

Ceramics: Relief surface using shellac. How to use shellac for making a relief surface

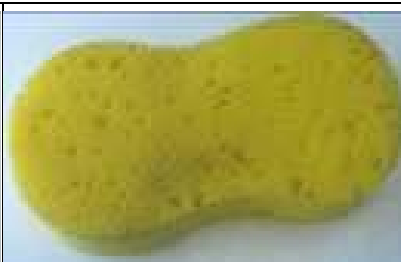
EQUIPMENT: What you will need



bone-dry, green ware
(unfired ceramic work)



shellac



sponge



clean Paintbrushes



Methylated Spirits



clean water



bucket or small container
for water



pencil



clean rags

Glossary : Words You need to understand

Bone dry. Very dry clay that will no longer feel cool on touch. Likened to dried out bones that have been in the sun and have no moisture left.

Shellac A type of estapol or varnish made of beetle wings. It is often used on furniture but it can be used to paint onto dry clay as a resist.

Relief surface using shellac

Draw your design onto the ceramic work.

Pencil marks burn away when the work is fired.



Paint shellac onto the design

You can also paint straight on, without drawing with pencil.

Keep stirring the shellac so it stays thick.

Hold the clay work flat so the shellac does not run.



Wash the brush

When you have finished painting your design, wash brushes out well in:

- Methylated Spirits.
- Then soap and water.



Dry shellac

Wait till the shellac is fully dry. This can take half an hour, or longer.

The best way to check if it is dry is by touching gently.



Wipe away clay around the dry shellac

With clean water and a sponge, wipe away the clay that is not covered by the shellac.

The more you wipe, the more clay gets taken away. The shellac part will become higher than the clay around it.

This is **relief**, which means higher and lower parts.



Dry the relief

When you are happy with the relief you have created, allow it to dry before firing in the kiln.

Fire to a low temperature, 1000 degrees Celsius or lower.

The shellac will burn away.



Tips: Relief surface using shellac

If the shellac is too thin, it will begin to wipe away. Paint a thick coat to keep all of the original design.

Do not have your sponge too wet, just a little damp, keep rinsing out the sponge. If you make the clay too wet your piece may collapse and break!

Shellac resist

Recipe for mixing shellac from shellac flakes with methylated spirits.

Shellac flakes are available from hardware shops.

1. Using a piece of paper as a funnel, half fill a sealable jar (glass or plastic) with flakes.
2. Pour in methylated spirits until just covered.
3. Allow to stand overnight, and then give a good shake with lid securely on.
4. To use shellac straight away, stand mixture in very hot water, shaking occasionally, until completely dissolved
5. Check consistency. Mixture needs to be fairly thick so that it withstands wiping.

Shellac is made from beetles' wings. It is good to use because it doesn't have any nasty smellies that are bad for you, like estapol or varnish.
