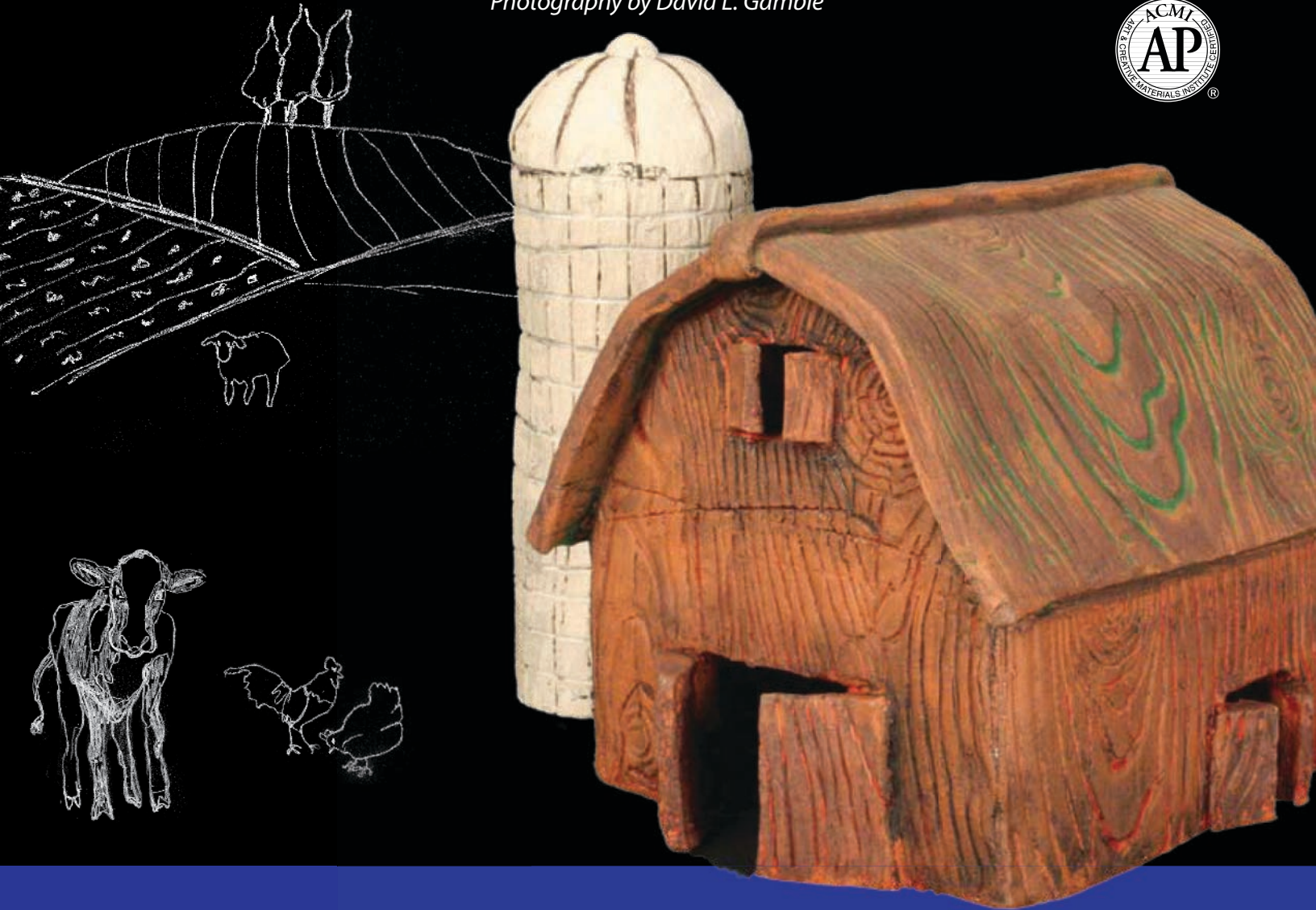


Barns and Silos

by Tracy Gamble

Tracy Gamble is a studio potter working and teaching in Plainfield, Indiana

Photography by David L. Gamble



Driving near our studio and home in Indiana I come across barns and silos and the inspiration for this lesson plan. There is something so basic about our lives, history and culture that bring me a sense of calm when I see barns and farmlands. The barns don't have to be functional, either. I enjoy the way they look if they are working, historical or maybe just falling down. Create these slab barns and silos. Students study barn structures in person or in photographs. Design and build, first with paper and then use the paper as a template for building the clay structure. Complete barns and silos over a couple of class periods for 5th grade students and up. Design expectations advance with age and experience levels.

Tools & Materials

- AMACO® Low Fire Clay White #27 or Red #77 (approximately 5 lbs. per student)
- Copy Paper, heavy sketch paper, cardboard (for paper design and templates/patterns)
- Ruler
- Scissors
- Masking Tape
- AMACO® Slab Roller or AMACO® Rolling Pin
- Rib - smoothing
- AMACO® Fettling Knife (11192H)
- Textures and texture tools
- AMACO® Double-Ended Clay Shapers—11126L No. 6 Angle Chisel/Flat Chisel or 11128N No. 2 Taper Point/Cup Round
- AMACO® Wire Clay Cutter (11017N)
- AMACO® Scoring Tools (11199R)
- Vinegar and vinegar brushes
- Wooden skewers
- AMACO® Brush-Fitch Fan, Series 28, No. 6 (11183R)
- AMACO® Sponge (11239J)
- AMACO Velvet Underglazes
- AMACO® Gloss Decorating Colors (GDCs)

Technique

Creating Barns & Silos



1. Right side—design for barn in paper
Left side—clay barn

Design and construct barn out of paper and tape together to ensure fit. Then use paper as templates/patterns to cut pieces from textured clay slabs to create barn in clay.

Lesson Plan Goals and Objectives

- Students will design and plan a structure.
- Students will create a clay vessel using textured slabs.
- Students will learn and use proper slab-building techniques to create structures.
- Students will glaze and personalize their work.
- The lesson incorporates art history, aesthetics, and criticism with a hands-on activity.
- Students will be able to identify patterns and visual styles from American culture.

This lesson is suitable for 5th grade students and up.

National Visual Arts 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 and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.
- Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.
- Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.



2. Roll slabs with a slab roller or rolling pin with a thickness of $\frac{3}{8}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ " and smooth with rib. Texture slab with, pieces of wood (as pictured), stamps, texture molds, and other found objects. There are too many texture tools possibilities to list. Be creative and find some good textures to use on slabs.



3. Place paper templates/patterns on textured slabs and cut using a fettling knife or a cutting tool.



4. Sides, ends and roof of barn.



5. "Raise" build your barn. Score where parts are to be attached with a scoring tool or wooden skewer. Connect using vinegar to moisten scored area only and press together.



6. Secure connection with a coil and smooth with finger.



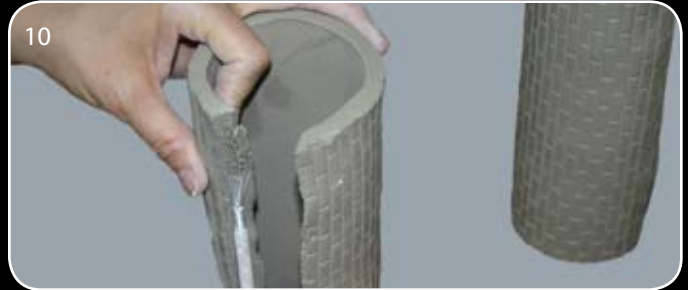
7. Finish barn by adding details—cutting out doors, windows, etc.



9. Roll Silo and cut thru on a diagonal for a clean edged seam.



10. Score area and connect using vinegar to moisten scored area only.



8. Cut silo and silo roof from textured slab. Silo roof may be curved and textured as desired. Heights and widths of silos can vary. Many silos seem to be taller than the barns.



11. Press together and gently smooth to maintain texture.



12. Score top of silo and roof, moisten with vinegar, attach and smooth.

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13. Bisque fire to Cone 04.

Tips for Success

- Make sure the clay slabs are stiff enough to hold shape when putting walls and roof together. The slabs should be stiff enough to assemble but pliable enough to apply texture. Plan on using approximately five pounds of clay per student.
- Design roof large enough for over hang on all sides of barn.
- Add roof design details of clay strips to cover any cracks in the clay that may appear when bending clay to attach roof.

Glossary

Bisque: Unglazed ceramic after the first firing.

Fire: To heat the clay in a kiln at a very high temperature until it is hard and it becomes ceramic.

Glaze: A special clear or colored liquid mixture applied to ceramic surfaces that become hard and glass-like when fired to the right temperature in a kiln.

Scoring: Carving tiny slits into the moist clay with a fork or scoring tool before adding slip and joining.

Sculpture: A three-dimensional work of art which is intended to be viewed from all sides. It can be made out of materials such as plaster, stone, wood, metal, and clay.

Template: A shaped piece used as a pattern.

Underglaze: A colored decoration applied to bisque or greenware and usually covered with a glaze before firing.

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Glaze Decoration

14. Brush on one to two coats of underglaze.

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15. If textured, lightly wipe some of the underglaze off, the barn and silo, with a damp sponge. Use a bucket of water nearby and rinse sponge in bucket when necessary.

Other low fire glazes can be used as an alternative or in addition to the matt finish of the underglazes.



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