

Clay Studio Guide

About us

Our mission is to provide a warm, inspiring environment that embraces individuals of all artistic abilities. We offer a nurturing atmosphere to explore and express the art making process.

Our Clay Program

Our Clay Program's overall goal is to provide structure and a positive experience through the ceramic arts for artists, learners, and the community. Ongoing programs include classes and workshops for children and adults at all skill levels. Our goal is to become the leading ceramic arts program in the North Metro offering diverse classes in handbuilding and wheel throwing and workshops on specialty techniques in clay.

Studio policies

In order to keep our clay program running smoothly, please familiarize yourself with our studio policies.

Clay

The clay we use in the studios is a mid-range, buff colored clay and is great for both handbuilding and wheel throwing. Clay can be bought at the front desk or when signing up for an open studio time. **No outside clay is allowed.**

Tools

If enrolled in a clay class you have access to all the communal tools and will find them on the shelf next to the drying table in the studio. Please return tools clean at the end of each session in the studio. If not enrolled in a class please bring your own tools. Basic tool kits can be bought from the front desk. Remember to label your personal tools with your name and/or initials!

Slips

A selection of clay slips are provided for use. These slips are to be applied to leatherhard clay by dipping or brushing. Slips can be located on the shelf in the wheel studio with the student tools. They are best used with clear, bass green or water blue glaze.

Glazing

We have nine in house glazes that are food safe and great for functional wares. The use of the glazes are included in your firing fee or class fee. The glazing room has an application board showcasing all the color options. Glazes are meant to be dipped, brushed or poured. **Glazes CANNOT be on the bottom of pots, please wipe away the glaze on the underside of each piece with a sponge and water.** To ensure success in glazing, limit application to two dips of glaze or less! Commercial glazes can be bought and used as long as they have been checked and approved by a monitor or studio technician. The firing temperature for our clay and glazes is Cone 5/6.

Firing

Clay is fired in a pottery kiln twice before completion. The first firing is called a bisque firing and prepares the wares for the glazing process. The second firing is the glaze firing. Please consult the check lists for firing on the kiln room door to ensure your pots are ready to be fired! If enrolled in a class all pots under 10 in. x 10 in. x 10 in. are fired under the class fee and pots stay with the class rack. If any piece is larger than 10 in. x 10 in. x 10 in. and you are enrolled in an education class, a \$10/per piece fee must be paid before the bisque and glaze firing process can be completed.

If not enrolled in a class all pots must be tracked with a tracking form and are paid for per pot. Our firing fee is based on the size of the piece and can be easily determined by the boxes that delineate these guidelines (\$5, \$10, \$15), this fee covers both firings (bisque and glaze). Please fill out the tracking sheet entirely, once pots are paid for show receipt to monitor and your pots will be placed in the kiln room by the monitor. This tracking sheet is reused for the glaze firing. **No outside clay or work made outside the studio will be fired.**

Clean up

This is one of the most important policies to follow when working in our studios. For the safety of our clay community please be aware that clay dust is a health concern and we must work together to prevent dusty situations. Following the steps below will ensure a clean, happy environment for everyone at the artcenter.

No sanding in the studios! Please refine and soften edges of pots while in the wet clay stage to prevent the need to sand. Sanding, grinding and polishing if needed should be done outside.

No clay in bathroom sinks! Clay easily clogs drains so keeping as much as possible from going down the utility sink is important. Follow these steps when working in studio

- Have a throwing water bucket and a clean-up water bucket

- All water used during throwing (in the splash pan) goes back into the throwing water bucket after a session in the studio. Use the small throwing sponge for this! This bucket then gets checked for chunks of clay and scraps in the bottom. Those scraps get placed in the clay reclaim bucket next to the drying table. Remaining water can be dumped in the utility sink in the south studio.

- Clean-up bucket and large sponge is used to clean the wheel, tools and table tops. This bucket can be dumped in the utility sink in the south studio. Wringe sponge out well to clean up without leaving a clay residue!

Please clean your wheel, ware boards, tools, table tops and the floor around your wheel at the end of each session. Use wet methods when cleaning to prevent dust. An abundance of sponges can be found around the utility sink.

Open studio

With a robust clay program we have a growing open studio schedule. We currently offer multiple times a week for community artists and students to come and work in the studio. Registration can be completed online and ensures a spot for you to work. You can also purchase clay and tools during registration. With the registration fee you receive two hours of time to work on your projects, a shelf assignment for in-process projects, and any slips and glazes you need. If enrolled in a class, open studio is offered for a discounted rate and communal tools can be used as well.

Approved commercial products

We understand sometimes as an artist you are looking for a specific colored glaze or material than what we offer. You are welcome to buy and use materials as long as they are **approved by a monitor, technician or clay studio director**. We allow *Amaco Velvet Underglazes, Mayco Fundamental Underglazes, and Minnesota Clay Underglazes* to be used in the studios. If you have questions regarding a material please consult with a monitor, technician, or clay studio director.

Thanks for making our clay program great

Our clay program is able to run with the help of our technicians and monitors. Please feel free to reach out to a monitor on shift or a technician with any questions you have while working in the studios.

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