

Tile Painting

Many cultures had decorative tile work as a part of daily life: be it in public places or in the homes of the wealthy. In this class we will see several different cultures' tile work and create one of your own on a pre-bisque fired tile. The result will be a tile usable as a trivet/coaster or for installing in a tile treatment.

The Materials Kit:

- 1 pre-bisque fired tile
- 4 dried pats of underglaze
- If you received your *Materials Kit* via the mail and do not have your own kiln, hang onto your shipping materials—you will need them to ship the tile back for glazing and firing.

What else you will need:

- Small paint brushes: white nylon is best for ceramics, followed by golden talkon. Do not use good natural-fiber brushes as the grit of the clay and underglaze will grind away delicate bristles.
- Mechanical pencil: 7mm or 5mm is (wood pencil graphite is more likely to contain iron that will leave marks on your tile after firing)
- Eraser: kid/school erasers such as those from papermate work better on ceramic surfaces than artist erasers
- X-acto -type craft knife: this is your “eraser” for correcting painting errors, spare blades may be wise because this will grind the blade away—you will hear us refer to this tool as a “scritcher” for obvious auditory reasons...
- A container of wash water: to wash brushes in. While underglazes in our Materials Kit are non-toxic, it might be best to find a non-food/drink vessel to use for this.
- *A design you want to draw and paint.*

Sources for more supplies:

- [Reannag Teine Resources Amazon Page](#)

The Directions:

Instructional video on YouTube forthcoming here –OR– [contact for livestreamed class scheduling](#)

- *If you are using the Materials Kit, start adding water to your dried underglazes **24 hours before you plan to use it.** It will be and easier to get an even consistency. Add a little water and let it sit and absorb it, coming back in a couple hours to check on it. Keep adding a little water to the underglaze until you get a creamy consistency.*
- Draw or trace your design onto the tile with a mechanical pencil. **Graphite burns away in the firing and will not be visible on the final product.** Yes, you can erase and redraw, but it may be wise to test your eraser on the back of the tile because some erasers can leave rubbery residue that can resist the underglaze. Be careful to keep your penciled lines from getting heavy: too much graphite acts as a resist to the underglaze or will burn away the underglaze on top of the graphite.
- **READ THIS PRIOR TO STARTING PAINTING –**
 - *There are hundreds of underglazes available on the market; these specs are for the underglazes in this kit only. If you are using other underglazes, the formulations and properties of them will be different.*
 - **Properties of the underglaze colors available in your *Materials Kit*:**
 - **Black:** most common for linework, can be used for shading
 - **Red:** single coat will show brushstrokes, 2 coats needed for solidity, can use for shading
 - **Orange:** strong colorant, can be used as linework for advanced painters
 - **Yellow:** single coat will show brushstrokes, 2 coats needed for solidity
 - **Green:** good for linework, can use for shading, easy to use
 - **Blue:** good for linework, can use for shading, easy to use
 - **Purple:** *the most difficult color*, requires 2 coats yet still shows brushstrokes or fading
 - **Brown:** single coat will show brushstrokes, 2 coats needed for solidity, can use for shading, not recommended for linework
 - **White:** will show on the off-white tiles, can use for shading, can be used as linework for advanced painters

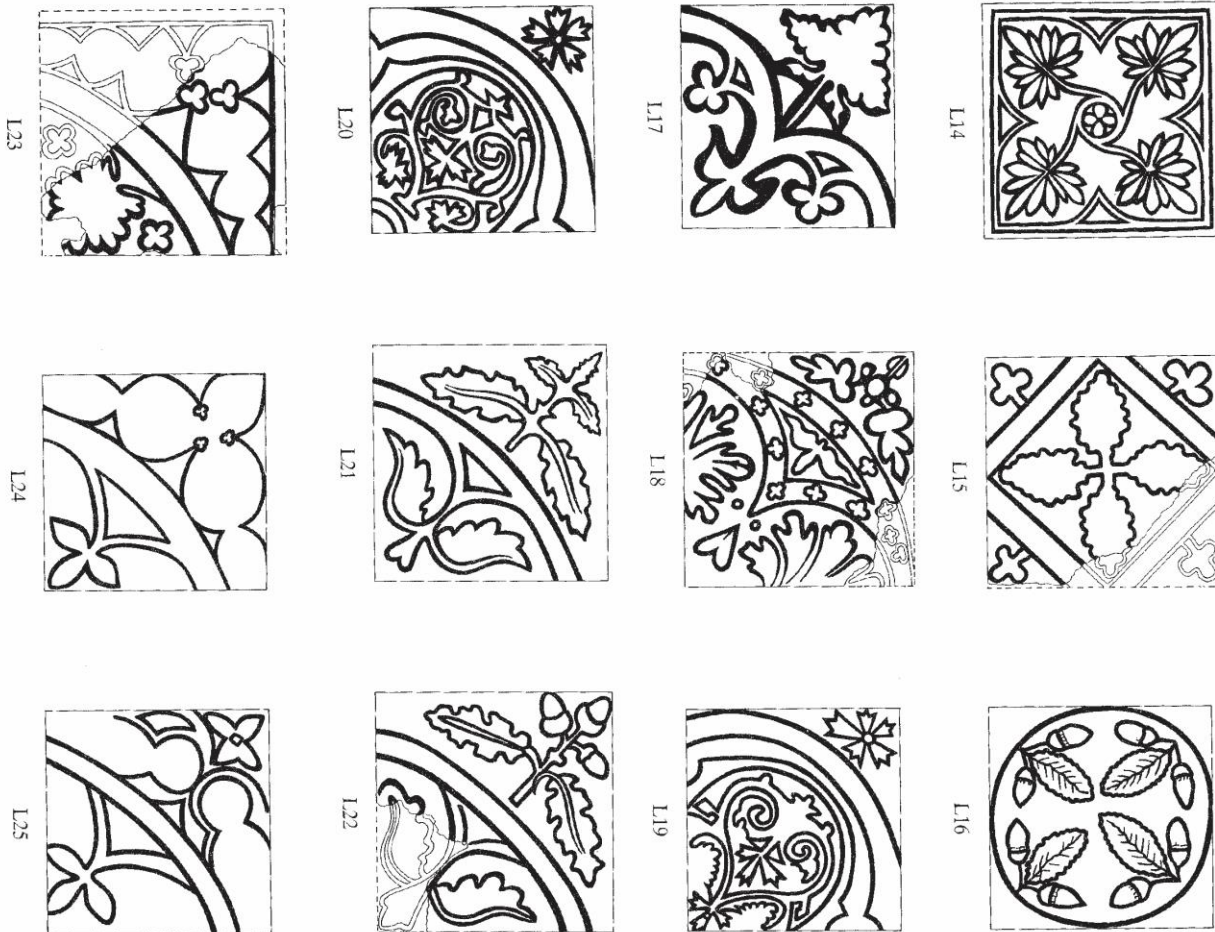
- **On mixing underglazes:**
 - *This is underglaze, not paint:* some colorants go through chemical changes in firing—and therefore can change color. While you can mix colors, there is no guarantee that you will get the color you are trying to achieve.
 - The same goes for stacking colors, as some colors are MUCH stronger than others:
 - Yellow layered over blue does not create green; it remains yellow over blue, since the blue is stronger.
 - Red can be put over a black design and you will still see through to the black because the black is stronger.
 - Green is such a strong color it covers most others. Any shading, like black or white for leaves, must be done on top of the green.
- **Painting your tile:**
 - **Using underglaze, paint your initials on the back of the tile for identification purposes;** pencil marks burn away when it goes into the glaze firing.
 - If applicable to your design, it is best to start with the outlines first—see the underglaze properties for the easiest choices for outlining.
 - If you shade, remember often 50% of the shading will fade out in firing.
 - The x-acto knife is your “underglaze eraser:” use it to scrape off painting errors or carve in fine details (a technique called sgraffito)
- ***Once you have completed painting on your tile, it needs to be clear-glazed and fired.***
 - **If you do not have your own kiln:** This is where you mail (or drop off) your tile back with us to be fired. We will apply the clear glaze, fire it to Cone 06 and then return the now finished tile to you.
 - **If you have or have access to a kiln:**
 - These are cone 06 tiles, so you will need a Cone 06 or 05 clear glaze to finish the tile.
 - Apply the glaze as per the instructions on the jar, careful to not get **any** glaze on the underside of the tile. If you get glaze on the underside, it will stick to your kiln shelf, ruining it, the tile, and potentially cutting up your fingers when getting them apart.
 - Fire to cone 06 in your kiln.

Terminology:

- **Bisque / bisqued:** first firing, generally to cone 05; as in bisqued (fired once) or bisqueware (a piece that has undergone quartz inversion—going from mug to earthen ware), ***not yet food-safe***
- **Underglaze:** colored, matte substance like glaze but with no melting agent, so it will neither seal the surface nor run, used to create designs on bisque fired pottery
- **Glaze:** a thin coating of glass, applied before the final firing as a blend of powdered minerals mixed with water, either commercially bought or formulated in the studio. Glazes can be formulated to be fired at all different cones (temperatures).
- **Cone 06 or 05:** depending on your chart 1830-1900°F
- **Kiln:** a furnace or oven for burning, baking, or drying, especially one for calcining lime or firing pottery.
- **see more at [Reannag Teine: Common Questions – Glossary of Terms](#)**

EXAMPLE OF PRE-1600s TILES:

Irish Medieval Tiles by Elizabeth S. Eames and Thomas Fanning, published by Royal Irish Academy in 1988. Technical reference full of drawings and black and white and color photos with descriptions. All in all, a great book and worth the money, but very hard to find.



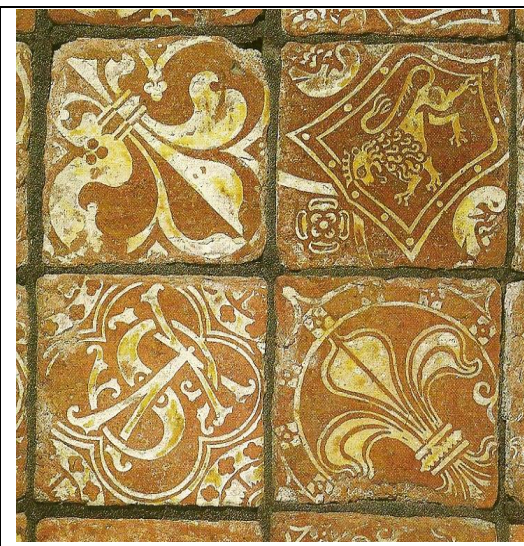
English

English Medieval Tiles by Elizabeth S. Eames, published by Harvard University Press in 1985. Technical reference full of drawings and black and white and color photos with descriptions. All in all, a great book and worth the money, but very hard to find.

Old English Tile Designs by Dover Publications. Inexpensive, good resource for drawings of tile designs. Includes several designs from Eames' book on English tiles.



Inlaid heraldic tiles 135mm sq from eastern arm of the abbey church at Hailes, Gloucestershire 1270s



Southam de la Bere, Gloucestershire 1600's

Italian, later 1400s



1480



1500



Siena 1495, Ashmolean

Middle Eastern

Freer|Sackler Galleries: the Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art: "In the Islamic world, ceramics makers emphasized brightly colored glazes and intricate designs to animate relatively simple shapes and architectural tiles. Drawing on a variety of decorative sources, they continually expanded and refined their repertoire of calligraphic, abstract, and figurative motifs. Some of the designs, such as the soaring phoenix on this fourteenth-century turquoise molded tile, reflect Iran's contacts with other artistic traditions, in particular China. Such "exotic" motifs became an integral part of the Persian visual language and were skillfully adapted to satisfy local taste and aesthetic preferences."



Architectural fragment
11th-12th cent. Stone-paste; painted under glaze, H: 37.0 W: 69.5 cm. Iran. F1908.192



early 14th cent., Il-Khanid period.
Stone-paste painted colorless glaze, H: 21.0 W: 21.3 cm. Iran. F1973.16



14th cent., Il-Khanid period
Stone-paste painted under clear glaze, H: 20.7 W: 20.8 cm
Sultanabad, Iran. F1973.15



late 13th-early 14th cent., Il-Khanid period.
Stone-paste painted under colorless glaze,
H: 10.5 W: 20.3 cm



early 14th cent., Il-Khanid period.
Stoneware, composite body
painted under clear glaze. H: 19.7
W: 19.7 D: 1.9 cm. Iran. Purchase
F1999.12



Rustam and the dragon
late 12th cent., Saljuq period .Stone-
paste painted with enamel, H: 18.3
W: 1.7 cm. Kashan, Iran. Gift of
Charles Lang Freer F1911.319



1500s Syrian



1500s Isnik, V&A



Spanish, Seville 1500s, Ashmolean



Netherlands 1585 – 1650, rijks museum

