

this is one of a  
series of resources  
looking at different  
vessels in the  
Sainsbury Centre's  
collections

VESSELS

Whistling  
Bird  
Bottle



# SAINSBURY CENTRE

LOOKING

INVESTIGATE:

Maybe use these questions to guide you:



Start by taking a good look at this vessel. Try to think about it before you read the information about it. What do you see?

Take a really good look at a 3D digital model of this vessel on SKETCHFAB. Turn it around, zoom in, look underneath.....

THINKING

<https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/whistling-bottle-as-bird-ecuador-1000-100bc-589fc9e1a8a74d0cabb21d8cd94d0e1c>

What is this vessel?  
What do you think it does?  
What is it made of?  
How is it made?



DISCUSSING

What are you most interested in?  
What else do you need or want to know?

What do you think these object have in common with the bird vessel?



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Perhaps answer these questions or ask your own.

Do this individually, in pairs or groups. Do you agree with other people?

How did you find this?

## IMAGINE:

Maybe use these questions to guide you:

Who was it made for?

In your dreams, what is it made of? Could it be chocolate, or caramel?



What magic do you think could happen when it whistles?

What song does it sing and what is it saying? Imagine a whole orchestra of these bottles!



What is the bird sitting on? Imagine it is sitting on its eggs. Can you picture the chicks that will hatch?

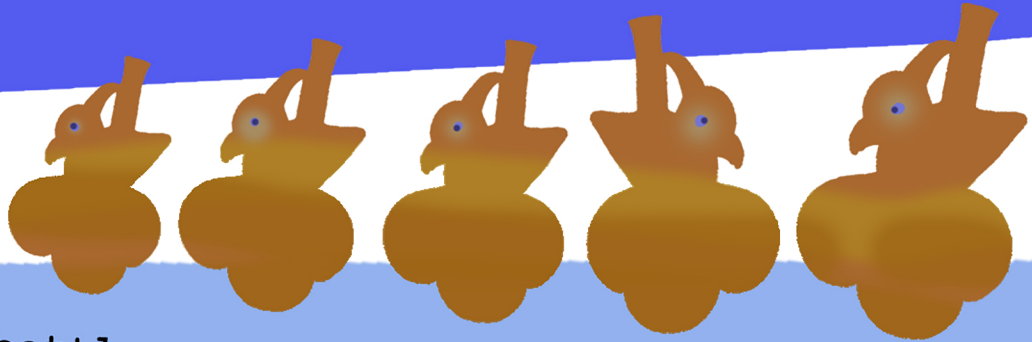


Where does this bird family live? What do they do all day?

Can you write a little story?

DRAW or WRITE down your ideas. Are these similar or different to other peoples?

Each object in the gallery has a label with some Facts and Figures. They highlight what we know, and what we do not know.



**Whistling bottle as a bird on eggs or pods** - this is the Title or Description of the object.

**Ecuador, Manabi province** - The Production Place is where the object was made, in as much detail as possible.

**1000 - 100 BC** - this is the date the object was made.

**Earthenware** - the Material the object was made from, perhaps suggesting how it was made too.

**UEA 850** - all of the objects in the Sainsbury Centre's collections are given an **Accession Number**.

The Accession Number allows us to keep records about all the objects, and helps you to find out more about them online:

<https://www.sainsburycentre.ac.uk/art-and-objects/>

There are several animal-form whistling bottles in the Collection



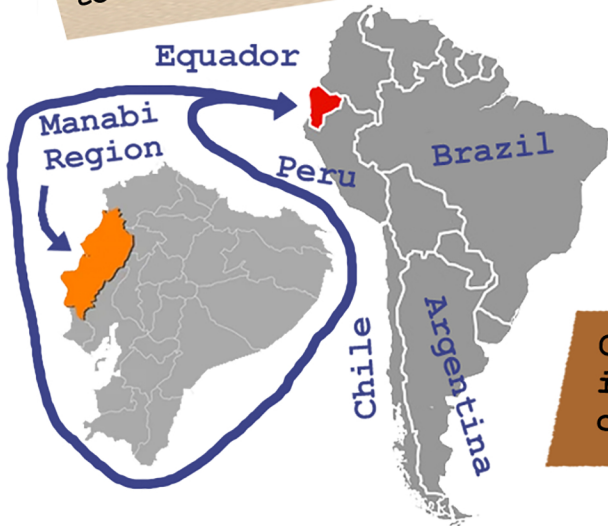
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Each of the objects in this resource have their number near them

# SAINSBURY CENTRE

## ILLUMINATE:

The Facts and Figures may have some of the answers, but there is so much more to know, to think about, and to understand.



This vessel comes from Ecuador in South America, from the Manabi province on the coast. Ecuador is on the equator.

The bottle was made from clay over 2000 years ago, at a time when the Chorrera culture flourished.

Chorrera artists are among the most inventive and technically accomplished ceramicists in the world.

This vessel's walls are only 3-4mm thick. The surface has been burnished to make it glossy, and covered in buff-orange slip. The Bird Bottle may also have a faded red glaze, applied to the clay before it was fired to decorate or protect the surface.



Some Chorrera ceramics are decorated by covering parts of the surface with wax then blackening the uncovered areas with soot from a fire. The wax melts, to show the brighter pigment underneath.

The bird, with its hooked beak, could be a macaw or parrot. These birds featured in lots of Chorrera art. There are over 40 different species of parrot living in Ecuador today.



There are several other pieces of Chorrera pottery in the Sainsbury Collection.

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What other connections can you make between the Bird Bottle and other objects in the Sainsbury Collection?

Can you find them in the galleries?

# SAINSBURY CENTRE

FIND OUT MORE:

Here are a few suggestions for further exploration:

Sainsbury Centre online catalogue:

<https://www.sainsburycentre.ac.uk/art-and-objects/850-whistling-bottle-as-a-bird-on-eggs-or-pods/>



3 Volume Catalogue  
Hooper, S. and Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts (1997)  
Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection.  
New Haven: Yale University Press in association with UEA.  
Volume III, pp.96-97



The Geography of Ecuador

<http://motherearthtravel.com/ecuador/geography.htm>

The Enigma of Whistling Water Jars

<http://peru.inka.free.fr/Runapacha/THE%20ENIGMA%20OF%20WHISTLING%20WATER%20JARS.pdf>

Re-animating a whistling bottle...

<https://garlandmag.com/article/cantarino-whistling-bottles-andes/>

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Object Photos:  
Pete Huggins

Words that may be new to you:  
Slip - coloured clay and water mixed so that it can be painted on.  
Burnished - clay that has been rubbed very smooth before firing  
Firing - baking the clay in a very hot 'oven' to make it hard  
Kiln - the name for the hot oven that clay is fired in

# SAINSBURY CENTRE

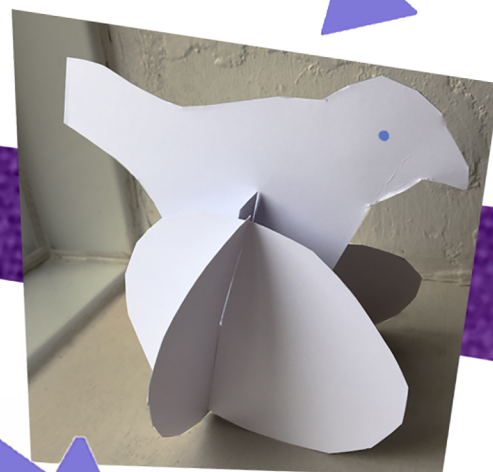
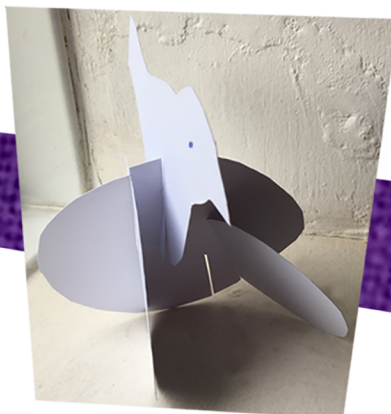
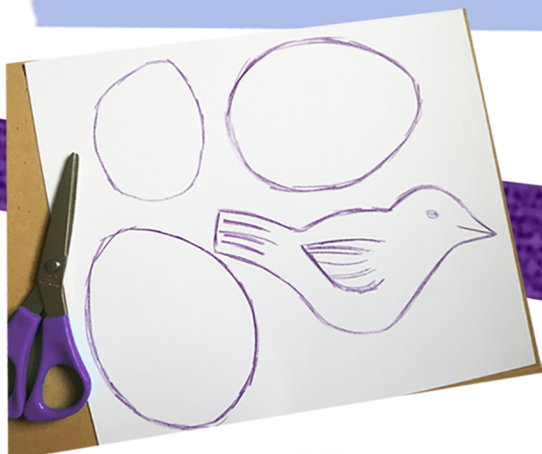
## ACTIVITIES:

### DRAW

Can you look closely at the vessel and commit it to memory? Then look away and draw what you remember. How close did you get?

Can you draw a bird - this one or one from your imagination? Use card. Cut it out, then draw the eggs on other pieces of card.

How can you join them together and build a 3-dimensional sculpture from these parts? Does it want painting? Or could you rub earth over it?



### CREATE

Try making a nest on the ground from blankets or cushions.

Blow up balloons for eggs. (A small pebble in each, before you blow it up, will give weight)

Can you fit in the nest and be the parent bird?

Or can you make a simple parent bird to sit with the eggs from some other fabric or blankets?

Maybe twist your bird into shape, holding its shape with wool or string.

## ACTIVITIES:

## FORM

Clay comes from the ground.  
Have a look at the  
earth in your garden  
or any outside space.

What colour is the earth?  
Can you find a few different  
colours?  
Is any of it clay-ey enough  
to make something from?

You can collect clay  
from the ground  
in some parts  
of Norfolk.

You know it's clay if you  
grip some really tightly in  
your fist and then when you  
open it again, it stays in  
the shape your hand made.



Make some eggs from clay.

Make them as smooth and rounded as you can.  
You may want to use wet hands once you have  
your shape, to smooth.  
Don't use too much water though!

Once they have dried a little, you could  
burnish them with the back of a metal spoon,  
rubbing it all over until it has a deep shine.





# SAINSBURY CENTRE

## SCULPT:

## ACTIVITIES:



Could you make a bird from a crunched up bag or newspaper, all taped together?

Blow up 3 smallish round balloons, tie or tape them together at the top and tape the bird on top.



Use plaster bandage to cover all over your sculpture.



When it has gone hard, give it some colour. You can paint it or use shoe polish.