



A DAY IN THE ARTS

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March 24, 2009 ADA0032 www adayinthearts.com

HANDMADE POTTERY - FIRST STEPS IN THE PREPARATION FOR WORKING WITH CLAY

By Betty Grandy

One of the most important steps in working with clay is to prepare it before throwing or hand building. Wedging clay should always be worked on a plaster or canvas surface. It is usually easier if you are standing. I use a wedging table I made of plaster and covered with canvas.

If you have some clay you need to reuse, it can be placed on the wedging table so that the plaster can absorb some of the moisture so it will be the correct moisture content prior to wedging.

I purchase my clay already prepared and wedged for me. However, if I use some and it doesn't turn out the way I think it should, I wedge it a little and put it in a plastic bag, set it aside for a couple days and then wedge it up to get the air bubbles out again.

Always start with wedged clay so all the bubbles are out. First take a piece and slam it onto the wedging table. Then cut it with a wire cutter in half and throw one of the pieces down on top of the other in the same direction. Repeat this over and over again until you don't see any more bubbles in the clay.

By repeating this step over and over again, it is wedging the molecules nice and tight together and eliminating as many bubbles as possible.

Even though you have wedged the clay according to the above step until you don't see any bubbles you still need to wedge again by using the cone method.

I like to weigh the clay before I begin to wedge. I use different weights for lids, bowls, vases and other items. If I weigh prior to wedging I have a record of what size pot or lid it will be when I finish throwing it on the potter's wheel. It is very important that you keep records of the weight you are going to work with. If you have a record to refer back to, when you are ready to make a mug you know exactly what the weight will need to be to obtain the size mug you want to make.

Before I get started making a piece of pottery on the wheel, I plan what type of pot I will be making. Is my finished pot going to be a mug, bowl, vase, lamp or platter?

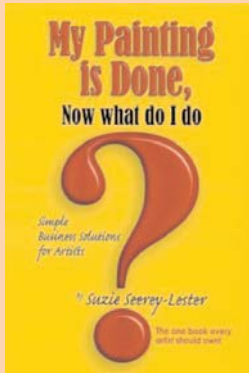
Based on the item, and what the dimensions are going to be, I decide the weight of the clay I want to wedge for that item. Once I have determined what size pot I want to make, I weigh it on a food scale.

In the beginning sometimes you just need to guess at the weight you will need to make a certain item. If you are unsure, try throwing some pots using different weights using 1/2 pound increased increments so you become familiar with the different sizes that the different weights of clay will produce according to your style of throwing.

This is due to the fact that each potter will have an individual style and thickness to their throwing the sizes of the finished pots can vary for the weight used.

You always need to keep in mind that as your pot dries it will shrink in size. It will





BOOK REVIEW

MY PAINTING IS DONE, NOW WHAT DO I DO?

What famous artists said about this book: *Claude Monet* - If I'd had this book, I would have been more productive, and done more shows, instead of just painting all those water lilies. *Vincent Van Gogh* - I hear it is a great book, but I couldn't read my copy because Gauguin stole it, and took it to the South Pacific. And *Salvador Dali* - If I'd read

Suzie's great marketing tips earlier, I could have sold that painting before the watch melted. (Quotes invented by the book's author.)

Knowing that the author, and her very famous husband, are successful artists, I was eager to take a peek inside the pages of *My Painting is Done*. I must admit that the book is very thorough and teaches how to organize and catalog your work to better keep track of it, how to photograph and frame your art, how to handle consignments, how to set prices, how to exhibit your work and much more. The book is written in a very light-hearted tone (as you can tell from the "quotes" above) but with very serious and helpful information packed in.

In the pages that talk about photographing your work, the author, Suzie Seerey-Lester, doesn't just tell you how but also shows many examples of improper ways. Thus we understand much more fully why something should be done a certain way. Step by step photos show how to properly frame a painting as well. The book is illustrated throughout with helpful photos and humorous cartoons by John Seerey-Lester. If you're serious about your artwork, this could be a very useful book indeed.

My Painting is Done, Now What Do I Do?

Mermaid Press ISBN 142762352X

Available from <http://tinyurl.com/cdccen>

Also available from Amazon

<http://tinyurl.com/d475be>

also shrink in the bisque firing, which is the first firing. The bisque fire helps to eliminate the extra moisture in the pot and is fired to 1890 degrees. The pot will also shrink even more in the final firing. The hottest temperature is in last firing, often called the final firing; the more the pot will shrink.

When purchasing clay from a company that is processed and ready for use it will usually state the shrinkage rate for each particular clay body.

Therefore, you must remember to make the pot just a little larger than the desired finished size.

I usually start with 3/4 of a pound of clay for a mug. Many times I will use three pounds for an average size bowl. Three pounds will also make a nice size vase.

A little planning, weighing, and wedging will go a long way in helping you to consistently achieve a successful piece of pottery.

Click through to my website to see my original pottery that is available for purchase
<http://www.artisticdesignz.com/>

About the author: Betty Grandy has been making handmade pottery since 1982. She has a unique style and uses her own original designs and glaze recipes
Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/>





ART NEWS

ARTY FACTS

Arty Facts, an art-making class for children ages four to seven with an adult companion, invites families to explore works of art, enjoy a family gallery activity, and make art in each ninety-minute class at the Brooklyn Museum. In April, participants will discover how artists are inspired by traveling around the world and viewing different cities and countries as well as rivers and seas. After viewing art exhibitions like the newly opened *Gustave Caillebotte: Impressionist Paintings from Paris to the Sea*, the participants will make their own artwork inspired by landscapes, cityscapes, and waterscapes. Arty Facts takes place every Saturday and Sunday at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. and offers a different program each day. Arty Facts is free with Museum admission. www.brooklynmuseum.org

ASIAN PAINTING

Dr. Richard R. Ernst, Laboratorium für Physikalische Chemie, ETH Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland Scientist and Nobel Laureate Richard Ernst presents an overview of his spectacular collection of scroll paintings from Tibet, Nepal and China. With the use of a high-powered microscope, Ernst has examined the pigments and materials of the paintings which reveal compelling information about their provenance and insights into the painting trade



"Grand Canal, Venice", 1908, Claude Monet (French, 1840-1926), Oil on canvas, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Bequest of Alexander Cochrane, Accession Number: 19.171, Photograph (c) Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

of Central Asia. A reception follows at The Walters Art Museum (Baltimore). Sunday, April 5, 3 -3:45 p.m. Guided tour of The John and Berthe Ford Collection of Himalayan Art with Walters Associate Curator of Asian Art Robert Mintz, 4 p.m. Dr. Richard Ernst's lecture begins, Graham Auditorium, **The Walters Art Museum**, 600 North Charles Street.

MAD ON COLOR

In 1888, the art historian Bernard

Berenson wrote from Venice to his patron Isabella Stewart Gardner, saying: "One soon forgets to think of form here, going almost mad on color, thinking in color, talking in color, almost living in color. And for one that enjoys color this is certainly paradise."

Drawing upon the vibrancy of Italy's magical city of water and light observed by Berenson is the installation *Mad on Color: Paintings of 19th-Century Venice* at the **Museum of Fine Arts**, Boston (MFA). On

view from March 7 through August 30 in the Museum's Upper Hemicycle, it complements the MFA's exhibition, Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance Venice, the first major exploration of the competition that developed among these renowned 16th-century Venetian masters.

Mad on Color illustrates the visual connection each artist made to Venice. It serves as a companion piece to the exhibition, Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance Venice, which explores through thematic juxtapositions of their works the emergence of each painter's signature style and the artistic exchange that existed among them.



Mari Kloeppe, Cobahsaan and Blue II, 2007. Oil on linen, 20 x 24 in. Collection of Mike Phillips.

ANIMALS IN THE DRAWING ROOM

Artist Mari Kloeppe, whose stunning animal portraits are currently on view in Animals in the Drawing Room, will be on hand to sign copies of the catalogue of her work. Catalogues are available in the Crocker Art Gallery (Sacramento, CA) Museum Store for \$5. Mari Kloeppe's technique is traditional, but

Cobahsaan, a 1,000 pound Arab gelding that crushed her in a riding accident. Severely injured and temporarily blind, Kloeppe's reverence for animals was not deterred, and she decided that if she could regain her health and sight she would become a full-time artist. She has since done exactly that. Today she paints horses, dogs, rabbits, chickens, and cattle, along

not her approach to animal painting. More than simply depictions of animals, her paintings are portraits, with personalities, thoughts, and sometimes even a sense of humor. Kloeppe's commitment to pursuing art as a full-time profession was in large part due to her horse-

with less domesticated creatures such as ravens, pelicans, and falcons. The species, however, matters less than her personal connection to the animal. She knows most of her subjects, having lived with them for years at her rural home in Elkhorn, north of the Monterey Peninsula. Others she encounters through animal rescues and local environmental activism. She finds beauty and intelligence in them all, and within them discovers her muse. www.crockerartmuseum.org

CARVERS AND COLLECTORS

March 19-September 7, 2009

Carved gemstones have captivated connoisseurs of every age, from antiquity to the modern period. The exhibition Carvers and Collectors brings together remarkable intaglios and cameos carved by ancient master engravers along with some of the outstanding works by modern carvers that they have inspired. The gems will be displayed together with material from later periods that evinces their importance through the ages--illuminated manuscripts, rare engravings from early catalogues, cabinets designed to house collections of gems, and other works of art in diverse media to illustrate the lasting allure of these masterpieces in miniature. www.getty.edu J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa ➤

WORD OF THE DAY OBAN

In Japanese tradition, a size of paper used for prints, measuring about 15 x 10 inches.

“Why do people think artists are special? It's just another job.”

Andy Warhol

ART AEROBICS

Practice you drawing skills

Draw three cubes lighted from the left. One with pencil. One with colored pencil. One with oil pastel / crayon. Six minutes drawing time. ➤