

TECHNIQUES

CLAY RELIEF

Small, soft pieces of clay can be built up in stages onto firmed previous

applications of clay until the required height or shape is achieved. Modelled clay can be integrated or joined on to clay formed by any of the handbuilding techniques using the score and slurry technique wherever the surface is leatherhard. When joining soft clay to soft, however, a gentle pressure to smear on the clay is usually sufficient. Leave any final carving of the modelled clay until the built-up clay is leatherhard to achieve a crisp finish.

■ Clay bas-relief that is thicker than 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in) must be hollowed out from the back to reduce the thickness of the wall for drying and firing. This enables water in the clay to escape as the work is heated in the kiln and prevent it from exploding with the pressure of evaporating water or steam. Thick forms should be fired slowly in the initial stages until the kiln has reached red heat or 600°C (1112°F).

Applying bas-relief



Small pieces of clay can be built up following the usual rules of joining to leatherhard clay (see using slurry for joining slabs). Soft clay can be joined to soft with applied pressure using fingers or tools. Modelled surfaces built up in this way can be applied to any angle or area of clay made by any forming method, as long as there is sufficient strength to support the weight of the applied clay and the pressure of the tools.

Modelling



All solid, modelled forms should be scooped out from the inside and emptied. Use a hooped wire trimming tool and leave a wall thick enough to support the modelled clay outer structure. Solid figures can be cut with a knife, hollowed and rejoined by slurring and scoring (see using slurry for joining slabs) while they are still leatherhard. This allows access to a solid area that cannot be reached from a base opening, such as for a head or the upper body sections of a figure.

When hollowing out a thick wall, use a hooped wire (trimming) tool to scoop out a little at a time when the work is firm enough to hold and turn without damage. Rest the overturned work on a pad or sponge to protect the front face.

COCKEREL, TUREEN WITH TAIL FEATHER
LADLE (35 CM/14 IN)
WHITE EARTHENWARE AND C-MATERIAL,
COILED, SCRAPED AND MODELLED WITH
BASE COILED ONTO A CURVED SLAB. ALL
DETAILS HAVE BEEN MODELLED BY
BUILDING UP SMALL PIECES OF CLAY
(ANNA LAMBERT).

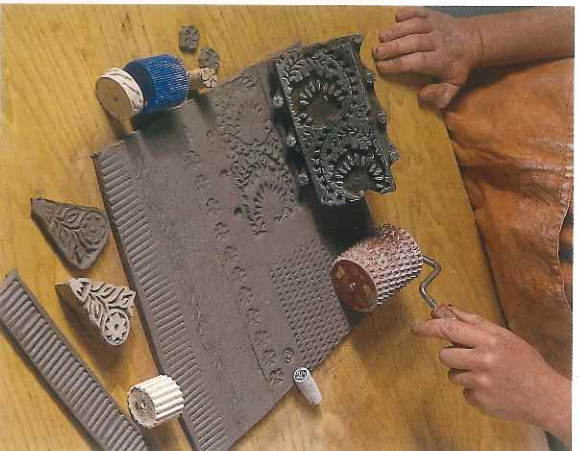


TECHNIQUES DECORATING INTO CLAY

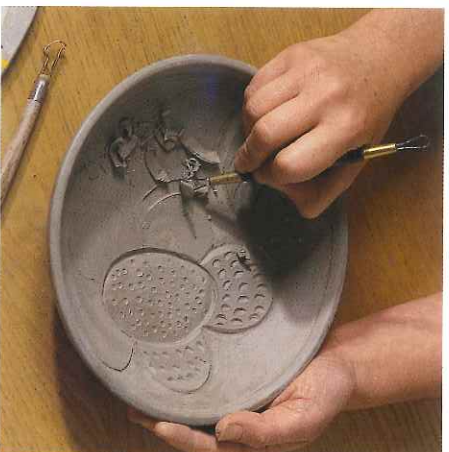
Clay is a wonderful material for picking up texture and can be treated in a number of ways to achieve a range of textural qualities and surfaces. There are many techniques to create raised and applied texture or to decorate into clay. When working into clay, the wall or slab must be thick enough to manage the depth of the imprint or tool. Separately worked pieces of clay can be fixed onto a surface with the slurry and score method (see using slurry for joining slabs).

Indenting

Indenting techniques involve making a mark into clay with a tool, such as a stamp, roulette or carving tool. These raised clay surfaces look effective with colour washes which pick out the raised textures, glazes that break at high points or coloured transparent glazes that collect in the indented areas making rich tones.



Detailed textures can be picked up on soft clay, which is laid flat, or by impressing stamps into built or thrown walls still soft enough to imprint. You can also attach individual pieces of stamped clay to a wall. Stamps can be made by carving plaster (see making moulds or models) or clay, which is fired before use. Roulettes can be carved in plaster, clay and wood or improvised using items such as cogs or bottle tops. Unlike stamps, they make a continuous, patterned circuit, which can be applied quickly to a soft piece of work. Strips of rouletted clay can also be cut and attached to a piece of work.



Clay can be carved in the same way as wood, using any tool that gives the required effect. For a crisp, hard edge carve clay when it is leatherhard. The softer the clay, the softer the finish will be. The tool you use and the state of the clay will dictate the quality of the carved edge. Carve into a thick-walled flat surface or a raised relief area to produce a sharp-edged sculpted feel.



Pieces of foam sheet, card (cardboard) or plastic sheet can be cut and rolled into soft clay to give a variety of edges and depths to the impressed shape. This is a useful technique for impressing letters or numbers into clay. You can also cut out shapes when they are firm and apply them to a formed clay surface.

TRAYS
SLAB BUILT WITH IMPRESSED
TEXTURE, HIGH FIRED STONWARE
WITH THIN SHINO GLAZE (TRAYS
JØRGENSEN).

