Fujioka Shuhei was born in Matsuyama, Japan, in 1947. He learned about art from a master potter named Mitsuo Tanimoto. In the 1970s, Fujioka’s artistic growth flourished when he discovered Iga-ware pottery. In this type of ceramics, the artist uses a pottery wheel and a specialized spatula to curve local clay into interesting shapes. Sometimes the artist presses grasses, flowers and other natural materials into the clay to form patterns. After this, the clay is baked in a kiln for up to three days. A kiln is like a very hot oven. Its heat hardens clay into pottery. Does this work remind you of something? What do the shapes and patterns in the clay look like to you?

Because of the high temperature in the kiln, clay turns reddish-brown on its surface. In a kiln heated by burning wood, pottery ends up with a transparent green glaze. These colors layer together and form beautiful washes of blended colors. Check out the contrast between the pale green of the glaze and the warmer reddish-brown surface of the clay in this sculpture. How do the colors make the piece interesting?

For this activity you will need:

- paper plates
- markers
- scissors
- water
- a popsicle stick
- tape

To make your paper plate mask:

1. Use markers to draw large areas of color on a paper plate. Don’t cover the entire plate. Leave a few white areas.

2. Dip your finger in a cup of water and then drip or rub water onto the plate. What happens when you add water to the areas you colored with markers? Repeat this process and create swirls and layers of different colors.

3. Once the colors have blended, let the plate dry. What shapes and patterns have appeared on the plate? Can you find shapes that remind you of a face?

4. Decide where you want the face of your mask to go, and outline it on the plate using a marker. Cut it out and make holes for eyes. This is your mask!

5. Flip the mask over and tape a popsicle stick to the back so you can hold it over your face.