

Independent Ceramics Study

By Noah Hochrein

Helpful References

[Making Clay Video](#)

[Making a Kiln Video](#)

[Bandana Pottery Process](#)

[Firing Temperatures](#)

[Charcoal Grill Pit Firing Process](#)

[Earth Pit Firing Process](#)

Day 1 - 4/2/20

Homework of Independent Study

Finding and Making Clay

Today I went into the woods and found a good area to get clay-rich dirt by a creek. The dirt stuck together when balled up. I took a wheelbarrow full of this dirt back to the house and put in in bins after sifting through it and removing as many rocks and sticks as possible. I then mixed the dirt with water to separate the rocks and grass from the clay. Here is one of the two bins on the right.



Day 2 - 4/3/20

Class Day 1 of Independent Study Making Clay

Today I filtered all the rocks, gravel, remaining grass, and roots out of the clay water. I did this by taking a screen and carefully pouring all of it through into another bin. So now only the fine material is in the bin. This was given a few minutes to settle. Then I poured the top clay water off into a new bin and left the dark organic material and fine sand in the bin to be discarded. This process was repeated until all of the mixture was filtered and removed from the remaining, unwanted soil. Now it is being left to settle overnight and tomorrow I will repeat the process of pouring off the top clay water to purify it more.



Day 3 - 4/4/20

Homework of Independent Study

Making Clay

Today I repeated the process of pouring the top clay water off and discarding the sand left in the bottom. I then put a cloth over a bin and poured the clay water onto the cloth. I tested different fabrics to see which held the clay the best. I then felt it to sit over night and make sure it would catch clay. I covered the fabric bin and the original bin to keep out bugs and plant stuff.



Day 4 - 4/5/20

Homework of Independent Study Making Clay

Today I added more clay water to the cloth. A lot seems to be doing through which I plan to let settle and then pour in again once it is thicker. The bin of clay water is starting to settle a lot. This may mean that next time I can pour the water off the top and just pour that thicker slip into the cloth which would dry quicker. If it doesn't settle soon I will add salt to help it settle or just pour it through the cloth as is. I left it covered the same way as yesterday.



Day 5 - 4/7/20

Class Day 2 of Independent Study Making Clay

Today I went to class. After class I added more clay that had settled to the cloth to let the moisture drip out. Then, to help settle the clay, I added salt to the bin of clay water. I covered the clay water again with the screen to keep nature out.



Day 6 - 4/8/20

Homework of Independent Study

Making Clay

Today I scooped the rest of the settled clay out of the bin and put it in the cloth. There is still more clay water in the bin though. I decided to go ahead and start getting the clay I had in the cloth hung and drying. The clay that is still in the water will go in the next batch. I bundled up the cloth and put it in into a pillow case. Then I suspended the sack above a bin to catch the drips using rope to let it drip dry.



Day 7 - 4/9/20

Homework of Independent Study Making Clay

Today I took the dripped clay water that was under the cloth and the unused clay water and condensed them making sure to get all the clay. I put them in the more narrow bin and used the other wider bin as a lid because it is supposed to rain. I also checked on the suspended clay and it looks great. It is drying and dripping only clear water now which means all the clay is staying in!



Day 8 - 4/10/20

Class Day 3 of Independent Study Making Clay

Today I did a lot of research. The clay is still hanging up drying and will take a few more days. At this point I need to wait and let it do its thing. I would like to see how this clay turns out before starting more to see what can be adjusted to improve it! I did a lot of research on kilns. Firing temperatures and what materials can withstand those temperatures was a big focus. I did research until I got a virus alert on my computer...But I managed to find some good stuff. At this point I think it will be best to use fire bricks to make the kiln to be safe because we are not sure how hot this is going to get. The problem with fire bricks is that we may have to buy them which I was hoping to avoid because I want to do this process from what I have.



Day 9 - 4/14/20

Class Day 4 of Independent Study Making Clay

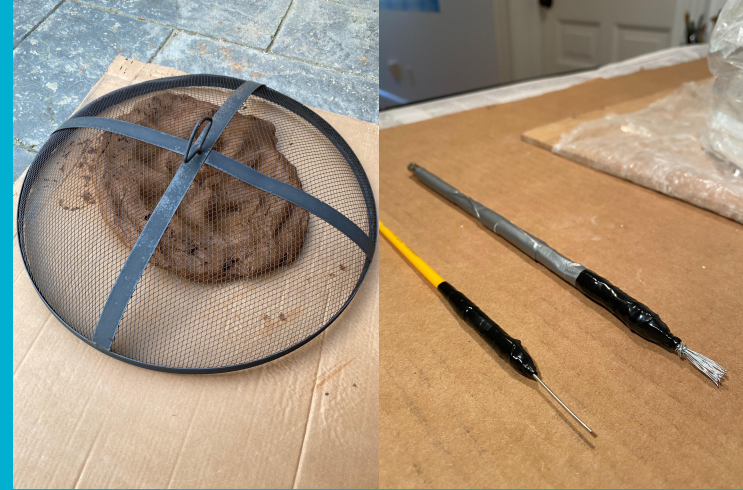
Today I took the clay out hanging sack! It is still too wet to use, but it was good to take it out a little early and wedge it to make sure it has an even consistency. I think next time I will leave it hanging a little longer though because it was pretty sticky. The top picture shows the clay in the cloth after being removed from the pillow case. The lower picture is the clay after I wedged it and patted it out to dry.



Day 10 – 4/17/20

Class Day 5 of Independent Study Making Clay and Tools

Today I made materials for the clay and worked on getting the clay ready. The right picture is of two tools I made, a needle tool and a wire brush. The materials I used were: paper clips, duct tape, electrical tape, thin wire, a mettle pensil end, a plastic paintbrush, and a paper straw. The picture to the left shows the clay which I flattened out to allow it to dry quicker and more evenly. I covered it to keep debris and pugs out.



Day 11 - 4/20/20

Class Day 6 of Independent Study Making Clay

Today I wedged up the clay that had been drying. It is now a little wetter than fresh clay, but it is not as pure. It cracks a little more than Highwater Clays because it has a little too much sand and silt in it. I am planning to work with the clay a little wetter since it holds its shape well and I don't want it to crack too much. I put the wedged clay in a bag so it does not dry out. I also set up my work space and am ready to get to work!



Day 12 - 4/23/20

Class Day 7 of Independent Study Making Pots

Today I went to class and worked with the clay after. It would be better to let it sit for a while and become more plastic, but I need to get going working and I will let the clay I am not using sit. I made a small vase using the coil method. I also made more tools, like a wire tool, and finished getting everything set up. My brother is interested in ceramics and I taught him how to make coil pots and he also made one with a lippe assistance. The clay is not amazing but its not that bad. It is hard to work with because it is a little wet and cracks a little too much. Here is the vase i made, pot my brother made and wire took I made.



Day 13 - 4/27/20

Class Day 8 of Independent Study Research+Creditcard Tool+Moisture

Today I work with the pit firing research, reading and looking at articles/websites and planing hot to make my kiln. I also used a hotel room key to make a tool for designing wheel thrown pots. It is the Fibonacci sequence!!!! And I did moisture control for the pots that are slowly drying. They are not done and at leather hard will be finished.



Day 14 - 4/30/20

Class Day 9 of Independent Study

Making Pots

Today I went to class all period.

Day 15 - _/_/_

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Class Day _ of Independent Study

Making Pots

Today I ...

Day _ - _/_/_

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Class Day _ of Independent Study

Making Pots

Today I ...