CUERDA SECA TILE

Cuerda Seca is a design technique characterized by black outlines of unglazed surface separating areas of colored glaze. The term Cuerda Seca translated from Spanish is “dry cord” although the technique can be seen in Turkey, Central Asia and India. Resists were made from a greasy substance mixed with manganese.

We can recreate this technique using black wax resist on tiles, the exterior of functional pottery or sculptures. Students can create traditional Cuerda Seca designs or create designs of their own.

MATERIALS

- Clay
- Black Wax Resist
- Rolling Pin or Slab Roller
- Pin Tool or Knife
- Rubber Rib
- Loop Tool
- Bulb Glaze Applicator
- Wood Ruler or Wood Block
- Variety of Color Glaze

PROCESS

1. Using a rolling pin or slab roller make a slab 1/2” to a 1/4” thick

Rotate the slab while working to get even clay compression

2. Using a ruler or template lightly draw an outline of your tile on your clay and cut out using a pin tool or knife

3. Roll wooden ruler or smooth block of wood over the edges of the tile to round them

4. Leave tile flat to dry to prevent warping
5. When the tile is leather hard use a loop tool to cut a notch in the back for hanging

6. Once dry you can bisque fire the tiles

**DECORATING TILE**
1. Lightly pencil design onto tiles

2. Use a bulb glaze applicator or slip trailing bottle to apply wax resist following your design

3. Let wax dry for a few hours

**GLAZE**
1. Glaze can be applied using small paint brushes or bulb glaze applicators

2. Carefully apply glaze between areas of wax