

Pots, Clay, Identity: Painting Pinched Pots!

Grade Level: 4th - 12th

Length of Time Needed: 2 Hrs. 35 Mins.

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Jane Addams
Hull-House Museum

JANE ADDAMS
HULL-HOUSE
MUSEUM



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Introduction

The **Jane Addams Hull-House Museum** serves as a dynamic memorial to social reformer **Jane Addams**, the first American woman to receive the **Nobel Peace Prize**, and her colleagues at the **Hull-House Settlement**. Their work changed the lives of their immigrant neighbors as well as national and international public policy. The Museum preserves and develops the original Hull-House site for the interpretation and continuation of the historic settlement house vision. Exhibitions and public programs connect the histories of the Hull-House Settlement to present-day social justice issues, and highlight histories of activism, progressive education and democratic principles of participation and exchange.

Founded in 1889 as a social settlement, Hull-House played a vital role in redefining American democracy in the modern age. The **Hull Mansion** (built in 1856) served as the origins of the Settlement House which expanded into 13 buildings by the early 1900s. Over the course of its history Hull-House housed over 100 Residents, mostly college-educated men and women who offered a multitude of classes that were influenced by the surrounding neighborhood of immigrants and low-income families. Hull-House Reformers offered programs that taught fundamental skills necessary for living and working in the United States, such as English-language, reading, and writing classes. Hull-House co-founder, activist, and art teacher **Ellen Gates-Starr** also organized art history classes and opened a book bindery at the Settlement.

The Hull-House Settlement took part in the first large-scale national sociological study focused on America's rapidly growing, congested, and industrialized cities, called ***The Slums of Baltimore, Chicago, New York and Philadelphia. Hull-House Maps and Papers***, an expansion of the Settlement's contribution to the study, included a survey of the neighbors living in the 19th Ward and information about their earnings, nationalities, education, health, and other living conditions. Colored maps that tracked nationalities and household wages of the surrounding community advocated for action on behalf of these marginalized populations. The book included 10 essays written by leading social reformers and Hull-House Residents. Modeled after sociological maps by **John Snow** and **Charles Booth**, the colorful maps and narrative essays laid the groundwork for the many programs that were developed during Hull-House's 70-year history.

Hull-House offered cultural programs that explored the heritage of the many ethnic groups living in their area. These programs, often led by the immigrant population, helped people tell the stories of their (im)migrant experience and also showed what made them special. One such program was the **Hull-House Kilns**. This program employed many Mexican artists who created pottery that helped support their families during its 10-year run.

Hull-House supported the passage of critical legislation and influenced public policy in public health, education, free speech, fair labor practices, immigrants' rights, recreation and public space, arts, and philanthropy. Hull-House has long been a center of Chicago's political and cultural life, establishing Chicago's first public playground and public art gallery, helping to desegregate the Chicago Public Schools, and influencing philanthropy and culture.

Use this educational packet to bring Hull-House history to life in your classroom. Inside you will find participatory arts activities that will help students explore Hull-House Settlement initiatives and the biographies of **Hull-House Reformers and Neighbors**. Jane Addams Hull-House Museum's educator-led tours are designed to expand and supplement the activities in this packet and enhance your students' experience with a **National Historic Site** and international monument to the fights for democratic ideals.



Jane Addams Hull-House Museum | Collection

No Kiln Necessary!

You do not need a kiln to make pottery! In this program, we will detail how to execute a pottery activity for elementary and middle school-aged youth. The activity will allow youth to express themselves and explore their identity by learning about the history of the Hull-House Kilns and how young people like them expressed themselves nearly a century ago. Participants will learn about the history of immigrants who worked in the Kilns and how they embraced their culture through pottery!



10 March 2019 | Brandon Fields
Girl Scout Pottery Programs at Hull-House

Why Pottery?

Art was integrated in every part of daily life at Hull-House. One of the co-founders of Hull-House, **Ellen Gates Starr**, was a prominent proponent of art as an essential element of life and advocated for arts education and programming at **Hull-House Settlement**. Starr was part of the **Arts and Crafts** movement, a response to the dehumanization of people under mass-production and industrialization. Those in the Arts and Crafts movement sought to empower workers by bringing attention to the handiwork of artisans and bringing affordable and aesthetically pleasing functional objects to the masses. The **Hull-House Kilns** is an extension of this philosophy that used pottery to bridge culturally empowering arts programs for Mexican immigrants with creative self-expression.

The Kilns were very popular with immigrant children who were often around Hull-House. While the kilns were originally intended for children, when immigrant men started showing interest in the initiative, different classes and programs were directed toward adult participants. A few display items in the Hull-House Museum collection were created by children who took classes at the Kilns. Hull-House teachers took local youth on a field trip to Lincoln Park Zoo and then had students sketch the animals on exhibit. After returning to Hull-House the children took their sketches and created what they saw in clay. This is why there are so many clay animals in the Hull-House Kilns collection.

Materials Needed + Prep Required

- **Air-Dry Clay** (Recommended: Crayola 25lb Air-dry clay)
- **Acrylic Paints:** If possible, avoid watercolors as it may dissolve the pot
- **Blank Sheets of Paper:** Students may use the paper to sketch a rough draft of their designs
- **Color Pencils/Pencils:** To draw rough sketches of their designs
- **Paintbrushes:** Look for a variety of sizes and brush types
- **Disposable Plates:** As palettes
- **Disposable Cups:** To wash brushes with water
- **Butcher Paper/Disposable Tablecloth:** To protect workspaces
- **Paper Bags:** To transport pots after the program

(Before program) Create clay shallow pinch-pots a minimum of two days prior to the program. Air-dry clay requires time to dry in order to be painted. Several tutorials are available online for simple bowls. Create one for each participant and several extras in case bowls are dropped.

Optional: A few days before the program, guide the students in creating their own pots. For best results, let pots dry at least two days before painting.

Set up materials. For each participant, place a plate at their seat with a small squirt of paint in several colors (do not do this too early to prevent drying of paints) and half a cup of water. Place several brushes, pencils, and pieces of paper at each station.

Standards

ISBE Visual Arts Standards¹

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work

Anchor Standard 6: (Middle & High School)
Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art

Anchor Standard 11: (Middle & High School)
Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

ISBE Social Studies Standards

Geography: Spatial Patterns and Movement, Global Interconnection, Human-Environment Interaction

History: “Change, Continuity, and Context”, Perspectives, Historical Sources and Evidence, Causation and Argumentation, Globalization

Economics: Globalization, Technology & Investment, Inequality

Objectives

Learn about the migration history of Mexicans during the Mexican Revolution to Chicago

Connect Chicago and Mexican history through art

Use critical thinking skills to create original designs and use their pieces to tell a story

Vocabulary

Immigrant: A person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country

Progressive Era: A period of widespread social activism and political reform across the United States of America that spanned the 1890s to the 1920s

Arts and Crafts Movement: A response against the dehumanization of people under mass-production and industrialization

Kiln: A furnace or oven for burning, baking, drying and firing pottery

¹ <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Fine-Arts.aspx>

Teacher Info

The **Hull-House Kilns** (1927-1937) was founded by **Myrtle Merritt French**, a **School of the Art Institute of Chicago** ceramicist and Resident of Hull-House. Looking to connect the service-driven mission of Hull-House with her own art-making process, French helped open the Hull-House Kilns. The Kilns provided a space for immigrants to make ceramics and earn proceeds from the sale of their creations. With financial support from **Hazel** and **Vinol Hannell**, Hull-House eventually opened a store on Michigan Avenue, a famous shopping district in Chicago, which sold the pottery made by the immigrant community. Sales supported the individual artists and funded the storefront.

One of the most well-known artists to come out of the Hull-House Kilns was **Jesus Torres**, originally an immigrant from Silao, Guanajuato, Mexico. After travelling across the U.S. as a migrant worker, Torres landed in Chicago and worked tough jobs like those in the steel mills. Torres first came to Hull-House for English classes but soon met **Morris Topchevsky**, who recognized Torres' artistic talents influenced by his time with artisans in Mexico. Torres quickly found success in the Kilns, and his artistic career began to grow. Torres often was inspired by his culture and used indigenous Aztec symbols, representing a time before colonial rule by Spain. Other Hull-House ceramists included artists **Miguel Juárez**, **José Ruíz**, and **Hilarion Tinoco**, who were part of the Mexican Nationalist Art Movement associated with muralists like **Diego Rivera**, **José Clemente Orozco** and **David Alfaro Siqueiros**.

The rise in Mexican themes and designs became so popular, that the market for these ceramic items may have contributed to the decline of the Hull-House Kilns. Taking advantage of this rise in demand for Mexican artistry, the **Homer Laughlin China Company** released a line of dinnerware called "**Fiestaware**" in 1936. Fiestaware's shape, design, and bright colors were clearly inspired by the pottery and ceramics made by Mexican artists of the time. Fiestaware was mass-produced and less expensive than handmade ceramics by Mexican artisans. Sales dropped due to competition, and the Hull-House Kilns and store eventually shut down after ten years of activity.

Today, the Museum uses the story of the Hull-House Kilns to help visitors reflect on their heritage and how that impacts their identity. What traditions do your families have? Are there family stories that are special to you? What is one way you learn about your traditions and heritage?



Jesus Torres | Ceramicist
Jane Addams Hull-House Museum Collection

Instructional Steps

Step One: Hull-House Tour ²

Student will explore migrant and immigrant histories of Chicago through Hull-House's remarkable *Maps & Papers* display and read the information-gathering tools reformers used to make the colorful maps. One hundred colorful ceramic items on view at the museum tell the story of Mexican migrant and immigrant experiences.

Step Two

1. (Before Program) Carefully set out pre-prepared and dried bowls at each station.
2. (Day of Program) Ask participants to reflect on their heritage and how that impacts their identity. Prompting questions can include: *What traditions do your families have? How would you describe yourselves? Are there family stories that are special to you?* Encourage students to write down their thought process.
3. Set up materials. For each participant, place a plate at their seat with a small squirt of paint in several colors (do not do this too early to prevent drying of paints) and a half cup of water. Place several brushes, pencils, and pieces of paper at each station.

Step Three

1. At their stations before painting, explain to participants to paint their pots with their identity in mind. Encourage participants to interpret the prompt in any fashion they choose. If younger, detail how to use paints (mixing colors, painting tips, drying times).

Where are you from? Pots can represent "home" and use symbols and motifs that feel relevant to the students.

- What symbols represent where you are from?
- What should people know about where you are from?
- What do you want to share with people that they would be surprised to know about where you are from?
- What's your favorite part of your culture?
- Where are you going?

² For more information on scheduling an in-person or virtual Educator-led tour, go to <https://www.hullhousemuseum.org/group-tours>

Resources

"Pots of Promise: Mexicans and Pottery at Hull-House, 1920-40" Cheryl Ganz, Margaret Strobel, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 2004.

- Do you think your identity will change in the future? (Do you think you will stay the same in the future?)
- What places evoke your future?
- What do you see for yourself in the future?
- What are your hopes and dreams for yourself?

5. Have group facilitators walk around and ask students to describe their pots and their choices and how that relates to their identity.

6. Approximately 15 minutes before the end of the program, announce the end to participants to allow their pots to dry before leaving. Begin cleaning up plates, cups, and brushes.

Optional: If you would like additional time for your students to present their pots, please feel free to add the necessary amount of time!

Family history

- What items or symbols are important to your family that can be represented by motifs?
- What would go in your pot that would represent your family?
- Is there something you would like to pass on to future generations?



10 March 2019 | Brandon Fields
Girl Scout Program at Hull-House

Exhibition Information

In a first-ever partnership, **Jane Addams Hull-House Museum (JAHHM)**, **Public Media Institute (PMI)** and the **Smart Museum of Art** will present a year-long series of experimental audio performances from **Guillermo Gómez-Peña**, a performance artist, writer, activist, and **MacArthur Fellow**, class of 1991. Beginning on Wednesday, January 27, 2021 6:30 (CST), ***Gómez-Peña's Mex Files: Audio Art & Strange Poetry from the US/Mexico Border*** (1985–2021) offers multi-lingual live radio and a selection of archival audio programs by the artist addressing “the multiple pandemics of racism, sexism, xenophobia, and neo-colonialism on steroids in the Trump Era.” Throughout his life, Gómez-Peña has worked in audio art and radio across multiple genres, from poetic journalism to Spanglish spoken word, radical storytelling and collaborations with musicians, poets, and activists. This ongoing series will present samples of his previous work (1980–2015) and newly recorded material created in the last two years and during lock-down. Audiences can tune in to Gómez-Peña's live broadcasts on *105.5 FM WLPN-LP* or stream on *twitch.tv/lumpenradio* and listen to what you missed on JAHHM's website.

An Open Letter to the Museums of the Future

Gómez-Peña's Mex Files was highlighted by the live video performance “***An Open Letter to the Museums of the Future***” on February 3rd 2021 at 6:30 PM. Gómez-Peña has an obsession with rewriting and re-staging so-called “Western Art History” while highlighting colonial legacies of systematic exclusion, demonization and fetishization of Brown, Black and Indigenous bodies. This keynote challenges contemporary art museum practices and calls for an open discussion regarding radical restructuring from within. Later in the radio series, Gómez-Peña will be joined by invited luminaries in the field who will offer their own responses to the **Museum of the Future**.

Exhibition at JAHHM

The audio series will lead up to the new exhibition featuring **Gómez-Peña, La Pocha Nostra** and their incisive challenges to the capital Art World, past and present, to the current debates on cultural hegemony and white supremacy. The exhibition will

be presented from **September 9, 2021 to May 31, 2022** at JAHHM, continuing the Museum's efforts to be a dynamic historical site for democratic principles and cultural exchange.

On **September 9, 2021**, the week of the 161st anniversary of Jane Addams' birth, JAHHM will present new performances and experimental audio by **Guillermo Gómez-Peña**. The exhibition will also present archival materials and videos from a number of collaborative Chicago-based performances including the iconic *The Year of the White Bear* and *Couple in The Cage: Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit the West*, devised and performed with artist **Coco Fusco**, that travelled to **Chicago's Field Museum** in January 1993 in collaboration with the **Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum** (now the **National Museum of Mexican Art**). Gómez-Peña's insurgent performances challenge how museums represent so-called discovered people and take back the commons on behalf of outsider identities and marginalized communities.

Alongside new performances, experimental audio, video, and archival material of Chicago-based performances by Gómez-Peña, JAHHM will present Hull-House social reformers' efforts, with their immigrant neighbors, to provide access to the arts and create a common museum. The Hull-House Settlement's first new building was the **Butler Art Gallery**, Chicago's first public art gallery. The location of the gallery, in the most disenfranchised and disinvested area of the city, was testament that art should be accessible in communities of all kinds. In 1900, Hull-House co-founders **Jane Addams** and **Ellen Gates Starr** opened the **Labor Museum**. The experimental museum provided craft demonstrations in textiles, metals, woodwork, and bookbinding in an effort to reflect the diverse cultural heritage present in the congested and disregarded immigrant community. The experimental museum used historical interpretation and cultural performances to break down barriers—within immigrant families, and between immigrants and their American neighbors—to present women's work and immigrant culture as valuable. JAHHM's exhibition will look back on these cross-cultural experiments in relation to present-day demands for structural change inside cultural institutions.

About Jane Addams Hull-House Museum

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Museum Hours

Tuesday - Friday & Sunday
9:10 AM - 4:50 PM
Closed Monday and Saturday

Contact

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Social Media

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**JANE ADDAMS
HULL-HOUSE
MUSEUM**



Group Tours

Jane Addams, Hull-House Settlement and Chicago Tour

(3rd Grade - Adult, 1 Hour)

Learn about the conditions immigrants faced in the 19th Ward of Chicago, the unique work of the Hull-House residents, the life and work of Jane Addams, and the lasting impact of the Hull-House Settlement.

Vernacular Architecture Tour

(3rd Grade - Adult, 1 Hour)

Explore the historic preservation of the 1850s Hull Mansion and the neighborhood conditions in the Near West Side at the turn of the 20th century in Chicago.

Gender and Sexuality Tour

(High School - Adult, 1 Hour)

Bring Chicago history out of the closet! Join us for a tour of Hull-House and explore early 20th century stories of gender non-conformity, diverse definitions of family, and fierce self-expression.

For more information visit
hullhousemuseum.org/group-tours