

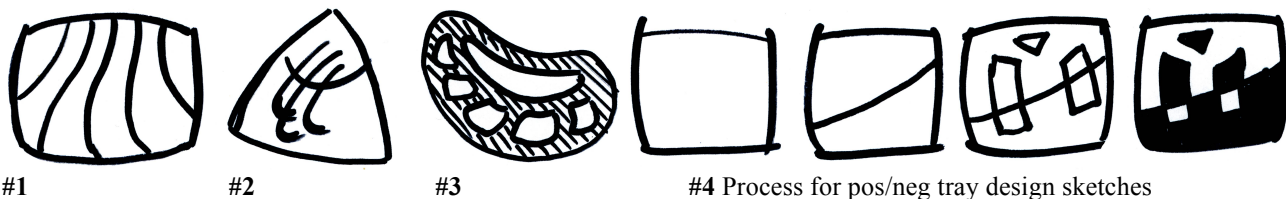
4+ Test Trays Project

Purpose: to become familiar with basic processes such as joining clay together, and to experiment with surface design and glazing methods.

Directions:

1. Use the slab roller to roll out enough clay to make four or more 4" x 4"-ish trays. REMEMBER, THEY WILL SHRINK around 12%, so if you want a specific final size (like, not super-tiny) you have to plan for that.
2. For the size of dish/tray you are making, the clay may still be a little thick. You can take a rolling pin or brayer (two-ended roller-thingy) to roll the clay a little thinner. Do this on canvas or plastic so the clay doesn't stick, and handle the clay with care so you don't tear it.
3. Put your clay on a small board and use a metal scraper or rubber kidney to smooth it out on both sides. Draw the scraper/kidney across the clay from the outside edge to the center so you are compressing the clay rather than stretching it out.
4. Cut out the shapes of your trays using a fettling knife or pin tool.
5. If you want the edges to be tapered thinner than the rest of the tray, use a brayer to make them the desired thickness.
6. Form some bits of clay into feet – they should be thick/tall enough that they will hold the bottom of the tray off the table at least ¼" (6mm), SO THEY WILL NEED TO BE TALLER THAN THAT, since the trays will be curved and lower in the center. The feet could be balls, hemispheres, cones, pyramids, brick-shaped, leaf-shaped, etc. etc. etc. They should somehow relate to the shapes of the trays.
7. Figure out where you want to place the feet on the bottom of the trays. The trays will get soft and want to slump when fired – the feet have to support the trays' curve, and also be widely enough spaced so that the trays are not tippy. When you figure it out, mark where you want the feet to go.
8. Attach the feet to the trays by scoring and slipping the trays and the feet where they will join.
9. Let the trays firm up until they're not floppy but still soft enough to bend. Flip them over on their feet and gently bend the trays to give them at least a slight convex curve, so the center is lower than the edges.
10. Smooth out the edges with your fingers or a couple quick swipes with a damp sponge.

Once you've finished making your trays, do not let them dry out. Use them to experiment as directed below.



Tray #1 – Carved Lines: When the tray is leather hard, create a design of carved-in lines. Try out various tools. If you end up with raggedy edges that are sticking up, GO OUTSIDE and sand/scrape them down or they will be hideous.

Tray #2 – Glazing Brushwork: This tray should have a nice smooth surface. Make sure your name is on the bottom and put it on the cart to be fired. You will use this tray to experiment with brushwork when glazing.

Tray #3 – Stamps & Texture: For this tray you will use stamps items with texture to impress designs and texture into the clay. The clay should not be too stiff, or it will want to crack. When you are pressing a stamp or textured item into the clay, support the clay with your hand directly below where you are pressing so the tray isn't bent or torn.

Tray #4 – Positive & Negative Shapes: When the tray is leather hard, paint it with underglaze of the color of your choice. Let the underglaze dry to the touch so it's not sticky or easily marred, then use a pencil, pen or pin tool to outline your design of positive (foreground) and negative (background) shapes. Once you have your design laid out, use a sgraffito tool to scrape away the underglaze from either the positive or the negative spaces. This technique of scratching through one layer to reveal a different colored layer below is called sgraffito, Italian for 'scratching through' and the root of 'graffiti'.

Make sure to put your NAME on ALL your pieces – NOT JUST YOUR INITIALS! Turn in your English paper or math homework with just your initials and see how that goes. In ceramics, put at least your full first or last name and the initial of the other. For example, I would sign my work Rob Flye, R Flye or Rob F. I will often not fire, throw away or put on the Shelf of Shame pieces without names or with only initials.