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# *WELCOME*

# **WELCOME**

to the

# **E**dmonton **P**otters' **G**uild

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# **Welcome**

## **to the Edmonton Potters' Guild...**

a place to learn, share ideas and techniques, and explore the craft of pottery. It is our hope that this document will be helpful in providing new (and current) members with information on the Guild and about pottery in general. The information contained within this booklet is based on the questions and experiences of past members. If there are any other topics that you feel may be helpful to other Guild members, please send us an email at [epg@shaw.ca](mailto:epg@shaw.ca) so we can add it to this document.

The **Edmonton Potters' Guild** (EPG) is a volunteer organization that relies on all of its members to help in keeping our Guild a safe, educational and, most importantly, an enjoyable environment in which to work. As a member, you are an essential part of our organization and we thank you for joining the EPG.

In order to assist us in doing our best to operate the facility in an efficient manner, we welcome your suggestions, comments, questions or concerns. So please take time to talk to your class representative or one of the Executive members. Alternatively, should you wish to provide feedback of a sensitive nature, please contact the President or Vice President directly, or slip either one of them a note in their locker (anonymously, if necessary).

We hope you enjoy the time you spend with us.

**Edmonton Potters' Guild**  
*Executive Committee*

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# Our History

In the late 1940's a small group of home potters was looking for a place where they could receive qualified instruction, better equipment and more space. They wanted to improve their standard of ceramic work and they wanted the opportunity to exhibit their work in Edmonton. Their quest led them to the Edmonton Public School Board and new Ceramics Room at Victoria Composite High School. In 1951, the room became operational with a ceramics teacher and a loan provided by the Canadian Handicraft Guild. Equipment and tools were purchased for high school students and a class of 20 adults. The following year, however, the high school program was cancelled due to the School Board's inability to acquire a qualified teacher, as well as a lack of interest from the students.

The adult students, however, were determined to continue and succeeded in leasing the Ceramics Room from the Edmonton Public School Board and the Edmonton Potters' Guild was formed in December of 1952. The organization of classes and the operation of the ceramic workshop became the sole responsibility of the Guild. Equipment has expanded many times since then to accommodate an increasing membership. For many years, the Guild produced low-fire earthenware. Following the acquisition of a gas kiln and an array of suitable high fire glazes, we now produce only high fired stoneware.

On very short notice in 1983, the Guild was forced to vacate the premises during a major expansion of Victoria Composite High School. All equipment, cupboards, glazes, clay, along with everything else that had been accumulating for over 25 years, was removed and with a grant from Alberta Culture, was reassembled in October 1983.

With 84 members, the Edmonton Potters' Guild is now one of the largest group of independent potters in North America. Over 1,000 potters have been trained in this institution and these artisans are now contributing to a flourishing creative activity provincially, nationally and internationally. A few of the well known Alberta potters who have participated in Guild activities in the past, include:

- Noburo Kubo
- Jane Van Alderwegen
- David Green
- Peggy Heer
- John Elder
- Helena Ball
- Richard Selfridge
- Brenda Danbrook

# **Our Mission**

Founded in 1952, the original aim of the Edmonton Potters' Guild was to

*“provide education through study and exhibition”.*

The membership, equipment and function of the Guild have changed considerably throughout the years, however, the founding principles remain the same.

Our qualified instructors introduce Guild members to various aspects of pottery through photos, lectures, demonstrations, workshops, etc. Because of the training received from the EPG, many of our members have gone on to teach pottery within the local community.

# **Our Location & Hours of Operation**

The Edmonton Potters' Guild is fortunate to reside within the most recognized school for fine arts in Edmonton. We are situated in the basement of the old section of Victoria School for Performing and Visual Arts, located on Kingsway Avenue and 101<sup>st</sup> Street. Access to the studio is gained through the Victoria School north entrance (main entrance doors on Kingsway Avenue, directly across from the Esso Station). A map providing directions to the studio is included within the “Miscellaneous” section of this booklet.

Typical hours of operation are:

Monday to Friday (Days)	9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Monday to Thursday (Evenings)	7:00 am – 10:00 pm
Saturdays	9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Because we are located in the school, we are bound by school operating hours, and follow the scheduled closures for school holidays, professional development days, etc. A class schedule, noting school/Guild closures, is posted in the Guild.

# Our Organization

The Guild is a cooperative organization that continues to operate only through the dedication, enthusiasm and participation of the individual members. An Executive Committee, elected by the membership, is responsible for the decision making regarding all aspects of the operation and management of the Guild.

The day-to-day operations of the Guild are funded through three primary sources:

- ⇒ Collection of Class/Studio Fees
- ⇒ Operating Grants from *Alberta Foundation for the Arts* and *The Edmonton Arts Council*
- ⇒ Proceeds from The EPG Annual Pottery Sale

The EPG Annual Pottery Sale is the only fundraising event conducted by the membership, and is our most significant source of revenue.

# Community Relationships

- **Victoria School** – throughout its’ years of operation, the Guild has worked with the Victoria School for the Arts on numerous occasions to foster the ongoing education of the Edmonton community in the arts and, particularly in the area of ceramics.
- **Edmonton Arts Council** – EAC provides support for the EPL through the award of an annual operating grant. This funding allows the Guild to operate with modest increases in our membership fees, etc.
- **Alberta Foundation for the Arts** – for the past several years, the AFA has supported the Edmonton Potters’ Guild by the award of annual operating grants. This funding has enabled the Guild to upgrade its facilities and equipment, as well as increase its promotional efforts within the local community.
- **Edmonton Public Libraries** - the Milner Library and the Riverbend Library have an interest and focus on arts and culture. Both libraries have provided us with gallery/display space twice a year to bring arts/culture awareness to their patrons.
- **External charitable organizations** – each year, many EPG members generously donate their time and/or their wares to the fundraising efforts of various charitable organizations within the local community. EPG also works with local worthwhile charities in making silent auction items, etc. for fundraising efforts.

# Membership

EPG Membership offers access to a unique institution where

- ⇒ novice potters can train along side skilled craftspeople
- ⇒ qualified instructors offer classes for various levels of proficiency
- ⇒ tips and techniques are shared among members
- ⇒ an extensive collection of library materials is maintained
- ⇒ a large, fully equipped pottery studio is available to all members

The EPG currently operates at maximum capacity, but maintains a waiting list for those eager to join. Although class size is limited, each year we have been able to accept a few new members.

## Benefits of Membership

- ⇒ class instruction/studio time in a fully-equipped studio
- ⇒ access to various levels of expertise and a myriad of styles
- ⇒ broad range of clay bodies and glazes
- ⇒ all firings are conducted by qualified, experienced, firing technicians
- ⇒ firing and glazing costs are incorporated into the cost of clay
- ⇒ opportunities for participation in various workshops

With 84 members, four instructors and two technicians, the pottery styles produced at EPG are very diverse. Our membership is comprised of various skill levels - from beginner and intermediate students through to advanced potters. We are extremely fortunate to have so many uniquely talented individuals working together under one umbrella.

## Membership Fees

Membership in the Edmonton Potters' Guild is only available for studio and instructed class participants, and is included in the fees charged for each term of instructed or studio classes.

<i>Instructed Classes:</i>	\$315 per term (15 weeks per term / 2 terms per year)
<i>Instructed/Studio Class:</i>	\$275 per term (7 weeks instruction & 8 weeks studio / 2 terms per year)
<i>Studio Classes:</i>	\$230 per term (18 weeks per term / 2 terms per year)

**Note: fees are non-refundable and do not include the cost of clay.**

## Payment of Fees

With the exception of new members, registration **and** payment for each term of classes is required prior to the completion of the previous term. **If payment is not received by the due date, it will be assumed that the individual is not returning and, therefore, their membership in the EPG will be terminated.** Payment of fees by cheque is preferred.

# Instructors/Technicians

The EPG provides high quality instruction at all skill levels. Our instructors possess a wide range of knowledge and experience and are eager to impart their expertise to a captivated audience. Intermediate/studio, intermediate, and beginner instructed classes are offered.

The EPG is also extremely fortunate to have two knowledgeable and capable technicians working on contract to the Guild. Akiko Kohana has worked with the Guild for over 25 years as our firing technician and is primarily responsible for the operation of the large gas kiln. Susanne Hertwig-Jaksch, in addition to teaching the Wednesday beginners and the intermediate/studio classes, has worked along side Akiko for many years as a studio technician, responsible for the clay, glazes and bisque kiln firings. These two individuals have provided a wealth of information for our members over the years.

# Facilities

Our studio facilities are partitioned into the following work areas:

- ⇒ **main studio** – 12 electric throwing wheels, wedging tables, sink, wet cupboards and drying cupboards/shelving
- ⇒ **glazing room** – approx. 20 glazes, a variety of oxides, slips, underglazes and overglazes, a spray booth, sink, hot and cold waxes
- ⇒ **kiln area** – one large high fire gas reduction kiln and one electric bisque kiln, shelving for glazed bisque ware storage
- ⇒ **hand building area** – three large canvas covered tables, slab roller and clay extruder
- ⇒ **clay room** – storage for clay and supplies, and individual lockers for members
- ⇒ **storage lockers** – each member is assigned two lockers – one in the clay storage room (for clay, bats, tools, etc.) and one in the hand building area (to be used ONLY for distribution and storage of bisqued pieces and finished glaze fired pieces)
- ⇒ **the Sybil Laubenthal Collection** – a compilation of pottery pieces from many of the talented artists who have been involved, in some manner, with the EPG (i.e., past members, instructors, workshop presenters, etc.)
- ⇒ **library** – an extensive collection of books, magazines and videos available to EPG members
- ⇒ **clay recycling area** – clay bathtub (for scrap clay), pug mill, chemicals room

# Supplies

Members are required to supply their own tools and supplies. Some items are available from the EPG for purchase by members:

- “Starter Tool Kit”
- throwing bats (small and large)
- dust masks

A number of communal tools are available for use in the studio, as well as numerous wooden drying bats, plaster bats/moulds and texturing tools. Also on hand are a table top grinder, a dremel tool, a heat gun, and a Giffen grip.

## Clays, Glazes & Firings

### Clays

**All pottery produced and fired at the EPG must be made using clay purchased from the EPG.**

**\*\* Absolutely no clay is to be brought in from outside the Guild. \*\***

The EPG offers a number of different types of high fire clay for purchase by our members. Clay pricing is posted in the Guild.

- H440 – brown
- H550 - grey *Special Orders (through studio tech)*
- H570 – white *- Columbia White*
- P700 – porcelain *- Laguna B-Mix*
- guild recycled mix

***Note: Firing costs and glazes are included in the pricing of all clay purchased from the EPG***

**Edmonton Potters’ Guild members** are not required to pay any studio usage fees over and above their membership/class fees. Member/class fees entitle a potter to purchase up to 4 boxes of clay per term at regular EPG prices. Any boxes purchased after the first four, will have a \$60 surcharge added. This additional charge compensates for the technician fees and glaze chemicals required to fire the extra pieces.

### Glazes

The Guild maintains a fairly extensive variety of materials for use in glazing your pots. We have approximately 20 high fire glazes and some specialty glazes for raku and

wood firing workshops. Also available are slips, underglazes, overglazes, oxides, ash, and glass for decorating. Our glaze tile board displays the various glaze combinations.

## Firings

An electric bisque kiln and a high fire gas reduction kiln are used for firing all EPG pottery. Throughout the operating year, there are typically three bisque firings carried out every two weeks and one or two gas kiln firings each week. The number of firings is dependent on production levels and may be increased or decreased as warranted.

Should members wish to re-fire their pieces due to irregularities in the glazes, etc., we ask that it be done in September or January, when the firing volumes are typically less. There will absolutely be no refirings done during peak production times.

## **EPG Collections**

In keeping with the original aim of the Guild, "***education through study and exhibition***", our members are typically introduced to various aspects of pottery through our gallery, library, videos, demonstrations and workshops with local professional and world reknown potters.

### The Sybil Laubenthal Gallery

In 1961, the Guild began a permanent collection of pottery. It was named "The Sybil Laubenthal Collection" in honour of Sybil Laubenthal, an influential instructor with the guild. This collection is prominently displayed in our facility.

### EPG Library

The EPG maintains an extensive library of trade magazines, newsletters, books and videos related to ceramics and associated arts. Guidelines for members' borrowing privileges are outlined in the following paragraphs.

## ***Library Materials Borrowing Guidelines***

- To borrow materials from the library requires current Guild membership.
- Members are limited to **4** items signed out at any one time.
- Lengths of loan periods are as follows:
  - **Existing books:** 2 weeks
  - **New books:** 1 week (for months 2 through 6 after first month of “in-guild-use-only”)
  - **Periodicals** (including Clay Times, Ceramics Monthly, Pottery Making Illustrated, etc.): 2 weeks (after first month of “in-guild-use-only”)
  - **Existing Videos:** 2 weeks
  - **New videos:** 1 week (for months 2 through 6 after first month of “in-guild-use-only”)
- A **waiting list** is posted on the side of the library below the New Books basket. Members can make their requests known by following the process indicated on this list.
- Members wishing to **renew items** must leave materials to be renewed in the Guild for a week prior to signing them out again to ensure no other member requires them.
- Should members abuse loan periods, they will receive a written notice of late items. If late items are not returned within a reasonable period of time, members will be charged replacement costs.
- If library materials are outstanding between terms, a member will not be permitted to register unless the outstanding items are returned or paid for with registration fees.

# The EPG Annual Show & Sale

The Edmonton Potters' Guild Annual Pottery Sale has become a tradition for many Edmontonians. For many years, the public has supported the EPG by attending the annual one-day sale of pottery created by its members. The sale has always carried a large variety of pottery, featuring some truly unique styles.

**Each term, studio potters are required to donate three pieces that are representative of their typical work.** In addition to the pots donated, we encourage the participation of individual members through the availability of personal sales tables. The proceeds from the Sale are utilized for the general expenses of the Guild.

## Sale Volunteers

Our Guild has survived only through the generous support and dedication of our members. This annual sale is our major source of funding each year, however, it is an enormous undertaking, with a variety of tasks having to be performed either before, during or after the Sale. **ALL GUILD MEMBERS are expected to participate in some capacity, to help create a successful event.**

## Workshops

Workshops are typically held throughout the operating year. These can be held onsite at the Guild, or may be held at various other locations. Past workshop presenters have included international artists, well-known local potters, EPG instructors and EPG members, delivering a variety of subject material.

The EPG Executive Committee would be happy to receive any suggestions that members may have for potential workshops.

# Rules and Responsibilities

## EPG Studio Rules

- Pots produced at the EPG are to be made in the EPG studio with clay purchased from EPG, glazed with EPG glazes, and fired in EPG kilns
- Members are to ensure that the workspace and equipment they use, and their personal storage space is kept in a clean and neat manner. Because EPG does not have janitorial staff, it is the responsibility of all who use the EPG studio to assist in keeping the facility neat and clean.
- Each class is to set up a permanent weekly cleaning schedule, assigning one or two class members to each of the 8 designated areas of the studio (clay room/entranceway; hand building area; tub area; kiln area; glazing room; sink-to-wall section of wheels area; sink-to-coffee counter to wheels; empty garbage & clean sink). Each individual is to ensure that their assigned area is properly cleaned prior to leaving the studio.
- All studio class members are required to contribute 3 pots per term to the Annual EPG Sale. As well, all members are expected to assist with the Annual Sale, since proceeds from the sale are used to subsidize the Guild's operation.
- Members who use the library are to follow the posted procedures.
- Clay belonging to members is to be stored in the lockers provided in the clay storage room only. Studio lockers are to be used for the storage of bisqued and glazed pots only.
- **ALL pots produced at the EPG must be clearly marked with the producer's name or initials and locker number.**
- Members are to record clay purchases as follows:
  - ✘ on the forms provided in the binder (below the telephone) AND
  - ✘ on the purchase slip attached to each clay box AND
  - ✘ payment is to be recorded on the appropriate class envelope within the cash box and the purchase form plus payment are to be inserted into the same envelope
- When glazing, abide by notices posted in the glaze room. The bottom of the pots and approximately ¼" (0.5 cm) up the side of the pot must be COMPLETELY GLAZE FREE. Any pots not conforming to this will not be fired and will be placed on the 'rejected shelf' for cleaning up by the owner. These pots stick to kiln shelves, resulting in damaged pottery and irreparable, costly damage to the kiln shelves.

- Glazing should be kept up to date to ensure the efficient use of EPG firing facilities.
- Glazed pots for loading into the kiln should be placed on the storage shelves from the rear (by the hand building tables).
- Members who wish guaranteed space in an instructional class or in a studio class for the next term must follow the registration procedures posted by the membership chairperson.

## **EPG Member Responsibilities**

Our Guild functions only through the devotion and continued efforts of our members. Along with membership comes the responsibility of participating in the safe and efficient operation of the Guild. The following points outline the responsibilities and guidelines for all EPG members.

### **Members are expected to:**

- attend the “Studio Orientation Workshop” provided for members prior to the start of each new term.
- ensure that their work space, the equipment they use and their personal storage space are kept in a neat and clean condition
- keep glazing up to date
- assist in unloading the kilns and distributing bisque and finished pots into the appropriate members’ lockers
- follow procedures and/or schedules for:
  - ✘ class registration
  - ✘ borrowing library materials
  - ✘ payments for purchases
  - ✘ attendance recording
  - ✘ cleaning the studio
- ensure that pots produced at EPG are made in the EPG studio with clay purchased from EPG, glazed with EPG glazes and fired in EPG kilns.
- keys are available for the Executive Committee and Class Representatives upon payment of a one-time refundable deposit of \$50. Also, after one year of membership, studio level members are eligible to obtain a facility key, upon payment of a one-time refundable deposit of \$50.
- all studio class members are required to contribute three pots per term to the EPG annual sale.
- all members are expected to participate in the EPG Annual Pottery Sale by providing assistance prior to, during or after the sale itself.

- members are to refrain from inviting/bringing non-members into the studio. Children, in particular, are not encouraged to be in the studio and are NOT permitted to be present when you are working. The studio is not a safe environment for children.

## Class Representatives Responsibilities

**ALL** EPG members are encouraged and welcome to attend the monthly Executive meetings. However, during the first class of the fall term each class (instructed and studio) is required to select a ***Class Representative*** who is a liaison between class members and the Executive and is a member of the Executive. Class representatives are specifically responsible for:

- Attending all executive and general meetings and report to the class after such meetings. If unable to attend, the class representative should ask another class member to attend.
- For consideration, report to the executive at executive meetings, any complaints and/or suggestions received from class members.
- Opening and closing the studio for class time or assigning the task to another member. For instructed classes, opening and closing the studio is the responsibility of the instructor.
- The class rep is required to assign general cleaning duties fairly among the class members. In addition to individual cleanup, each class member is to be assigned the responsibility of cleaning a pre-defined “general use” section of the studio prior to leaving the facility.
- At the end of each class, the class representative or instructor is responsible to ensure the class members have cleaned the studio thoroughly prior to its next use.
- Introducing new members to fellow classmates and familiarizing new members with EPG facilities.
- Sending cards to class members when special attention is known.

Class representatives provide orientation to new members and reminders to existing members on the following practices within the guild:

- All studio members are required to donate for the guild sale at least three pots per term that represent their own **quality** work. Each donation is to be recorded on the sheet filed in the blue binder located under the telephone.
- Attendance is to be properly recorded for the class in the green binder.

- Clay purchased at the studio is to be properly recorded as follows: in the binder under the phone, on the slip attached to the clay box, and on the appropriate envelope in the cash box.
- Money for the purchase of clay is to be properly recorded on, and placed inside the appropriate envelope in the cash box for collection by the Treasurer.
- When class members borrow materials from the library (including books, periodicals and videos), they should make certain library cards are completed correctly and filed.
- Class members must clearly make their intentions known regarding returning to the guild for the following term.
- Cleanliness of an individual's work area is their own responsibility. The common areas of the studio and clay storage room are also to be kept clean and orderly by assignment of the cleaning of a specific area of the studio to each class member.

## Mentorship for Studio Members New to the Guild

When registering new studio members, the person in charge of filling classes will outline the following procedures:

- A person from the class in which the new member is to be enrolled will be assigned as a mentor to the new member.
- New members will be informed that the first three weeks will be a trial period during which mentors will fully orient them. At the end of this period, new members will be invited to continue in the studio time or be offered a class which would be more appropriate for their needs.
- The Member Services coordinator will inform the new member that **The Edmonton Potters' Guild is not a facility that supports production potters.** It is expected that a studio potter will use the facility for about 10 – 15 hours per week.

The mentor can, but does not need to be the class rep. The responsibilities of the mentor are:

- To welcome and fully orient the new member to the guild.
- To inform the person in charge of membership if the new member will need a more appropriate class placement.

# **Safety at the Guild**

A hazard assessment of the studio facility, equipment and methods of usage was completed in 2006. Action was taken to conform to the recommendations made in the hazard assessment report, to ensure that we have the safest working environment possible within the constraints of our physical facility.

If individuals have any medical concerns regarding exposure to the potential hazards of the ceramics environment of the Guild, he or she should contact their physician.

## **Emergencies/First Aid**

- In the event of an emergency situation, all emergency contact telephone numbers are posted beside the telephone in the Guild.
- A first aid kit is located in the supply cabinet to the right of the library shelving.
- An eye-wash station is located beside the sink in the glaze room in the event a member requires immediate attention to an eye.
- Please report any injuries to your instructor or class representative.
- Should you use the last of any item from the first aid kit, please ensure the instructor or class representative is made aware of it.
- Members who have first aid training/certification are asked to let the instructor or class representative know.

## **Personal Protection**

- Remove jewelry
- Use vinyl or lined rubber work gloves when glaze dipping.
- Materials used to produce ceramics should not be handled when you have any cuts or open wounds.
- Use a face mask when using the spray booth.
- Always wash hands thoroughly when you are finished.

## ***Pregnancy Issues:***

- Women who are pregnant or considering pregnancy should only work with glazes in a supervised studio.
- Pregnant women or women contemplating pregnancy who are active ceramists should notify their physician of their work with ceramic products.

### ***Potential Health Problems:***

- ***Allergies:*** individuals may suffer from special allergies to molds that are normally contained in aging clay
- ***Back Injuries:*** One of the most common occupational hazards to potters comes from poor lifting habits related to bags of clay, kiln shelves, and so on.
- ***Wrist Injuries:*** Carpal tunnel syndrome and tendon problems can be caused by overuse or misuse of wrists or/and other joints and muscles. Use the body more and the wrist less. Take regular breaks. Try some hand building. Limit your use of the computer mouse also. These cause more problems than throwing.
- ***Vision and Eyesight Concerns:*** Staring into a white hot kiln to see the cones may damage the eyes. Intense ultra violet (UV) and infra red (IR) light is emitted. Welding goggles used by electric arc welders or glasses specifically designed for kiln work are useful to reduce damaging rays. Eye damage is also reduced by staying as far back as possible from the kiln when looking into the kiln. Persons stoking a wood kiln need to take similar precautions to protect their eyes.

If members are aware of any safety hazards within the studio or happen to notice any unsafe practices being carried out, they are asked to bring the problem to the attention of the physical plant coordinator(s).

### **Ceramic Hazards**

- **DO NOT inhale the dust or fumes** from the clay, grinding, sanding, or from the materials used in glaze production.
- **DO NOT carelessly produce clay dust** – use only wet cleaning methods
- **DO NOT use vacuums or brooms** – they create airborne silica particles that are inhaled and are too heavy to be expelled from the lungs – this can cause fatal silicosis over time.
- **DO NOT sand, grind or spray glazes outside of spray booth.**
- **ALWAYS use a face mask when sanding, scraping, grinding, etc.**
- **DO NOT stir glazes with hands** – the glaze ingredients may cause skin reactions.

# Cleaning

## Keeping YOUR Guild Clean

Each member is responsible for cleaning up their own work area(s). Since the Guild does not employ cleaning staff, we all must do our bit to keep the studio clean. So, if you see something that needs cleaning, please take a moment to do so. Your cooperation in keeping the Guild clean and tidy is greatly appreciated.

- **WASH THE FLOORS:** The studio and clay room floors must be cleaned regularly to help keep dust to a minimum. Each member is asked to wet-mop the areas you have been working in at the end of each class. (Don't forget the glazing area if you have been doing any glazing).
- **TABLES:** Keep those work surfaces clean! Tables must be wiped with a wet sponge at the end of each class where you and your fellow guild members have been working. Again, don't forget the glazing area.
- **WHEELS:** You'd be amazed at how many nooks and crannies the clay can be hiding in, on, around, and under the wheels. Even if you've just been trimming pots, please take apart the wheel tray and wash it every time you use it.
- **GARBAGE:** Please empty the garbage whenever it is full. The garbage bags must be taken out to the large green bin outside the main school doors and in front of the overhead door to the theatre. New garbage bags can be found in the cupboard under the microwave.
- **GLAZE CONTAINERS:** A very common statement is "this glaze is not working right – it's not the same as it used to be". **Contamination!** Dried glaze on the sides and lids of the glaze containers falls back into the glazes; double dipping when first glaze is not yet dry, etc. Be careful! And, every time you finish with a glaze, please wipe the lid and the inside of the container with a wet, clean sponge.
- **SINKS:** Minimize the amount of clay that goes down the drain. Slip and clay trimmings collected in the wheel trays are can be placed in the clay tub. Buckets have been placed in the sinks to do the first "dirty rinse" of sponges, wheel trays, tools, glaze paddles, etc. As the buckets fill up, the solids will settle on the bottom and water on top. The water can be drained off as the solids settle out. **Keep the sinks clean!** Whenever you are using the sink and the sieve looks a little grungy, please remove it and dump the clay and other residue into the garbage. Be sure to wash glaze out of the sinks to prevent staining and build-up.

- **USED CLAY BAGS:** We recycle old clay bags and use them for our recycled clay. Please wash out your old clay bags and hanging them on the rack over the sink near the bathtub.
- **LOCKERS:** Clean out your lockers periodically...you may even find some buried treasures in there!
- **RECYCLING CLAY:** Large pieces of old clay should be placed on the shelf above the tub. It is easier for our Technician to break up the big chunks with a hammer prior to putting them into the recycling tub. Wet clay from wheel trays and slip buckets should be dumped into the tub through the sieve to ensure no lost tools, bolts, sponges, etc. slip in as well.
- **BISQUE WARE:** After the bisque kiln is unloaded, all classes are responsible for distributing bisqued pots to the appropriate members' lockers.
- **GLAZE FIRED POTS:** members are responsible for distributing any bisqued or glaze fired pots sitting on the hand building tables, to the appropriate lockers so that the tables are kept clear for working.

**ASSIGNED GENERAL CLEANING DUTIES:** In addition to individual clean-up, each class is required to distribute general cleaning duties fairly among the class members. **Each class member is to be assigned the responsibility of cleaning a pre-defined section of the studio prior to leaving the facility.** The class representative or instructor is responsible to ensure the class members have cleaned the studio thoroughly prior to its next use.

# Miscellaneous

## Stages of Pottery Production

All pottery items go through a series of stages during construction:

1. The raw clay is wedged to make its moisture and other particle distribution homogeneous and to remove air bubbles.
2. It is then shaped either by hand or using tools such as a potter's wheel, an extruder, or a slab roller. Water is used to keep the clay flexible during construction and to keep it from cracking.
3. The wet piece is wrapped in plastic and placed into the wet cupboard to set up or stiffen enough to survive manipulation. This condition is called *leather hard*.
4. Work that is thrown on the wheel often needs to be trimmed or turned to make its thickness uniform and/or to form a foot on the piece. This is done at the leather hard stage.
5. The piece is then allowed to air dry in the drying cupboards until it is hard and dry to the touch. At this stage it is known as greenware. Items of greenware are very brittle but they can be handled with care. Greenware items can be wiped with a damp sponge or burnished to ensure a smooth finish in the completed item.
6. Sometimes the greenware is given a coating of a liquid clay slip. This is most often done to give a coloured base for decoration, other than the colour of the main clay.
7. The greenware is given a preliminary lower range firing in the electric kiln. Once it has been fired, the clay is known as 'bisque' ware. Bisque ware is normally a plain red, white or buff colour depending on which type of clay is used.
8. The bisque ware is decorated with glaze and then fired again to a higher temperature.

The overall length of time required to take a piece of wet clay to a final product varies depending on a number of circumstances (i.e., drying time, bisque loading and firing, and space availability in gas kiln).

Since the kilns are loaded by “fitting the puzzle pieces together”, it may take longer for specific pieces to be fired. Please be assured that this is NOT intentional. The technicians do their best to treat all pots with equal fairness.

## Pottery/Ceramic Related Terminology

**Banding Wheel:** A revolving wheel head that sits on a pedestal base. It is turned by hand and used for finishing or decorating pottery.

**Bat:** A flat disc made out of wood, plaster, or plastic which is affixed to the wheel head with clay or pins. Bats are used to throw pieces on that would be difficult to lift off the wheel head.

**Bisque:** Clay that has been fired but not glazed. A bisque firing is carried out at a lower temperature than the final glaze firing. When the bisque kiln is unloaded, members are asked to distribute them to the appropriate lockers.

**Burnish:** A process of 'polishing' dry greenware with a smooth rounded utensil (i.e., a rock or metal spoon) to compress and smooth the outer surface of the piece.

**Ceramic:** Any man-made solid produced by the fusion of mineral substances in a kiln. The term 'pottery' is used to refer to those individuals who fabricate their own ware using clays of all types and at all temperatures ranges.

**Crawling:** A condition where fired glaze separates into clumps or islands leaving bare clay patches showing in-between.

**Crazing:** Small hairline cracks in glazed surfaces that usually appear after firing but can appear years later. It is caused by a mismatch in the thermal expansions of glaze and body. A glaze of higher expansion shrinks more than the clay to which it is attached and therefore crazes.

**Dipping:** The process of dipping ware into glazes.

**Dry Cupboard:** A communal cupboard where trimmed pots are placed for further slow drying. Each class is to check for dry pots that can be moved to the shelves of pots waiting to be bisqued.

**Earthenware:** A clay fired at low temperatures (up to 950°C) where it does not develop maturity (vitrify). Earthenwares are porous and therefore not as strong as stonewares and porcelains (sintering is the primary particle bonding mechanism). Earthenware glazes are usually very bright colored and if the glazes are properly fitted, earthenware can be quite strong and functional. Terra Cotta is a special type of earthenware where red burning clay is used.

**Firing:** The process which changes clay into ceramic. Up to 600°C the chemically bonded water in Clay is driven off. This irreversibly changes the chemistry of the clay into pottery.

**Glaze:** A thin 'glassy' layer formed on the surface of fired ceramic. Glazes are a finely ground mixture of mineral and man-made powders tuned to melt and flow at a specific temperature.

**Greenware:** Unfired pottery. Ready to be bisque fired.

**Grog:** Gritty material added to clay to modify its behaviour in firing. It is usually ground clay that has already been fired, and can be coarse or fine depending on the type of work for which it is being used

**Kiln:** Basically an insulated box that is heated and 'fires' clay and glazed objects to maturity. The maximum operating temperature for most pottery kilns is about 1300°C although many wood fired kilns may be fired up to 1350°C.

**Leather Hard:** Partially dried clayware. A stage in the drying process of clay when the material is still flexible, but strong enough to handle. It is the ideal time for trimming and for the addition of handles and spouts.

**Overglaze:** refers to the process of painting metallic oxides or stain mixes over a raw glaze before firing.

**Oxidation:** Firing with a full supply of oxygen. Electric kilns fire in oxidation. Oxides show bright colors.

**Oxides** minerals in water solution for brushed colour designs over and under glazes, used like water colours.

**Porcelain:** A clay body which, when fired, becomes very mature and usually translucent. Porcelain is normally quite white and fires to a very smooth pleasant surface. Porcelain clays lack iron impurities and are ground to very fine particle sizes.

**Reduction:** Firing in a reducing atmosphere. This is when there is insufficient air for the flame to burn off its carbon content. The result is a smoky atmosphere that causes metallic content in the glaze and clay to change colour.

**Slab:** Pressed or rolled flat sections of clay used in hand building.

**Slip:** A clay with enough water added to become a 'cream' like consistency. It is used to join slabbed forms and handles and spouts to the body of the vessel while leather hard, but before the bisque firing. Also used in casting and decoration.

**Stain:** Oxide and water, used as a colorant for bisque wear.

**Stoneware:** A high fired ceramic (fired up to 1300°C) that is vitreous or semi-vitreous, not translucent, and often made of clays that are not highly refined. Stonewares can be brown, buff or white. Stonewares commonly have some speck and some particulate material such as sand or fine grog.

**Throwing:** A delicate balance which defies gravity and centrifugal force as clay is coaxed up by hand from the spinning turntable.

**Underglaze:** Oxide color mixtures which are applied to bisque or green ware and over which a transparent glaze is applied. To prevent excessive feathering of edges, underglazes are usually a mix of metallic oxides and a fritted stable glaze.

**Vitrification:** The firing of pottery to the point of glossification.

**Wax Resist:** applied to portions of the pot where glaze is not desired (i.e., bottoms, flanges, decorations).

**Wedging:** A method of kneading clay to make it homogenous by cutting and rolling.

**Wet Cupboard:** each class is allocated a cupboard where wet, untrimmed pots are kept to slow down the drying process until they can be trimmed.