

Weathered Color Layering

by Michael Harbridge

This technique sheet goes along with the webinar by the same name, originally shown August 7, 2013. This technique sheet may not be reproduced or distributed to anyone other than those paying for the webinar.

Weathered color layering can be done on greenware or bisque. I prefer bisque because it is more durable and won't break during the sanding stage. The colors used with this method are clay based underglazes. These types of colors generally require three coats to make them opaque. Examples are Duncan Cover Coats, Mayco UG colors and Amaco Velvet underglazes. Products like Concepts, Stroke & Coat and Fun Strokes may work for this method, but the dust created can be harmful, so those type of products are not recommended. Most underglazes are a form of colored clay and do not contain frit or silica. Some artists choose to wear a mask of some kind for protection while sanding or removing color.

Step 1) Damp sponge the greenware or bisque to remove dust and dampen the ware for better color adhesion.

Step 2) Apply two to three coats of the first color. I use red so when I sand the colors, and I see red, I know to stop. Any color will work, but since red is the universal color for "stop", I find it works best. Always apply two or more coats with this layer so it's thicker and will not sand through as easily.

Step 3) Allow the colors to dry to the touch between coats and colors. Continue to add layers of color. Each additional color after the base color only requires one coat. It does not really matter what colors are used or how many layers you end up with.

Step 4) Apply your top coat of color. In all the samples shown, black was used so the colors below would show up better. But any color can be used. Apply one to two coats for solid coverage. Darker colors should have at least two coats applied. Allow to dry completely. Sanding damp ware does not work real well.



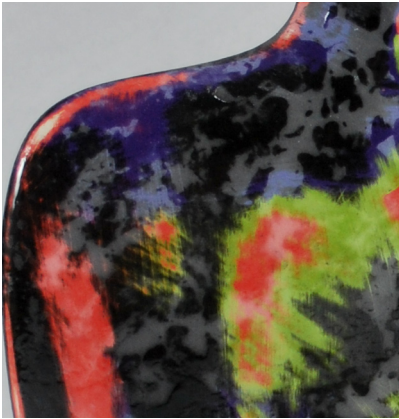
Step 5) Use medium grit sandpaper, a cleaning cube, grit sander or other means to sand random areas. Once you start seeing red (or the color used for your base color) stop sanding in that spot. If you go through to white (the bisque or greenware) you can leave it or touch it up with more color.

Step 6) Always dust away the powder created while sanding with the use of a dry brush. You don't want the clay dust blowing all over.

Step 7) You can also use stencils for your patterns. Place the stencil on top of the dry color and sand the open areas. Sometimes the openings are small and sanding does not work well. In that case, use a stylus or other sharp-tipped tool to scratch away the design. Be careful not to press too hard.

Step 8) You can also use those tools to do free form designs.

Step 9) Once you have the entire design completed, it's best to dust away all loose powder and fire to cone 04. Since you have applied multiple layers of clay-based underglaze, clear glazing at this point and firing could result in pinholes, craters or other imperfections in the surface. If you started with bisque, you could fire the item to 06.



Step 10) After removing from the kiln, use a damp sponge to clean any remaining dust from the ware. Dip or brush with appropriate amount of clear glaze of choice. You can also sponge decorative items with wax resist and then apply clear glaze for a combination look of dull and shiny.

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