

Thematic Clay Picture Frames

from AMACO (American Art Clay, Co., Inc)

Students select their favorite photo and design a custom picture frame to display it. Beginning with a simple slab, students create an overall shape and enhance it by adding more shapes, and by modeling, carving and texturizing the clay before it is dried and fired. After the bisque firing, the picture frames will be painted and decorated using the new **AMACO® Teacher's Choice and Teacher's Palette** low-fire glazes.

Grade Levels K-6

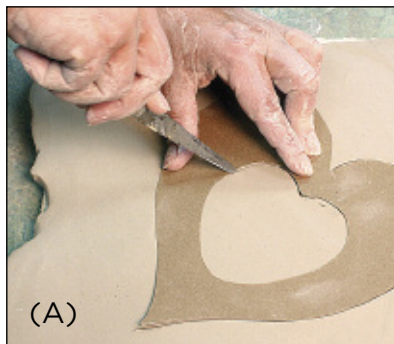
Note: instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Select a photo to be framed and determine its most important theme. Examples: "Summer holidays", "My cousin's wedding," or "Love of mother and child."
2. On drawing paper, sketch the desired shape and size of the frame to fit over your photo. Remember that the clay will shrink approximately 10%, so make the frame opening a little larger than necessary. The shape can be drawn freehand or to mimic the theme of the photo. Be sure to make the frame at least 1" wide all around.
3. Cut out the frame shape to create a template.

Process

1. As an option, cover a board or heavy piece of cardboard with canvas or newspaper. This will help the slab dry evenly and keep it from warping. With a rolling pin or slab roller, flatten the clay to approx 3/8" thick, and then transfer it to the board.
2. Smooth the clay slab surface using a rib, and then place the template face-up on the slab. Use a knife to cut around the template to create the exterior and interior contours of the frame, see (A).



Materials

AMACO® No. 25 White Art Clay, 50-lb package (30505-1025); need 1 to 1-1/2 lbs per student

AMACO® Teachers Choice Glazes, gallons, assorted colors (30477-); share selection across class

AMACO® Teacher's Palette Glazes, assorted colors (30476-); share selection across class

Wooden Rolling Pins, 10" (30345-1010); share one between two students

Blick® White Sulphite Drawing Paper, 80-lb, package of 100 sheets, 9" x 12" (10209-1043)

Clay Modeling Tools, set of 36 (30304-1009); share set across class

Royal Langnickel® Ceramic Glaze Brushes, set of 16 (06060-1016); share two sets across class

Optional Materials

Wooden boards or heavy cardboard to support the clay while drying

Hygloss™ Ribbon Rainbow (61498-1009)

AMACO® Brent® SRC Slab Roller (30213-0000)

Process, continued

3. Create two holes to hang the frame after completion. The holes should be placed where the frame will balance as desired (straight or not). Make sure the holes are big enough so that they don't fill up with glaze.
4. Add texture, relief attachments or carve away the desired design while the clay is still moist. Designs may be pressed into the soft, moist clay and sculpted elements may be adhered by wetting the attachment area with clay slip, see (B). Carving should be done when the clay is a little bit stiffer, or leather-hard.
5. Lightly drape a piece of plastic over the frame and allow it to dry slowly overnight. Uncover it the next day.
6. Bisque fire the frame to cone 04.
7. Complete the frame by decorating it with AMACO Teacher's Choice & Teacher's Palette glazes. These glazes can be mixed or layered to achieve a variety of colors and designs. They can also be used like underglazes to write words or decorative detail. Just remember, the top color is what you will see. Fire it to cone 05.
8. After glaze firing, center the photo over the opening in the back of the picture frame, and attach it with tape or glue along the edges.
8. Thread a ribbon through the holes and hang!



National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #1 Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes

K-4 Students use different media, techniques and processes to communicate ideas, experiences and stories.

5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.

Content Standard #2 Using knowledge of structures and functions

K-4 Students use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas.

5-8 Students employ organizational structures and analyze what makes them effective or not effective in the communication of ideas.

Content Standard #3 Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas

K-4 Students select and use subject matter, symbols and ideas to communicate meaning.

5-8 Students use subjects, themes and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks.

