Gope boards were created by many different tribes in Papua New Guinea, part of a large island in the Pacific Ocean north of Australia. Carved from old canoes or paddles, these boards hang in the men’s ceremonial houses. Do you see the faces in each of the boards? These abstract faces were meant to represent the clan spirits, known as immunu. Each Gope board also has a navel or belly button that the spirit could travel through to live inside the board.
Instructions:

1. Give the students a golf ball sized ball of clay.
2. Have them roll the clay out on the paper plate to about the thickness of their pointer finger. We have some rolling pins or they can use their hands.
3. Using the tool’s pointy end, cut out a surfboard shape. If the edges are jagged, they can dip their finger in the water to smooth the clay back out. DON’T USE A LOT OF WATER or you will get mud.
4. Design time. You can walk them through recreating one of the Gope Boards that the Fred Jones Jr. Museum has, or you can do something else.
5. Have the students choose 1 COLOR of paint. These things are small and a lot of paint will drown out the design. Lightly paint the boards. Dry brushing as a good method to use as well.
GOPE BOARDS - Papua New Guinea