

Glazing Instructions

VERY IMPORTANT: Be sure that your piece has been bisque-fired BEFORE you apply any glazes!!!

1. Find your bisqued piece on the bisque carts. Your hands should be clean. Grease and dust will prevent the glaze from attaching to the pot and will cause a defect called crawling. Dusty pots should be wiped with a damp sponge. If the piece is very dusty it should be rinsed under running water and allowed to dry for 24 hours. Wet pots will not accept glaze.
2. If you have not already signed your piece before it was bisqued, sign the piece now with iron oxide (before waxing and after rinsing). I highly recommend a notebook to keep track of your work, the type and weight of the clay, a rough drawing of the piece, glazes applied and how, the type of firing (e.g., ^10 gas reduction, Raku, salt, etc.) and a description of the results.
3. The bottom of the piece and ANY place that might touch the kiln shelf should be waxed. Waxing prevents glaze from sticking to the bottom of the pot and sides so that glaze won't run down the side when the glaze melts during the firing process and stick to the kiln shelf. This should include the foot ring, sides of the foot ring and about 1/4 - 1/2 inch up from the bottom of the piece. Waxing can be neatly accomplished by using a potter's wheel. First, center the pot on the wheel-head. Get the wheel spinning slowly. Dip your waxing brush (brushes used for waxing should be dedicated to that task) in the wax bottle. Be very careful not to drip any wax on the piece where you don't want it. If this happens, have the pot re-bisque-fired to burn off the wax. Paint the wax on very carefully with hands braced. This method applies a clean application of wax with a sharp, clean edge. If wax starts to build up you are applying too much. Wipe the excess off with a paper towel. The excess wax will float off in the glaze and contaminate it.
4. Let wax dry for at least 1 hour, preferably several hours before applying glaze.
5. Consider the colors of the glazes and oxides that are available in the glaze room. Decide which color or combinations will best suit the mood and intent of your piece. Also think about how you are going to apply the glaze.
6. Glazes should be stirred thoroughly with the sticks provided in the glaze bucket – **DO NOT MIX STIRRING STICKS**. Stir round and round from the bottom to the top. The heavier colorants will settle out first. If not thoroughly stirred the glaze will not have the right color. Glazes should be stirred if they have not been used for several minutes.
7. **Glazes are precise recipes – Don't contaminate them with stirring equipment or pouring containers from other glazes.**
8. Only take the lids off of the glazes that you are using and close them when you are finished. Apply the glaze that you are using over **that** glaze bucket. This will prevent spilling or splashing into other glazes.

9. Glazes should be about the consistency of cream. If it appears too thin stir again – especially from the bottom. If the glaze appears too thick ask your instructor or an instructional assistant to check it.
10. Glazes can be applied in several ways – dipping, pouring, sponging, squirting, brushing, etc.
11. When dipping the pot in a glaze do not submerge for longer than about 3-5 seconds. If you are applying a second glaze, the total time for BOTH should no more than 3-8 seconds. Be careful applying a second glaze on top of a previous application. The second glaze should only be applied to the top half of the pot. Glazes that are too thick will run down the side of the pot and stick to the kiln shelf!
12. Brushing usually doesn't produce an even coat of glaze or color – this may be the effect you want though – e.g., you may just want a wash of one color on top of another or just a brush mark.
13. Let one glaze dry completely before applying the next – this will take roughly 30 seconds. Wax resist can be applied on top of the first glaze to create a design – let it dry. Dip it into another glaze to create layers and patterns.
14. If your glaze surface looks bubbly or pocky (an effect called “pin-holing”) you can smooth it with your finger tips as needed. Do not blow on the glazed surface – it will create a cloud of glaze dust which can be poisonous!
15. Check the bottom of your piece to make sure no glaze has stuck to it. Use a damp sponge to remove any droplets of glaze that remain on the waxed areas.
16. Record all of your glaze applications in your notebook.
17. **Clean up any messes that you make and a little extra. Communal art spaces like the Benton Center ceramics studio work best when everybody pitches in and works together to keep it clean!**
18. Take your glazed piece to the kiln area and place it on the ware rack. When there is enough glazed work the kilns will be loaded and fired.
19. If there is a problem with your pot, e.g., the glaze is too thick, there is glaze on the bottom, the glaze is cracking off, the glaze is too near the bottom, etc. it will be placed on one of the lower shelves with a note. Correct the problem and put your piece back on the ware rack to be fired.
20. Claim your piece as soon as possible before they mysteriously disappear!

A FINAL NOTE: Take care in waxing and glazing your pots. Good pieces can be ruined if you rush and are sloppy at this stage!