Zellige and Bejmat style Handmade Installation Guidelines

Please note that the following information serves as a general guide, and professional advice from a qualified industry specialist is strongly recommended.

Zellige style tiles are **handcrafted**, which means you should expect noticeable variations in thickness, colour, shade, and size. Features such as edge chips, blowouts, scratches, crazing, and warping are typical for these traditional tiles. These irregularities contribute to the unique and timeless beauty of handmade tile, offering an organic and natural aesthetic.

IMPORTANT: Due to the inherent colour and shade variations, it's crucial to mix tiles from all boxes upon delivery and arrange them in the installation area to ensure your desired layout before beginning installation. Do not install the tiles without first blending them from all boxes. Additionally, there may be colour and size variations between batches, which can be challenging to match with subsequent orders. Therefore, please plan your order carefully and ensure you purchase enough material.

Understanding and appreciating the distinctive characteristics of Zellige style tiles is important before making a purchase. Features that might be considered flaws or defects in other tile ranges, such as significant colour variations, differing shapes, and sizes, are not regarded as flaws in Zellige style handmade tiles.

Please note that returns are not accepted for handmade Zellige style tiles. They are sold with the understanding that all the characteristics mentioned here have been clearly explained or demonstrated to the customer.

Traditionally, Zellige style tiles are installed with tight joints, requiring skill and patience from the installer. The installation process for these historical tiles is slow, as it involves careful placement and adjustment of the various sizes. Expect some lipping, which is a normal part of the installation.

Zellige style tiles can be installed with or without grout joints, depending on your preference or design choice. If using grout, select a fine grout to fill the small gaps typically found in butt-jointed tiles. When lipping occurs, wipe excess grout away so that it only fills the voids and does not cover the tile surface.

Glazed tiles do not need sealing, while natural terracotta tiles do.

Before installation, clean any dust and residue from shipping by simply brushing, splashing of sponging back of tile. Refer to your preferred glue manufacturer’s instructions on cleaning the backs of the tiles. Back buttering with a notch trowel adhesive on the wall is recommended.

For external corners, we suggest mitre cutting the tiles. A wet saw makes mitre cuts easy, and the sharp edges can be sanded evenly. Fill the corner void with grout for the finished look.

Handmade tiles often lack engobe, which is a type of slip or clay mixture applied to the surface of a tile before glazing. Engobe can act as a barrier, providing a smoother surface for the glaze to adhere to and help prevent the tile from absorbing moisture. When handmade tiles don't have engobe, a few things can happen:

1. **Absorption Through Glaze**: Without an engobe layer, the raw clay body of the tile can be more porous. This means that even with a glaze applied, the tile might absorb moisture through the glaze. This can be an issue in places where the tile is exposed to a lot of water, such as in bathrooms or kitchens.
2. **Surface Texture and Appearance**: The texture of the tile can be more irregular or rough without the smooth coating that engobe provides. This can affect the final appearance of the tile and make the glaze look different from what you might expect on a tile with engobe.
3. **Durability**: Tiles without engobe might be less durable in some conditions, especially if the glaze isn't perfectly sealed. The absorption of moisture can lead to issues like staining, or in extreme cases, the tile might degrade over time.

Overall, handmade tiles without engobe often have a more rustic and artisanal look, but they may not perform as well in all environments, particularly where moisture resistance is a key concern.