

Art Activity

Create your own Paper Pellet Drum

Take & Make: Create your own Paper Drum

Ages: 8+

Collection: East Asian art

Culture/Region: China

Subject Area: Fine Arts, Visual Arts

Activity Type: Hands-On Activity



Create your own drum inspired by traditional Chinese Pellet Drums (Bo lang Gu)

What is a Bolang Gu?

The Bo Lang Gu (拨浪鼓) is a traditional Chinese instrument that is known in English as a pellet drum. It is used in performances and ceremonial events, and is also a popular children's toy. Pellet drums have two heads and a wooden rod attached at the bottom. Two pellets are connected to cords on each side. When you hold the rod and start twisting it back and forth, the pellets strike the drum to create sound.

Materials:

- 1 popsicle stick
- 2 paper plates
- Glue stick
- Ribbon or yarn
- Stapler or tape
- Paint (can use markers or crayons instead)
- 2 Jingle bells or beads
- **Optional:** glitter

Creating your own Pellet Drum

1. Using a pencil or pen, write a Chinese character on the front/back of the paper plates. On our ChinaFest event page, watch the William & Mary Confucius Institute video as they demonstrate how to write Chinese characters 永 (forever), 福 (blessing), and 春 (Spring). In our samples below, we will write the character for good fortune (福).



2. Use crayons, markers, or paint to design and color the plates (allow the paint time to dry before proceeding to the next step.)



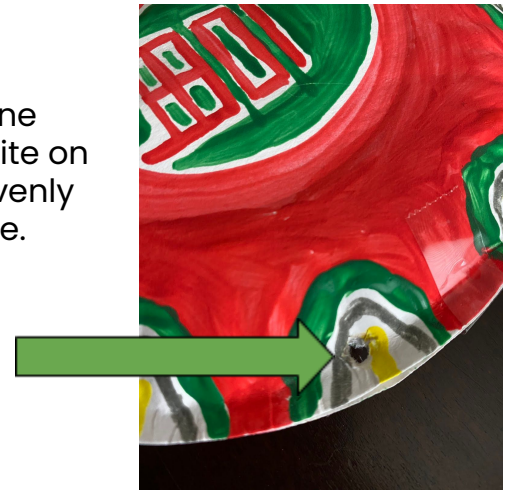
3. Use a piece of tape to secure a popsicle stick to the inside of one of the paper plates at the bottom of the plate, below the character.



4. Tape or staple the two plates together so that the decorated sides of the plates face outward; the popsicle stick will serve as a handle.



- Carefully use scissors or a pencil to cut/poke two holes; one through the plates on the left side and one directly opposite on the right side. You want to make sure these are spaced evenly for the ribbon or yarn to strike the plates in the same place.



- Cut two, 4-inch strips of ribbon or yarn (the yarn should be half of the diameter of the plate). After cutting your ribbon or yarn pieces, tie a jingle bell to one end of each piece of ribbon or yarn. Tie the other end of the ribbon or yarn through each hole made on the plates.



- Using the handle, twist the drum back and forth to make the bells/beads touch the outside of the plates!



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Magu Offering a Longevity Peach, 1889

Pan Jicheng, active 1880s - 1920s

Chinese, Qing dynasty

Album leaf; ink and color on satin

East Asian Art, VMFA

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Bell (Niu Zhong), 6th century BC

Chinese, Eastern Zhou dynasty

Bronze

East Asian Art, VMFA

57.45.10

Info: Music was an integral part of ritual ceremonies and royal banquets during the Zhou dynasty. Bells with hangers were used as percussion instruments in the 6th century. This bell was either played as a solo instrument or as one of a set of bells cast in different sizes to create a complete musical scale. During the performance, the bell would be suspended on a wooden rack. A player would use one or two wooden mallets to strike the bells, producing solemn yet beautiful music.