



Make an Impression

Add textured designs to slab tiles



Objectives

- Make tiles from clay slabs
- Make impressions in slab clay
- Combine areas of fired color with unglazed natural clay color

Step 1: Place the clay on the slab roller and roll it through to make a large slab.

Step 2: Pull the top of the slab mat back and randomly place various leaf forms over the clay slab, leaving enough space around each form that you can cut tiles.

Step 3: Place the slab mat back over the clay with the leaf forms and gently press the leaves into the clay. Roll the slab back through the roller to embed the leaves.

Step 4: Pull the slab mat back and use a needle tool with a ruler to cut out tiles of various size. Pull away excess clay and place the



tiles on several layers of newspaper. Cut small, 1-inch tiles from the leftover scraps of clay to use as risers (when attaching the tiles in Step 12). Press over the tiles with a textured fabric to add texture to the tiles (a crocheted cloth was used on the examples shown).

Step 5: Use the needle tool to pick up the edge of each leaf form and remove it from the clay. Continue making tiles until you have enough for the area you want to cover.

Step 6: Use a wooden rib to texturize the edges of each tile.

Step 7: Place newspaper and drywall or boards on top of the tiles to prevent them from warping or curling up at the edges as they dry. Allow all tiles to dry completely before firing to shelf cone 04.

Step 8: Thin Tuxedo 1:1 with water and, using the 1-inch glaze wash, apply a coat over the tops of all tiles. Let dry and wipe back with a wet sponge, leaving color in the crevices. Let the color dry completely.

Step 9: Apply color to the leaves using the #3 and #5 rounds. Start by applying Sunkissed to a small area of the leaf. Dip into Orange-A-Peel and apply it on a small area next to the Sunkissed. Allow the two colors to overlap slightly, dragging the brush so the color gradually blends. Continue the same process with Hot Tamale and Just Froggy. You want the colors on the leaves to blend, giving the illusion of colorful fall leaves. The equivalent of one coat of color is all that's needed; you want some of the Tuxedo to show through.

Materials

Low-fire red clay
by Continental Clay
M-400-001 Mini 22 slab roller by
Bailey Ceramic Supply

Leaf Presses by ClayPuzzling.com

Small leaf assortment
Large leaf assortment

Colors by Mayco

SC-06 Sunkissed
SC-08 Just Froggy
SC-15 Tuxedo
SC-74 Hot Tamale
SC-75 Orange-A-Peel

Brushes & Tools by Royal & Langnickel

Wooden pottery tools
1-inch glaze wash of choice
#3 and #5 round brushes of choice
10/0 liner of choice

Miscellaneous

Ruler
Newspaper
Scrap drywall or plaster board
Stained or painted board
for mounting tiles
Sponge
Glue
Piece of textured fabric (optional)

Step 10: Thin some Tuxedo and outline the leaves using the 10/0 liner. Use the same brush to add veins to the leaves.

Step 11: Fire to shelf cone 06.

Step 12: Arrange your tiles on the stained or painted board. Glue the small 1-inch tiles behind some of the larger tiles. Some tiles will be glued right to the board, some will have one small tile behind and some will have two small tiles glued together to rise even higher.

Advanced Methods

Instead of (or in addition to) making flat tile for display, you can turn large versions of these tiles into shallow dishes. The rectangular dish shown here was a slab of clay impressed with three leaves as outlined in the step above, and then placed in a shape to dry (in this case, a rectangular bisque sushi dish was used). If the surface you use will not absorb moisture, place newspaper between the clay and the surface to prevent them from sticking together. Allow sufficient drying time before removing from the form and firing to shelf cone 04.

Sources

Bailey Ceramic Supply: www.baileypottery.com
Clay Puzzling: www.claypuzzling.com
Continental Clay: www.continentalclay.com
Mayco: www.mayco.com
Royal & Langnickel Brush: www.royalbrush.com

