching your wind-blown house, focusing on how the wind will alter the structure (tilted walls, bent roof, etc.). Keep in mind the overall proportions and shape.

2. Create a Paper Template

- Based on your sketch, draw the walls, roof, and any additional elements (windows, doors) onto paper or cardstock. Cut out the shapes to create a template for your slab pieces. Exaggerate bends or curves in the shapes to reflect the wind's effect on the house.

3. Roll Out Clay Slabs

- Roll out clay slabs to an even thickness (about 1/4 inch thick) using a rolling pin and guide sticks or a slab roller. Make sure the slab is large enough to accommodate your template pieces.

4. Cut Clay Using the Template

- Place your paper templates on the clay slabs and use a clay knife or needle tool to cut out the shapes of the walls, roof, and other features (windows, doors). Gently remove excess clay.

5. Score and Slip the Edges

- Score the edges of the slabs where they will be joined (e.g., the base of walls, roof connections) using a scoring tool or fork. Apply slip (a mixture of clay and water) to the scored areas to help them bond together securely.

6. Assemble the House Structure

- Begin assembling the house by standing up the walls and pressing them together along the scored and slipped edges. Use your fingers or tools to smooth the seams. Attach the roof last, allowing it to sit in a tilted or wind-swept position. Reinforce connections as needed by adding extra clay coils along the seams.

7. Distort and Shape the Form

- While the clay is still soft, gently push, bend, or warp sections of the walls and roof to exaggerate the wind-blown effect. For example, you might curve the walls or make the roof appear as though it's lifting or collapsing under the force of the wind.

8. Add Textures

- Use tools like sponges, wire brushes, or loop tools to add textures that enhance the wind-swept appearance, such as cracks, grooves, or swirling patterns. You can also add details like windows or doors that appear partially broken or shifted by the wind.

9. Refine and Dry

- Carefully refine the details of your house, smoothing any rough edges or cracks. Make sure there are no weak spots in the structure. Let the house dry slowly and evenly to avoid cracking, covering it lightly with plastic if needed.

10. Bisque Fire the House

- Once completely dry, the house is ready for its first (bisque) firing in the kiln.

11. Glaze the House

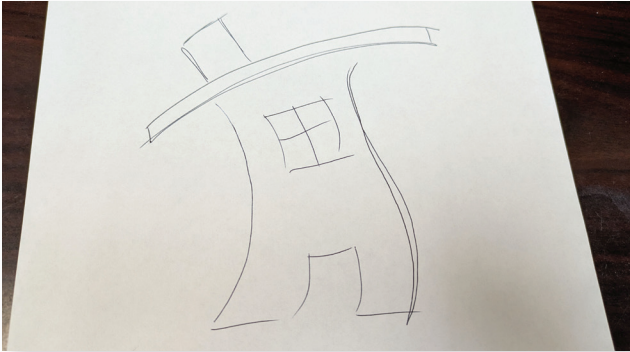
- After the bisque firing, apply glaze to the house. Use colors and techniques that enhance the weathered, wind-blown effect, such as sponging on glaze or layering for a worn look.

12. Final Firing

- Fire the glazed piece in the kiln for the final time, completing your wind-swept ceramic house.

DIRECTIONS

1. Begin by sketching your wind-blown house concept, focusing on how the wind will alter the structure (tilted walls, bent roof, etc.). Keep in mind the overall proportions and shape.

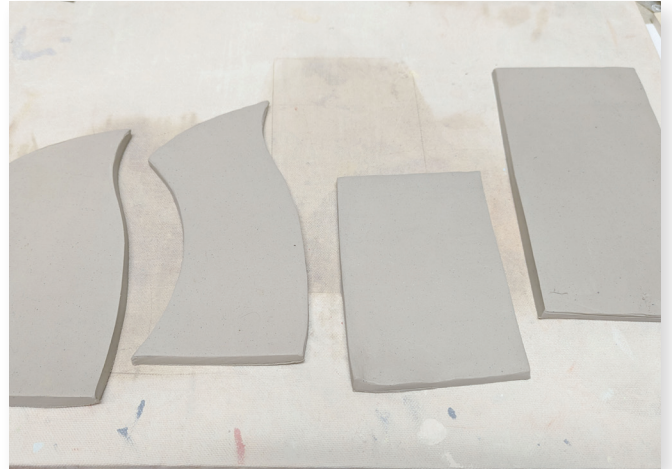
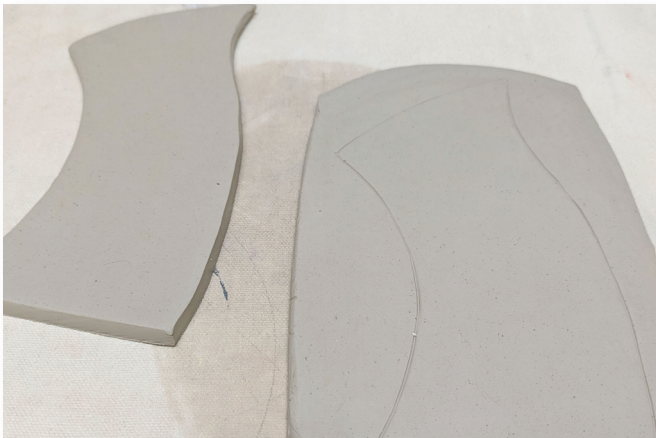


2. Based on your sketch, draw the walls, roof, and any additional elements (windows, doors) onto paper or cardstock. Cut out the shape to create a template for your slab pieces.
3. Roll out clay slabs to an even thickness (about 1/4 inch thick) using a rolling pin and guide sticks or a slab roller. Make sure the slab is large enough to accommodate your template pieces.

4. Place your paper templates on the clay slabs and use a clay knife or needle tool to cut out the shapes of the walls, roof, and other features.



Gently remove excess clay.

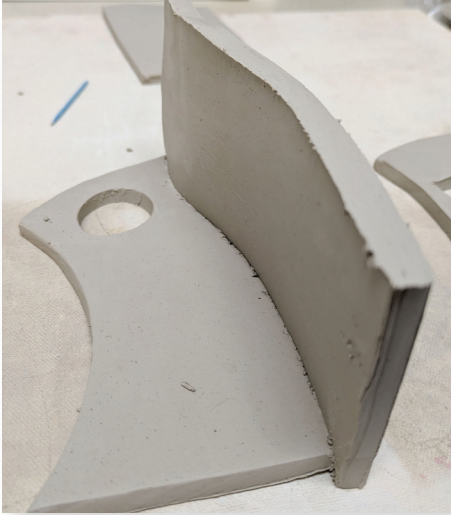


5. Score the edges of the slabs where they will be joined (e.g., the base of walls, roof connections) using a scoring tool or fork. Apply slip (a mixture of clay and water) to the scored areas to help them bond together securely.



DIRECTIONS

- Begin assembling the house by standing up the walls and pressing them together along the scored and slipped edges. Use your fingers or tools to smooth the seams.
- Attach the roof last, allowing it to sit in a tilted or wind-swept position. Reinforcing connections as needed by adding extra clay coils along the seams.



- While the clay is still soft, gently push, bend, or warp sections of the walls and roof to exaggerate the wind-blown effect. For example, you might curve walls or make the roof appear as though it's lifting or collapsing under the force of the wind.
- Use tools like sponges, wire brushes, or loop tools to add textures that enhance the wind-swept appearance, such as cracks, grooves, or swirling patterns. You can also add details like windows or doors that appear partially broken or shifted by the wind.
- Carefully refine the details of your house, smoothing any rough edges or cracks. Make sure there are no weak spots in the structure. Let house dry slowly and evenly to avoid cracking, covering it tightly with plastic if needed.
- Once completely dry, bisque fire the house in the kiln.
- After the bisque firing, apply glaze to the house. This project features Mayco [Foundations® Glazes](#). Foundations® glazes dry quickly, allowing immediate additional decorating and same day firing. Available in gloss opaque, gloss translucent and matte finishes.
- When applying glaze, use colors and techniques that enhance the weathered, wind-blown effect, such as sponging on glaze or layering for a worn look.
- Fire the glazed piece in the kiln for the final time, completing your wind-swept ceramic house.

WHY FOUNDATIONS® GLAZES ARE PERFECT FOR THIS LESSON:

- They are user-friendly for beginners and versatile, working with a variety of clay bodies and firing ranges.
- They offer a broad color palette for mixing and the freedom to explore textures allowing students to experiment creatively.
- The glazes also deliver consistent, predictable results, making them practical while offering both creative and educational value.

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

LINGUISTIC (Word Smart)

Students write a short story or poem describing the origin of their wind-blown house. They could explain how the wind shaped it or imagine what kind of events or forces led to its unique form.

Students create a list of vocabulary words that are relevant to the project (e.g., distortion, erosion, texture, abstraction, dynamic, organic, architecture) and use each word in a sentence related to their ceramic house.

SPATIAL (Picture Smart)

Students explore the concept of negative space in their ceramic houses by intentionally leaving gaps, holes, or distortions that suggest wind passing through or around the structure. They focus on how the empty spaces enhance the overall form.

Students explore the difference between organic and geometric shapes in their ceramic designs. They experiment with how the wind might distort both rigid, geometric structures and soft, flowing, organic forms, applying these concepts to their house.

INTERPERSONAL (People Smart)

Students work in small groups to research real-world examples of buildings or structures designed to withstand wind or environmental forces (e.g., wind-resistant buildings, ancient wind-driven architecture, or modern sustainable architecture). Each group presents their findings to the class.

Students pair up to write artist statements for each other's wind-blown house, based on discussions they have about each other's work. Each student must listen carefully to their partner's ideas and then articulate those ideas in a written statement.

BODY KINESTHETIC (Body Smart)

Before beginning the ceramic project, students engage in a tactile warm-up where they manipulate soft clay with their hands. They experiment with pinching, twisting, and pressing the clay to create forms that mimic the effect of wind. This hands-on exercise strengthens their connection to the material.

Students engage in gesture drawing exercises where they draw quick, fluid lines that represent the motion of wind. To amplify the kinesthetic experience, they use large paper and stand while drawing, using their whole arm and body to create sweeping gestures.

NATURALIST (Nature Smart)

Students explore real-world examples of buildings designed to withstand environmental forces, like wind-resistant skyscrapers, hurricane-proof homes, or ancient wind-catcher towers used in desert environments.

Students research the environmental impact of traditional building materials versus sustainable alternatives, such as clay or natural materials used in eco-friendly architecture. They can discuss how their ceramic houses mimic sustainable designs or how architecture could adapt to wind and environmental challenges.

LOGICAL/ MATHEMATICAL (Word Smart)

Students calculate the angles of their roof and walls to ensure proper alignment and structural integrity, even with the distorted, wind-blown design. This geometric reasoning helps them maintain a functional yet creative structure.

Students use rulers, calipers, or other measuring tools to precisely plan the dimensions of their ceramic house before building. They measure and calculate the dimensions of slabs, walls, and features to ensure accuracy in their construction.

INTRAPERSONAL (Self Smart)

Students complete a self-assessment that asks them to reflect on their original artistic intent and whether they achieved it. They answer questions like, "What was your goal for this piece?" and "Does your final piece align with your personal vision?"

Encourage students to work in silence for a portion of the project, allowing them to focus inward and connect with their creative process without distraction. Afterward, they write a reflection on how the quiet, focused time affected their approach and artistic choices.

MUSIC (Music Smart)

Students research and explore music from different cultures that relates to wind or nature, examining how different cultures express these themes musically.

Students create a narrative or story that involves their ceramic wind-blown house, and then use music to enhance the storytelling experience.

RUBRIC

	4 - EXEMPLARY	3 - PROFICIENT	2 - DEVELOPING	1 - BEGINNING
CREATIVITY & CONCEPT	Strong, unique design clearly reflects wind-blown theme with imaginative, exaggerated features.	Design reflects wind-blown theme, with thoughtful consideration of form and structure.	Some elements show wind impact, but theme is not fully explored or imaginative.	Minimal or no attempt to reflect the wind-blown theme; design lacks creativity.
CRAFTSMANSHIP & CONSTRUCTION	Excellent craftsmanship, all slab joints are well-secured, walls are even, and structure is sturdy.	Good craftsmanship, with mostly secure joints and solid structure.	Joints are somewhat uneven or weak, and structure may lack stability.	Poor craftsmanship; loose or weak joints, uneven slabs, or unstable structure.
USE OF SLAB-BUILDING TECHNIQUE	Advanced use of slab-building techniques; forms are well-executed and detailed.	Correct use of slab-building techniques; forms are clean and functional.	Some difficulty with slab-building; forms may be uneven or poorly constructed.	Significant difficulty with slab-building techniques; forms are not well-executed.
MANIPULATION OF FORM	Excellent manipulation of clay to convey wind movement; dynamic and expressive form.	Good manipulation of form to suggest wind impact; shows movement but could be more expressive.	Some manipulation of form, but the wind-blown effect is subtle or inconsistent.	Little to no manipulation of form to reflect wind impact; house appears static.
TEXTURE & SURFACE DETAIL	Skillful use of texture and surface detail to enhance the wind-blown effect; surfaces are rich and well-integrated.	Good use of texture and surface detail; enhances the overall design.	Some texture and detail, but not fully integrated or effective in enhancing design.	Minimal or no texture and surface detail; surfaces are flat and lack interest.
GLAZING/ SURFACE FINISH	Exceptional use of glazing or surface finishes to enhance texture and wind-blown effect; creative use of color and technique.	Glazing or surface finish is appropriate and enhances the design.	Glazing is uneven or doesn't fully compliment the wind-blown theme.	Little to no glazing or surface finish, or glazing detracts from the overall design.
OVERALL PRESENTATION	The piece is well-finished, polished, and visually striking; clearly communicates the concept of wind-blown architecture.	The piece is complete and communicates the wind-blown concept well.	The piece is somewhat unfinished or rough; the wind-blown theme is not fully clear.	The piece appears unfinished or rushed; does not communicate the wind-blown theme.

Total Score: _____/28

RUBRIC

GRADING SCALE

24-28 POINTS (A): DEMONSTRATES EXCELLENT CREATIVITY, CRAFTSMANSHIP, AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WIND-BLOWN CONCEPT.

18-23 POINTS (B): DEMONSTRATES SOLID CREATIVITY AND CRAFTSMANSHIP, WITH A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE WIND-BLOWN THEME.

12-17 POINTS (C): SHOWS SOME SKILL BUT LACKS REFINEMENT OR FULL EXPLORATION OF THE CONCEPT.

7-11 POINTS (D): NEEDS SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN CREATIVITY, TECHNIQUE, OR EXECUTION.

BELOW 7 POINTS (F): INCOMPLETE OR RUSHED PROJECT WITH MINIMAL EFFORT OR ENGAGEMENT. FAILS TO MEET THE BASIC CRITERIA.

This rubric assesses students on creativity, technical skill, and understanding of the wind-blown concept, while also giving weight to craftsmanship and the finishing touches on their ceramic piece.