

Dug-Out Clay Plaque

A thick slab of clay is transformed into a 3D plaque. The dimension keeps the height of the surface of the slab even, with detail on the lower levels of the design. Form and space are then created below the clay surface. A special liquid glaze acrylic is colorfully rich and requires no baking. The acrylic is painted with a red interference glaze that transforms the first paint layer into luster colors. Study architectural techniques used on historical buildings

Grade Levels 7-12

Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Process:

1. Cut a 3/4" slab of clay from the body of clay. The clay must be a consistent texture throughout to provide sharp images when carved. Knead together and wedge to remove air bubbles. This project depends on a sharper design. Place slab on a piece of bakers parchment paper and place both on a cookie sheet to bake in oven.
2. Lightly draw the design onto the damp slab with a needle or pointed tool. Using the ribbon cutting tools, dig into the clay to remove deep areas. Make certain to dig deeply but not through the back of the slab. Leave much of the design the height of the surface clay. Gently continue to shape the recessed areas with smaller ribbon tools. The last step is to use the 1/4" hole cutter to place 2 holes in the top of the clay for hanging. Place holes at least 1/2" in from edge of slab.
3. Remove any burrs or crumbles of clay on the cut edges. Allow the piece to dry until it no longer feels cold or damp. Bake in a 350°F oven for 1 hour.
4. Paint the plaque with Golden Liquid Glazes. These glazes are slower drying than regular acrylics.
5. Mix the final glaze: 3 parts red interference to 10 parts acrylic glazing medium. This can be painted on the surface of the painted plaque. The colors will turn brighter and



Materials

[Laguna Ovencraft Clay](#), 4-lb (33231-1004), share one box between six students

Assorted Clay Modeling Tools, recommend:

[Kemper® Scraper](#), Smooth (30334-1004)
[Mini Ribbon Tools](#), (30321-1009), 6-tool set
[Thin Line Tools](#), 5-tool set (30309-1009)
[Duron Plastic Tools](#), 12-pc set (30322-1009)
[Single End Tools](#), 6-pc set (30360-1009)

[Golden® Acrylic Glaze](#), (00658-) assorted colors, share at least five 4-oz bottles across classroom

[Golden® Acrylic Glazing Liquid](#), Gloss (00628-1017), share one quart across classroom

[Golden® Heavy Body Acrylic Interference Colors](#) 8-oz (00620-) assorted colors, share four tubes across classroom

[Greek Leather Cord](#), Black (60669-2051), need one 15" length per student

Baker's Parchment Paper, available at grocery stores

metallic-looking. Fantastic!

6. Add a hanging cord. The two holes will make the plaque hang evenly.

Hints

- If the clay needs to be held over for a second class period, make sure to cover it with a damp cloth and put in an air tight plastic bag.
- After the plaque is air dried, the clay can be smoothed or textured with screen wire or sandpaper.
- Choose a hanging cord strong enough for the weight of the plaque.

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National Standards:

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

- **5-8** Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experience and ideas.
- **9-12** Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques and processes they use.

Content Standard #2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions

- **5-8** Students employ organizational structures and analyze what makes them effective or not effective in the communication of ideas.
- **9-12** Students create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems.

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

- **5-8** Students integrate visual, spatial and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks.
- **9-12** Students reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally and functionally and describe how these are related to history and culture.