

SAA Ceramics Studio Guidelines

Wheels:

All potter's wheels must be left in a clean condition when finished. This includes the splash pan, work surface, wheel head, floor and stool. When finished, remember to turn the control to the "off" position. Place the stool upside down on the wheel head and remember to return any bricks if used. ***Never*** attempt to fix a wheel. Serious problems can occur if you attempt to remove any part of the wheel. Any problems with a wheel or foot pedal must be brought to the attention of the studio manager and it will be remedied in a timely fashion.

Slab Roller:

This piece of equipment requires an orientation. Never attempt to use it without being shown how to properly use it. Never force extremely thick clay through the rollers—you should not have to force it through. If you force clay through, you will seize up the rollers and cause damage. If you have questions, please ask your instructor or the studio manager.

Clay:

The SAA provides both white and brown cone 6 stoneware for studio use. They have a 12% shrinkage rate and are compatible clay bodies. You are encouraged to use both the white and brown clay bodies in order to take full advantage of our wide range of studio glazes. Being mindful of the amount of clay used is very important. Your instructor can help you determine how much clay to use for particular projects. Trimmings should be put in the slip buckets (the smaller of the two sets of buckets). All other 'spent' clay must be reconditioned and put in the appropriate barrel. Try not to accumulate too much 'spent' clay before the end of your class. Allow time to recondition your clay (dry it for 15-20 minutes and then re-wedge it) before returning it to the appropriate clay barrel. Running out of time is not an appropriate excuse for leaving clay out in the studio.

Clay Recycling:

Only clay trimmings and slip are to go into the slip buckets (the smaller of the two sets of buckets.) Trimmings should be accompanied by a bit of water, which helps 'slaking' of the clay to occur. Never hide your failed pot in the slip buckets. Failed pots and any clay that does not go into the slip buckets should always be reconditioned (dried for 15-20 minutes and then re-wedged) and returned to the appropriate clay barrel.

Wedging Boards:

Studio clay is to be wedged on the wedging boards. The wedging table has plaster bats designed for wedging and conditioning your clay. Remember to scrape and wipe these surfaces clean after each use. The plaster helps draw moisture out of the clay, which is part of the reason that we use them. Also use of the plaster bats on the wedging table will help ensure that your clay remains clean and free of possible contaminants. Always make sure that the wedging board surfaces are wiped clean with a damp sponge at the end of class. If there is not room at the plaster wedging boards and you can not wait, please spread a piece of canvas on the table before wedging.

Sink:

Always use the clay sink on the left. Never use the 2-D studio sink to the right with clay material.

The clay sink is a 'settling sink', designed to drain slowly from the top while allowing sediment to settle. This is the first line of defense in keeping clay sediment out of the drain. The second line of defense is the clay trap. Water drains through two different sized screens designed to 'trap' clay sediment. Do not leave the water running in the sink...it fills the sink faster than it drains. ***Do not*** aim the faucet directly down the drain pipe...it will fill the sink trap too fast and you will end up with wet feet and a flooded floor. You are encouraged to be resourceful when cleaning up and using the sink... wash your buckets and tools with the sink water. A final rinse with the faucet is all that's necessary. When cleaning your wheel and tools, consider bringing water to your wheel rather than stand in line waiting for the sink. Your conservation efforts, when it comes to the sink, are greatly appreciated.

The large yellow sponges are clean up/floor sponges and the small yellow sponges are for wheel work. Please remember to return the sponges and water buckets to their appropriate place when finished.

Glazes:

The studio glazes are all food safe, dishwasher safe and microwavable. They are cone six glazes (2232 F) and formulated to mature and 'fit' both the white and brown stoneware clay bodies. The glazes are formulated for dipping and pouring applications. A glaze test tile hangs on each glaze bucket and will show you the end results on both clay bodies with proper application. The large test tile display board shows you various combinations. Many combinations are possible and some are to be avoided. Your instructor will tell you how to read the combination board and apply the glazes for best results.

Always spread newspaper when working with glazes and wax resist. It helps with the cleaning up process and also helps keep the countertops clean and free of contaminates. All foam wax brushes are to be rinsed with soap and water and put back clean. The SAA occasionally has paintbrushes that can be used for wax application, but unless they are washed immediately, they will be ruined after a single use. If you would like to use a paintbrush, please consider bringing your own, or having a small bowl of warm soapy water with you at the table so you can soak it immediately.

It is important to wipe up the counter and bucket surfaces with a sponge and water when you're finished working with the glazes. A variety of containers for transferring glaze are available under the counter. These containers help when glazing a wider bisque form or if the glaze level is low in the original glaze bucket. Remember to rinse your measuring cups in the rinse bucket first before rinsing in the sink. This resourceful step helps create our studio scrap glaze.

No food or drink is permitted in the glaze room.

Kilns:

MIT EHS (Environmental Health and Safety Office) mandates that studio Staff and Independent studio users are the only authorized people to operate the kilns. Please do not open or attempt to load or unload a kiln. The condition of the kilns and their contents are the responsibility of Studio Staff and Independent users.

If you would like to learn more about kiln tasks in order to fully understand the full ceramic process, please contact the Studio Manager or your instructor. The opportunity to help alongside your instructor is always appreciated.

The kilns are fired when there is enough work to fill the kiln, and all kiln firings are recorded on the kiln room door. Here you can see whether or not a kiln is loaded with bisque or glazed ware, who loaded and fired it and judge when it will most likely be unloaded. Any kiln questions can be directed to the Studio Manager. Both bisque and glaze firings have about a three day turn around. The majority of the kilns are loaded on Tuesdays and Fridays depending on the amount of dry work on the shelves. All work will be fired unless it has been placed on the 2nd. Chance Shelf. This shelf allows you to remedy any glazing faults or other minor repairs on work before it is fired. It gives you a 'second chance'.

Shelves:

Storage of your clay work in progress is to be placed on your class assigned bank of shelves. Ware boards are encouraged for the placement of your work. Do not use bats for storage unless your work has been created on it. A limited number of private shelves are also available in the glaze room for the storage of work and tools. Contact the Studio Manager regarding the availability of private shelving.

Studio Maintenance:

It is important to help maintain a standard of cleanliness and order to the ceramic studio. Airborne silica is a health hazard. A minimum amount of clay dust is to be expected, as this is a very active ceramics studio. Please help us reduce the amount of airborne particles by confining any dust producing processes such as grinding or sanding to the kiln room where there is additional ventilation. The preferred practice is to take your piece down to the second floor and do your sanding outside.

Tables, wedging boards, glaze buckets, etc. all need to be wiped down after being used. Wipe up any spills on the floor immediately to avoid accidents. If you see clay left out, please put it away. Do not step on clay trimmings...if you see them on the floor, please throw them away. If your trimmings are consistently falling to the floor, please consider putting newspaper on the floor to catch them and keep them clean. Clean trimmings can always be recycled. Failed pots and any clay that does not go into the slip buckets should always be reconditioned (dried for 15-20 minutes and then re-wedged) and returned to the appropriate clay barrel.

Keeping clay dust to a minimum and maintaining a level of cleanliness is a priority.

A studio clean up is scheduled at the end of each term and everyone is strongly encouraged to participate in this necessary and important event.

Emergencies:

A list of contact numbers is posted on the kiln room door, studio door and the SAA office door. A red first aid kit is available in the ceramic studio. It can be found on the shelf above the clay recycling. A second first aid kit is also available in the SAA Office.

