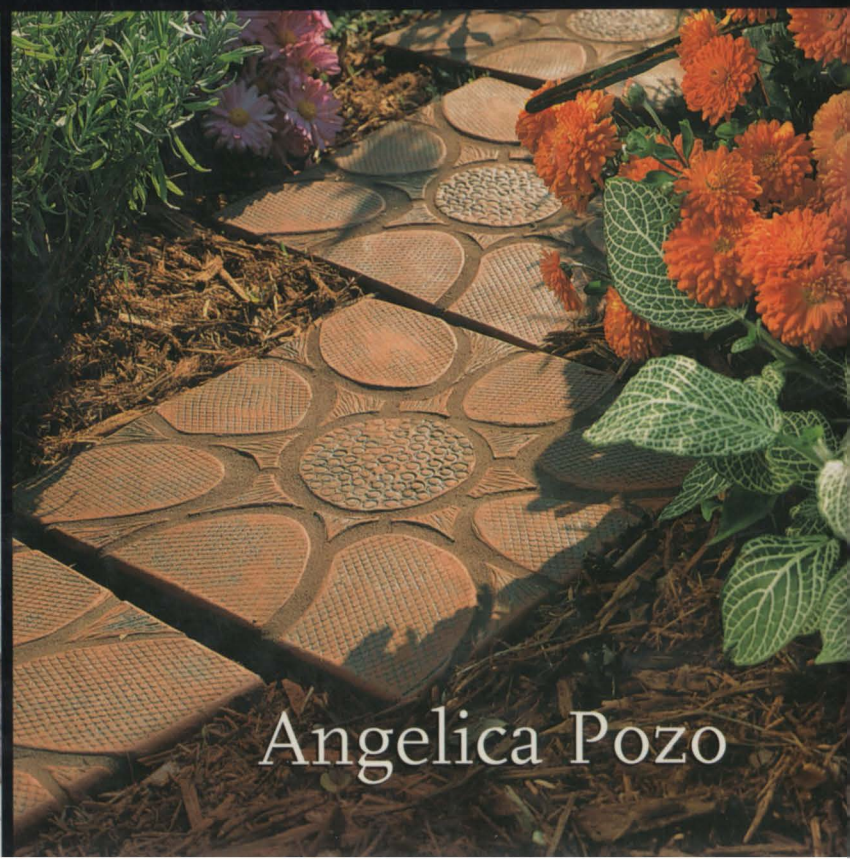




# MAKING & INSTALLING Handmade Tiles



Angelica Pozo



**Right: Diana L. Watson**  
*Malibu Garden Fountain, 2001*  
6 x 5 x 2 ft. (1.8 x 1.5 x .6 m)  
Ram-pressed terra cotta; electric fired, cone 05; *cuerda seca* resist line technique; silkscreened onto bisque and hand glazed  
Photos by artist

**Left: Adele Howitt**  
*Goddess I, 2000*  
4.3 x 3 x 3 ft. (1.3 x .9 x .9 m)  
Heavy-grogged, white earthstone clay; electric fired, cone 06; cobalt and iron oxide brushed glazes, cone 11  
Photos by artist  
Courtesy of the Kingston Hospital Millennium Garden, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey, England

**Far left: Christine Lush-Rodriguez**  
*Pomegranate Border, 2003*  
8 x 5 ft. (2.4 x 1.5 m)  
Slab-built terra cotta original; multiples created from plaster press mold; electric fired, cone 04; underglazes and glazes, cone 06  
Photos by artist



additive included in the dry grout mix—but be sure this is true for the one you plan to use.

### mixing thin-set mortar

The same general procedure for mixing grout is used for mixing thin-set mortar (see also the information on page 96, in *Installation Basics*). From the manufacturer's mixing instructions, determine how much water or latex additive is needed per pound of dry mortar. Calculate how many pounds of mortar you'll need for your installation and proceed as you would with grout, slowly adding powder to the liquid.

The consistency of thin-set should be stickier than it is for grout. You'll know that it's close to the

proper consistency when some mortar can cling to the top of a tilted margin trowel without immediately sliding off (see photo 1). Other clues for proper consistency come when you spread the mortar with a notched trowel. If the peaks sink right down after spreading, it's still too wet and needs more dry mortar. If it won't stick and won't spread smoothly and continuously, then it's too dry. It's not recommended that you add liquid to the mix, but you can try to revive it by anointing it, a few drops at a time, with water or latex.

As with grout, there's a limited amount of time, based on temperature and humidity, in which to work with the mortar. Hot sun and high wind dry out mortar faster. Mix only as much as you can install in 60 to 90 minutes.



The proper consistency for thin-set mortar is when a layer can cling to the top of a tilted margin trowel without immediately sliding off.