



Chinese, FIGURE OF A HORSE (Tomb Figurine), 950 – 1250 AD, Glazed terra cotta,  
Gift from the Estate of Fred Gavin Gordon

# CLAY HORSE

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ART AT HOME

This standing horse figure can be found in the **Mary and Charles Rodning Gallery of Asian Art** at the Museum and has been determined by a procedure called **'thermoluminescence'** to be over 1,000 years old! Created by an unknown artist during the **Tang Dynasty** (618 - 906 CE) in China, these types of figures were tomb figurines, that is, they were intended to be buried with a wealthy individual and to provide the deceased with needed services: in this case, transportation in the afterlife. The Tang Dynasty in China is regarded as the Golden Age of Chinese civilization; it was an era of progress, prosperity and social stability. This is only one of many horse figurines created during this time.

This Tang horse is made from terra cotta, a type of clay, and the color comes from a sancai glaze, meaning 'three colors', usually amber, green and cream. Can you see how shiny the surface of the figure is? This type of glaze has maintained its shine for hundreds of years!

**You can make a similar figurine at home; let's get started!**

# SUPPLIES

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- **AIR DRY CLAY, MODELING CLAY, OR PLAY-DOH**
- **WOODEN SKEWER OR SHARP PENCIL**
- **WATER**
- **NEWSPAPER OR OTHER TABLE COVER**



# DIRECTIONS

ART AT HOME

Break off a piece of clay in whatever size you want and form it into a ball. We began with a piece about the size of a tennis ball.

Roll the clay on the covered table until it forms a cylinder. It should still be very thick, with the length about twice the width.

Choose one end to be the head and bend that end up at an angle. Make sure to give yourself plenty of clay for the head, about 1/3 of the clay.

Next, bend the top of the head back in the other direction so that it is going forward. It should look like a very rough horse without legs at this point.

Flip the horse onto its back in your hand and with your other hand start to pinch four legs. This will take a lot of pinching before they look long enough to be legs. **Tip: Don't make any of your legs thinner than a pencil, unless you are making a very small horse. They need to be thick enough to hold the weight of the body.**



# DIRECTIONS

ART AT HOME

Pinch at the back of the horse to create a tail. You can make it as long or short as you want. Don't make it too thin or it may break.

Pinch along the top of the horse's head and down the back of the neck to create a mane. You can leave it standing up or fold it over, depending on how you want your horse to look.

Pinch ears on either side of the mane.

Use your skewer (or pencil) to draw eyes, a nose, and mouth on your horse. You can add details to the mane and tail if you want it to look like hair.

Sign your work and let it dry! After it's dry you can paint it.

**Have fun!**

