

Textured Hand-Built Vase

by Daniel Gegen



Molds Used:

[TX04 - Waved Texture](#)
[TX06 - Funky Texture](#)

The decorative surfaces on clay have always challenged the maker and appealed to the user of clay objects. One of the greatest challenges for a potter who decorates their work is finding an image or texture that fits the form of the pot. Drawing and painting on clay surfaces has always been an integral part of my work. Recently, I started using textured plaster slabs as a way to apply the decorative surface directly to the clay before the construction process begins.

Interesting things happen when the textured surface is manipulated into vessel forms. Textures can overlap one another to create contrast or add visual tension. The result is similar to the way patterned fabric looks when it is made into clothing. Except, I am more interested in how the patterns don't line up on the seams. Often I push the slabs out from the inside of the vessel to create volume, this will soften and distort the surface texture as well.



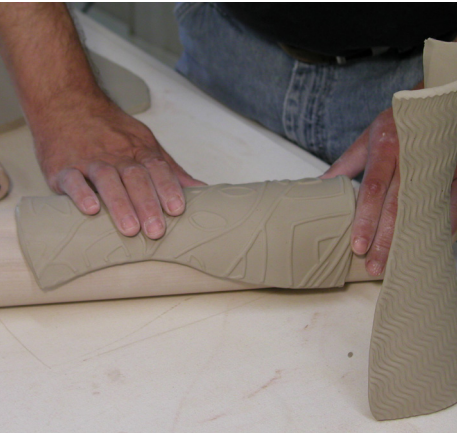
I begin the hand-building process by flattening and rolling my clay using a rolling pin and ¼ inch thick wooden slats to create an even thickness. Flip the clay over repeatedly after each rolling so that it does not stick to the canvas.



Use a template cut from card stock to cut out two hourglass silhouette shapes. I use heavy weight paper so that I can save and reuse my patterns. I create my templates by folding the paper in half and cutting the shape out to ensure that the shape is symmetrical when cut.



Place the soft clay on the textured plaster slab and tamp it into place using a sand bag. Then use a rolling pin to press the clay firmly onto the texture. The edges can be beveled by using a pony roller. Repeat this step using a contrasting texture to create the other half of the vase.



Lay the textured clay shapes on to the rolling pin to gently start forming the curve of the oval vase.



Stand the two halves up and score the inside surfaces using slip to join them together. The seams can fall on the sides of the pot, but I place the seam in the middle of the form. This will create an opportunity to place emphasis on the two different textures.



Gently press the two halves together, slightly overlapping, taking care not to distort the surface texture. I blend the seams together on the inside of the vase but leave the external seams visible. I want the viewer to see that the vase was constructed from slabs by hand.



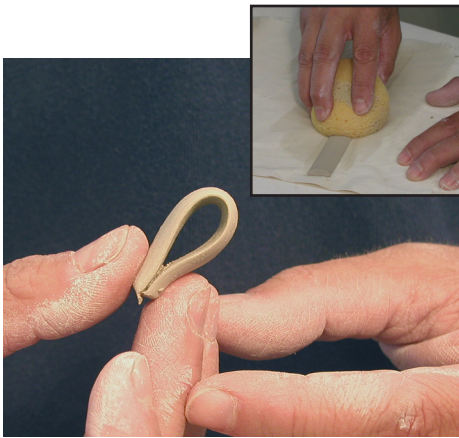
Attach a slab bottom (texture could be applied to the bottom slab as well). Cut the bottom slab 1/8" larger than the vase and bevel the bottom and top edges to give a more finished look.



To create the looped handles start by rolling out a 3/8" thick coil of clay.



Flatten the coil of clay between two soft cloths using the ridge in the palm of your hand. The cloth will soften the edges and help to create a half rounded effect to the handle.



Use a sponge to moisten the clay so that it can be bent without cracking. (Top right picture.)

Cut handles to length and fold the ends toward each other creating a loop.



Attach the handles by pressing in on the base of the looped handle with your thumb and index finger. Place your other hand on the inside of the vase to support the walls when pressing the handles on.



Take care to soften any rough edges with a damp sponge.



Cover your hand-built projects with plastic and let them dry slowly, this will ensure that the seams stay together.

This project was initially done as a demonstration by Daniel at the Creative Paradise booth at the Baltimore NCECA Conference.

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