





Kelly Akashi, *Be Me (Cultivator)*, 2019. Flameworked borosilicate and stainless steel, 10 x 9 x 4 in (25.4 x 22.9 x 10.2 cm). Courtesy the artist, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York, and François Ghebaly, Los Angeles

Kelly Akashi is an artist (living in Los Angeles, CA) who uses a variety of materials—such as glass, bronze, wax, concrete, water, rope, and marble—to explore her own hands and their impressionable and indexical properties. Drawing from her own body, Akashi often uses bronze to cast her hands in varying gestures—fingers outstretched, gnarled, relaxed, or ensnared and cage-like. She is interested in the impermanence of the human body.

Hand & Nature Impressions

What You'll Need:

- Four Cups All-purpose Flour
- One Cup Salt
- 1 1/2 Cups Warm Water
- Mod Podge (or other clear glaze finish)
- Materials Found in Nature
- Your Oven Set to 250 Degrees F (ask your parents for help)

Optional:

- Paint (tempera or acrylic) & Paintbrush

Instructions:

First, you will need to go outside and collect different elements from the natural world. Items may include pine needles, flowers, rocks, twigs, blades of grass, seeds, or snail shells!

Next, combine the flour, salt, and water with your hands! As you mix, think about the different shapes that your hands can make. Are you using different muscles as you flex, extend, bend, and curl your fingers?

Now, roll out the dough using a rolling pin, bottle, or any smooth object in your kitchen. What shapes can you come up with for your piece?

Once you have a smooth piece of dough to work with, you can make impressions with your hands, fingers, and the natural objects you have collected.

Place your art in the oven for one to two hours (longer if it still seems too soft).

Once your object cools, you can paint it and/or add the natural objects with glue.

You may also seal it with Mod Podge or another clear fixative if you are able.

Set your art down and take some time away from it. Come back to look at it later. Think about the relationships between your handprints/fingerprints and the natural objects you collected.

What does this combination mean to you?

What other combination of materials or collection of objects could be used for this project?