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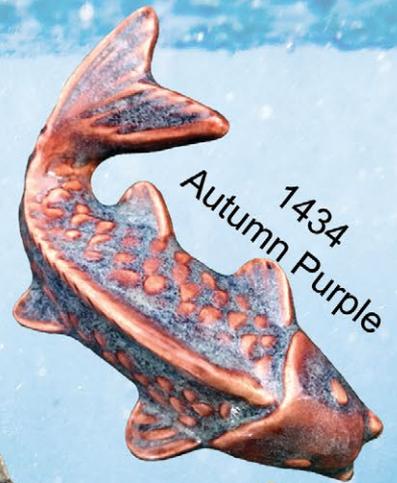
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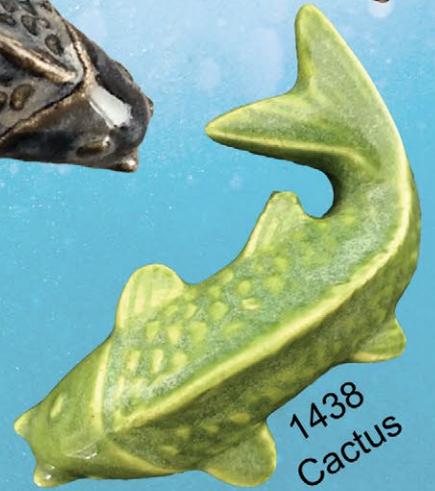
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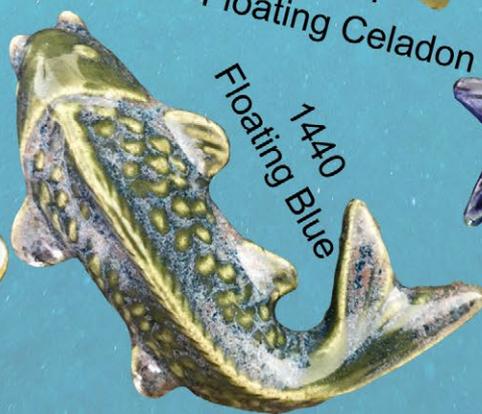
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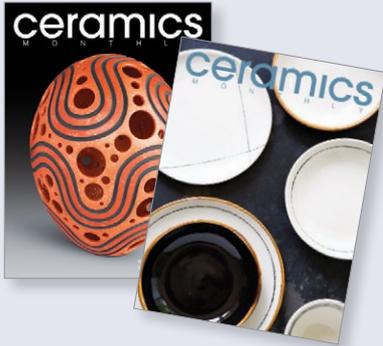
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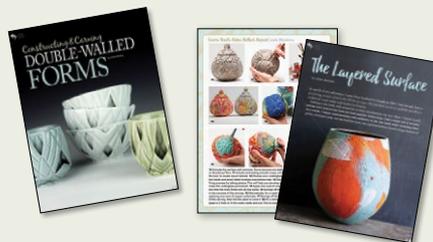
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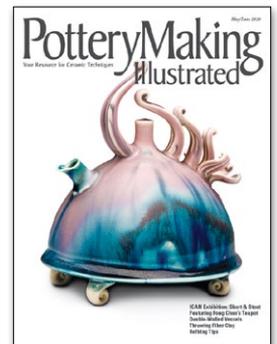
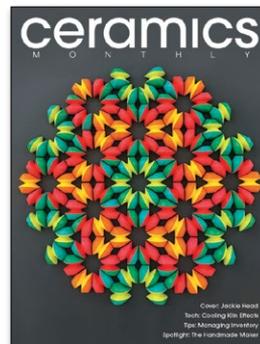
by Melissa Weiss
 Use thick coils to build a large bucket form, then refine it with a scraped surface and thoughtful handles.

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Welcome to your workshop! Whether you're attending in person or online, we've pulled together the best of *Pottery Making Illustrated* and *Ceramics Monthly* for you to enjoy in the studio including projects on throwing, handbuilding, surface design, and glazing.

If you're familiar with *Pottery Making Illustrated* and *Ceramics Monthly*, then you already know these two publications are packed with practical information, helpful studio tips, and step-by-step techniques. The articles shared here provide a sampling of some of the great content in each issue.

You'll also find a wealth of information on the magazines' websites: www.ceramicsmonthly.org and www.potterymaking.org. Guests can access their choice of articles for free on a limited monthly basis. For more tips and techniques, check out hundreds of free posts and scores of how-to videos on the Ceramic Arts Network (<https://ceramicartsnetwork.org>). Enjoy your workshop!



Jessica Knapp
 Jessica Knapp
 Editor, *Ceramics Monthly*

Holly Goring
 Holly Goring
 Editor, *Pottery Making Illustrated*

Cover (Clockwise from top left): Melissa Weiss adding a thick coil to a handbuilt bucket; Melissa Mytty applying dots of luster to a glazed tumbler; Joyce St. Clair Voltz creating a textural sprig to add to a vessel; Arthur Halvorsen's slab plate with layered newsprint transfers; Andrea Denniston trailing glaze onto a tulipiere; Don Clark cutting slots in a soft-brick test-tile rack.

UNIFYING Form, Texture, and Surface

by Joyce St. Clair Voltz

The evolution of my sprigged jars illustrates that form, surface, and texture have been very meaningful to my artistic development and research. While exploring robust femininity in porcelain and how celebratory utilitarian forms relate to those ideas, the jar form has really stood out for me. A jar can have beautiful anthropomorphic qualities, an alluring potential for volume and containment, and a wonderful blend of utilitarian and sculptural elements. As I work, my goal is to find a place where form, texture, and surface all play an important role in expressing my ideas. It's important for texture and surface to work to build the form as opposed to simply laying upon it. These relationships constantly challenge and excite me as I look for new balances between strength, beauty, and celebration.

Constructing the Parts

The body of the jar starts as a cylinder made from an 8–9 pound ball of clay. The form is proportioned like a bottom-heavy hour-glass, with the collar located 2 inches below the rim (1). I leave the walls thick so that the form remains strong while I stamp the clay when it's still fairly wet. The rim is left about ½ inch thick so that I can press stamps and waves into it.

I throw a hollow bulb as an armature to support the sprigs on the lid knob (2). The armature size depends on the size of the jar body, since I want the final height of the sprigged knob to be

about $\frac{2}{3}$ the height of the body. The armature keeps the sprigs from shifting or slumping. The walls of the armature should be fairly thin to avoid adding too much extra weight. The lid needs to be heavy enough to support the weight of the sprigs.

Since the jar gallery and lid are thrown separately, I measure the inside of the jar body, ½ inch below the rim, then throw the gallery to match that diameter (3). The gallery will be attached after I have stamped the jar body. I've found that stamping all the way up to the rim of the body isn't possible if the gallery is built





in because it prevents applying pressure to the inside of the body to successfully manipulate the rim.

The lid is also thrown off the hump (4). I want the lid to sit high on the form and for the dome of the lid to be fully visible.

Stamped Decoration

After constructing all of the parts, I move to the decoration. My stamps are a collection of found and purchased items; objects that have lyrical lines, deep texture, and are abstracted florals and vines are some of my favorites (5). I love the floridity of Rococo-era porcelain and am interested in items that spark visual similarities.

I stamp the outside of the jar when the clay is just dry enough to no longer be tacky (my fingers don't leave a mark on the surface) but is soft enough that the clay bends but doesn't crack. It's very close to the consistency of clay fresh out of the bag. I place one hand on the inside of the form to support the wall of the jar and press a stamp into it (6).

I pick a large stamp to start with, improvising the flow of the designs, and alternating stamps that have minimal texture with ones that have more detail. I want the movement of the stamps to accentuate the belly of the jar and flow vertically and horizontally, making a continuous pattern around the jar (7).

Fitting the Gallery and Lid

The next step is to attach the gallery to the jar. The stamping process alters the rim out of round. Place the jar on a banding wheel and score a level line around the inside of the rim, then alter the shape of the gallery to conform to it. While attaching the gallery, pay close attention to keeping the rim level (8).

When fitting the lid, the edge sometimes needs small adjustments, like trimming or shaving small areas to accommodate the slight bends in the stamped jar body. After attaching the armature, marking keys on the lid and the body at this stage makes it clear how to align the lid.

Use a loop tool to blend the base of the armature into the lid. This will make the transition between the sprigs and the lid smoother (9).

Adding Sprigs

Sprigs can be made from basically any shallow carving or texture that you can press clay into. These textured relief shapes are then added to the form. Sprigs can be small or large, and can have as much or as little detail as you would like. All of my sprigs are bisque molds made from the stamps in my collection. The bisque-fired clay is strong, while also retaining absorbency so it releases the clay that is pressed into it.

After pressing a piece of clay into the sprig mold and carefully pulling it out (10), trim around each shape carefully, trying to maintain the molded edges and remove any negative space to create more layering and visual information to play with (11).

I begin building with sprigs by laying a high-texture base of sprigs where the armature meets the lid and adding some support sprigs to the top and sides of the armature (12). I add to the base layer, paying attention to the connection points and flow of the sprigs. I work from the bottom up, and let the pieces firm up before adding more weight to them (13). I then build up the volume of the sprigged knob at the top, focusing on a balance of negative space and texture (14).

At this point, I take a paintbrush with a little water and clean up any small cracks or splits on or between sprigs (15).

Lastly, I place a few sprigs on opposite sides of the jar body to form handles and provide a visual connection point between the impressed stamps and the sprigs (16).

The finished sprigged jar is coated with bright, flowing glazes that melt down from the top of the knob. The playful colors flux in the kiln and flow over and pool in the various shapes and textures created by the sprigs, further tying the surface to the form and joyfully finishing the vessel.

Joyce St. Clair Voltz is an artist and educator in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where she lives with her husband, Lars Voltz. Voltz received her MFA in ceramics from Wichita State University in 2014 and has since completed long-term residencies at the Red Lodge Clay Center and the Iowa Ceramics Center and Glass Studio.

Continued on page 6.

Unifying Form, Texture, and Surface by Joyce St. Clair Voltz



1 Leave the rim about ½ inch thick, so that stamps can be pressed into it.



2 Throw the hollow armature for the sprigged lid off the hump.



3 Throw the gallery before the lid. The gallery will be attached later.



4 Throw the lid form off the hump. Throw it upside down as a shallow bowl.



5 My stamps are a collection of found and purchased items with deep texture.



6 Begin to stamp the jar when the clay is just dry enough to no longer be tacky.



7 Use a large stamp to create movement and a continuous pattern around the jar.



8 Score, slip, then attach the gallery to the inside of the jar.



9 Use a loop tool to blend the base of the armature to the lid.



10 Form various sized sprigs for use around the jar and on the lid armature.



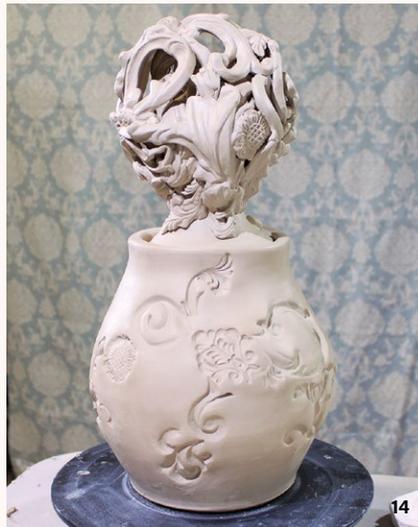
11 Trim the sprigs carefully, maintaining the edges and cut out any negative space.



12 Sprig the lid by first laying a high-texture base where the armature meets the lid.



13 Work from the bottom up, building on the base layer, considering connections.



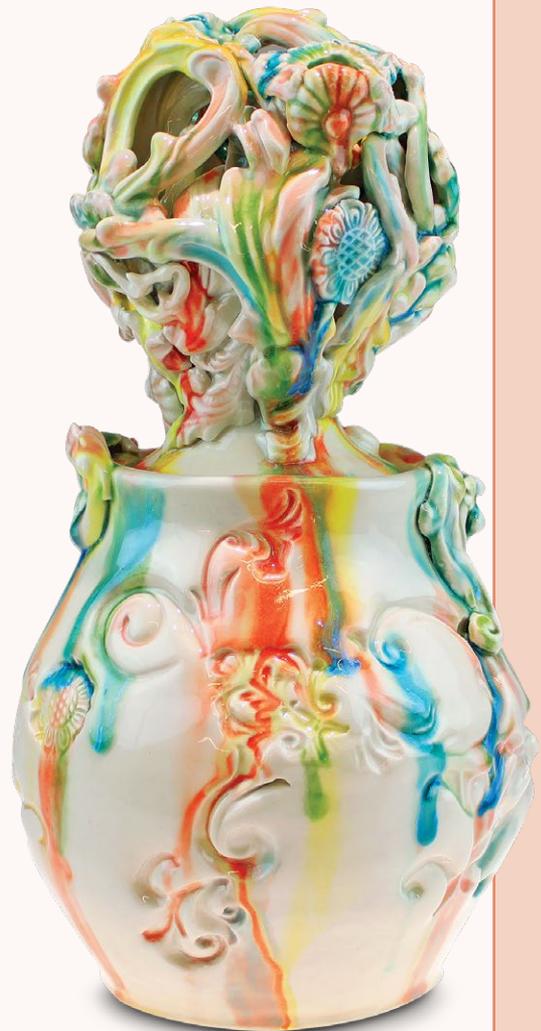
14 Build up the volume of the sprigged knob at the top, focusing on balance.



15 Use a wet paint brush to clean up any small cracks or splits in the sprigs.



16 Place a few sprigs on opposite sides of the jar body to form handles.



Standing Test Tiles

by Don Clark

Test tiles provide essential information for fired ceramic pieces, but can be a hassle to keep organized in and out of the kiln. This pair of DIY tile stands addresses numerous problems.

I do a lot of glaze testing and needed to find solutions to the problems of moving and handling large quantities of test tiles through the different stages of glazing and firing. This starts with deciding the test tile that best suits your needs: small pots, thrown rings cut into sections, shards, or reject pots. Each type has its benefits and disadvantages from making to storage, and I have tried them all.

Finding a Solution

The approach to test tiles that works best for me originated with Ron Roy. I studied with him in Toronto, Canada, in the late 1970s, and I believe that Ron still teaches this method in his glaze workshops. Ron uses flat test tiles and fires them in soft firebricks with parallel slots cut into them. The tiles stand vertically in the slots, allowing each brick to efficiently hold multiple tiles. This is a DIY equivalent of a tile crank.

These sitters can be made from new bricks, salvaged bricks, and broken pieces of bricks to create a range of sizes. Using a set square and a pencil, mark the slots, then paint the areas to be removed with iron oxide (see 1, 2). A standard 4×9-inch soft brick can fit 4 long slots measuring $\frac{3}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide (cut lengthwise) or 8–9 shorter slots measuring $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (cut across the width). I have an old saw dedicated for cutting brick, as the refractory material will ruin the teeth of a saw over time. Make the cuts for each slot

approximately 1 inch deep (2). Then with a flat-head screwdriver and a hammer, gently tap the cut section until it pops out (3). I level and smooth the base of the groove with a file. Test with one of the tiles to ensure there will be a good fit. **Caution:** Always wear a dust mask and work in a well-ventilated area when carving and sanding soft firebrick.

The size of the test tiles used depends on your personal preference. I make my test tiles $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide by 4 inches tall and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick, as well as 4 inches wide by 4 inches tall by $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick (measured in the raw state). A full firebrick can hold up to 18 of the $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-wide tiles. Make no mistake, a small tile of this size will reveal a lot of information about a glaze. When I find something interesting, I continue testing on the larger tiles.

Load the glazed test tiles onto the tile sitters and then place the bricks around ware in the kiln or have entire shelves of test tiles placed in sitters. Care must be taken at this stage, as the bricks will leave debris if moved along a kiln shelf. Firebrick, once fired, becomes brittle and will leave refractory crumbs behind. I use a small, handheld vacuum to tidy up around the bricks once I have placed them in the kiln.

There are several advantages to this method of firing test tiles. When a glaze test gets overfired and runs, it runs onto the brick and not the shelf. The test tiles are easily separated from the bricks



1 Tools for making the soft-brick stands: combination square, pencil, old saw, hammer, flat-head screwdriver, and file.
2 Mark the sections with iron oxide, then cut with a saw. Be sure to wear a dust mask when sawing or filing the brick.
3 Gently tap out the cut sections with a flat-head screwdriver and hammer.
4 Assemble the wooden stands with wood glue and nails.



5



6

5 Glazed tiles in the soft-brick sitters awaiting the glaze firing. 6 Fired glazed test tiles transferred to wooden stands for examination of results.

post firing, generally with little damage to the bricks. This method also solved the problem of firing a large volume of tiles at one time.

Handling the Tiles

Glazing, moving, and storing the tiles on the racks resulted in refractory brick debris on work surfaces, which wasn't desirable in my small studio where I have my throwing and glazing areas.

I devised a simple solution to replace the use of firebricks in my glazing area. Using some pine shelving, I cut, glued, and nailed nominal 3/4x3/4-inch pieces of the pine to 1x10-inch pine boards (4). The spacing between the added strips of wood is determined by fitting a bisque tile (about 3/8 inch), thus allowing an adequate space for the tiles. I place the freshly glazed tiles on these tile racks prior to firing. This is also a convenient way to store the tiles until the next firing. As my gas kiln is in the back garden of my house,

I now have a safe and efficient way of carrying the tiles to the kiln. A 15-inch long board can hold as many as 60 of the 1 1/2-inch test tiles. Once at the kiln, I transfer the tiles to the fire-brick sitters (5) and place them in the kiln.

Post firing, back in my workshop, I use the wooden racks to hold the fired tiles while I examine and record the results (6). This flat tile format stores easily. The glaze-fired tiles can be kept on the wooden racks for reference, or they can be removed and easily stored in a shoebox. (I can fit 200 or more tiles into an old shoebox).

Don Clark is a potter working in cone-10 reduction-fired porcelain. He apprenticed for both Ron Roy and Kayo O'Young in Toronto in the 1970s, and currently lives and works in Millbrook, Ontario, Canada. To learn more, find Don on Instagram @drclark42 or contact him at drclark42@gmail.com.

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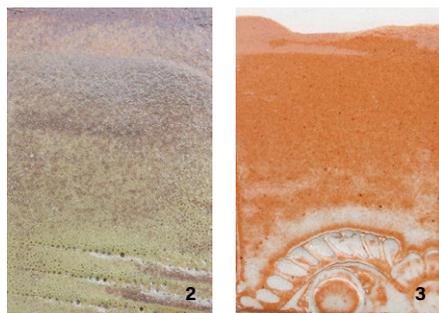


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Archive Glaze Tests

by Alisa Liskin Clausen

Alisa Liskin Clausen tested a handful of glazes from our extensive archive with names that promised interesting textures and results. Here's what she found when the tests were unloaded from the kiln.



1 Left: Stony Earth Glaze with 2% red iron oxide, right: Stony Earth Glaze with 5% red iron oxide.
2 Stony Earth Glaze base. **3** Eggshell Glaze. **4** Left: Nancy's Pink Icing glaze on light stoneware; right: Nancy's Pink Icing glaze on darker stoneware.
5 Left: John Britt's Beads glaze on light stoneware; right: John Britt's Beads glaze on light stoneware over a mixture of 75% red clay and 25% JM frit 169 (can substitute with Ferro frit 3134).

STONY EARTH GLAZE (1, 2)

Cone 6–8 Oxidation

Whiting	10 %
Feldspar (Forshammer)	40
Local Earth (Oldenwalder Red)	50
	<u>100 %</u>

Add: Red Iron Oxide 1–5%

Specific gravity: 1.43. Stony Earth Glaze has an earthy brown and green color, with simple ingredients. No extra red iron oxide was added for the base test. Additions of red iron oxide from 2% and up resulted in an overall dark brown gloss. My tests with red iron oxide added in increments from 1–5% made the glaze darker, and finally a dull brown gloss with 5%.

Forshammer feldspar is a combined soda and potash feldspar. In the US, test with Custer feldspar, Minspar 200 feldspar, and a 50/50 mix of Custer feldspar and Minspar 200 feldspar.

Original recipe shared by Patrick Fleming in the April 1980 issue of *Ceramics Monthly*.

NANCY'S PINK ICING GLAZE (4)

Cone 6 Oxidation

Barium Carbonate	1.98 %
Gerstley Borate	6.46
Lithium Carbonate	11.26
Magnesium Carbonate	2.82
Whiting	12.39
Nepheline Syenite	23.61
Silica	<u>41.48</u>
	100.00 %

Add: Tin Oxide 3.05 %
 Dark Rutile 3.55 %

Specific gravity: 1.40. Of these recipes, Nancy's Pink Icing was the most difficult to get a good test. I tested it on white and brown stoneware with noticeable color response differences. The surface is a pleasing silk matte and is completely opaque. Extreme accuracy is required when mixing to result in a strong pink.

Original recipe shared by Harold McWhinnie in the January 1982 issue of *Ceramics Monthly*.

EGGSHELL GLAZE (3)

Cone 6 Oxidation

Whiting	9.5 %
Ferro Frit 3124 (sub. JM Frit 169)	44.5
Custer Feldspar (sub. Forshammer)	20.0
EPK Kaolin	5.0
Silica	<u>8.0</u>
	100.0 %

Add: Tin Oxide 9.0 %
 Red Iron Oxide 3.0 %
 Bentonite 7.5 %

Specific gravity: 1.40. Eggshell glaze has a strong breaking white effect against a glossy rust background. I substituted Forshammer feldspar for Custer Feldspar due to availability, and used JM frit 169 in place of Ferro frit 3124 in this glaze. These frits are not similar. JM frit 169 has no alumina and includes barium.

Original recipe shared by Central Carolina Community College in the October 2004 issue of *Ceramics Monthly*.

JOHN BRITT'S BEADS (5)

Cone 6 Oxidation

Light Magnesium Carbonate	20 %
Zinc Oxide	2
Nepheline Syenite	75
Ball Clay	<u>3</u>
	100 %

Specific gravity: 1.60 (but can range from 1.25 to 1.60). I applied this glaze by brushing on two coats. Like any other crawling glaze, this needs to be applied thickly. When drying, the glaze should crack, but not lift.

John's Beads melts better at cone 6 for raised, smooth, round islands or beads, rather than rough-edged beads. This difference in texture is due to the additional flux from zinc, a strong flux at cone 6.

This recipe was sourced from John Britt's blog: http://johnbrittpottery.blogspot.com/2015/10/beads_23.html.

Want to test more textural glaze recipes? Looking for recipes at different temperature ranges or with different surfaces? Visit ceramicrecipes.org.



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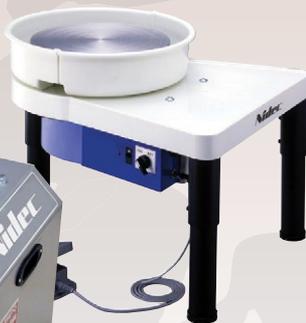


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Dots Galore

by Melissa Mytty

I build pots to function as a canvas for my glazing. I pinch and coil my pots because this process is organic, slow, and methodical. Pinching leaves evidence of touch in the clay, providing a subtle texture to interact with the glazes. The glaze is brushed onto the pots so the surfaces take on a painterly quality. This is by no means a quick process, but rather a labor of love.

I approach my glazing process with a focused interest in depth of surface; I think of the surface in layers, similar to encaustic. I see the surfaces as a Color Field painting converged with Ben-Day dots commonly found in Pop Art. The vessels are layered with commercially available underglazes, glazes, and lusters. I'm interested in the combinations of these materials and their resulting emotive qualities. In some areas, there are four or five layers of glaze, concealing underlying colors in places and revealing them in others. I strive to make beautiful, colorful, and happy artwork to function well and bring joy to everyday objects.

All glazing takes place after bisque firing the pieces to cone 05 for durability purposes. I think of the clay body as the first layer in the painting, like a gesso-covered canvas. The second layer is the underglaze, which I tape off and paint with various colors depending on the particular composition. Next, I move on to glazing a pattern, followed by a cone 6 firing. The composition is finished



with overglaze metallics such as gold, white gold, and sometimes additional lusters. Lusters are fired to a much lower temperature, typically cone 018.

Dots Galore Pattern

For the *Dots Galore* pattern, start with a block of orange or blue underglaze, typically at the bottom of the piece. Apply a base glaze to the rest of the piece. Then meticulously add a red-dot glaze pattern in rows, starting from the top of the piece (1). This layer is the most important because it establishes the groundwork for all



Carefully apply the first layer of glaze dots over the fully glazed exterior.



Add a second dot over each base dot, leaving a red ring around the white dot.



Add a third, smaller dot to the center of each white dot, again leaving a ring.



Once the pot has been fired, apply gold luster to the center of each dot with a small brush.



For the *Funky* pattern, brush on the background color for the design overtop a pencil sketch.



Add a white glaze otop of the green glaze, leaving the green slightly visible.



Brush on the top coat of the design with various colors in stripe or dot designs.



A fired Funky pattern cup with luster added followed by a third firing.

the other dots that will be layered on top. This first layer of glazed dots is also the most time consuming. After all the red base dots have been applied, go over each red dot with a white glaze, leaving a ring of the red around the outside (2). This red ring pops once the piece is fired. The white glaze allows the top dot color to be visible when the pot is finished. If you put the final color directly on the red without the white barrier, the red eats up the pigment and the colors are very muted.

After the white layer has been applied, the real fun begins because the design comes to life when the final colored dots are applied. Add the dots in rows or random patterns with purples, greens, and yellows, according to your preference (3).

For the dot application, the choice of brush is very important and the amount of glaze on the brush is critical. Use a brush that's slightly rounded, but not totally round. The dots cannot be rushed because it takes a second for the glaze to come off the brush and for the right dot shape to form on the surface before you can move on to the next dot. Use the same brush for the red layer of dots and the white layer of dots and simply adjust the pressure applied to the brush, lessening the pressure for the white dot so it's smaller. Switch to a smaller brush for the final glaze color. The luster brush that's used for the final gold luster dots is the smallest brush used in this technique (4).

While glazing, you can use a heat gun to quickly dry areas so that the glaze doesn't accidentally smudge. If you accidentally smudge an area, dry it with the heat gun and use an X-Acto knife to scrape any smudges off the pot.

Funky Pattern Glazing

When glazing the *Funky* pattern, start by blocking off a chunk of the pot with underglaze, similar to the *Dots Galore* pattern. Then add the base glaze to the rest of the exterior. At this point, you can be much freer in this style and the remaining glaze work. Before adding glaze to this base, sketch out the design with a regular no. 2 pencil, which will burn out in the kiln. For the *Funky* pattern, I draw on elements reminiscent of flowers, butterflies, polka dots, and graffiti. By sketching first with the pencil, you can be sure that the elements all make compositional sense. The main difference between this *Funky* pattern and the *Dots Galore* pattern is that the design dictates where the second and third layers go; they do not overlap the whole design.

Use a thicker brush to lay down the pattern of your glaze design (5). Then use a variety of brushes in varying thicknesses to

complete the remaining designs on top (6). Add polka-dot and line patterns to create interesting designs. The more glaze added, the more the pattern moves in the kiln (7). Don't add so much that it runs and gets blurry, but rather just enough that the glaze flows a bit in the kiln and the colors blend together. This pattern is much looser and more intuitive than the regularity of the dots.

I love the look of the pots before they go into the kiln. The layers of glaze are just waiting to get hot and blend together to create a lush, fun, and colorful pattern (8). While these techniques are time consuming—the more time invested, the more fun it is to open the kiln. Happy glazing!

Melissa Mytty is currently working as a studio artist in Collegetown, Pennsylvania, where she and her husband are raising their two young daughters. She earned her MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Follow her on Instagram @melissamytty and at melissamyttyshop.com or melissamytty.com.



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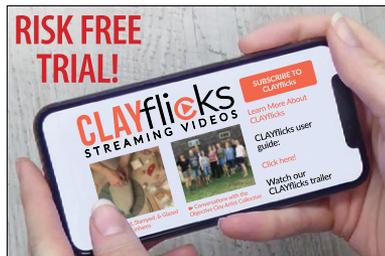
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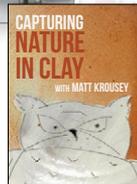
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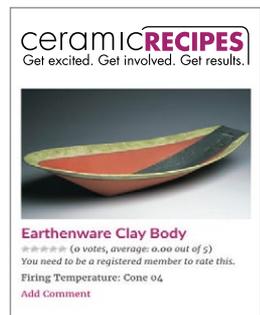
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Guest Potter Tips

by Lisa York

Approach group firings at a host's kiln with a maximizing mindset: bring pots and pieces that intentionally fit a variety of spaces—in areas of the kiln and on each shelf—in order to fit more of your pots in the kiln.

I have been wood firing pottery for the last 10 years. I was first introduced to wood firing as a student at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, and can attribute most of my wood-firing knowledge to my apprenticeship with Kevin Crowe at Tye River Pottery in Amherst, Virginia. I have helped build and/or fire wood kilns in Guatemala, China, Hungary, Nicaragua, and the US.

Since moving to the Midwest in 2017, I have become a nomadic potter. First I moved to Illinois and now my studio is in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I became a guest crew member at a variety of wood-kiln firings, which has allowed me to fire my pottery while waiting for the opportunity to build my own kiln. Typically, I drive two to three hours away to kilns in Wisconsin and Illinois. As I have gained more experience being a nomadic potter, I have learned the best kinds of pottery to create for these group wood firings. In turn, I have increased the odds of my work fitting into the kiln.

The most important lesson to learn as a guest potter is the need to maintain an open line of communication with the host of the wood firing. I always ask how much work I should bring, usually in terms of cubic feet or number of kiln shelves to fill. In addition, I ask if the host would like me to make any particular sizes of work. For instance, someone who owns an anagama kiln may be behind in making larger pieces, and I could have the opportunity to fire a larger pot. My goal is never to be pushy about getting my work into the kiln and to remain flexible.

By bringing a range of work, I am prepared to have pots loaded in any section of the kiln as they vary both in surface treatment and scale. Some of the pieces are partially glazed for drier parts of the kiln, and others only have slip decoration for ash-heavy parts

of the kiln. I bring four basic types of clay objects that can easily be incorporated into a kiln load.

Type 1: Tiny Objects

I literally mean tiny, as in 1–3 inches wide and tall. This would include objects such as buttons, shot glasses, little dishes, jewelry, etc. There is always room on every kiln shelf where these tiny objects can be tucked around other pieces of pottery or sculptures.

Type 2: Tall and Thin Objects

Have you ever heard the mantra “tall and thin always gets in?” Keep in mind that tall and thin could range from a thin 4-inch-tall bud vase to a 20-inch-tall skinny vase, depending on the design of the kiln being filled. Usually my skinny pitchers, bottles, tumblers, and vases are between 6–12 inches tall. These heights fit under standard-height posts. In addition, lately I have been firing the most in a train kiln, which does not have a very tall arch to fill with taller ceramics.

Type 3: Complementary Shapes

Making objects in pairs with complimentary shapes can maximize how much work will fit on a kiln shelf. If I have a piece with a wider top, I will make another piece with a wider bottom to fit next to it. Keep in mind these pairs could be different forms such as a mug and a jar or creamers and bowls.

Type 4: Specialty Kiln Fillers

This kind of kiln filler is determined by the design of the wood kiln being fired. Here are a couple of examples.



1



2



3

1 Serving bowls, fired to cone 10. These bowls were objects used to fill the archway, and were fired rim to rim, separated by wadding. 2 Vase, fired to cone 10. This vase was fired on its side with three big wads placed underneath it. 3 Mug with flashing-slip pattern, fired to cone 10.

Example 1: Pottery designed to be fired near the side-stoke aisles. My favorite pieces to put here are sturdy vases or bottles to be fired on their side. Pots with the following features should not be placed by a side-stoke aisle: handles, spouts, open forms, and narrow feet. These pieces are more susceptible to breaking and being knocked into another piece of pottery if hit by a piece of wood when side stoking.

Example 2: I make taller, non-open forms to help fill the arch of the kiln. I do not want open forms by the arch as kiln crud frequently falls from the arch down onto the pottery, especially in older kilns. This is a great place for larger jars, pitchers, taller vessels, and bowls that are wadded rim to rim.

Note: I bring pots that are already bisque fired, and have all the surface slip and glaze work complete. I decorate the pots at my home studio because the pattern work is time consuming and I would not want to slow down the process of the kiln loading, or worse yet, not have pots loaded evenly throughout the kiln because they were not ready. Secondly, decorating work at home means the temperature is comfortable and I have all my normal tools ready to use. I rarely have problems with chipped slip or glaze because I carefully wrap each individual pot with plastic or bubble wrap, then place them in totes to transport to the kiln. Usually, the host of a firing has a specific mix of wadding they want everyone to use for their kiln, so I wad my pots at the kiln site.

Being a nomadic potter is a great opportunity to learn what kiln design and firing schedules are the best fit for your work and lifestyle. It is also an opportunity to observe effective leadership styles to fire a kiln successfully with a crew of people.

Typically, guest firing is not a great opportunity to fire a lot of your own personal work. My goal is to build a propane-fired soda kiln that I can add wood into. I am looking forward to the freedom that will bring to firing more of my artwork, and to be able to make all the decisions about how the kiln is loaded and fired. I am hoping to continue participating in group wood firings at least a couple times a year even after I have my own kiln as I enjoy the wood-fire community.

Lisa York creates pottery for special occasions and daily use that has surface patterns inspired by travel and time spent outdoors. Her studio is located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. To learn more, visit www.lisayorkarts.com.



4



5



6

4 Buttons, shot glasses, and little dishes (tiny objects) with glaze or slip patterns, fired to cone 10. 5 Mug and garlic jar (shapes that complement each other) with glaze patterns, fired to cone 10. 6 Bottle, pitcher, and tumbler (tall and thin objects) with glaze or slip patterns, fired to cone 10. 1-6 All pieces fired in Amy Song's train kiln.

exploring the TULIPIERE

by Andrea Denniston



Over the past five years, I have steadily explored using cutouts on the necks of my vases as a way to create more complex forms and expand their function. My early vases with cutouts have turned into what I now call a tulip vase, and the form has gradually grown taller and sleeker. The more I make these pots and live with them, the more I realize that my vases may not actually need flowers to be complete. My hope is that they will brighten any space in the home, regardless of whether or not they are displaying flowers.

Initially the cutouts were a design choice that provided little windows through the neck of the vase. After some research on Delft tulipieres and flower bricks, the cutouts quickly became functional elements of the vase as I made them larger to accommodate individual flower stems.

Making pots on a daily basis often has me considering the relationship they have to the food, drink, or flowers they are intended to contain and display.

Throwing

Begin with two balls of cone-6 Grolleg porcelain. The first ball is usually 4–5 pounds, and the second is 1–2 pounds. The larger ball of clay becomes the base and belly of the vase and the smaller ball becomes the neck of the vase. The neck section is thrown a little thicker, with the lip beveled in the opposite direction of the lip on the base section to aid in joining them later. I throw them in a series, but keep the neck section covered loosely with plastic until the base has dried enough to not deform when the two pieces are joined together. When the base is ready, score both the lip of the base and the bottom of the neck and apply a small amount of water where the two pieces will be attached together (1). After joining the two pieces together, I continue throwing the neck and combine it with the base seamlessly. This creates a continuous curve on the final vase shape (2). Throwing the vases in two pieces also reduces almost all need to trim the finished form, minimizing clay waste and allowing me to create taller, lighter pieces. If I'm in a hurry and don't have time to wait for the base to stiffen up, using a heat gun speeds up the drying process, allowing me to attach the neck to the base almost immediately.

Cutouts

After the combined vase form has reached an even dryness (roughly leather hard), it's time to begin placing the cutouts around the neck. Each cutout is intended to display one tulip stem. The tallest vases typically have three rows of cutouts. Divide each vase into equal sections vertically and mark these lines lightly with a pencil (3). Any scalloping of the foot or lip is done next (4). Once the piece is divided into equal segments and the scalloping is complete, cut paper templates unique to each vase that fit within each segment (5). The templates act as a guide for the finished cutouts. I always begin the cutouts at the top and work my way down (6). After the cutouts have been made, roll tapered coils of clay and attach them to the exterior wall of the vase around the cutout to reinforce the opening (7). This addition of the coil not only adds to the visual depth of the piece, but also provides structural support for the neck of the vase. **Caution:** In the past I have taken the cutouts too far, and without any added support from coils, warping became an issue with some vase necks. The cleanup needed for the cutouts—smoothing the joins and rounding the cut edges—is the second most time-consuming part of this process (8), the first being the inlay and glaze work.

Decorating

The next step is the inlay decoration. I typically work on the tulip vases in batches of three, each with a different surface pattern that matches other tableware I'm working on. Using a variety of patterns keeps me engaged in the process as each piece is a new canvas to explore. Despite the variations in pattern, I maintain cohesion through color across my entire body of work. The decoration begins on the belly of each vase, followed by a complementary pattern added at the top of the neck and on the foot. Next, I find a way to link the neck and the belly with some line work around the cutouts. Because the size and shape varies from vase to vase, I'm able to experiment with pattern sizes, spacing, and composition on each one. I carve the patterns into the leather-hard clay with a small scalpel blade (9), then brush on a black underglaze over all of the lines (10) and let it dry until it's no longer tacky (generally a little past leather hard). I use a yellow sponge to remove the excess underglaze (11). This process requires having a clean sponge at all times to avoid smearing the underglaze everywhere, so have a bucket of clean water nearby to constantly rinse the sponge. The next step is for the vases to dry slowly and then bisque fire them to cone 08 in an electric kiln.

Glazing

I use plastic squeeze bottles with needle tips to apply colored glazes inside the carved underglaze lines. At this point, the process is similar to a paint-by-number image or a coloring book (12). I mix my trailing glaze thicker than my dipping glaze to avoid dripping and running glaze as I

trail it on the rounded surface of the vases. I complete my glazing process with a full dip in a clear glaze. The colored glazes I use have the same base recipe as the clear glaze, but they are mixed with small quantities of oxides, carbonates, and Mason stains. I fire all of my pieces to cone 7 in an electric kiln. During the firing process, the glazes melt into each other and begin to flow down the sides of each vase.

For now, the tulip vase is my most technically challenging piece and the knowledge and skills I've gathered while making them over the past five years has allowed for new solutions and new problems to solve as I move forward. One of the great things about being a studio potter is the ability to make both large and small changes to forms, colors, and surface design pretty quickly. The ability to experiment and try something new each day is a privilege that I attempt to honor by keeping a close attention to detail and quality, and pushing myself to always create well-crafted pots for the home.

Andrea Denniston is a potter in Floyd, Virginia, where she shares a studio with her husband, Seth Guzovsky of Poor Farm Pottery. She completed her MFA in ceramics at Syracuse University. She worked for studio potter Silvie Granatelli prior to graduate school and she is now a member of the 16 Hands Studio Tour. To learn more, visit andreadenniston.com.

Continued on page 20.



Exploring the Tulipiere by Andrea Denniston



1 After throwing the two parts of the vase and allowing them to firm up, attach the neck to the belly of the vase.



2 Throw the neck and belly together to create a seamless finished vase shape.



3 Divide the vase into equal sections using an MKM Decorating Disk and a dull pencil.



4 Scallop the lip of the vase using a sharp knife and following the graphite pencil marks.



5 Use paper templates and lay out the location for the cutouts within the pencil-drawn grid.



6 Cut out the spaces for flowers in the neck using a sharp knife and following the graphite pencil marks.



Roll tapered coils and attach them to the exterior wall of the vase around the cutouts to reinforce each opening.



Clean up and smooth the cutouts and newly attached coils with a clean, damp sponge.



Carve into the leather-hard clay with a scalpel blade. Experiment with patterns, spacing, and composition on each section.



Apply thin, watered-down underglaze to the carved lines with a wide brush and allow to dry until it's no longer tacky.



Clean off the excess underglaze with a damp sponge. Be sure to rinse and wring out the sponge between cleanings.



Apply colored glazes to individual sections of the pattern using a glaze-trailing bottle.

Fab Lab Sponges

by Paul Wisotzky

Use graphic-design software, a laser cutter/engraver, and a polyurethane sponge to produce incredibly precise and intricate sponge stamps to apply glazes, slips, and wax resist.

I've been using sponge stamps as a surface decorating tool for many years. I've created them using a razor knife to cut the sponge or a soldering iron to melt away the negative space to create the design. While these methods work, the resulting stamps don't create the crisp lines, shapes, and graphic patterns I've been striving for, nor can multiple stamps with the exact same design be reproduced. The process I've developed using a laser cutter produces the best results by far, yielding incredibly precise and intricate sponge stamps to apply glaze, slips, and wax resist.

An Introduction to Digital Fabrication

I was introduced to the laser cutter and other digital fabrication tools at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Deer Isle, Maine, in their fab lab. Fab labs are small-scale digital fabrication facilities, and Haystack is the only craft school that is part of a network of more than 1700 fab labs around the globe (www.fabfoundation.org). This year I was awarded an open studio residency at Haystack where I developed the process of creating sponge stamps using a laser cutter. The process is involved, sometimes challenging, and not for everyone, but it is one example of how to integrate digital technology and fabrication into your current, conventional making practices.

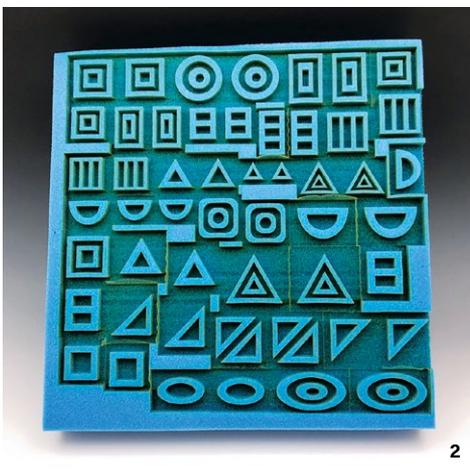
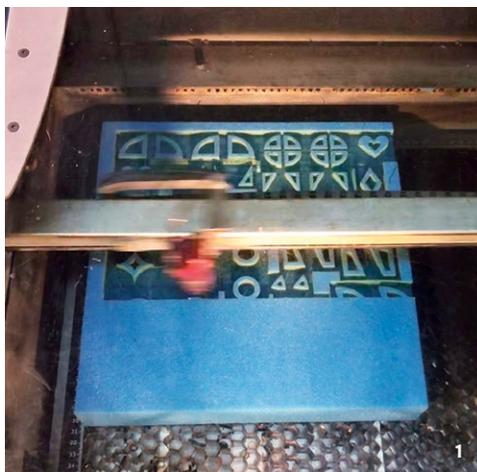
First, you need the facilities and equipment for the task. While polyurethane sponge is approved for use in most laser cutters, regardless of approach, you will need to account for the gases and fumes produced when cutting the material. Machines must be

properly ventilated. Home and hobbyist laser cutters and engravers are starting to become more widely available, but they are not inexpensive. Always check with the manufacturer to make sure polyurethane sponge or foam is an approved material for the machine and that it can be properly ventilated. Laser cutters are also appearing in many community-based maker spaces and educational institutions. These spaces often limit the kinds of materials you can use, so check first to see if polyurethane sponge is allowed to be used. There are also companies that provide laser cutting and engraving services. You provide your design and material, and they do the cutting. Be specific with them about what you want to do, the material you will use, and the exact results you are looking for before you engage their services.

Creating the Designs

You'll design your stamps on a computer or tablet in a graphic design program such as Adobe Illustrator or Corel Draw. Just like a word-processing program where you can edit, draft, cut, paste, and copy easily, the design software also gives you these abilities. You can experiment with shapes and patterns, preview them, and explore combining them within the design program before you begin to cut the stamps. This method also allows for you to scale up or down easily and produce multiple stamps with the same exact design.

Most likely you will produce many stamps on one piece of material. The stamps that I've found work best are no more than 2 inches wide or tall, so I group many designs in one file. Create a canvas in



1 The laser cutter in action cutting a 12×12-inch block of sponge. Prior to cutting you will determine the best power and speed of the laser. Always test and determine settings for each machine before cutting. **2** Laser-cut block of Aquazone sponge. This block of sponge will be cut apart into 51 individual stamps. **3** Cut out the individual stamps using an electric serrated kitchen knife.

the software that is the same size as the material and create at least a ¼-inch border on the canvas to contain the design.

Choose a polyurethane sponge that has very fine pores and is at least 1½ inch thick. The yellow, brick-shaped sponges that most of us use in our studios work fairly well. The material I have found that works even better is an industrial sponge called Aquazone (I purchase mine from www.mcmaster.com), which is used to make sponge mops. Make sure the cutting bed of the machine can accommodate whatever size material you choose.

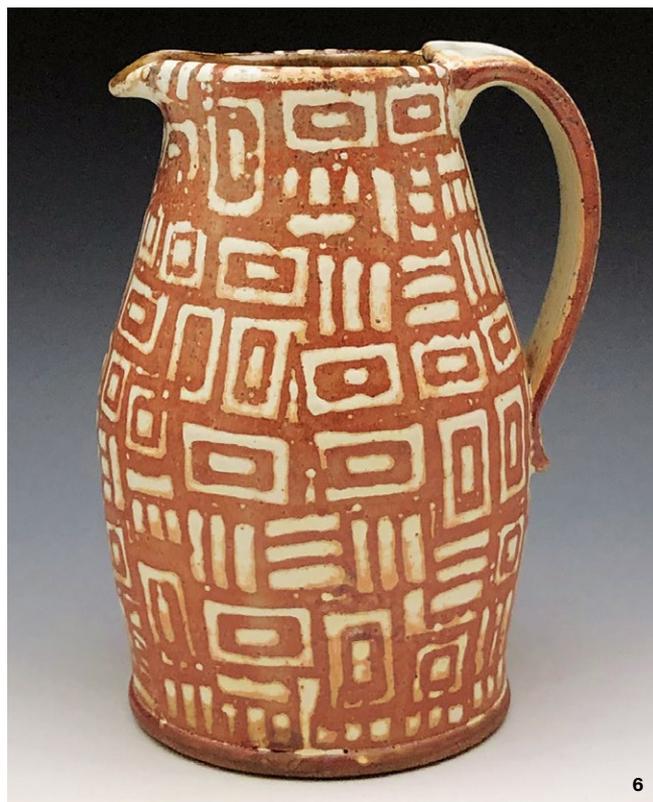
Laser cutters/engravers perform two basic functions—vector cutting and raster engraving. To produce the stamps, use the raster engraving function. This cuts away material, leaving the raised portion of the stamp. You will want to cut out between ¼–⅜ inch of material and keep the thickness of the raised portion of your stamp to ¼–½ inch. In your design, designate a color for the raster engraving areas and a color for the areas that will remain uncut.

Whether you run the machine yourself or have someone else do it, laser power and speed settings will need to be determined for each machine and material. Have an extra piece of sponge that you can do a couple of test runs on to determine the correct settings before you make your final cuts. A 12×12-inch square of sponge will take approximately 20–25 minutes to cut, depending on the intricacy of the design and the number of individual stamps. Never leave the machine unattended while cutting. When finished, cut apart each individual stamp using an electric knife.

When using your sponges with wax resist, wash out the sponge with warm water and a dot of dishwashing liquid until the water runs clear as soon as possible after use. This will remove the wax resist from the sponge as long as you rinse thoroughly. Do not let the wax set up in the sponge. This practice will greatly extend the life of the sponge.

Paul Wisotzky is a studio potter and teacher based in Truro, Massachusetts. He makes pots at his studio Blueberry Lane Pottery for everyday use out of porcelain and stoneware. He fires in reduction and soda atmospheres. Paul has been an open studio resident at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts and a winter resident at Penland School of Crafts. To learn more, visit www.blueberrylanepottery.com.

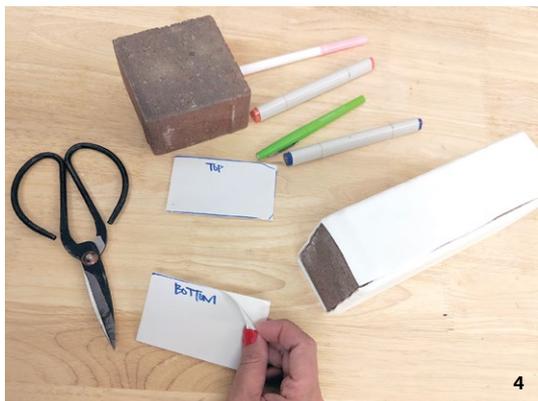
4 Examples of stamps cut on yellow brick sponge, which are available in most hardware stores. Each sponge yields multiple stamps. **5** Examples of individual stamps made from both the blue Aquazone sponge as well as readily available yellow brick sponges. **6** Pitcher, 11 in. (28 cm) in height, stoneware, layered glaze pattern created with multiple sponge stamps, fired to cone 10 in reduction.



Soft Bricks

by Catie Miller

Skip the plate stand—adhesive craft foam and a brick are all you need to create a stable and subtle support for photographing plates and platters.



I have a major pet peeve when it comes to photographing plates or platters. There is nothing more distracting than seeing a plate stand, whether it is clear acrylic or more decorative.

Many artists have used bricks to prop up plates and photograph them. Bricks are great because they come in all different sizes and are heavy so they don't tip over when holding up a plate. The one major issue is that they are rough and can scratch up your backdrop.

Luckily there is a simple solution. Cover your bricks in adhesive-backed craft foam. Craft foam is available from most craft supply stores. This is an easy 5-minute project that costs only \$1.10!

Supplies

- Bricks (I used landscaping pavers from my local hardware store, \$0.50 each)
- Sticky-back foam sheets (I used 2mm-thick, 9×12-inch Foamies brand from my local craft store, \$0.60 each)
- Scissors
- Writing utensil

Process

Start by tracing your brick on the paper backing of the craft foam (1). The paper backing covers the adhesive and will be removed later. If you have a large piece of craft foam, you can trace and rotate your brick to create a continuous sheet (2). Once you've traced all the sides and the top and bottom, cut out the foam pieces. Peel off the paper backing (3), and adhere the craft foam to the brick (4).

Now you're ready to use the padded bricks. Place the brick behind your plate as a prop to give your photos a plate-stand-free image (5). The squishy foam will save your backdrop from scratches and grip your plate. Cover multiple bricks in different sizes to stack and ensure you always have the right size for the right plate.

Additional tip: Use white or black craft foam to cover bricks to avoid any unwanted color from the foam being reflected onto your backdrop and shadow.

Catie Miller is a studio potter living and working in Fargo, North Dakota. She continues to work within the art community, teach workshops throughout the Midwest, embrace motherhood, and relax with her family and small dog. To see more of her work, visit www.catiemillerceramics.com and follow her on Instagram @catiemillerceramics.



1 Lay your brick on the paper backing of the craft foam and trace it. 2 Trace all sides of the brick. 3 Peel off the paper from the adhesive craft foam. 4 Adhere the craft foam to the brick. 5 Place a craft-foam-covered brick behind plates and platters to create a plate-stand-free image when photographing.

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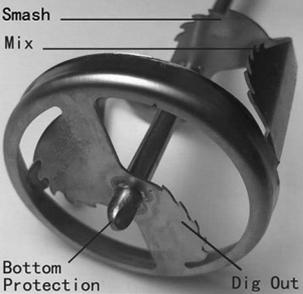
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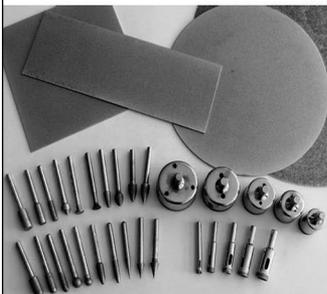
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Applying Newsprint Transfers

by Arthur Halvorsen

After painted newsprint underglaze transfers have dried for at least 24 hours, they can be cut up and used as stickers (1). This way, I can pull from a library of pre-made images to use at the ready in a spontaneous manner. First, I select which transfers I am going to use and arrange them in a composition (2), knowing that whatever images I have chosen are going to print backwards. Then, I put the transfers off to the side so I can start creating the clay form.

Next, I roll out a slab of clay between about ¼ and ½ inch thick and large enough to hold the whole composition (3). Prepare the slab with the use of various serrated and smooth metal ribs. I choose which sticker would be the most captivating in the foreground. This is the one that I put down first, and then add other stickers that will appear to be in back of the ones placed before it. I then paint white slip onto the side of the newsprint with the dried underglaze on it (4). (I like my slip to be the consistency of thick frosting.) When the slip loses its sheen, I lift the sticker from the table and place it on the slab.

Once the sticker is on the slab, I rub the back of the newsprint with a rib to remove air bubbles and get as much contact as possible between the slip and the clay (5). The background imagery is placed next (6).

Before peeling off the stickers, I trim the slab to its finished shape, flip the slab over and add a coil for the foot, then flip it back over and press the plate into the shape defined by the coil foot. I also use the paper as a resist and apply the underglaze I want to use for the background (7). After the underglaze has lost its sheen, the paper is removed.

With the very fine tip of a knife, I begin to lift the paper until I'm able to grasp it and peel it up. Try to peel as close to the slab as possible, so that if the underglaze is not adhered, it hopefully rolls off the paper and onto the clay (8).

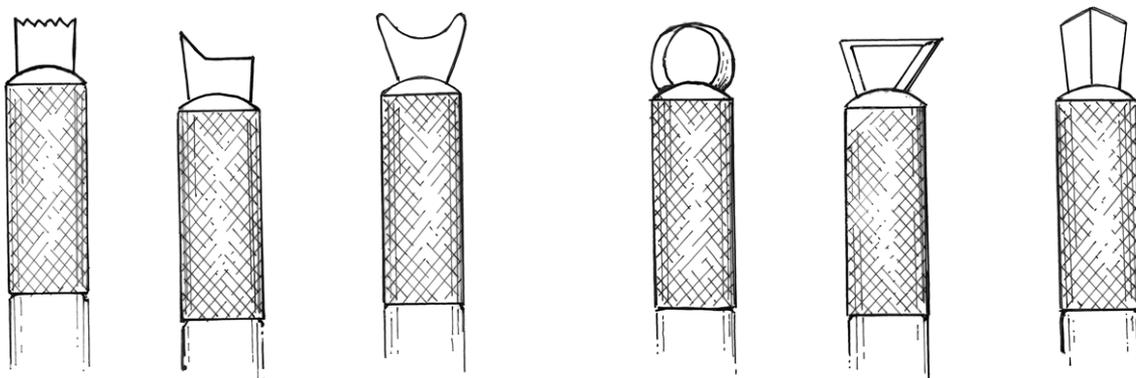
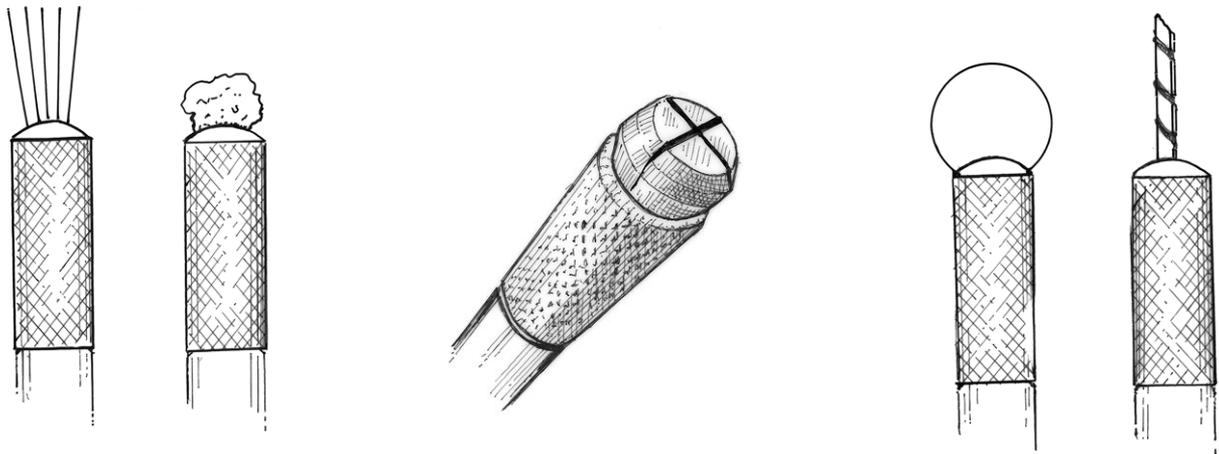
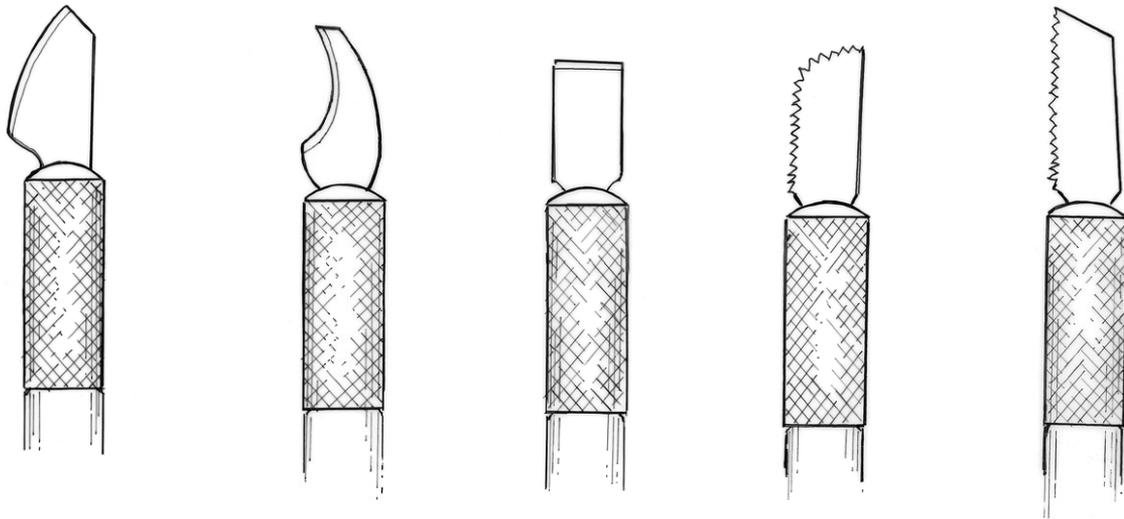
I bisque fire to cone 07–08, then glaze fire to cone 02, using Arbuckle Majolica as a liner glaze and apply a commercial Amaco clear glaze to all underglazed areas. I also use a squeeze bottle to apply colored commercial glazes to accentuate and pump up the color.



1 Newsprint underglaze image transfers cut into stickers. 2 Lay out a composition of selected stickers. 3 Roll out, compress, and texture a slab, which will be layered with underglaze stickers and formed into a plate. 4 Apply white slip to the back of the foreground image transfer. The slip will adhere the transfer to the slab. 5, 6 After placing the stickers on the slab, rub the back of the newsprint with a rib to remove air bubbles. 7 Cut the slab to its final shape, add a coil foot to the back of the slab, and press the plate into the shape defined by the coil. Add white underglaze to any exposed clay for the background. 8 Remove the newsprint to reveal the image.

X-Acto Knife Hacks

Swap out the standard X-Acto blade for more complex blades to make different marks and cuts in clay. Customize the tool by making your own inserts out of lengths of wire, a bit of sponge, coins for boring keys in molds, a drill bit, a piece of a hacksaw blade, and shapes made of credit cards and strip steel.



Robin Ouellette

An Easy Introduction to COIL BUCKETS

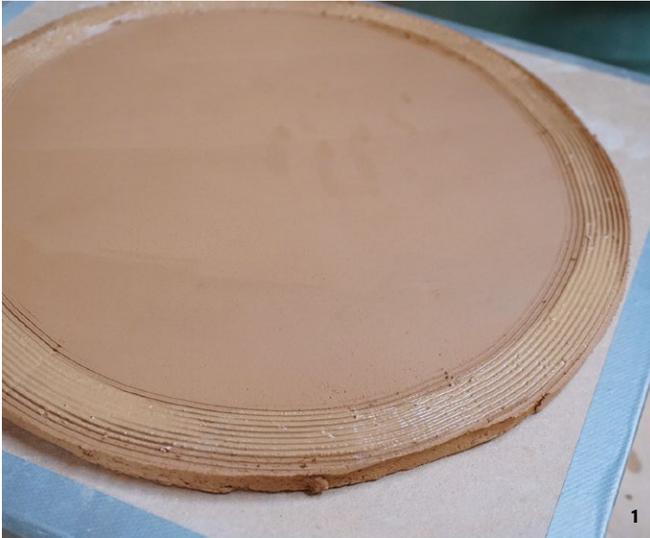
by Melissa Weiss



I made my first coil pot after I had been working with clay for 12 years. It was an intuitive way to build a pot and the knowledge I already possessed of the material made for an easy introduction. The first form I made was a bucket. I wanted to elevate this humble object into a handmade piece of art that combines function and form into an object that one can then use to hold the most common of domestic items such as umbrellas, laundry, baguettes, or kindling.

Building the Bucket

Construction of these buckets starts with a slab rolled out to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thickness. I used a 5-gallon bucket to make a circular template out of cardboard. Start by tracing the circle onto the slab, cut this circle out, and put it on a ware board. This is the bottom of the form. Score and slip the outside top edge of the circle (1). Place the ware board on a banding wheel. Then, roll out a coil that's approximately 1 inch thick and long enough to wrap around the circumference of the bottom (2). Starting at one end of the coil with your thumb on the inside, and four fingers on the outside, press the bottom of the coil into the base (3). Continue pressing around the coil until the ends meet. Smooth the coil down on the outside and inside using your thumb to eliminate the seams (4, 5). Next, pinch the coil up to thin it and give height to the bucket. I pinch with equal pressure on the inside and outside to encourage a straight rise. Using more



1
Cut out a circle from a compressed slab, put it on a ware board, then score and slip the outside top edge.



2
Roll out a coil that's approximately 1 inch thick and long enough to wrap around the circumference of the slab.



3
With four fingers on the outside of the coil and your thumb on the inside, press the bottom of the coil into the base.



4
Add another coil and continue pressing around until the ends meet and the seams are blended together.



5
Smooth the coil down on the outside and inside to eliminate the seams.



6
Add coils to build up the form. On the last coil, use a Surform to even out the rim.



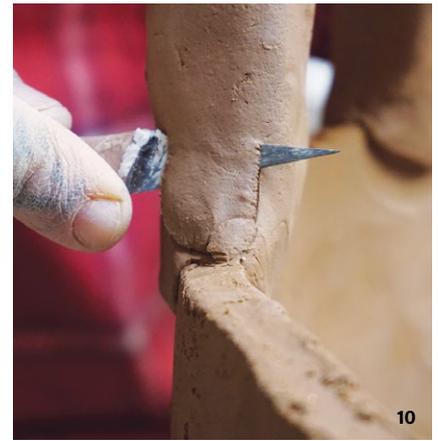
7
For a disk handle, flatten balls into disks, attach, then shape them into handles.



When the handles become firm, use a hole punch tool to cut out circles.



For a coil handle, flatten the ends of a coil to create a wide, flat base and attach.



When the handles are firm, use a flexible knife to sharpen the rounded curves.



Use a metal rib to soften the handles' angles, then thin, refine, and texturize the handle on each side.



Compress the rim and create texture over the entire bucket by scraping it with a metal rib to bring the grog to the surface.

pressure on the outside as I pinch angles the wall inward, while more pressure on the inside encourages it to angle outward.

There will be an excess of clay on the outside bottom edge. To remove this, take a needle tool and angle it down and into the coil until the needle tool touches the ware board. Holding the needle tool steady, turn the banding wheel to remove a ribbon of clay. I use a yellow Mudtools rib to scrape away the pinch marks and push the clay in an upward motion the entire way around, removing all traces of seams while also compressing and thinning the wall.

I add successive coils to build the bucket in this way. I know when to stop when the pot tells me to. It won't look right until it's done, and it's not done until it looks right. So when this happens, I stop adding coils and use a Surform to even out the height (6), then I let the bucket set up to the soft side of leather hard.

Handles Two Ways

I prefer to add the handles at this softer stage to reduce the risk of cracking. I make two styles of handles for the buckets: a disk-shaped handle and a coil handle. For the disk handle, roll out two balls of clay about the size of golf balls. Flatten the balls into a disk about ½ inch thick. Then, take the disk and push the edge into the table to flatten one side and make a wide base for attachment. Gently place the disks on the pot to see where they look best. Add these handles on the top of the rim directly across from each other

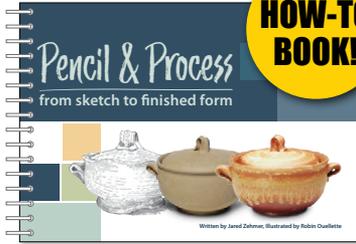
and press the wide base into the pot on the outside and inside of the rim edge (7). When the handles become firm, use a hole punch tool to cut out circles (8). Use a metal rib to scrape the handle, shaping it and giving it texture.

For the coil handles, roll a coil about a ½ inch thick and 1 foot long, then cut it in half. Curve one piece and set it on the pot to determine the curve and length, then cut off any excess length of the other coil half. Press the ends of both coils into the table to create a wide, flat base for attachment. I place the handles on the rim across from each other and press the base into and over the rim, securing the attachment (9). When the handles are firm, use a flexible knife to sharpen the rounded curves (10), then use a metal rib to soften the angles created by the knife. Finally, thin, refine, and texturize the handles (11), as well as compress the rim and create texture over the entire pot (12). If your clay body has some grog in it, scraping it with a metal rib will bring the grog to the surface and create a subtle, overall texture. Wrap the handles and rim in plastic and allow the bucket to slowly dry. Once the pieces are dry, I bisque fire to cone 04, then glaze and fire them to cone 10.

Melissa Weiss received her BFA in photography in 2000 from the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan. She lives in Asheville, North Carolina, where she runs SouthSide Studios. She is a full-time studio potter and a mom.

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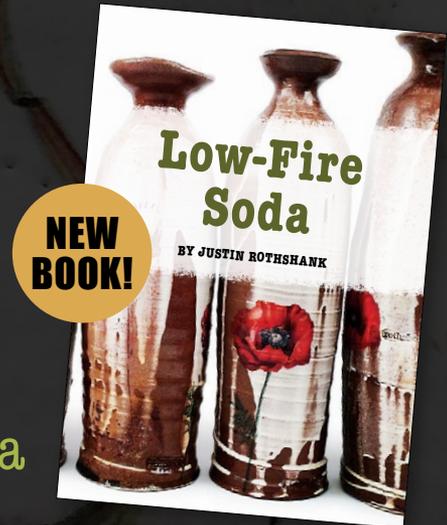
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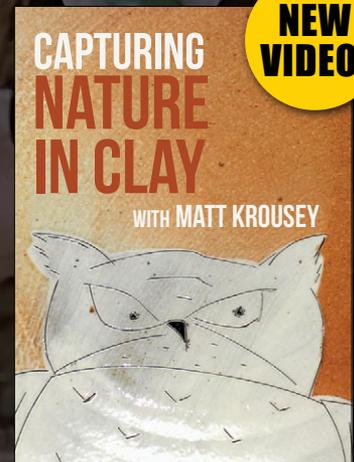


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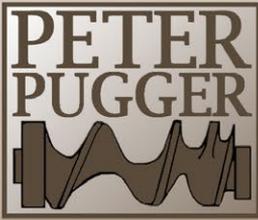
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