

### The Della Robbia Collection at the Williamson Art Gallery

The Williamson Art Gallery is proud to be home to the largest public collection of Della Robbia pottery in the UK. Founded in 1894 in Birkenhead by Harold Rathbone, the ceramics factory was inspired by the principles of the Arts & Crafts movement. Rathbone moved in the circle of Pre-Raphaelite artists that surrounded William Morris and followed his ideas. He also appreciated Italian art and, having seen colourful and decorative pottery adorning churches and other buildings in Italy, wanted to bring the same spirit to Britain.

The workshop was led by Conrad Dressler and Giovanni Carlo Manzoni, and trained local young people as labourers. The workshop produced brightly coloured architectural and decorative designs, with their colours and materials inspired by Italian designs of the 15th and 16th centuries. Its work was sold by stores including Liberty and William Morris' own company. Although the studio itself was short-lived, closing in 1906, there has always been a considerable interest in the works it produced.

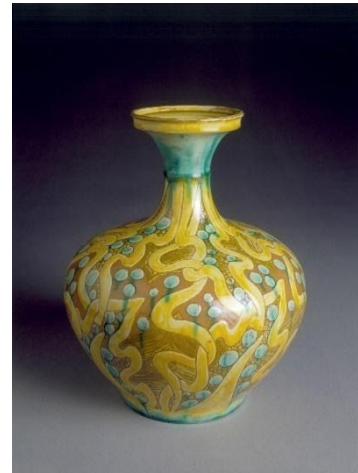
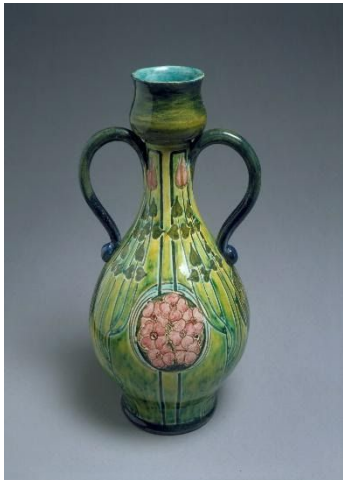


Take a close look in this cabinet. Can you find examples of the following items?

***A candlestick, vases with dragon handles, clock cases, giant 2 handled vases, and a sun plate.***

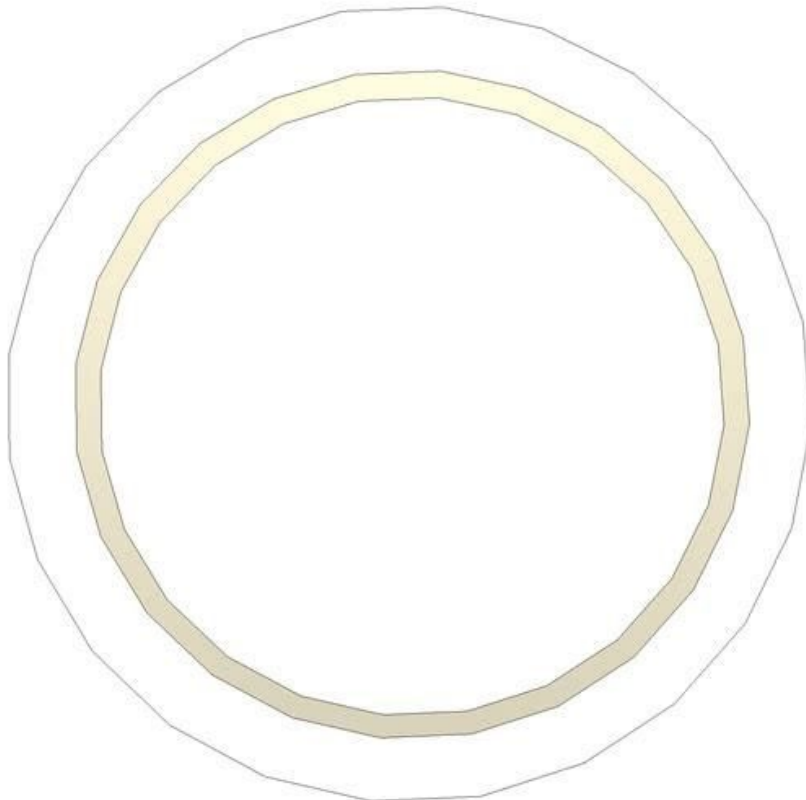
Della Robbia made pottery between **1894 and 1906**. *How many years is this?*

Have a look at the selected pieces below and see if you can work out what characteristics make up the pottery of Della Robbia. Look at the shape, colour and use of the object to help you.



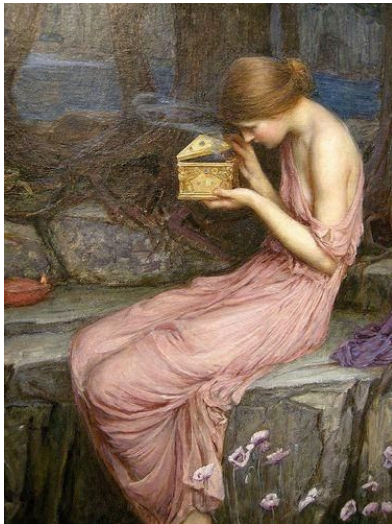


**Task one:** Lots of the images depicted on the Della Robbia pottery are inspired by nature. Have a go at completing one of your own plates inspired by this sun and daffodil plate. Think carefully about what flowers and colours you wish to use.



**Task two:** Pandora had been told not to open the box, but she could not resist. This myth has inspired lots of artwork by different artists.

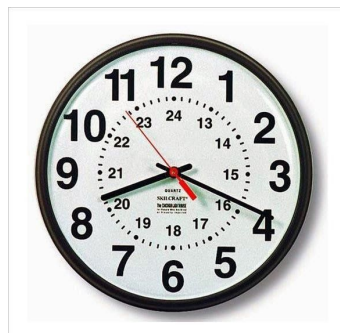
Take inspiration from the beautiful Della Robbia panel and other paintings. Use the space on the next page to draw or paint what you think is coming out of Pandora's box. Let your imagination flow.



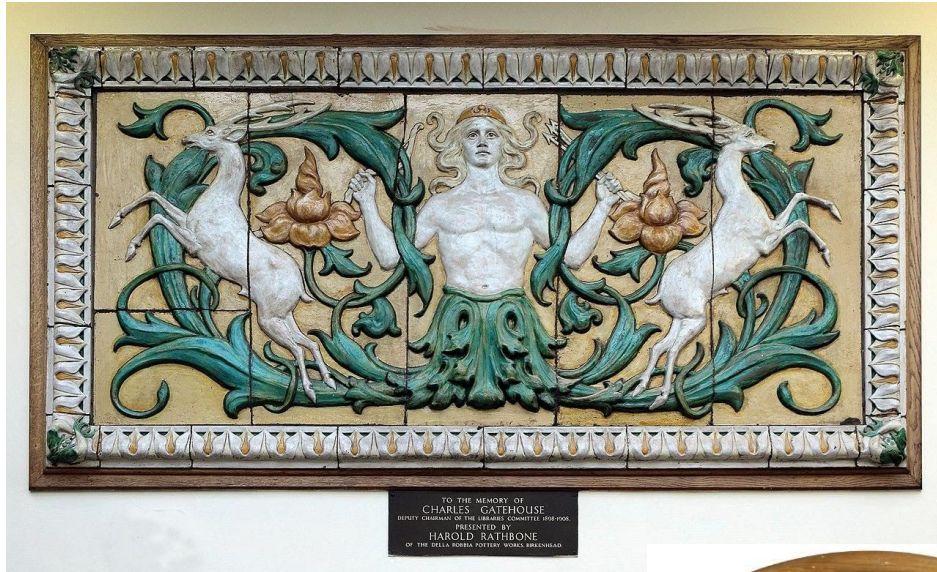




**Task three:** One of the centre pieces of the collection at the Williamson Art Gallery is this clock case. Take inspiration from the Della Robbia case and the other selected ceramic clock cases to design your own. Look closely at the colour palette of the Della Robbia Potters and use these within your design.



**Task four:** The Della Robbia potters were very good at making wall plaques. This example can be found in Birkenhead Library and is made of 5 panels. Take a look at the other panels and then have a go at designing your own.



**Task five:** Now that you have explored the Della Robbia collection have a go at designing your own pottery. Remember to think about nature and natural forms and think about the colours used by the potters. Remember to have fun with your design.

