



# The Ways Of Glaze

Glaze is the final statement you make about your ceramics artwork

Glaze seals in your piece as well as decorating

Make sure you check that your glaze is non-toxic if you are going to use it on a cup or bowl!

**Put Glaze on Bisque Ware** - you use glaze **after** the artwork has been fired for the first time

**Clean Your Artwork First** – Use a slightly damp sponge to clean your artwork. Gently wipe the piece to remove dust, or sediment. Let it sit after you clean it for 5 minutes. Don't saturate the ceramics with water or your glaze may not fire properly.

**Record What You Do** – Always write down what glazes you use, and on which piece in your glaze record. This way, you can be experimental and be able reproduce what works! Also, you may need to look back and confirm that your glazes are food safe.

## Types of glazes

In our lab we use 2 kinds of glaze, *low-fire* and *high-fire*.

### **LOW FIRE** (*also earthenware, majolica*)

Practically speaking, this means that your artwork is fired at a lower temperature and **your ceramics is not microwave or oven safe**. It is also more brittle. The colors are much more stable however, and you have a lot more choices and control. If the glaze does not completely seal the ceramic vessel, it is also NOW waterproof and water will slowly leak out through the porous walls.

**How Our Low Fire Glazes Are Organized:** The glazes are kept in plastic bins by the sink according to color. Check the glaze number on the bottle if possible since sometimes the lids get switched!

<b>1</b> coat (dry)	<b>2</b> coats (may be patchy)	<b>3</b> coats (full color)
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**GLAZES CHANGE CHARACTERISTICS IF THEY ARE THIN OR THICK, AND IF COMBINED WITH OTHER GLAZES**

### **Putting on a LOW FIRE glaze:**

- LOW FIRE glazes in our class are applied by brushing the glaze on.
- In general you want 3 even flowing coats to go on.
- Let the glaze dry completely in between every layer!

### **HIGH FIRE (*also stoneware*)**

Stoneware is fired at a very high temperature and is completely *VITRIFIED*. This means the clay has gone through a molecular change so that no water is left at all in the chemical structure. It has become crystallized and therefore, very strong.

Stoneware glaze tends to run in the kiln, so you can't apply it too thickly. The colors are much less stable and are often more like earth tones.

The clay is so strong that you can use it in the microwave and it is also completely impermeable to water.

**How Our High Fire Glazes Are Organized:** The glazes are kept in large buckets towards the rear of the room on a long table. They must be stirred before use as the glaze tends to settle. They also must be covered after you are done using them or they become too thick as the water evaporates.

### **Putting on a HIGH FIRE glaze:**

- High fire glazes are often applied by waxing the areas you do not want glazed and then dipping or pouring the glaze over the artwork.
- You can also brush on the glaze and follow the same guidelines as for low fire ceramics
- YOU MUST LEAVE ¼" at least unglazed at the base of your project if it is high fire glazed.
- Generally you need only dip once unless the glaze is too thin.
- When layering glaze leave room for the 2<sup>nd</sup> layer to run...
- Wax the foot first and let it sit for 15 minutes. This will keep the base cleaner. You still will have to sponge it off!

## **TYPES OF GLAZES**

OPAQUE GLOSS · Cannot see through and surface is shiny and smooth

TRANSPARENT GLOSS · Can see through and the surface is shiny and smooth

SATIN-MATT · Surface is dull and smooth

MATT · Surface is dull and rough or grainy

ART & SPECIAL · glazes that have flecks, streaks, textures or unique effects

CRACKLE · A glaze in which the surface has visible cracks in it

**Glaze Over Newspaper** – Glaze is **toxic** and can be absorbed through skin contact, and contaminate clay!

**Use the appropriate size of brush for the area you are trying to glaze** – Often problems with brushing on glaze are caused by using too big of a brush for detail work, or small brushed for large areas.

**Let your piece dry completely between coats.** Glazes that are applied unevenly rarely come out as expected. A glazes usually **requires 3 coats**. Some glazes (900 series) require 5 or more coats.

**Sponge off the bottom of your piece** – In general, **DO NOT GLAZE the bottom of your piece**. If you do, your piece may stick to the kiln shelves, ruining the piece and also the kiln shelf (which is very expensive). If you need to glaze the bottom of your piece make sure you ask the teacher. **NEVER** glaze the bottom with High Fire.

**Put your piece on the glaze fire shelf** – When your piece is glazed, put it on the appropriate shelf and it will be fired when a full kiln load can be made. Make sure you put your artwork on the correct shelf. Low Fire ware that goes into a High Fire kiln may be ruined!

## **Be Creative !**

- ④ **Do something new on every piece**
- ④ **Record what you do**
- ④ **Use tape to mask areas for clean lines and transitions**
- ④ **Try layering glazes**
- ④ **You can let areas of the ceramic show through**
- ④ **Apply light glaze or sponge off glaze for some color**
- ④ **Apply glaze inside grooves and sponge off excess, leaving glaze in the indentions. You can use another glaze over the top**
- ④ **TAKE YOUR TIME!!! A rushed glaze job can wreck a good piece of ceramics**

# Stoneware Glazes

Clean off your bisque ware with a damp sponge and let sit for 5 minutes. This will minimize glaze imperfections and glaze contamination.

Wax the foot of your pot. Leave at least  $\frac{1}{4}$ ". This gives the glaze a little room to run in case you apply too much glaze.



USE A TURNTABLE OR  
BANDING WHEEL AND  
ONLY WAX BRUSHES

Stir the glaze. It should be about the consistency of pea soup.



EITHER USE A CLEAN  
STIRRING STICK OR THE  
ONE ALREADY IN THE  
BUCKET!

Use a CLEAN measuring cup to pour glaze into your pot. Pour it back into the glaze container with a rotating motion so that the entire inside is covered evenly.



PLEASE DON'T  
WASTE GLAZE \$\$\$

If the glaze bucket is deep enough you can dip your pot and hold it under for 5 seconds to glaze the outside -OR- Use the same measuring cup to evenly pour glaze on the outside as you rotate the pot.

# - Majolica -

Apply the white base glaze by dipping or pouring (one coat only). It may also be brushed on in three even, flowing coats.



USE THE  
CORRECT SIZED  
BRUSH FOR  
THE JOB!

Let dry and paint on the base with colored glazes, one color at a time, allowing time to dry between colors.



Along with brush size, vary line quality by changing pressure on the brush

Use a single coat if you want the white base to show through. 3 coats will make the color fully **OPAQUE** so that the white will not show.



Thicker coats allow shading and create **FORM**

Think of how you can use the contrast of light and dark and of transparent and solid colors to make a more exciting glaze.

