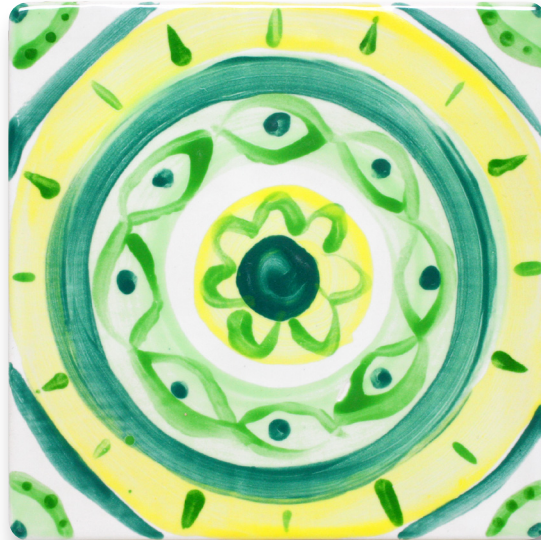


MAJOLICA RENAISSANCE

In-Glaze Painting on Ceramic Surfaces

by Diana Faris



“Majolica” is the historical term used to describe a decorative ceramic technique of painting with glaze materials on top of an opaque, tin-based white glaze. It is a process that was first developed in the Middle East to imitate Chinese Porcelain. It was brought across Gibraltar into Spain by the Moors. Spanish potters then began making Muslim-inspired works in this method. Italians imported this ware from the Spanish port of Majorca, calling it “maiolica” ware. When the French imported it from the Italian city of Faenza, they called it “faience.” Delft pottery also employs the same technique as Majolica (Maiolica), and is most often represented by blue brushwork on a white background.

Traditionally, the Majolica process involved completely coating terra cotta clay, or red-ware in an opaque white glaze, then painting on top of that unfired glaze with decorative stains and oxides. AMACO’s low-fire Teacher’s Palette and Teacher’s Choice glazes allow you to mimic this historic technique with ease and success in the classroom over any low-fire earthenware clay.

Lesson Plan Goals and Objectives

- Students will study the influence of the trade industry on pottery, and how this ultimately affected Italian ceramics during the Renaissance. They will learn about the Moorish influence in Spain and eventually Italy from the early 8th to mid 15th century.
- Students will learn how to replicate the historic ceramic decorating technique of “Majolica” using AMACO® TP and TC low-fire Gloss Glazes.
- Students will learn how to use geometry to create symmetrical patterns on ceramic tiles, in the style of Italian Renaissance architectural and decorative tile work.
- Students will learn how to create and use a template to draw symmetrical and repeating designs.

This lesson is suitable for grades 5-12. May be adapted for all grades.



National Visual Art and Core Standards

- Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and culture.
- Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.
- Using knowledge of structures and functions.
- Choosing a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.
- Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics of artwork.
- Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines (specifically Geometry, Math and History).

Tools & Materials

- AMACO® TP Teacher’s Palette Glazes—24 Colors, available in Pints and half pints and various Class Packs assortments including:
 - Teacher’s Palette Class Pack #1, 8 oz—6 colors (39239V)
 - Teacher’s Palette Class Pack #2, 8 oz—12 colors (39243A)
 - Teacher’s Palette Class Pack #3, Pint —12 colors (39270H)
- AMACO® TC Teacher’s Choice Glaze —TC-11 White, Gallon (36502B)
- AMACO® Black underglaze in Pints or 2oz: LUG-1, V-361 or V-370
- Optional: AMACO® Underglaze Pencils
- Optional: Underglaze Applicator bottles, 18 gauge (11261G)
- 6" x 6" Bisque-fired tiles (11333L) or pottery
- Optional: AMACO® #5 banding wheel (11078J)
- Glazing brushes, assorted sizes
- Sketchbook or paper, soft pencils—one per student
- Paper plates or paint mixing palettes
- Pint container plastic lid, preferably clear—one per student (approx. 5" diameter)
- Scissors, black markers, rulers

Preparation



1. Show students images of both historical Majolica wares and contemporary ceramic art using the Majolica process. Have students loosely sketch their desired symmetrical designs, and a mythical animal of their choice for the center of their tiles. They may create their own imaginary creature by combining two different animals together.

2. Lightly wipe bisque surfaces with a clean damp sponge to remove any dust before glazing.



3. Write each student's name on the back with underglaze by brush, an Applicator bottle or an AMACO® underglaze pencil.



4. Glaze each tile with 2-3 even coats of TC-11 White glaze (allow glaze to dry between coats).

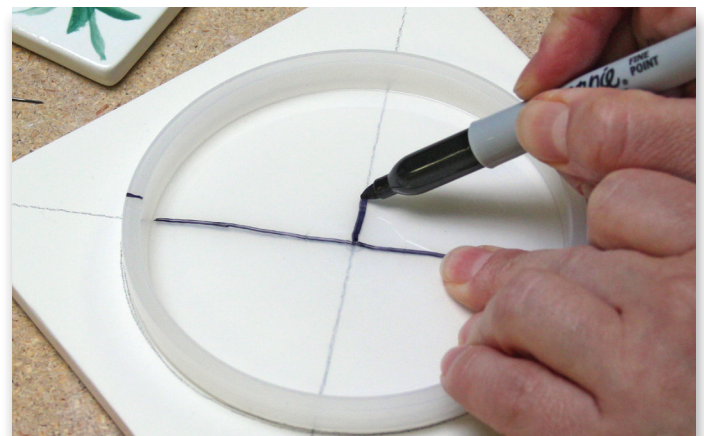
Creating Templates



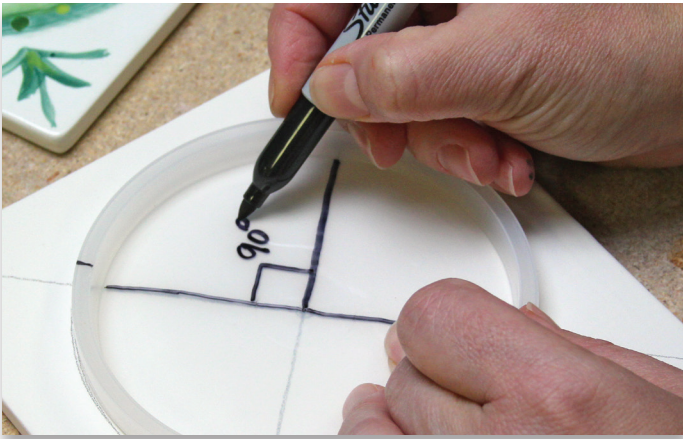
1. After white glaze dries, have students find the center of the tile by connecting each two opposing corners with a lightly drawn line and rule using a soft pencil (lines will burn out and disappear during firing). Tile center is the intersecting point of these two lines.



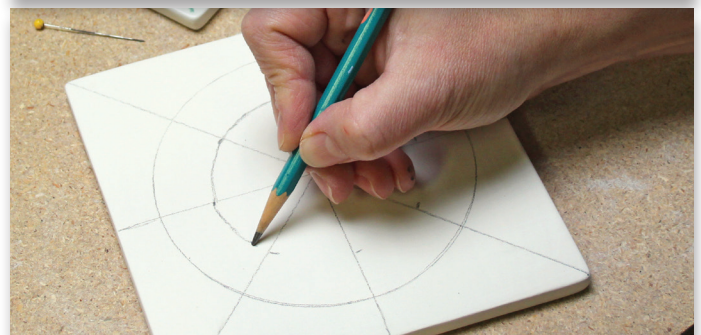
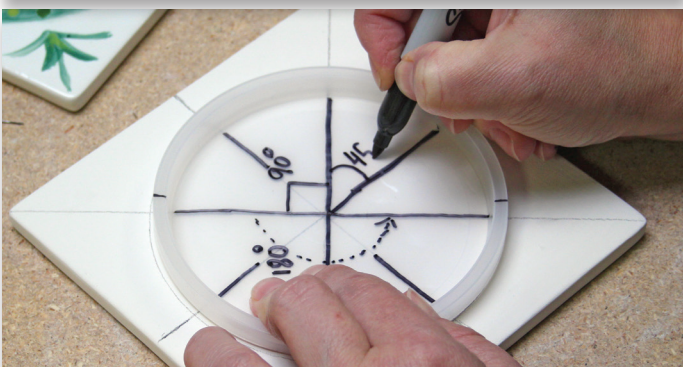
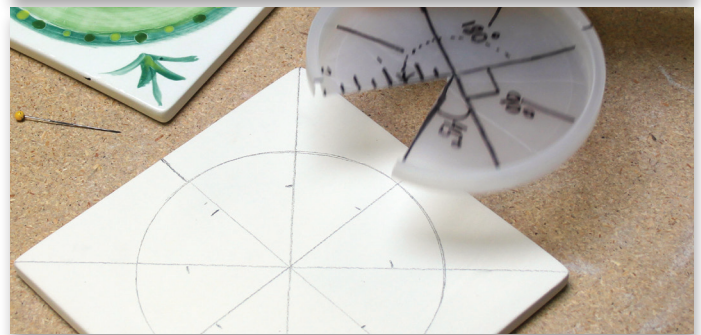
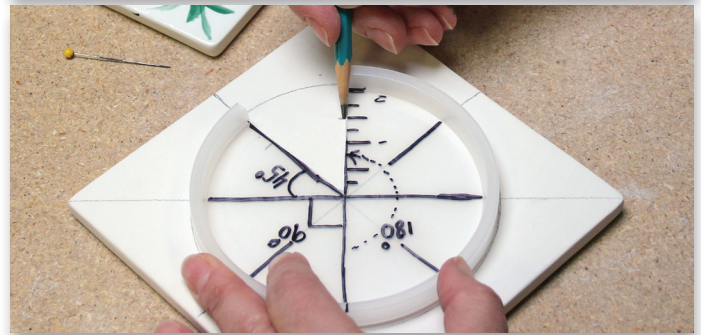
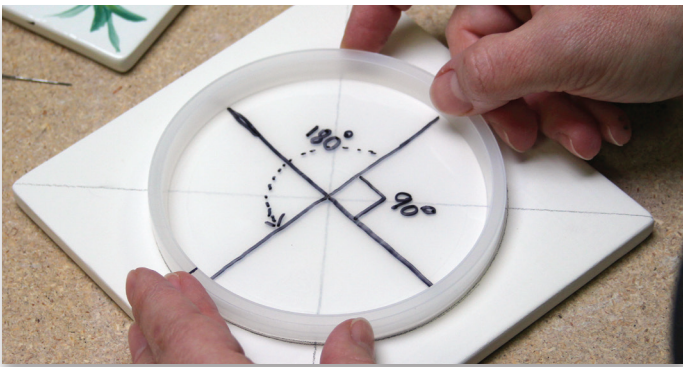
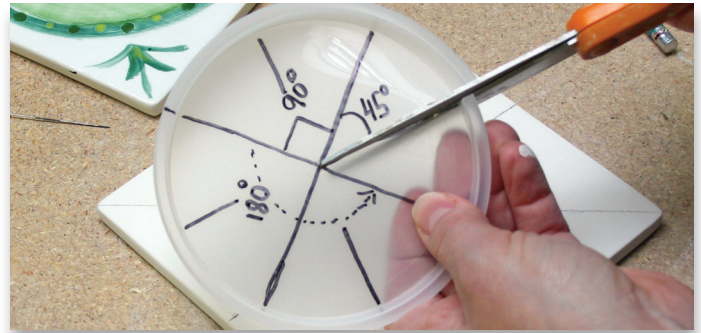
2. Place a clean plastic lid on the tile and align the center bead over the "X" created by the drawn lines. Hold lid in place and trace a circle around the lid onto the tile.



3. Turn the lid into a template by using a fine-tip black marker to trace the lines created in step 1 onto the lid to divide it into four equal quadrants.



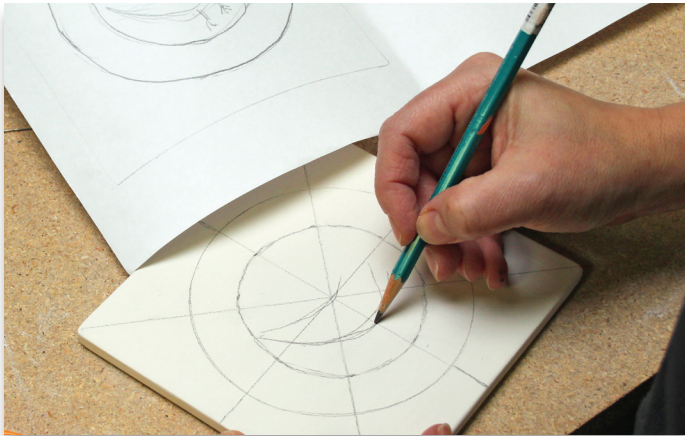
4. Mark one corner as 90° and two together as 180° .



5. Rotate the template/lid and align its quadrants with the outside edges of the square tile, so the four quadrants are divided into eighths, or 45 degree angles. Trace these onto the lid as they will assist in applying the design motifs symmetrically around each circle.

6. Cut out one of the 45 degree "pie sections" to use the inside edge as a ruler. This helps with sketching an inner circle parallel to the exterior one. The inner circle can be a frame for the mythical animal.

Completing Projects



1. Have students sketch their design onto the tile. All pencil marks will fire out.



2. Use paper plates as a mixing palette. Have students select their color schemes by placing a dollop of each desired TP glaze color onto their plate.



3. Instruct students to start with the lighter or background colors, and paint each section with an appropriate brush size. Dilute colors with water on the palette to create longer, flowing brushstrokes.



4. If desired, black underglaze may be painted last to create a matt outline or definition to the design. Use brush or an 18 gauge Underglaze Applicator containing the underglaze.

5. Completed tiles should be fired to cone 05 at medium speed.



Susan Snyder,
Leopard Plate



Posey Bacopoulos,
Square Bowls



Linda Arbuckle,
Small Rectangular Tray with Green Tabs

Resources

Contemporary Majolica Artists include Linda Arbuckle, Susan Snyder and Posey Bacopoulos. Students should look up these ceramic artists' websites on-line and discover how they have adapted this glazing technique to decorate their own ceramic artwork.

Glossary

In-glaze: Ceramic decoration applied on the surface of the glaze before the glaze firing so it matures simultaneously with the glaze.

Majolica/Maiolica: Decorated earthenware pottery with an opaque white glaze. Traditionally applied to an unfired glaze surface by brush and usually restricted to five colors: cobalt blue, copper green, iron red, manganese purple and antimony yellow.

Moors: Credited with introducing Majolica technique to Europe. Medieval Muslim inhabitants of Morocco, western Algeria, Western Sahara, Mauritania, the Iberian Peninsula, Sicily, and Malta. They influenced Spain's ceramic art.

Palette: In this lesson plan, three related, but different meanings:

1. Mixing Palette— a plastic, glass, wooden, or paper surface which a painter mixes pigments on.
2. Color Palette—colors put on the palette to use for painting.
3. Teachers Palette (TP)—AMACO® low-fire gloss glaze line.

Renaissance: In French, Renaissance means "re-birth", and refers to a cultural movement from the 14th to the 17th century, beginning in Italy in the Late Middle Ages and later spreading to the rest of Europe. Artistically developed highly realistic linear perspective. Scientifically, for its emphasis on mathematics and collecting measurable and objective evidence.

Template: A stencil, pattern or overlay used in graphic arts and sewing to replicate letters, shapes or designs.



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