

IMPRESSIVE TILES

A TEXTURAL MOSAIC
ART AND LANGUAGE ARTS
GRADES: 9-12

BASED ON



Iran or Central Asia
Mihrab (prayer niche), late 15th century-16th century
Glazed ceramic tile, mosaic technique
Gift of the Museum Shop Committee and its 90 Volunteers
1971.59

OBJECTIVES

- Students will create clay stamps that make a defined impression in clay.
- Students will explore words and textures in small pieces of clay, together forming a glazed mosaic.
- Students will reflect and critique their final project.

CONCEPT

This unit introduces the students to clay. Between making stamps, discovering textures, choosing words, rolling and impressing small pieces, the students explore clay. The students will create a mosaic textured piece. The students will self-evaluate and reflect on the ideas of, textures, construction and glazing processes. The *Mihrab* is also a mosaic piece with words. The students will compare and contrast their work with this piece.

MATERIALS

- Images of the *Mihrab* (prayer niche) and other textural, mosaic-type works
- Low-fire clay (approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ lb per student)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " templates
- Clay boards with canvas covering (1 per student)
- Teacher and student examples
- Needle tools, rolling pins, sponges, slip, q-tips,
- A variety of texture materials (What can be pressed into clay?)

- Brushes, black and assorted colors of glazes
- Water/containers, paper towels, water-filled spray bottles
- Plastic bags (for storing in-process tiles)
- Foam/cardboard (if designing their own word) and/or letter stamps
- Stamp hand-out
- Impressive tiles hand-out
- Cardboard or masonite for mounting tiles
- Hot glue or glue to adhere the tiles to a backer board
- Self-evaluation/reflection

VOCABULARY

Stamp- impress a pattern or mark, using an inked block or die or other instrument

Impression- a mark imprinted on a surface of something

Texture- the feel, appearance, or consistency of a surface or a substance

Mosaic- a picture or pattern produced by arranging together small colored pieces of hard material, such as stone, tile, or glass

Emboss- carve, mold, or stamp (a design) in relief on a surface or object

Clay slab- rolled out clay of even thickness

Written reflection- serious thought or consideration, committed to writing

PROCEDURE

1. The students explore the concept of pressing textures into a clay surface. Clay stamps and rubber stamps are used as reference. Referring to the clay stamp hand-out, the students construct two small clay stamps. Students are reminded that all letters and numbers need to be backwards on the stamp, as they will be impressed in reverse.
2. The students are introduced to mosaics, including the *Mihrab*. The idea of words in ceramics is discussed. What word/words mean something to them? (They cannot use a person's name).
3. The Impressive Tiles hand-out is reviewed. They are to bring and use three textures from home, as well as use at least one of their bisque-fired stamps.
4. The students construct 16-20 small tiles, 1 ½" square. Each tile has a deep impression in it, or a word. They are to use at least eight different textures but are challenged to make each tile unique. The word itself can be created using 'fun foam' cut out letters, mounted on cardboard, or rubber stamps. (Note that the word can be 2-3 tiles wide). Additionally, the students can swap and use their classmates' textures.
5. The students examine the craftsmanship of each of their tiles. Craftsmanship is critical: smooth edges on each tile, make certain each impression is deep enough and does not distort the square, clean up any clay crumbs, and include initials on each tile.
6. Once bisque-fired, a demonstration on using black glaze occurs. One coat of black glaze is applied. Once the glaze is dry, a damp sponge is used to remove the top surface of glaze, leaving black in all the cracks and crevices. The goal is to enhance the overall appeal of each textured tile.
7. After the tiles dry, a single coat of a colored glaze is applied to each tile. The students have their choice of 1-3 glaze colors.
8. Once glaze-fired, the students mount their work. (If time and expenses allowed, the students could add grout between each tile).
9. A group critique occurs. Additionally, students write a reflection about their mosaic. They compare and contrast with the *Mihrab*. They complete a self-evaluation, recalling challenges and successes, as well as the wipe away glaze technique.

ASSESSMENT

Stamps

Two stamps with: a flat face, handle, deep, clean impression (at least $\frac{1}{8}$ " deep) or a $\frac{1}{8}$ " raised surface, no rough lines, no needle-thin lines, pattern runs to the edge. All letters are backwards so they are readable. Creates a definite impression in the clay.

Mosaic

Goals of the mosaic: 16-20 tiles, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " squares, one word included (additional words smaller) that is on 2-3 tile spaces, at least one student stamp used, three textures from home used, deep impressions, name and bell # on the bottom of each tile, glazed according to procedure, mounted.

Craftsmanship & Effort: Attention to detail in all the tiles, smooth edges of each tile, all impressions are deep enough and do not distort the square, cleaned up any clay crumbs, include initials on each tile. Care in glazing so impression stands out. No glaze on the bottom. Carefully mounted. Time and effort apparent in the final project.

Creativity/Visual Impact/Originality: The students demonstrated creative thinking throughout the project, from the stamps they created, to the textures they brought from home, to the placement and use of each texture, as well as final placement when mounting the tiles. High visual appeal.

NATIONAL STANDARDS

Visual Arts:

Creating Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Presenting Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

English Language Arts:

Standard 5: Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements to appropriately communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

RESOURCES

Tile Art: A History of Decorative Ceramic Tiles, Noel Riley

Rookwood Pottery, Jeffrey Snyder

Handmade Tiles; Designing, Making, Decorating, Frank Giorgini

Khan Academy-

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-islam/islamic-art-medieval/v/ilkhanid-mihrab-1354-55-isfahan-iran-metropolitan-museum-of-art-new-york>

Daily Art Magazine-

<http://www.dailyartmagazine.com/art-of-mihrab/>

Museum with No Frontiers-

http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;de;Mus01;19;en



Impressive Tiles

You will be creating a series of small ceramic tile squares with an impression/texture in each piece. These pieces will be mounted together to form a mosaic.

Vocabulary: Stamp, Impression, Texture, Mosaic, Emboss, Slab

Before beginning the project, you will need:

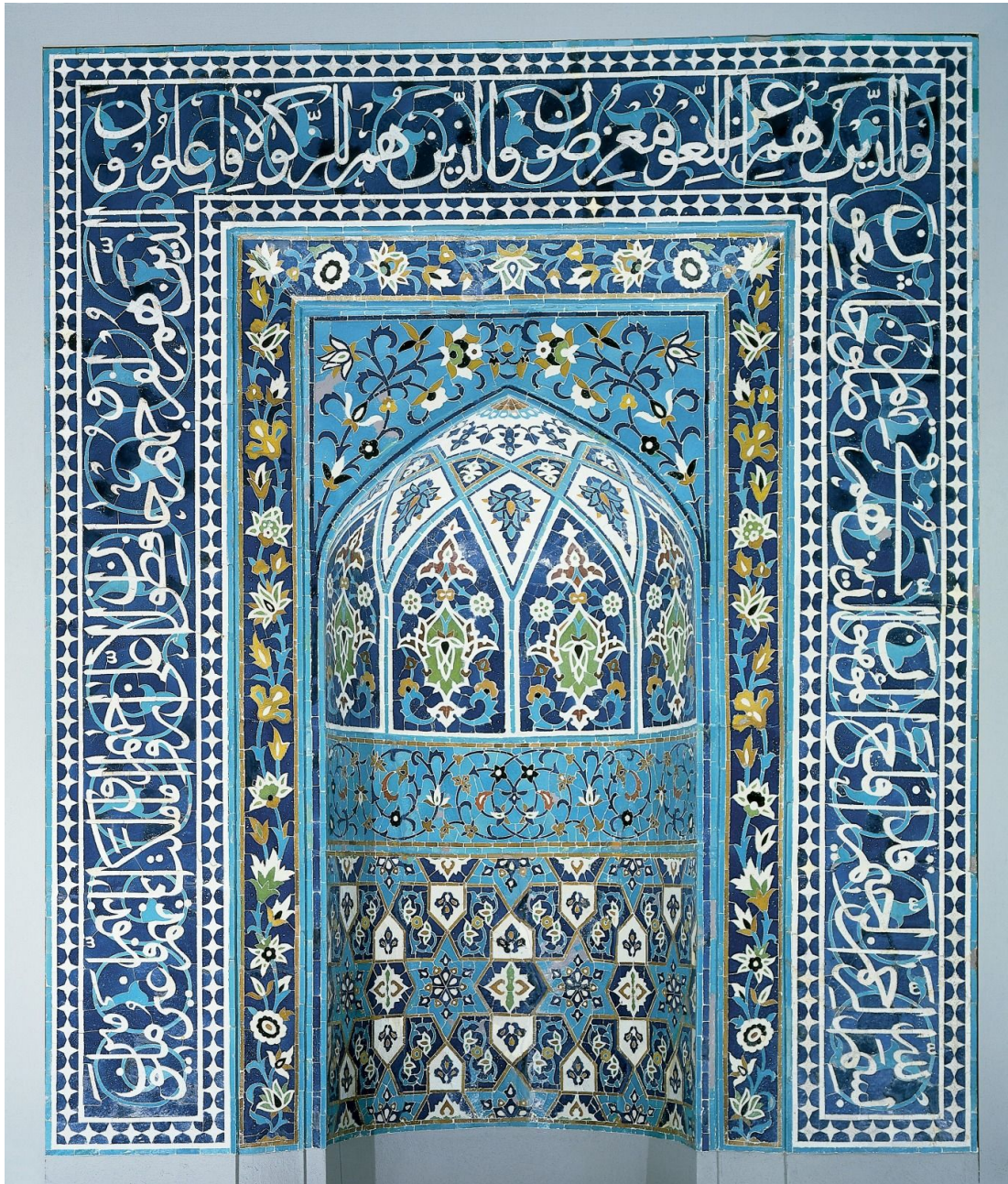
1. At least one stamp that you have created (and has been bisque-fired).
2. Three or more texture items that you have brought from home. (What can you press into clay to create an indentation?). This is a homework assignment.
3. A word that you have chosen will be stamped into clay.

Choose a word (or select one of your own):

Adventure	Alive	Animated	Astute
Bighearted	Bloom	Brave	Bubbly
Cherish	Connected	Curious	Elegance
Active	Adorable	Amaze	Astonish
Caring	Charming	Clever	Courageous
Accept	Artistic	Authentic	Beautiful
Creative	Discover	Effervescent	Energized
Family	Friendship	Gather	Genuine
Grace	Harmony	Hug	Ingenious
Inventive	Joy	Enthusiastic	Freedom
Give	Graceful	Incredible	Laughter
Fortunate	Funny	Gorgeous	Gratitude
Heart	Helpful	Imaginative	Independent
Intuitive	Love	Miracle	Motivate
Positive	Quest	Relax	Remarkable
Smile	Soul	Spirited	Strong
Optimistic	Peace	Original	Powerful
Rejoice	Serenity	Sincerity	Spiritual
Marvelous	Paradise	Quiet	Silence
Team	Thankful	Today	Transform
Wonder	Together	Triumph	Upbeat
Wonderful	Yes	Tranquil	Value
Willing	Wondrous	Visualize	Vision

Mosaic concept-

- First, decide 16 or 20 squares.
- The word can take up to 3 squares. Where will you place your word?
- You must have at least 8 different textures (in addition to the word).
- Up to two additional words can be added on other tiles, but they must be secondary/smaller.
- Craftsmanship is critical: smooth edges of each tile, make certain each impression is deep enough and does not distort the square, clean up any clay crumbs, include your initials on each tile.
- Glazing will emphasize the impressions, with specific colors and techniques.



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EXAMPLES OF STUDENT WORK

