DEBOSSED RELIEF TILE

Ceramic tiles are often seen presented in multiples through installations such as floors or kitchen backsplashes. In the ceramic industry multiples are created using molds made of materials such as plaster which can be expensive. This project presents an easy way to make multiple debossed relief tiles of the same design while using inexpensive materials. Students can create multiples of their design and have fun arranging them.

MATERIALS
Cardboard Squares
White Classroom Glue
Yarn
Pencils or Pen
Rolling Pin or Slab Roller
Knife or Pin Tool
Variety of Underglaze Colors
Additional Stamping or Debossing Items
Clear Transparent Glaze
Thickness Guides

PROCESS
1. Cut cardboard to desired size for tile. You may need to do this step ahead depending on the abilities of students.

2. Draw design directly onto cardboard.

3. Use white classroom glue to trace the design.

4. Lay the yarn over the glue line and allow to dry.

5. Roll a slab using a slab roller or rolling pin. If using a rolling pin, use thickness guides on each side to create an even slab.

6. Transfer slabs to a board or bat and compress slab one more time. This will allow students to rotate their slab without having to lift it up and prevent warping in the future.
7. While the clay is still soft lay the cardboard design facedown onto the slab.

8. Use a rolling pin to press design into the soft clay.

9. Before removing cardboard use a knife or pin tool to trace around the outside edges of the cardboard cutting the tile to size and removing extra clay.

10. Carefully lift cardboard off surface to reveal relief design. Try to prevent lifting or bending the clay while removing the cardboard.

11. Students may choose to add additional stamps, and debossing items to their design.

12. Using a variety of underglazes students can add color to their tile designs. This can be done while the clay is still wet or during the leather hard stage.

13. Set tiles aside to dry.

**FIRE AND GLAZE**
Once the tiles are bone dry they can be bisque fired. Glaze tiles with a clear transparent glaze and fire to desired glaze temperature.

**THICKNESS GUIDES**
Thickness Guides are two strips of material of even thickness that can be laid parallel to a slab of clay. A rolling pin would then rest on top of the thickness guides while in use to create a slab of even thickness. Thickness Guides are typically made out of wood but can be made using a stack of sturdy cardboard.

*This lesson plan was created by Marsha Williams, Artist in Residence at Motawi Tileworks*