Slade-Gingerbread

Outline & Goals for your class (to be shared with students)

In this online workshop, students will create a festive ceramic gingerbread house using brown terra cotta clay and slab-building techniques. We will approach the project much like building a real gingerbread house: constructing walls and a roof from flat slabs, then decorating the finished structure with white slip “icing,” colourful underglazes, and handmade ceramic candies and sprinkles.

Along the way, students will learn foundational slab-building skills that can be applied to future functional, sculptural, and architectural ceramic projects. Students will be encouraged to personalize their houses through architectural details, textures, colour, and plenty of over-the-top candy decoration!

Workshop Outline

- Rolling and preparing even slabs for construction
- Using paper templates to cut walls, roofs, windows, and doors
- Adding texture and architectural details while slabs are flat
- Timing construction and understanding when slabs are ready to assemble
- Scoring, slipping, joining, and reinforcing slabs
- Constructing a strong, square architectural form
- Creating rooflines, chimneys, windows, doors, and other details
- Using white slip to create piped “icing”
- Making miniature ceramic candies, gumdrops, peppermints, and sprinkles
- Adding colour and detail with underglazes
- Finishing, drying, and preparing the completed house for firing

Course Outcomes

By the end of the workshop, students will:

- Understand the basic principles of slab construction
- Be able to use templates to create three-dimensional ceramic forms
- Gain confidence joining slabs and constructing hollow forms
- Learn techniques for minimizing warping, cracking, and weak seams
- Understand how to use slip, texture, and underglaze as decorative surfaces
- Learn how to create and attach small sculptural embellishments
- Understand appropriate drying and firing considerations for terra cotta

- Leave with the skills to adapt these techniques to their own future slab-built projects
- Be in a festive mood :)