



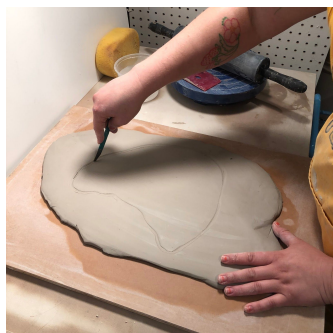
## That Figures! Figures on the Wall

By Anika Major PDF download at [ratcitystudios.com](http://ratcitystudios.com)

Using clay as a canvas invites a variety of opportunities for playfulness and creating engaging surfaces that enhance my ceramic and wire silhouettes. My focus has always been on the figure and beginning my artistic journey as a painter greatly influenced the way I approach the surfaces of my pots. For this step-by-step walkthrough of my process, I'll be working with a cone 5 porcelainous stoneware clay, and using AMACO liquid underglazes and underglaze pencils. I'll be doing most of my decorating at the bone dry stage. You can decorate any dryness stage after leather hard, but adding many layers to the painting will slow down the drying time significantly. If you are painting at leather hard, your surface will not dry as quickly and you run the risk of muddying your colors. I use many layers in my painting process to capture the soft and painterly qualities of an oil painting.



Roll out a slab to  $\frac{1}{4}$ " thickness and compress both sides with a red rubber rib. Make sure your slab is already on a surface that you will be able to easily transport without directly picking it up. Moving your slab as it is drying will cause warping. Select an image for reference and create a paper template from it. Press the paper into the slab by running your fingers around the edge to make an impression on the slab.



Use a knife to cut around the template. Lift the template off and remove excess clay. Swipe your fingers along the sides to round them out, and follow with your red rubber rib to compress the slab again on top. Angle the rib along the edges to that it creates a smooth, beveled edge.

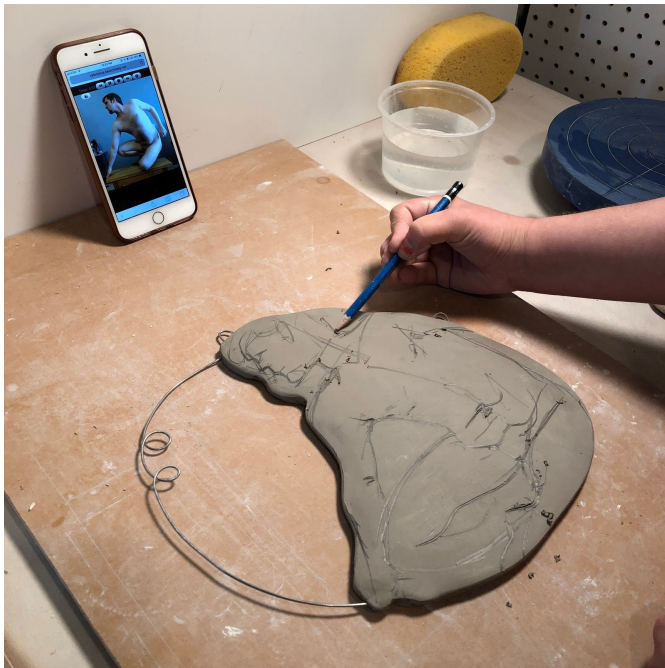


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Cut three lengths of 22 gauge kanthal wire with wire cutters. Two 2" pieces, and one 16" piece of wire.

Shape your wires into two U's, and press into the middle of your slab, at the top of your shape. These will be for hanging your shape on the wall. The third piece should be inserted along the side to complete the shape's silhouette. Compress your slab once more to seal the wires in place.



Allow the slab to dry to leather hard, flipping as it dries. Place between two boards and flip intermittently as it dries so as to dry evenly.

If the slab dries without flipping, it may dry unevenly and warp. Keeping your reference nearby, use an HB pencil to sketch your reference directly onto the slab. Be detailed, and draw out your form and background imagery. The pencil lines will burn away in the bisque.

*For this piece, I will be using Amaco Velvet Underglazes: V-361 Jet Black, V-384 Real Orange, V-301 Ivory Beige, V-302 Beige, V-323 Salmon, V-383 Light Red, V-315 Peach, V-375 Maroon, and V-360 White.*



Select your color palette. When selecting your colors, you can be as close to the demonstrated image as possible or select your own accent colors!

Start by painting with the skintones and the background, laying down a solid base of 2-3 coats. (Using Ivory Beige, Peach, Real Orange, and Maroon.)



Add the shadows and accent colors, and layer over it using your first skin tones to add depth. (Adding Maroon, Beige, Salmon)  
 Use Jet Black to create the hard lines, and add variation by switching from thick to thin line.  
 Use a sgraffito tool to go around the lines and refine the shapes.



Add additional colors to finish fleshing out the form. Continue adding layers of color, black lines, and carved lines until you are happy with the form.  
 Wet the tip of a black underglaze pencil (this makes a bolder mark) and use to create additional lines to define the form. I'm using them here for body hair and to define the chest.



Add accent colors (Real Orange, Maroon) to carved lines, and gently wipe away with a sponge at the surface while still wet. Do not wipe with heavy pressure, as it will erode the dry work you have already done.  
 Add white accents for the eyes and any highlights (around thighs, hair, shoulders)



Bisque fire the piece to cone 06. When firing, place the piece on sand to help minimize dragging on the shelf when it shrinks.

Glaze with a matte/satin glaze and fire to cone 5 (again on sand). *Note: wipe away any glaze on the wire, as it will stick.*

Add a plate hanger to the back to hang on the wall, and enjoy your new wall piece!