

Kokeshi Dolls

Assemble beads and wood shapes to make sculpture that reflects a traditional Japanese art form

(art + history)

Kokeshi dolls are a traditional Japanese folk art that originated in the rural northeastern regions of Japan approximately 200 years ago. Woodworking artists used hand-turned lathes and scrap pieces of wood left over from making furniture and household utensils to create inexpensive toys.

There are two types of Kokeshi:

Traditional dolls have been made in the same style for generations, with round heads and cylindrical bodies that lack arms or legs. Each region in which Kokeshi are created maintains a particular style, using designs and colors unique to their production. Each doll is hand-painted, so no two are exactly alike.

Creative Kokeshi are relatively modern, developing in popularity after World War II. They are the expression of the individual artist who creates them, and the shapes, designs, and techniques used to create them vary widely. Still, most creative Kokeshi are made from turned wood and retain the limbless qualities of the traditional Kokeshi.

Wood-turned shapes and wooden beads can be assembled to make Creative Kokeshi with a modern, Western approach. These small sculptures can be designed with colored pencils, markers, or paint and can represent literature characters, self-portraits, or a reflection a young artist's imagination.

GRADES 2-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Tear sandpaper into small pieces. Examine wood turnings for splinters. Some rough surfaces may need trimming or sanding.



Materials (required)

Creativity Street® Wood Turnings, two 1 lb bags (28978-1001) or one 5 lb bag (28978-1005); share across class

Wooden Bead Assortment, 1 lb bag (60706-1006); share across class

Woodsies® Wood Shapes, assorted package of 220 (60408-1050); share across class

Elmer's® Carpenter's Wood Glue, 4 oz, (23893-1004) share 3-4 across class

Drawing and painting supplies; recommend any of the following:

Blick® Studio Markers, assorted colors (22148-) or

Blick® Studio Brush Markers, assorted colors (24532-)

Blick® Studio Artist's Colored Pencils, assorted colors (22063-)

Blick® Matte Acrylics, assorted colors (00727-)

3M® Production Sand Paper, fine grit, package of 10 sheets (34916-1303); share across class

Optional Materials

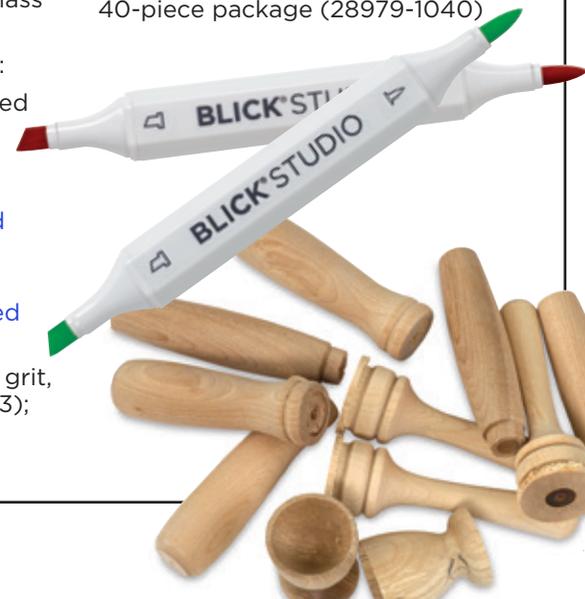
Surebonder® Mini-Trigger Glue Gun, dual temp (23601-0200)

Prang® Decor Multi-Surface Markers, set of 6 (22353-1006)

Sharpie® Ultra-Fine Point Markers, assorted colors (21315-)

Blick® Fixative, Matte (21707-1105) or **Gloss** (21707-1005)

Hygloss® Wooden People Shapes, 40-piece package (28979-1040)



Process

1. Each figure will need a piece of turned wood for the body and a large bead for the head. Join with wood glue or glue gun and allow to set. 2. Features and clothing can be drawn or painted directly onto the unfinished surface of the wood. Varnished bead surfaces may need to be lightly sanded in order to accept pencil.
3. Smaller beads and wood pieces may be used to create details on the dolls. Ribbons, strings, and wire can add accents and camouflage seams where pieces join.
4. Glue a large wooden disk or square shape to the base of each doll so it stands more securely.
5. As an option, use a matte or gloss fixative to protect the doll, especially if it will be handled often.



Step 1: Attach a wooden bead to a turned-wood shape to create a head and body.



Step 2: Add features and clothing with markers, colored pencils, or paint.



Step 3: Embellish with beads, ribbons, string, wire, and other materials.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Presenting

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Responding

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Connecting

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.