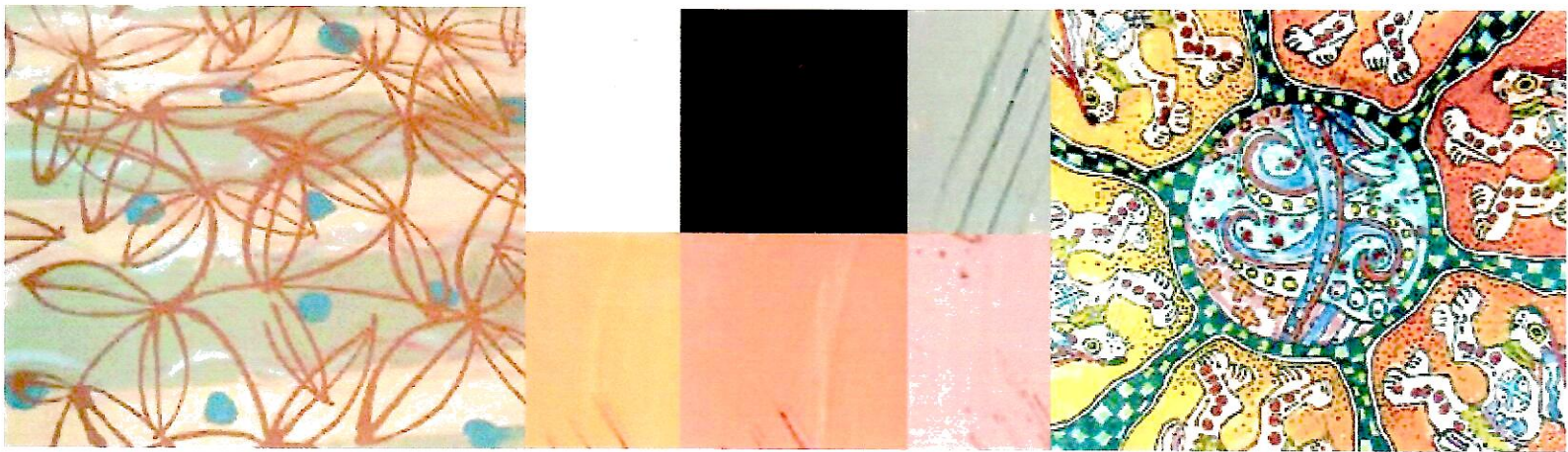


underglaze users guide



**how to use underglazes
to add color and graphic interest
to your pottery projects**



Underglaze Users Guide

How to Use Ceramic Underglazes

to Add Color and Graphic Interest in Your Pottery Projects

Underglazes are basically clay-based materials with ceramic stains and metallic oxides added to create a full spectrum of color in your work. They're the fastest, easiest, and most dependable way for you to add pizzazz to your pottery or sculptures for just an accent or an entire surface treatment. Like many other art materials, underglazes come in a wide variety of forms—liquid, dry, chalks, pens, and pencils—so no matter what your background, a ceramic surface awaits your colorful treatment.

Laura Kukkee: Using Underglazes for Slip Trailing and Appliqué Techniques

by Anderson Turner

There is no shortage of application techniques using ceramic underglazes. Laura Kukkee creates her decoration with underglazes on newspaper then transfers it to a freshly rolled clay slab. She builds up layers of different colored slips and underglaze decoration on newsprint to create a very thin slab. Then she cuts the slab into pieces and uses an appliqué technique to apply the decorated pieces to pots. She also demonstrates silk screened and inlaid appliqué.

How to Make Homemade Underglazes

by Holly Goring

Whether you want to make your own underglazes or use commercially prepared underglazes, this article will provide a valuable understanding of what underglazes are made of and how they behave. Regardless of which way you want to go with underglazes, knowing how they are made will help you know how to use them more effectively—and that means better chances for success in the studio.

9 Artists Using Colorful Underglazes

by David Gamble

With so many ways to use underglazes, it opens up so many opportunities. Just take a look at the effects Jim Kemp gets by spraying vivid colors on his teapots or how David Gamble expertly obtains a sketchbook feel with thinned out underglaze washes. Debra Fritts applies layers of underglazes and removes them to achieve her stunning patinas and Rimas VisGardas maximizes the underglaze's ability to provide bold illustrations. These artists and five more explore many possibilities you can delve into to add life and vibrancy to your work.

Laura Kukkee

Demonstrates How to Use Underglazes

For Slip Trailing and Silk Screening Appliqué

by Anderson Turner



Untitled, 23 in. (58 cm) in diameter, monoprinted (paint, slip trail, silk screen) slips on soft slabs, glazes, and sand then multifired.

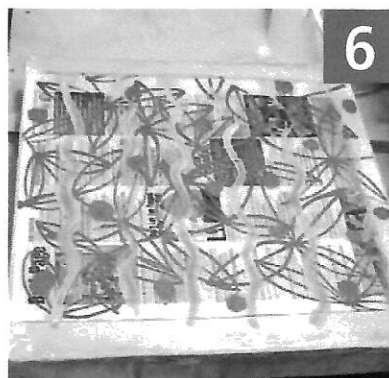
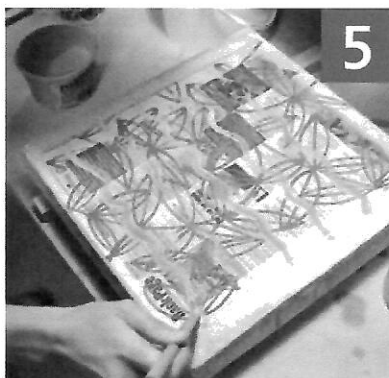
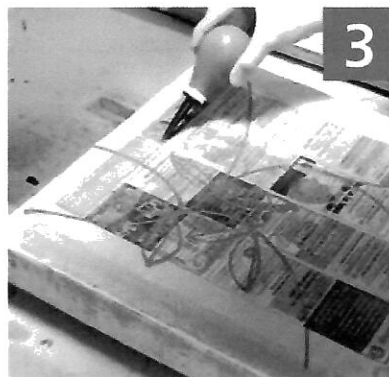
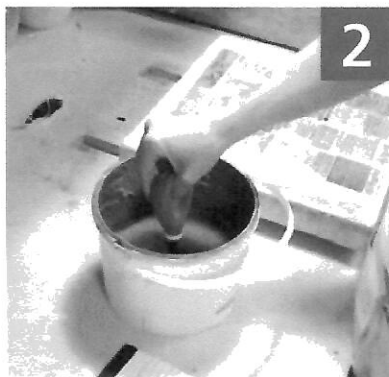
It is often taught that artists must strive to be wholly original. We must envision something great and new and then apply it to our art, thus astounding all who happen by the work we've made. This is a tall order to say the least. Many a great idea has fallen by the way side because the artist is unsure of how to execute the desired result. Often, it is the subtle change in a technique that can lead to impressive results. One example of that type of change is in the work of artist Laura Kukkee.

Laura, a native of Toronto, Canada, did her undergraduate studies with Bruce Cochrane at The Sheridan School of Crafts and Design in Oakville, Ontario and developed

this technique in the craft studios at Harbour Front Centre in Toronto. Utilizing slips and underglazes in the decoration of clay has been happening for thousands of years. From the Ancient Greeks and Chinese to the 17th-century country English potter, the use of colored slip has been an important part of the decorative arsenal of nearly every clay artist.

Laura is currently working with ideas surrounding the notion of a fragment. "This fragment is in the form of an image or a pattern which is divorced from its original meaning. By pulling fragments outside of their traditional contexts and restructuring the way in which they are presented, meanings become

Slip Trailing Appliqué



more elastic.” Her results in the research are both exciting and new, and they offer a chance for individuality that every artist strives for.

Notes on Slip

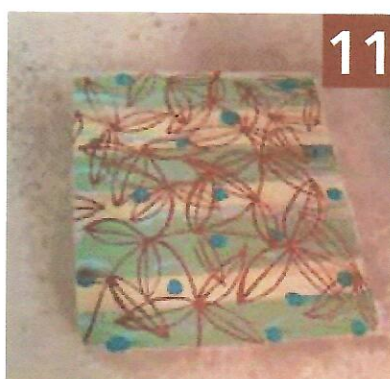
Slip, as defined by Vince Pitelka in his book *Clay: A Studio Handbook*, is clay suspended in water, usually the consistency of thick cream. It may be colored and used to decorate surfaces, or may be cast into plaster molds to create ceramic forms. For her artwork, Laura uses slip the consistency of a thick cream as well as a slip that is substantially thinner. **Note:** Commercial underglazes can also be easily substituted for the slips. She uses different proportions of water and a small

amount of Darvan #7 to get the “flow” of the slip she desires. It’s a good idea to test all slips and underglazes before using them on your own work.

Slip Trailed Appliqué

What you’ll need: ball syringe, newsprint, spray bottle, and plaster slab (optional). Laura sets the plaster on two pieces of wood to keep slab well ventilated, thus discouraging mold. You will also need the colored slips or underglazes of your choice.

Wet a piece of newsprint using a spray bottle so that it is damp but not soaked. Smooth the paper out onto the plaster slab, so you don’t get ridges—smoothing helps the paper absorb water (*figure 1*).



Remember, whatever color you use first is going to be the outline of the pattern you're making. You're building color and pattern from the top layer down with the background color applied last, which is the opposite direction one normally works. For this demo, I'm using black slip, though I have often used other colors. It's a good idea to mix and sieve slip thoroughly beforehand to blend all the materials.

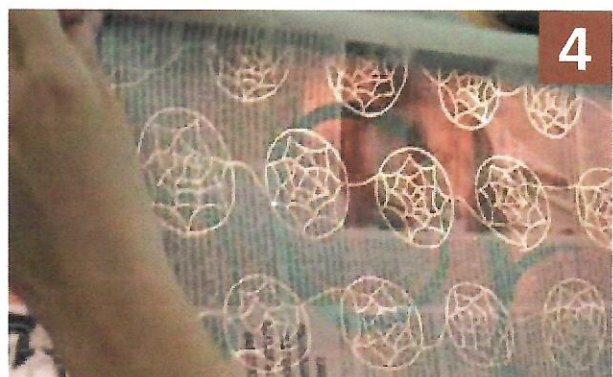
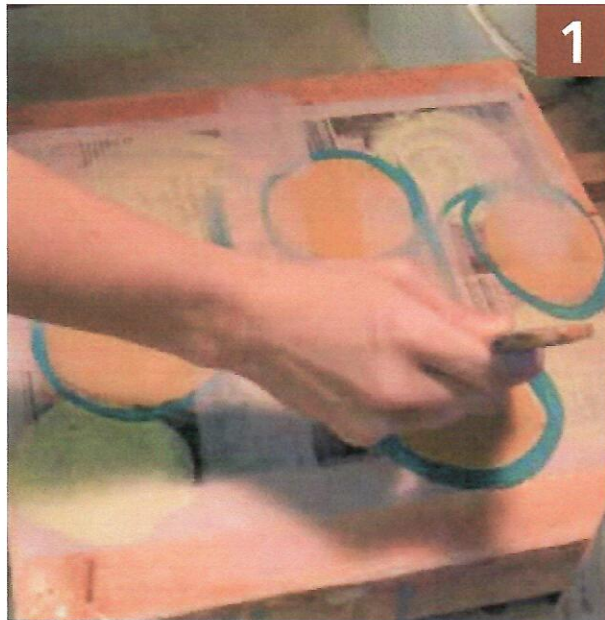
Dip the syringe in the slip and fill it (figure 2). To get the bulb flowing, try practicing on an extra sheet of paper before beginning (figure 3). Slip trail pattern or image of your choice onto paper. Pick the paper up by the edges carefully and hold it up to light

so you can see your pattern better (figure 4). Set the paper aside and allow slip to dry until the sheen goes away, then start laying color in and around the pattern (figure 5).

I like to apply bands of color together behind the pattern. Set aside the paper and let dry until sheen disappears (figure 6).

Again, once sheen is gone, cover the colored slip with a white slip made of the same ingredients as your clay body, with roughly 3% Darvan #7 added to the mixture. Make sure the slip is really flowing. Set aside and allow to dry until the sheen goes away or you're ready to use. I often apply up to four applications of white slip depending on how thick I

Inlaying Slip Appliqué



Inlaying Slip Appliqué

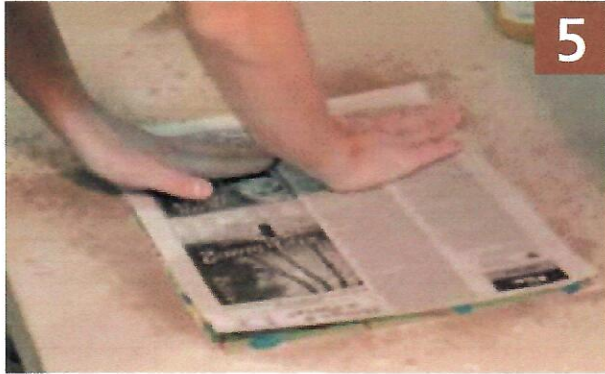
Begin this process in exactly the same way as the slip trailing. Brush the slips in a design covering the paper. In this example Rahill is using a large pattern and bold colors. Set the paper aside to dry (*figure 1*).

Once the gloss is gone, cover the design with the white slip made from your clay

body with approximately 3% Darvan #7 added to the mixture. Set aside (*figure 2*).

When the sheen has disappeared from the white slip, carve shapes in the slip. Be careful not to cut through the newspaper (*figure 3*).

When you finish the pattern you should be able to see light through the design.



Cover entire sheet with black slip. Set aside to dry. When the gloss is gone, cover entire piece with white slip (*figure 4*).

Smooth a sheet of newspaper over the slab, flip it over and carefully remove the paper from the pattern side, and spray with water, if necessary, to keep from tearing the slab (*figure 5*).

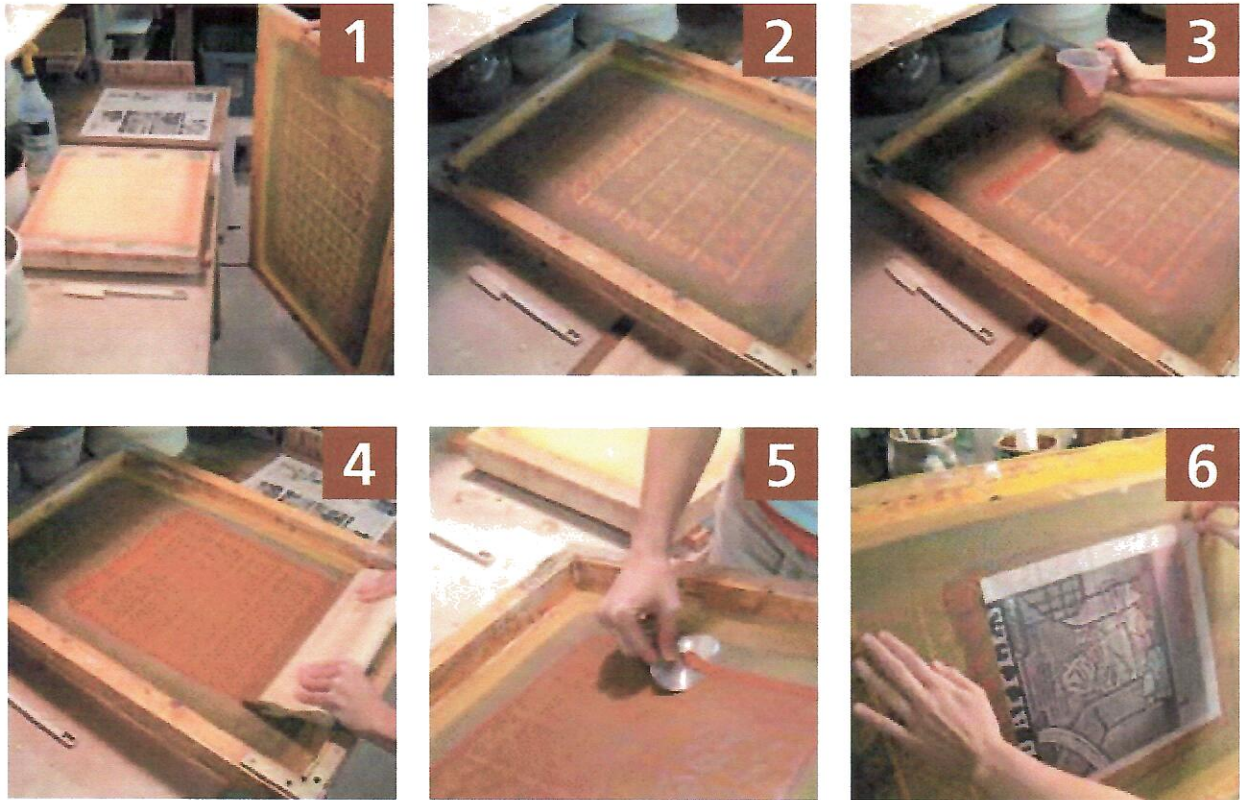
Place fresh paper over the slab,

smooth, and flip the slab again. Peel the paper off the back of the slab. The slab can now be cut into shapes for appliqué (*figure 6*).

Once the excess clay is removed from between the shapes, begin to gently peel up the cut out patterns (*figure 7*).

Paint white slip onto the white side of each piece and gently apply the shape to the pot (*figure 8*).

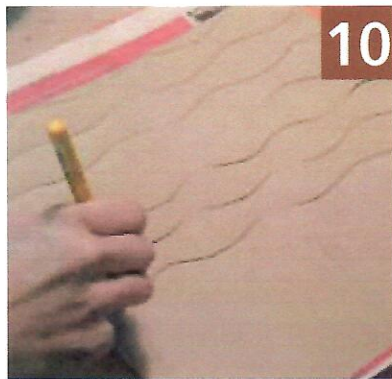
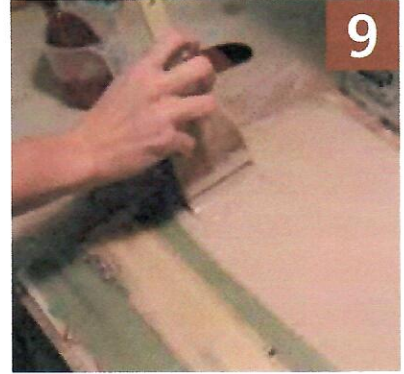
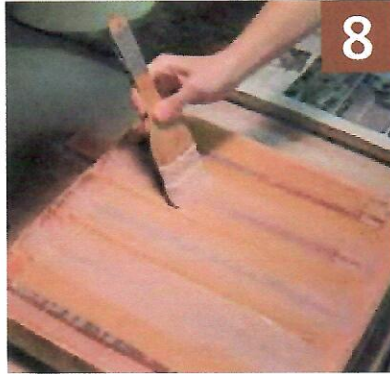
Silk-Screening Slip Appliqué



Silk Screening Appliqué

Items you need: squeegee, spatula, metal rib, small pitcher, brushes, a pointed tool, and various colored slips. Prepare paper the same way as in the previous examples (*figure 1*). Position the silk screen on top of the prepared paper (*figure 2*). Pour a bead of black slip on the screen at one end only (*figure 3*). Squeegee slip across the screen with steady, even pressure (*figure 4*). Use a metal rib to remove excess slip from the silk screen (*figure 5*). Carefully remove the paper from the silk screen to avoid tearing the pattern

(*figure 6*). After the pattern is screened onto the paper, let it dry until the gloss is gone (*figure 7*). Apply colored slip over the design and allow to dry (*figure 8*). After the slip loses its sheen, cover the entire sheet with white slip and set aside to dry (*figure 9*). Flip and add fresh newspaper. When this process is completed, begin to cut out the shapes (*figure 10*). Once the excess clay is removed, gently peel up the cut out shapes (*figure 11*). Paint white slip onto the white side of the shape and apply it to the pot (*figure 12*).



Three completed forms with applied slip decoration.

9 Artists Using Colorful Underglazes

by David L. Gamble



Teapots, by Jim Kemp. Jim uses a low-fire red clay body and airbrushes underglazes onto the greenware. The last color he applies is black, which is sprayed across the piece to highlight the variations in heights of the surface decoration. The pieces are once fired to cone 02.

Commercial underglazes are basically clay slips containing colorants, and they're a great way to add color to your work using a variety of application methods. And since they're formulated to have low drying shrinkage, they can be applied to bone-dry greenware or to bisque-fired surfaces. In addition to being able to change the surface color of your clay body, underglazes can also be used to change the texture of the body.

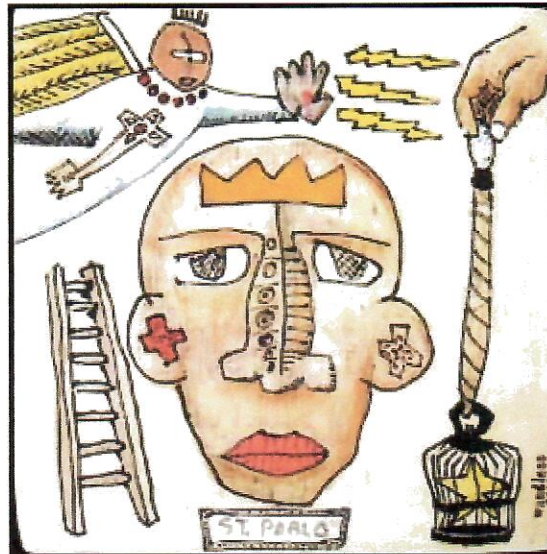
When used to add color to surfaces, underglazes have an advantage in that they are composed mostly of clay with very little flux, so they'll

stay put and won't run, which makes them ideal for detailed decoration. While most underglazes were originally formulated for use at low-fire temperatures, most, maintain their color in the mid-range and some even as high as cone 9 or 10.

Simple Application

Underglazes can be applied by brushing, pouring, dipping, and spraying—anything goes. Each application method has different requirements. If an underglaze is too thick for spraying or using as a wash, just add water to thin it down. If it's too thin for silk screening or monoprinting, leave the container exposed to air to evaporate some of the liquid.

Paul Wandless paints underglazes on plaster in reverse, painting the foreground first and the background last. He then pours a low-fire white slip on the plaster. This picks up the underglaze image and inlays it into the clay. After bisque firing to cone 02, he applies a thin clear glaze then glaze fires to cone 04.



Tom Meunick uses white stoneware or porcelain then bisque fires to cone 06. He then uses underglaze pencils to draw on the surface. After drawing, he atomizes it lightly with water then applies a glaze by dipping or spraying.



Steve Howell uses a body made from half porcelain and half raku clay. After the initial bisque firing, he adds underglazes and bisque fires again. Because a higher bisque absorbs less smoke, he bisque fires cool colors to cone 06 and warm colors to cone 04. After the bisque, he places the piece upside down in a 2x4-foot brick pit filled with sawdust layered with copper carbonate, salt, and bits of sticks and wood, then covered with a Kaowool blanket.