

Texas Gulf Coast Ceramics Society

January 2004 Newsletter

December was a rough month for the Texas Gulf Coast Ceramics Society members. We lost two members of the ceramics world. Dorothy Baldon (B&B Ceramics) and Lora White (Alora's Ceramics and Gifts). Both will be missed in our world of ceramics.

Beulah's Ceramics and Doll Shop closed their doors during the first part of January. Curtis and Lee are retiring. There has been Beulahs in LaPorte and the ceramics industry for the past 52 years. We will miss them.

The local Duncan distributor now is Texas Art Supply in Houston. Shop Owners - If you haven't purchased anything from them for awhile, you might have to apply for dealer discounts.

Mary Lou's Ceramics of Pasadena purchased Beulah's molds. So if you were getting special greenware or bisque from Beulah's, contact Robin at Mary Lou's to see if she has that mold.

TIPS and HINTS

Greenware Tips

Submitted by Trish Gill
Removing Seam Lines

Do not try to remove the seam line from greenware all in one pass. It is best to go over the line several times until the line is flush with the rest of your piece.

Soft-Fired Greenware

Sometimes you may come across a piece of greenware that you really like but hesitate to buy it of fear that you will break it whilst cleaning it. You can ask the studio to "Soft Fire" it for you. That is the piece is fired at a low temperature.

You will still be able to clean it up, but it will not be so fragile.

Glazing Greenware a No-No

Question: What would happen if I applied glaze to greenware and fired it the same as greenware to an O4 cone?

Answer: You would more than likely be very disappointed with the final result. Possible defects from firing glaze on greenware include craters (popped bubbles) graying under the glaze and tiny bubbles in the glaze. The bisque firing releases gases and moisture from the greenware and if you fire a glaze applied over the greenware these gases must escape through the glaze. Moisture is present in the kiln during greenware firing and moisture will often contaminate certain glaze colors.

Brush, Don't Blow!

Use a soft, dry dusting brush to remove the accumulated clay dust while cleaning greenware. Blowing the dust away can result in the airborne particles contaminating unfired glazes, overglazes and other susceptible products.

Cradle Greenware in Sponge

A thick sponge cushion is handy for cradling large pieces of greenware during cleaning.

Greenware Shock Absorber

Have you got a computer and wondered what to do with your mouse pad when it wears out and gets tatty or grotty?

Why not use it as a shock absorber for your ceramics. I have found they are great to put under your greenware piece when I am cleaning up, but also nice and firm to hold the piece whilst I am painting. Even if you don't have a computer you could buy a mouse pad - they are quite cheap.

Filling pin holes

Clay dust accumulated from cleaning greenware can be saved and revitalized for filling pin holes.

To fix a pinhole in the greenware surface touch a drop of water to the tiny hole with a small soft brush, blot the water. Then dip water moistened finger in to the clay dust and rub it gently into the pinhole. Allow the area to dry and lightly sand smooth.

Raised Designs

You can apply raised designs to wet greenware by using a brush, syringe or eye dropper filled with slip. This can make some interesting designs and patterns.

Shop Owners – Tip from IADCCT ATTRACTING STUDENTS

Don't make students out to be the bad guy when a piece doesn't look like they - or you - think it should. Try to shift at least some of the disappointment elsewhere, even to yourself for perhaps not communicating product information correctly

Experiment! Try techniques like mixing silica with glazes to make a textured glaze or putting vinegar with cover coats to thicken the paint. Try vinegar etching on greenware to achieve a textured finish. Be bold and say "We will try". Avoid saying "It just won't work"

Take field trips to stores to see what is new. Studios and teachers can get in to a rut of only being able to see things one way. Go see market trends, new color combinations and see what consumers are purchasing.

Listen to student needs. Keep it exciting fun and rewarding for anyone who wants to learn.

Remember the old saying 'Give a little and you will gain a lot'

MOLDS AND POURING

When pouring small molds you may experience difficulty sometimes in getting the slip to drain from small pour holes. Try using an atomiser with a piece of flexible tubing attached. Insert the tube into the pour hole and turn mold over and pump air in to the mold. The slip will then run freely. OR you could also insert a straw and blow gently into it to drain the mold. The straw acts as a vent allowing air in to displace the slip.

One method of avoiding hard spots when pouring is to insert a tongue depressor or flat object in the mold and pour slip against it

CLASSES

Upcoming at Brennan's Pride Enterprizes (281 585-8888) for sign up and information

Elza Reidell – Majolica Butterfly January 31, 2004 and Protector of Reflection Dragon February 1, 2004

Blanca at Garden Road Ceramics will be starting Pottery Classes this next month. She has a special artist to show us many different ways of working with clay. Call Blanca at (281) 485-1510

Gene Thornton-Brennan of Brennans Pride Enterprizes will be hosting a Doc Holliday open house on February 15, 2004. That's a Sunday afternoon. Hope to see you all there.

In Star Decal Party

Mary Lou's Ceramics will be hosting a decal party featuring In Star decals February 23, 2004 beginning at 10am. Please contact Robin (281) 998-9987 for more details.

Anyone with internet access should check out the new feature on our web page.

NEW NEW NEW NEW NEW NEW

Houston Ceramics.org now has a message board, Please sign up and use it. Ask questions, leave answers, leave tips, who's got that mold. It's all about people helping people.

There is also a calendar there where you can list a class you are hosting/teaching or search for a class you want to attend.

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