Studio in Ceramics

**Glaze Information**

**What it is:**

A liquid suspension of finely ground minerals which is applied on the surface of bisque fired clay.

The glaze ingredients will melt together when fired to form a glossy glass-like surface.

**The purpose of a glaze is to:**

1. Decorate or add color to a ceramic piece.
2. Waterproof a ceramic object. A clay body should be glazed in order to seal pores and make it water-tight.

**How to:**

Glazing is generally applied by brushing, pouring, dipping or spraying.

**Things to know:**

1. The color of the liquid glaze IS NOT necessarily the color it will be when fired. (Check glaze chart or color tiles for an idea of glaze color)
2. The color and texture of clay will have a great impact on the glaze.
3. A light colored clay will have a better color response.
4. The texture of the clay surface can make a nice contrast in the over-all effect of glazing.
5. Glaze is a way to enhance the design of your work, not detract from what should be a well-planned project.
6. When firing, the objects should be placed about ¼” apart and from the sides of the kiln to prevent the two surfaces from bonding together.

**Rules to be successful:**

1. Glaze is expensive, glaze only those works you plan to keep.
2. Wipe off your bisque pieces with a damp sponge (don’t soak them) to remove any oxidation, dust or clay particles. (Glaze will not stick to loose foreign matter.) Defects from glazing unclean work include: Blistering, pinholes, crawling, running, cracks and dull sheen to name a few.
3. Remove rough spots before glazing. (No sanding of pots inside building if possible. Go outside if sanding is necessary.)
4. Wipe off lids and replace them on glaze containers immediately after using. (Make sure you put the correct lid on the correct glaze container! )
5. Check labels, some still contain a small amount of lead which can **not** be used for holding food or drink.
6. Check labels for number of coats recommended.
7. After glazing your pieces, clean up drips on tables and floor.
8. Clean off any glaze that sticks to the foot of the clay piece. Bottoms of pots must be absolutely free of glaze or the pot WILL NOT BE FIRED.
9. “Dryfoot” all glazed objects prior to firing.

**Common Issues:**

1. Blisters and Pinholes: Caused by bisque not being moistened before glazing. Glaze trapped in the pours of the clay. Or a second glaze was applied over a completely dry first coat.
2. Crawling or scaling: Dust or oil on the clay surface.
3. Running glaze: Glaze was applied too heavily.

**Using Underglaze:**

1. Underglaze is applied when clay is in the greenware state (can do at bisque stage as well)
2. Clear Glaze is put over underglaze after the bisque firing
3. Unlike glazes, underglaze colors can be mixed together to create new colors.
4. Also unlike glazes, the color when fired is similar to the color when wet (another reason why painters often prefer underglazes.)