

Designing the Surface - Part II

Etching, carving, incising &
other surface treatment
techniques...



WATER ETCHING. Using a resist to create line, shape & pattern...

- Using a brush, apply resist- an agent applied to the surface of greenware in order to protect the surface from exposure to other surface treatments in a particular area. Be careful! Greenware is fragile!!!
- Make use of a sponge and a cup of clean water. With the damp sponge, gently wipe away the exposed clay surface, carefully leaving the resisted clay surface intact.
- Apply another layer of resist agent to the already resisted surface with a brush.
- After letting this layer dry, sponge-away the exposed clay again.



Using a resist to create line, shape & pattern...

- Now brush on an underglaze over the entire form. The underglaze will settle upon the unresisted (exposed) surface, and the resist will, well... resist the underglaze!
- Using another damp sponge, gently wipe the remaining underglaze from the resisted surface. Bisque the form when dry.
- Upon retrieval from the kiln, wipe the surface clean from dust created by the bisque. Clear glaze should now be applied (once the form is dried) gently with a brush.



• Technique by Jim Gottuso @

<http://ceramicartsdaily.org/pottery-making-techniques/ceramic-decorating-techniques/etched-in-clay-how-to-make-beautiful-relief-surfaces-with-shellac-resist/>

LOW RELIEF: Shallow carving into the surface of a form in order to create dynamic changes in surface texture, and play with highlight and shadow.



Clay is removed or added to strategic areas which play with light and shadows, thus creating an illusion of superficial depth across the clay surface.



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1. You can draw a freehand design using a pencil to lightly sketch the outline onto a moist clay surface. Mistakes are easily erased by gently smoothing over the top of the unwanted mark with a slightly wet finger

2. Once you have your plan, begin to shave just enough clay from the areas where the shapes overlap so the one in the visual foreground is physically higher than the object that should appear behind it. You will also want to shave clay from any of the other objects that will be receding into the background.



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3. Be sure not to carve too deeply into the surface of the form, for fear that it might pierce the wall unintentionally. Of course, this could also be used as another effect entirely...

A JAPANESE SATSUMA PORCELAIN VASE, OVOID HAVING A FLARED RIM, WAVES AND CARP FIGURES IN DEEP RELIEF, FITTED MAHOAGANY STAND. CIRCA 1801-1900



Ken Sakaguchi

HIGH RELIEF. High-relief carving describes undercutting design elements so they appear to detach from the background space. Further, it may also incorporate sculpted clay added to certain areas on top of the background to create added depth.



Fine detail carving tools are a must for this delicate technique...

Undercutting techniques create pieces with even higher relief areas.



Ann Ruel

HIGH RELIEF.

High-relief carving describes undercutting design elements so they appear to detach from the background space. Further, it may also incorporate sculpted clay added to certain areas on top of the background to create added depth.



Michelangelo Buonaratti. *Pietà Palestrina*. 1555.

It's important to remember the more clay you cut from the body the more delicate the piece may become. If it's a tall cylinder, begin cutting away from the top to avoid having the piece collapse due to a weak bottom and heavy top.

Timing is crucial with this process. If your clay is very wet when you begin carving, it may not have enough strength to hold its shape and the clay around the cuts will sag. If you attempt to make the cuts when the clay is too dry, the clay may crack or chip. If you have a large piece that is taking a considerable amount of time to complete, cover the areas you aren't working on to keep them wet and avoid cracking and unusual stresses. Try to dry the piece very slowly due to inconsistent thicknesses created by carving. Clay walls with varying depths will dry at different rates and have an increased chance of cracking. Place several sheets of plastic loosely around the piece and leave it until it is totally dry.