

# Speedball®

## Camouflage with Color and Pattern

Exploring the visual effects of color and pattern with ceramic glazes.



by Nancy Sowder

**History** – This project is derived from one traditionally made with complimentary colors of paint on paper.

**Goals**- To explore the visual effects of pattern and color; to create a template to transfer a design to a clay object; to explore lettering as a design element.

### Materials:

1. Leather hard clay object suitable for surface design. It should not be excessively textured or delicate. It may be wheel thrown, or hand built. It could also be a leather hard tile.
2. Speedball® underglazes
3. Brushes
4. Paper and pencil
5. Speedball® clear earthenware covering glaze
6. Scissors
7. Tape (masking)
8. Slides or photos of lettering, patterns or op art

**Description:** The students will choose their name or other lettering to paint onto the clay piece. This will be “imbedded” in a pattern such as stripes, swirls, spirals etc. Switching the foreground and background color within the pattern will result in a camouflage or op art effect. Students will choose two colors which may be complimentary for the most striking effect, related colors for a more subdued result, or just two colors of their choosing.

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**Step 1** – Have the students cut a piece of paper to correspond with the area to be lettered, and then remove it to draw their plan. Draw the name (or other text) in a bold enough, open font to make painting possible. Choose a pattern to draw over the text, in this case stripes was used. Where the pattern and the lettering intersect, new shapes are created.



**Step 2** – Paint the entire piece with two coats of the lighter of the two chosen colors. When dry to the touch, reattach the paper to the leather hard clay with masking tape and trace the letters and pattern lightly to leave a faint imprint. Remove the paper pattern. (Once the pattern is traced onto the clay the piece may be allowed to dry if desired, or it may be kept leather hard until complete.)



**Step 3** – Begin painting with the second color. In this example, every other stripe is painted blue. In the blue stripes, the lettering will be chartreuse; in the chartreuse stripes the lettering will be blue. See photo.

**Step 4** – A second coat of the darker color should be applied to ensure solid coverage. Touch up where needed. The striped design in this example was extended to cover the entire surface. This was done by continuing the blue stripes above and below the lettered area.

**Step 5** – Allow to dry completely before bisque firing to cone 04. Apply Speedball clear earthenware glaze and re fire to cone 05 or 06.

## Variations:

- A white line may be incorporated by lightly outlining each space with a sgraffito tool if desired.
- Paint the design onto a slab before it is leather hard then shape by using a hump or slump mold.

## Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on:

- Design of lettering
- Use of color and development of pattern
- Execution of painting