

## CERAMIC VOCABULARY

### STAGES OF CLAY DRYNESS

Plastic or Moist - Clay that is soft and pliable with a high moisture content. Good for coiling, pinch pots, and slab rolling.

Stiff clay - Clay is dried just enough to stand on its own. It is between plastic and leather-hard stages. Textures can still be rolled into stiff clay.

Leather-hard - Clay holds shape well, stands on own with slight flexibility, cool to the touch. It can be incised to create texture, cuts easily, holds edge and can be joined by scoring and slipping. Good for building geometric forms.

Bone-dry - Clay is completely dry and warm to the touch. It is rigid, uniform in color and very fragile. Clay must be bone-dry before firing. We don't carve bone-dry clay because it can break easily and makes clay dust.

Greenware - is completely dry clay that has not been fired, synonymous to bone-dry clay.

Bisque fired clay - This is what we call the ceramic piece after it has been fired once.

Glaze fired - Second firing of clay after it has been painted with overglaze. The glaze melts and fuses to the bisque fired clay during this firing. It is a lower temperature than bisque firing.

### TYPES OF VESSELS

Coil - Rope coils are rolled by hand from moist or plastic clay and stacked on top of each other in this building process.

Slab - Clay is rolled out to a desired thickness and can be shaped while moist, stiff or leather-hard. Slab pieces are joined by scoring and slipping.

Pinch - A ball of moist clay is indented in the center and pinched between thumb and fingers while turning clay in hand. The clay is pinched in a spiral motion from the bottom to the top making the walls thinner and higher while aiming for an even thickness.

### TERMS

Wedging - Kneading clay in order to expel air, compress clay, and make clay homogenous. Some methods of wedging are called ram's head, spiral or shell, and slamming.

slip or slurry - a mixture of clay and water blended to the consistency of stirred yogurt. Used for joining two pieces of clay.

scoring - roughing up the surface of clay in a criss-cross fashion with a needle tool to extend the surface area and prepare a rough surface to accept slip for joining pieces of clay together. Both pieces to be connected should be scored & slipped if using leather-hard clay.

Sgraffito - A surface decoration technique where the ceramist scratches through a layer of colored slip or underglaze to reveal the clay body underneath. This technique can be done on wet, stiff, or leather-hard clay.

Stilts - Heat resistant supports used to raise glazed ware above the kiln shelf so that melting glaze won't fuse the ware to the kiln shelf.

Whetstone - Used to scrape down the sharp glaze points on the bottom of the ware left by the stilts after glaze firing.

Underglaze - Glaze that can be painted on moist, stiff, or leatherhard clay before bisque firing.

Underglaze can colors can be mixed by eye just like tempera. They hold the edge well with minimal movement, and used for sgraffito. It is primarily used for decorative details rather than for large areas of one color.

Earthenware clay - We use low-fire white and red earthenware clay that bisque fires at cone 04 reaching a temperature of about 1948 F. We glaze fire at cone 06 at about 1832 F.

Bat - Round Masonite or plastic flat plates used to throw clay on a wheel. We use them to hand-build on and to store our pieces as they are being constructed.