

## BURN-OUT HANDOUT

A burn-out refers to any organic matter that is mixed in or coated in clay that when fired, burns out. This does not refer to anything inorganic (no metal, stone, or glass - MUST BE FIRED IN CONE 2 KILN at Greenwich House Pottery) This is because we need it to be bisque firing within a gas kiln. The gas kilns have a much stronger draw because of the chimney, venting off all harmful smoke and gases. Never put a burnout in an electric kiln to bisque at Greenwich House Pottery - it will smoke out the entire kiln room!

### 1. Why is it done?

Burn-outs are used for a variety of reasons:

- a) To achieve more porosity within the materials
- b) To coat/dip fabric in **casting slip** and burn out the fabric to maintain a visually fabric-like ceramic work.
- c) To coat/dip any organic materials in slip to burn away, being left with a ceramic shell of that object. Some beautiful results may develop when experimenting with the use of anything from dead and dried plants to hand knitted garments. When dipping objects in slip to fire, it always works best with a **casting slip** and to do several coats
- d) To build on top of a material (using newspaper as an armature or filling)
- e) To achieve texture, often creating pocked clay or a volcanic porosity on the surface.

### 2. Materials to experiment with. This handout is a simple starting point for your own research .

- a) Rice
- b) Pearlite from gardening supplies
- c) quinoa
- d) buckwheat
- e) saw dust
- f) Fabrics

### 3. Process Ideas

- A) Wedge any organic grain or grain-like material into you clay. It can be helpful to start with a lump of clay and press a small hole into a lump of clay a size of your choice (much like the start of a pinch pot). In your pinch-pot like clump, fill with material of choice and continue wedging. Repeat as often as needed. It will take a surprising amount of material to create a textured, pocked, or porous clay all the way through.
- B) Take a thick slip and mix in any organic grain-like material of you choice. Use as much as needed to create the desired level of saturation. This way will be easier to create a clay that is completely filled with the organic material. You could then smear this slip on the surface of hand-built or thrown forms OR dry clay out on plaster to make a plastic clay for hand building or throwing.
- C) In a typical slap built piece, before you start building press your freshly rolled slabs into rice/grain/sawdust and then continue to build with slabs as usual. This will leave the burn-out texture of your chosen material only on the surface and will use much less material than mixing all the way through
- D) Dip flowers, branches, or fabric in a casting slip to arrange, drape, or build with. Fire it up!

Image ideas.



Georgina Calder - ( birds nest dipped in casting slip)



Bio Degradable packing peanuts dipped in Casting Slip and fired - Image from Mark Manusco's Flickr



Coconut Shavings pressed into clay - unknown source



Helen Gilmore