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Spectra Art and Clay-(originally written by Cathy Redfern)

We have 2 types of clay: the buff or gray clay, which fires to a cream white so the students can glaze it. The red clay; this fires to a terra cotta so for a natural look the students do not have to glaze them but can clear glaze or color glaze if they like. It needs 2 thick coats, just like when you apply nail polish.

We may only have one type of clay this year.

Adults and students, before you start you may want to take off rings from your fingers and watches. Make sure everyone has his or her sleeves rolled up. Hand out the aprons to cover their cloths.

Before you start cover tables with drop cloths, put a tub or two of water per table and explain the project before you cut and distribute the clay then put out the clay tools.

Things to keep in mind when you are working with clay:

1. Keep it moist-just like you put cream on your body to prevent cracking same goes for clay, use just enough water, one bag is 25lbs so to make life easier cut into 24 pieces, each student gets just over a pound of clay (about the size of a large orange) please use the whole bag.
2. Methods of clay use-slab-roll it, coil-roll like a snake, pinch pot-take a piece and pinch out the shape.
3. If you're making clay animals or people just have the kids poke a hole in the large areas-like the legs, stomach, head through the eyes, etc.-this allows the air to escape and prevents it from exploding in the kiln. Also if you need to attach a piece of clay you will need to score (make like a tic tack toe mark deeply) on both pieces and apply water for it to bond. Make sure each student puts their initials deeply on the bottom of their work.
4. The height limit for pieces is 6" tall, allow for an overall 10% shrinkage. You want your pieces to be no thicker than a pencil.
5. The first firing is called bisque-this takes 3 stages and in all 12 hours, it takes about 2-3 hours the next day to cool down. **When the kiln is on or cooling down one of the vent fans will be on in the art room so please keep the door closed.**
6. Allow for time-2-3 weeks: One week for the clay to dry and be ready for firing. Firing will take one day, then 2-3 hours the next day for the cooling. **I have a clip board with a form, so please fill out your name and phone# or e-mail, the teachers' name, the date you finished the project, also I need your teacher's name on paper on the trays. After I take the pieces out of the kiln I'll e-mail you so you can come and wax the pieces and they'll be ready for your class.**
7. **Why do we wax the bottom of the pieces before you take them to apply the glaze? Because for one they will fuse to the shelf. This means a broken piece and possibly a broken ceramic shelf (very costly, it means taking a hammer etc and chiseling the piece).The waxing takes 10-15min. Then if the piece accidentally gets glaze on it, just wipe it with a wet cloth or sponge, OTHERWISE**

IF THE PIECES GET GLAZE ON THE BOTTOM AND YOU DID NOT WAX, NO FIRING AND YOU WILL NEED TO SAND OFF THE BOTTOM WITH THE GLAZE AND THEN WAX. This will hold up your whole class project. **Save yourself the time.**

8. **IF you do not know how to wax please just email me, and I will be happy to show you.**
9. Wax skillet-plug in and turn on to 400F when the wax melts, this only takes a couple of minutes, turn the control down to simmer or 250F, for large items where you can easily hold the pieces you can just dip them into the skillet, the wax will dry almost immediately, for the thinner pieces please use one of the 4 paint brushes on the tray to brush the wax on. Once you are done please turn the skillet off and holding the skillet handle carefully unplug it.

Important things to remember when glazing:

Make sure you have waxed the pieces before the students start to glaze.

Glaze does not come off cloths, so roll up your sleeves. You want to put on at least 2 layers of glaze, like when you are painting your nails.

Put a little glaze in each pallet, you can always add more. Use one brush per color; you can paint on top of another color, just wait 5 minutes for the first color to dry. For example, if you're painting a ladybug, paint it all red, let it sit for 5 minutes, then paint on the black dots. Don't recycle or add water glaze.

Put finished projects back on the tray, make sure they do not touch each other and put yours and your teachers name along with the date.

PLEASE WAX YOUR PIECES AFTER THE FIRST FIRING, BEFORE YOU GLAZE THEM.

I will e-mail you after they have been fired. This is all new to me so I am learning as I go and I will probably be firing on Mondays and Wednesdays.

I will also be gone from December 13th till after the holidays, so projects will be need to be completed before that time.

If you need to reach me:

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Thanks for volunteering.