

Distinctive Works of Art for Elegant Home Decor



Clay Decor, LLC

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What Sets Us Apart: Product and the Process

Hand-crafting is the Clay Decor way. Absolutely every part of creating our tiles, sinks, and decorative elements (with the exception of the kiln) is done by hand in our studio.

Tiles

Clay Decor, LLC only produces Art Tile; tile which is made entirely by hand. All tiles are made in relief, which means that the images on the surface are raised from the background. A.M. Foulke creates the tiles in the tradition of medieval German potters, using wood molds rather than plaster as much of the rest of the industry does. In the 16th century 'Kacholefen', a type of stove, was decorated with relief tiles and used to heat homes in Austro-Hungary, Germany, Switzerland, Bohemia, Northern Italy and Scandinavia. German potters created tiles for these stoves by carving blocks of wood with a design of the day, then pressing wet clay into the molds to reveal a raised design. Foulke chose this method because "it is deeply satisfying to work a design into the wood and clay, and it connects me to my German ancestry and my Pennsylvania German heritage."

The process for making Clay Decor tiles begins with a sketch, which is transferred to a block of wood, the wood is cut to the tile outline, and then the design is hand-carved into the wood. The carving is refined and sanded to ensure proper depth in lines and spaces and smooth edges. Wet stoneware clay is rolled into even slabs, which are cut and hand-pressed into the tile mold. Each tile is then separately worked to refine the edges and design relief. The tiles are pressed and dried slowly to prevent warping, then fired in the kiln to over 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. After the initial firing, glazes are applied. All of Clay Decor's glazes are formulated and mixed in small batches in our studio to ensure consistent quality in materials and results.

Sinks

Clay Decor's vessel sinks are created with the same stoneware clay and glazes used in the tiles, which ensures the consistent look of all finished materials. The Classic, Fluted, and Prairie sink designs start as a ball of clay which is worked into a large bowl on the pottery wheel by the artist. A hole is cut for the drain, and bottom finished to be mounted in a countertop. The clay is carefully dried, fired in the kiln, glazed, and fired a final time. Our new rectangular sinks are created by draping and sculpting sheets of wet clay around a plaster form designed and constructed in the studio, following the same drying and firing process as the circular sinks.

Decor Elements

Elements of decor include individually created sculptures with shapes and finishes unique to each piece—no two are alike. Works are made with a combination of techniques depending upon the piece. The artist begins with raw clay and transforms it into sculpture on the pottery wheel. Some sculptures are modified with hand-building techniques, using clay coils or slabs. Other sculptures come to life through carving or using a clay paddle. These are non-utilitarian works of art meant for display.