

THE MAKING®

Working with Ceramics

These resources are intended for use by teachers to help you get started with making ceramics in the classroom.

The information was supplied by the artists who contributed to the *Skills in the Making* workshop programme 2009-12, funded by The Paul Hamlyn Foundation.



Introduction

Contemporary ceramic makers use clay to make a broad range of work that can be functional or sculptural. The practice of making ceramics encompasses a wide range of techniques which can be used individually or in combination. These include hand building techniques such as slab building, modelling and carving or wheel thrown work which can be manipulated on or off the wheel. Decoration is applied while the work is leather hard as slip or after the first firing on or under the glaze.

For images of the work of The Making's ceramic artists, and the ideas that inform their work see:

Kate Malone: hand built natural forms (image courtesy Clare Beck at Adrian Sassoon)

www.themaking.org.uk/Content/makers/2009/03/kate_malone.html

www.katemaloneceramics.com

Richard Phethean: thrown and moulded forms

www.phethean.clara.net

Phil Eglin: slab built figurative forms

www.re-title.com/artists/Philip-Eglin.asp collection of work

www.vam.ac.uk/vastatic/microsites/eglin/frameset.htm an exhibition at the V & A inspired by medieval sculpture

Stephen Dixon: slabbed and modelled political and satirical works

www.themaking.org.uk/Content/makers/2011/03/stephen_dixon.html

www.vam.ac.uk/things-to-do/blogs/steve-dixon-0 record of workshops run at the V & A

Katharine Morling: slab built sculptural ceramics

www.themaking.org.uk/Content/makers/2010/11/katharine_morling.html#comments

Rob Kessler: ceramics and print

www.themaking.org.uk/Content/makers/2007/05/rob_kessler.html#comments

www.robkessler.co.uk/

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Films

Links to makers in action can be found on their websites, but here are a few links

Kate Malone hand building www.youtube.com/katemaloneceramics

Mike Eden demonstrates a range of making techniques

www.artisancam.org.uk/pages/artists.php?artist=mike

Paul Scott demonstrates hand building and printing on clay

www.artisancam.org.uk/pages/artists.php?artist=paul

Phil Eglin explores the V&A's medieval collections for inspiration

www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HJ6PYEbyYw

Common ceramic terms explained

Making techniques

Slab building: rolled out flat pieces of clay which can be joined or placed in or over a mould

Pinching: hollowing forms by hand

Modelling: using hands and tools to add and take away clay

Coiling: building up forms with coils of clay

Carving: subtracting material from a block of clay

Throwing: making a pot on the wheel

Turning: cutting away unwanted clay from a thrown pot

Clay

Clay body: the name for the unworked clay in its raw state. Clays are mixed by suppliers to ensure consistency of plasticity (workability) and firing temperature

Earthenware clay: usually a red clay which can be fired to around 1100 degrees. To be fully waterproof earthenware clay must be glazed.

Stoneware clay: clay which matures at higher temperatures than earthenware but which becomes fused or fully water proof without a complete glaze covering; usually fired to between 1150 to 1260 degrees

Porcelain: fine white clay which when worked finely and fired sufficiently high becomes translucent.

Leather hard: state of drying clay when it is hard enough to turn, carve or decorate without bending

Decoration

Slip decoration: slip is a thick solution of coloured clay which can be applied to a leather hard object by any of the techniques below.

Sgraffito: involves cutting through a slip to reveal the colour of the clay beneath

Slip trailing: using a special tool, a slip trailer, to flow lines and dots of slip over a surface, leaving a raised finish

Marbling: mingling wet colours on a wet slip base

Printing: applying patterns or texture with sponge or chosen tool

Transfer Printing: decals can be bought or made, and are applied over dry slip or glaze

Resist (non removable): wax emulsion or paraffin wax burns away during firing

Resist (removable): newspaper or latex laid over slip layer and then carefully removed

Inlay: brushing slip into carved patterns on leather hard clay. When slip is leather hard, the excess is scraped back with a metal kidney. A softer version can be done when slip is still

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wet, wiping excess slip off with a rubber kidney

Glaze: a coat of a glass forming coloured solution that must be fired to produce a water resistant surface

Glaze can be painted or sprayed on the work. Brightly coloured “brush on” glazes especially made for painting and use in schools are widely available.

Dipping is a traditional method of glazing pots. First the inside is filled with glaze and is immediately emptied. The piece is then held by its base and is dipped rim first in the glaze, held for a few seconds and withdrawn.

Metal oxides: used to colour slips and glazes, are mixed with a clear or opaque white glaze. Mixed thinly they are used to paint over a white glaze – the technique of Maiolica

Under glaze colours: ready mixed colours used in the same way, which are more stable.

Firing

Biscuit firing: the first firing of a clay object so that it can take a glaze. The kiln temperature must rise very slowly to enable all moisture in the work to be expelled, and to prevent the work cracking, usually to 1050-1100 degrees centigrade

Glaze firing: the firing of the glaze onto an object, usually after it has been biscuit fired. The kiln temperature can rise more quickly, but care must be taken to reach and maintain the right temperature for the glaze to mature.

Raw glazing: the glaze is added to the leather hard pot and fired once only – this requires skill and is not usually done in school.

Oxidising Firing: a firing, as in a normal electric kiln, where glazes from with access to oxygen.

Reduction Firing: a method which excludes oxygen from the glaze surface changing the quality and colour of the glaze

Raku firing: is a form of firing where glazed pots made of strong clay are fired rapidly up to about 1000 degrees and removed from the kiln, plunged into a reducing medium such as saw dust, enabling the metallic qualities of the oxides used to colour the glaze to develop. An exciting process which enables students to see how glaze melts in the kiln and the effect of different firing environments on glazes.

Suppliers for all things ceramics related

Potters Connection, Staffs www.pottersconnection.co.uk Tel: 01782 598729

PO BOX 3079 Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 9FW

Bath Potters Supplies, Bath www.bathpotters.co.uk Tel: 01761 411 077

Unit 18, 4th Ave, Westfield Industrial Estate, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Avon BA3 4XE

Potclays Ltd, www.potclays.co.uk Tel: 01782 219816

Brick kiln Lane, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 7BP

PotteryCrafts Ltd www.potteryCrafts.co.uk Tel: 01782 745000

Campbell Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 4ET

Clay specialists

Spencroft Ceramics, www.spencroftceramics.co.uk Tel: 01782 627004

Spencroft Road, Holditch Industrial Estate, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 9JB.

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Valentines Clays Ltd, Staffs www.valentinesclays.co.uk Tel: 01782 271200
The Sliphouse, 18-20 Chell Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 6BA

Tools, Materials and Equipment

Top Pot Supplies, Shropshire www.toppotsupplies.co.uk Tel: 01952 813203
Celadon House, 8 Plough Lane, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 8BS

CTM Potters Supplies, www.ctmpotterssupplies.co.uk

Unit 8, Broomhouse Lane Ind Estate, Edlington, Doncaster, DN12 1EQ Tel: 01709 770 801
Unit 10A, Mill Park Industrial Estate, White Cross Road, Woodbury Salterton, EX5 1EL
Tel: 01395 233077

Kiln Manufacture, Installation, Service, Repair (also second hand equipment)

Northern Kilns, Lancs. www.northernkilns.com Tel: 01253 790307
Pilling Pottery, School Lane, Pilling (Nr. Garstang) Lancs, PR3 6HB

Ceramics Specialist websites

www.studiopottery.co.uk Studio Pottery: an excellent and wide ranging resource with makers' biographies, technical information and networking opportunities. Links to galleries and current events

www.onlineceramics.com commercial site with a good range of makers work to view

www.ceramicreview.com Ceramic Review, the international magazine of ceramics

www.ukpotters.com site with many UK potters

www.new-ceramics.com European ceramics magazine

Books

Practical Ceramics Guides

There are many guides to pottery making

Casson, Michael (19 *The Craft of the Potter* A classic Guide to pottery making.

Mattison, Steven (2003) *The Complete Potter: The Complete Reference to Tools, Materials and Techniques for All Potters and Ceramicists* Quarto

Quinn, Anthony (2007), *The Ceramic Design Course*. London: Thames & Hudson

Research and Development

Genders, C. (2002), *Sources of Inspiration*. London: A&C Black

Genders, C. (2009), *Pattern, Colour & Form*. London: A&C Black

Malone, K. & Jackson, L. (2003), *Kate Malone: A Book of Pots*. London: A&C Black

History

Cooper, Emmanuel (2010) *10,000 Years of Pottery*. British Museum press

Cooper, Emmanuel (2009) *Contemporary Ceramics*. Thames and Hudson

Journals

www.ceramicreview.com Ceramic Review: International Magazine of Ceramic Art

www.new-ceramics.com European Ceramics magazine

Ceramics collections and displays in museums and galleries

Many local museums contain ceramics that reflect the availability of resources nearby and the history of the locality. So visit a museum near you...

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Some outstanding collections include:

www.ceramics-aberystwyth.com Aberystwyth University Ceramics Archive, Wales

www.stokemuseums.org.uk/pmag The Potteries Museum, Stoke on Trent, A vast historic collection and contemporary exhibitions

www.wedgwoodmuseum.org.uk/ Wedgwood Museum in Stoke on Trent, historic collection, tours and contemporary exhibitions

www.vam.ac.uk/page/c/ceramics/ fabulous new ceramics galleries, contemporary and historical exhibitions

www.leachpottery.com the famous leach pottery, now a museum and studio

General Crafts Resources

Craft & Design Theory

Adamson, G. (Ed.) (2010), *The Craft Reader*. London: Berg

Adamson, G. (2007), *Thinking through Craft*. London: Palgrave Macmillan

Britton Newell, L. (2008), *Out of the Ordinary: Spectacular Craft*. London: V&A

Dormer, P. (ed.) (1997), *The Culture of Craft*. Manchester University Press

Dormer, P. (1994), *The Art of the Maker: Skill and its Meaning in Art, Craft and Design*. London: Thames and Hudson

Frayling, C. (Ed.) (1991), *Beyond the Dovetail: Craft, Skill and Imagination*. London: Crafts Council

Greenhalgh, P. (Ed.) (2002), *The Persistence of Craft*. London: A&C Black

Harrod, T. (ed.) (1997), *Obscure Objects of Desire: Reviewing the crafts in the twentieth century*. University of East Anglia & Crafts Council

McCullough, M. (1996), *Abstracting Craft: The Practiced Digital Hand*. London: MIT Press

Papanek, V. (1979), *Design for the Real World*. London: Paladin

Sennett, R. (2008), *The Craftsman*. London: Penguin

Williams, G. (2009), *Telling Tales: Fantasy and Fear in Contemporary Design*. London: V&A

Articles/ reports

Clark, G. (2009), 'The Death of Crafts: A Post-modern Post-mortem' in *Crafts* No. 216 (January/February 2009) pp.48-51

Crafts Council (1998), *Learning Through Making: A national enquiry into the value of creative practical education in Britain*.

Creative & Cultural Skills (2009), *The Craft Blueprint*.

Downing, D. (2005), *School Art- What's in it?* National Foundation for Education Research

OFSTED (2009), *Drawing Together: art, craft and design in schools*.

Williams, G. (2009), 'Tales of the Unexpected' in *Crafts* No. 219 (July/August 2009) pp.48-55

Journals

Crafts magazine: produced by the Crafts Council

Websites

www.themaking.org.uk craft development agency that promotes high quality contemporary art, craft and design and inspires new audiences to engage with the art of making. The

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website has information about 60 contemporary makers and links to their websites, and descriptions of crafts education events in schools and the community

www.artisancam.org.uk: videos of makers and pupils in action, step by step guides to making. A section for teachers: www.artisancam.org.uk/pages/teachers_notes.php includes demonstrations of basket weaving, ceramics, metal sculpture, jewellery and sci/art projects.

www.culture24.org.uk : information about museums and galleries across the UK: collections, exhibitions and events

www.craftscouncil.org.uk: information on UK crafts and learning programmes at www.craftscouncil.org.uk/learn/

www.csc.ucreative.ac.uk The Crafts Study Centre, Farnham has a collection and archive of twentieth century British Crafts. On-going exhibition and events programme.

www.engage.org National Association for Gallery Education. Case studies of working with schools in craft galleries and studios: www.engage.org/watchthisspace/studies.aspx including ceramics

www.nsead.org: National Society for Education in Art and Design. Current issues in Art and Design education, Professional Development opportunities

www.teachersmedia.com the new Teachers TV: an archive of educational films on all subjects including craft and cross curricular work

www.craftspace.co.uk Birmingham based organisation with strong educational remit - case studies of school projects

www.craftanddesign.net information on contemporary craft galleries near you

Crafts Collections in Museums and Galleries

www.vam.ac.uk Victoria and Albert Museum international historic and contemporary international crafts.

www.britishmuseum.org British Museum historic crafts from around the world

www.csc.ucreative.ac.uk/ Crafts Study Centre Farnham, Surrey

www.manchestergalleries.org Manchester Art Galleries historic and contemporary craft and design collection

www.twmuseums.org.uk/shipleigh The Shipley Art Gallery, Tyne and Wear

www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk Bowes Museum, County Durham
...and in a local museum near you: search Culture 24

Contemporary Crafts galleries with changing exhibitions

www.caa.org.uk Contemporary Applied Art, London

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www.ruthincraftcentre.org.uk, Ruthin Craft Centre Clwyd, Wales

www.bluecoatdisplaycentre.com The Bluecoat, Liverpool

www.harleygallery.co.uk Harley Gallery, Nottinghamshire

www.flowgallery.co.uk Flow Gallery, London

www.crafts.org.uk Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Bovey Tracey, Devon

