

WHEEL THROWING

- ✓ One of the basic methods for working with clay.
- ✓ Wheel throwing involves the use of a potters' wheel to make an open or hollow form.
- ✓ The potters' wheel has been around for thousands of years, and its use developed in several cultures, including China, Japan, Egypt, and parts of the Middle east. Its functional use may be as ancient as 6000 BCE.
- ✓ Early potters' wheels involved the use of a *kickwheel*... many still do!
- ✓ Wheel-thrown pieces can be functional, sculptural, or a combination of both.

The potters' wheel is not the only method of working with clay, or the most ancient. Other *handbuilding* techniques include *pinch*, *coil*, and *slab*, and all of these techniques can be combined .

What is ceramics?

The word 'ceramics' is derived from the Greek 'keramos' – translating roughly to 'burnt earth' or 'pottery.' The word 'ceramics' defines both the art media and practice *and* the use of ceramic materials in industry. Ceramic materials have been used in manufacturing superconductors, armored vests, engine design, and space shuttle insulation, and one can study or major in ceramic engineering.

What is clay?

We use the word 'clay' to refer to ceramics before they are fired. Clay minerals have *plasticity* – its particles will stretch when wet. In nature, clay is made from the decomposition of rocks and organic material. Clay can be made from various combinations of minerals, and can be dug in nature or developed by manufacturers. Our studio clay is manufactured, and retails for about \$12-\$15 per 50 lb. box. It is not permanent until fired, and can be recycled almost indefinitely by laying it out on plaster and re-pugging

Clay goes through stages in its working process:

✓ Greenware

- Wet
- Leather
- Bone Dry

✓ Bisque: Unglazed ware that has been fired once. Clay goes through a chemical change that can no longer be reabsorbed into water. This happens at around 1112°F. We continue firing to about 1830-1940°F, also known as cone 06 - cone 04.

✓ We have both lo-fire and hi-fire glazes in our studio. Lo-fire glazes fire to about cone 06; hi-fire glazes to about cone 6. Hi-fire glazes will not *vitrify*, or get glassy, at cone 06. Hi-fire glazed pieces must be labeled!

✓ *More glaze notes to come...*

Throwing Steps

1. Apron, bucket, tools, clay
2. The Throwdown
3. Seal
4. Center
5. Thumb Dive
6. Flat Bottom
7. Volcano
8. Lift
9. Release the Seal
10. Wire Cut
11. Remove/Board

Why We Trim:

1. To lighten the piece
2. To shape the bottom
3. To level the foot
4. To add visual interest

Trimming Steps

1. Centering
2. Sealing (3 Vienna Sausages!)
3. Shape the Outside
4. Right-Angle the Foot
5. Articulate the foot on the inside
6. Clean it up