

4A KIDS December 2021

4A Kids



<https://www.instagram.com/ruth.li.art/>
<https://linktr.ee/ruth.li.art>

Ruth Ju-Shih Li is a Taiwanese-Australian artist who likes making imaginary animals, flowers and plants with both fired and raw clay!

Presented by 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, 4A Kids is a project that connects children with Asian and Asian Australian contemporary art, culture and ideas. 4A Kids commission artists to create activities designed for kids ages 5-17 and beyond. Access our kits via: 4a.com.au



Clay Flowers with Ruth Ju-Shih Li

Hello and welcome! Let's make some beautiful clay flowers that melt in the rain together.

My name is Ruth Ju-Shih Li and I was born in Taiwan, grew up in New Zealand and am now based in Sydney, Taipei and Jingdezhen. Phweft! That's a lot of places! You could say that I am Taiwanese-Kiwi-Australian. Isn't it wonderful to have many different identities that all tie in together to make us unique? What different identities, nationalities or ethnicities do you or your family have that make you, uniquely you?

Fun Fact: Did you know that Ginkgo tree species is over 290 million years old? They were already here when the dinosaurs were around. How amazing is that!

But even though nature is all around us, we mustn't take it for granted and we need to protect it so these beautiful trees can be around for another couple million years.

I just love the many beautiful shapes and sizes of different flowers, have you seen any unique flowers recently?

What are your favourite plants?

Maybe something loopy and spikey like a grevillea?

Or something full and fluffy like a chrysanthemum?

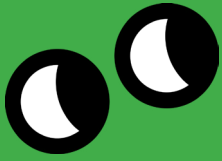
Or maybe something waterfall-like and droopy like wisteria?



Keep your favourite flowers in mind and let's get started!



Activity: Clay Flowers with Ruth Ju-Shih Li



All you need is:

- A piece of paper
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Clay
- Cup
- Rolling Pin
- Paint brush
- Bamboo skewer (or similar)



To bring this workshop to life, watch the video tutorial [here](#)

STEP 1

Using the rim of your cup as a guide, draw out a circle on your piece of paper and cut it out.



STEP 2

Grab a handful of clay and roll out to a flat sheet no thinner than 1cm.

STEP 3

Using your cut out circle as a guide, cut a full circle on your clay slab. Now cut a long rectangle more than 3 times the length of your circle.

Set both pieces aside to stiffen for an hour in the shade.



Activity: Clay Flowers with Ruth Ju-Shih Li

STEP 4

Take a little bit of your off-cut clay and place it inside your cup and mix thoroughly with a dash of water to make some clay slurry. This will be the glue to stick all the different parts of clay together!

STEP 5

While your clay is stiffening up, head out to your backyard, front yard or local park to collect lots of leaves, flowers and any other fun textures for inspiration.



STEP 6

Time to assemble your circle and rectangle into a column! Scratch and score the edges of your circle as well as one side of your rectangle. This will make them rough and textured. Now trace these edges with clay slurry and stick them together!

Cut off any excess clay from your rectangle and seal the edges with the same method. Set aside to dry.



Activity: Clay Flowers with Ruth Ju-Shih Li

STEP 7

Now that the base is built, time to create our clay flowers and leaves! Roll out another piece of clay, but this time roll it thinner. Press your leaves and other textured objects onto the surface of your clay. After gently peeling them off, cut them out.

Another way you can make leaves is by pressing a small piece of clay directly onto the textured side of a leaf and gently peeling the clay off.



STEP 8

Let's make some flowers! With your fingers, press and mould individual flower petals and assemble them into flowers according to your liking. You can have as little as 3 and as many as 20 petals on one flower! Don't worry about getting them perfect, we're here to explore with our imagination.

Make lots and lots of flowers inspired by the different flowers you found outside or plants you've seen before.



STEP 9

Now that you have all your flowers ready, flip your clay column upside down – this will be the base of your sculpture.

Activity: Clay Flowers with Ruth Ju-Shih Li

STEP 11

Arrange all your clay flowers and leaves into a beautiful bouquet and stick them on using... you guessed it! The clay slurry. Once you have arranged your bouquet set it aside to dry.

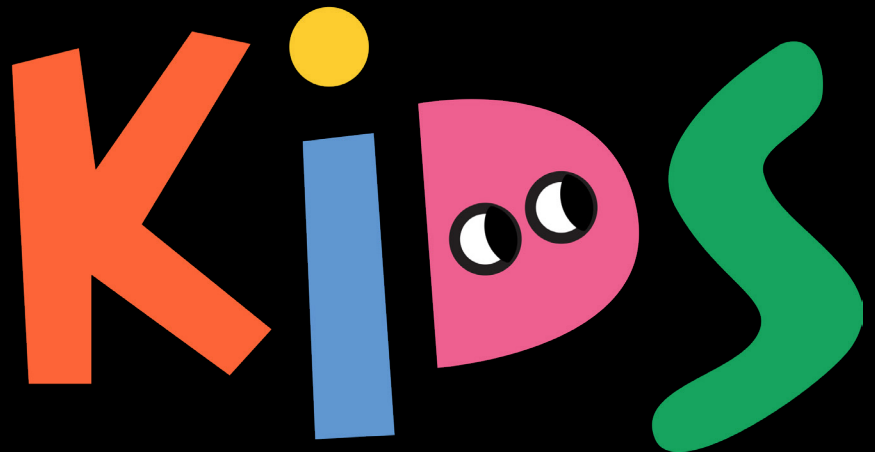


STEP 12

Once your sculpture has dried, leave it outside and check on it every day to see the progress. As it rains, your sculpture will slowly melt and return to the earth. Just like everything in nature, it has a natural cycle.

We need to be aware and respect nature and know that our little actions can have a BIG impact on our environment! What are some things we can do to show respect to nature?





Thanks for having fun with 4A KIDS – see you next time!
4a.com.au