

Clay Vocabulary

Ceramics - Objects made of clay fired sufficiently high in temperature for a chemical change to take place in the clay body, usually over 1550 degrees F.

Wedging: Slamming the clay down forcefully in order to compress the clay. This collapse any air bubbles which might be trapped in the clay. It also distributes moisture equally through the clay body.

Air pockets: Small bubbles of air trapped within the clay wall. During firing, the moisture in these will turn to steam, causing the pot to explode.

Slip: A fine, liquid form of clay applied to the surface of an unfired vessel as a glue.

Score: To rough the surface of the wet clay in order to attach another piece of wet clay.

Coil: Long strands of clay which are laid on top of each other and joined through blending.

Leather Hard - A damp condition of the clay when it is too firm to bend yet soft enough to be carved.

Sgraffito: A surface decoration technique which involves scratching marks into the surface of the pot, either into the clay surface itself, or into the glaze before firing.

Greenware - Unfired clay ready or nearly ready for firing.

Bisque - Clay that has been fired once, usually at a low temperature.

Kiln - The furnace in which ceramics are fired.

Firing: Clay is hardened by heating it to a high temperature, fusing the clay particles.

Glaze: A coating of material applied to ceramics before firing that forms a glass-like surface.