

# THE VILLAGES CERAMICS

*The Villages Ceramics Room is an extension of The Villages Arts & Crafts Association. We are committed to providing a friendly, supportive, and educational environment for all trained and approved Village Residents. Approved members need to have sufficient training and experience or to have completed a Beginning Ceramics Class offered by The Villages Ceramics.*

*The Ceramics Room (Studio) is not intended for use by professional ceramicists. Professional ceramicists are welcome to become members of the club, but they are not allowed to use the studio's facilities to make commercial ("production") work for their own profit.*

## Safety First:

The Ceramics Room must be always used in a safe manner. The basic rule is that all work done in our Studio must be performed according to accepted practices and with consideration for the rights of others. Each user is responsible for the safety of his or her acts and for being certain that these actions do not create unsafe products or conditions. During open studio hours, the Studio has a qualified monitor to oversee and enforce safety protocols.

The following two sections of the Ceramics Room Rules give an overview of some basic safety precautions when working in our Studio. Members should also heed specific safety warnings posted in the studio and/or given verbally by monitors or instructors.

## Safely Handling Clay / Sanding Ceramic Pieces:

When working with clay it forms tiny particles too small to see which can settle in your lungs and cause silicosis, which is why it is especially important to keep the work areas of our Studio clean. In particular, any sanding of dry clay (either before or after it has been bisque-fired) poses a serious respiratory threat to everyone in the vicinity, similar to the hazards of secondhand cigarette smoke. Our rule is that all sanding of dry clay pieces must be done outside of the Studio. Wearing a protective mask and gloves is also recommended. Please take care to clean your work area afterwards; use a towel or a damp sponge to wipe any dusty surfaces.

## Safely Using Equipment and Materials:

Do not operate any equipment in the Studio unless you have been fully trained in its use. Do not operate any machinery while working alone in the Studio until you have not only been trained, but also have had enough experience using the equipment to feel competent and confident on your own.

If you are not the designated Kiln Master, never open the kiln either to load them or to unload fired pieces from them. For obvious reasons, all combustibles (towels, work boards, etc) must be kept away from the kiln.

Our Studio has a First Aid Kit, for simple first aid supplies (bandages, antiseptics, etc.). For anything more serious than a small cut or abrasion, members should call Public Safety 408-223-4665 and/or 911. There is also an emergency red box phone located just outside the Studio that will contact Public Safety directly.

Finally, after you've used a work table, a potter's wheel, or any other equipment or materials, always double-check to make sure that there's no loose/wet clay, water or other liquid remaining on the floor around the area. If there is, it could cause someone to slip and fall - so be sure clean it up.

## Clay, Glazes and Equipment:

Members can keep one bag of clay inside the Studio on a designated shelf. All other supplies need to be brought with you when you are using the Studio and then removed when you leave. Only authorized clays and glazes are to be used. Materials must be clearly labeled for Cone 5/6, and should be approved by the Studio Manager. Ceramic pieces made outside of our Studio with clays not identifiable by the Studio Manager will not be fired in Studio kiln. Also, no commercial slip castings or ready-made tiles will be kilned.

Members are responsible for the repair or replacement of any equipment damaged due to poor work practices, carelessness, or violation of rules. For instance, if a member has applied too much glaze to a piece which causes it to overflow onto a kiln shelf during firing, the kiln shelf will have to either be cleaned or replaced by the person responsible for the damage.

## Working in The Studio:

Everyone using the Studio (other than students) must be a current Arts & Crafts member. Members can invite guests into the Studio for a tour but must stay with them and make sure that they adhere fully to our Studio's rules and work practices. Guests are not allowed to work in the studio.

Member must have individual identification marks (a.k.a. a signature or logo) which are recorded on the Membership Form. Such a mark must be used on every ceramic piece created in the Studio; unidentified pieces will not be fired. In addition, the Kiln Master will reject poorly prepared pieces as they see fit.

## Studio Etiquette:

It is a strict policy to avoid touching other people's pieces without their permission. If it becomes necessary to move the work of others, please ask the monitor to move. Should someone else's piece be broken by accident, the member who damaged it must leave a note for the other person. Everyone knows that accidents happen, and acknowledging a mistake is a form of courtesy.

As a matter of basic Studio courtesy, do not interrupt someone who is in the process of working with clay. If you have a question or a favor to ask of a member who is present, first ask them if it is a good time – don't just assume that they won't mind. Concentration is often especially important when doing creative work, so please don't take it personally if the person says "No." Either wait until she or he has finished the task at hand or find someone else to ask. The same thing applies if you simply want to chat; although we are for the most part a very friendly group, it is OK if someone is not in the mood for conversation - please be sensitive to this.

All members are asked to remove their finished work from the Studio as soon as possible to make room for the work of others. This is important due to space limitations. At some point every month, ceramic pieces which have been left on the racks or damp cupboards for over two months are collected and put out on a table with a sign saying that they must be removed by a certain date or they will be disposed of.

Unless you are alone, cell phone conversations should not take place in the Studio - if it can't wait, please go outside. You may play music if you are the only one in the Studio, but when others are present you should ask if it is all right with them - or simply turn it off.

## Cleanliness in the Studio:

We pride ourselves in the cleanliness of our Studio. The policy of the Ceramics Room is that whenever you are finished working in the Studio, the workspace used should be as clean, if not cleaner than when you started there. Each member of our club is expected to clean up after him or herself.

Occasionally someone forgets to do something, so if you notice that another member hasn't cleaned something minor, such as wiping off a table or putting something away, please do it yourself. The next time someone might do the same for you. But if one of our members has left a huge mess, please to bring it to the attention of the Studio Monitor. The Studio Manager will speak with the person responsible.

Deposit any scraps of unfired clay that you don't want into the recycled clay bucket. Please only add small pieces (no larger than 3" x 3") to the bucket.

Keeping clay and glaze out of the sink is a top priority. We have two rinse buckets at the side of the sink. Rinse all items in Bucket #1 first, then rinse again in Bucket #2

before cleaning tools in the sink. Always have the sink screen over the drain as we cannot have any clay or glaze going down the sink drain.

We have a supply of work boards, tools and molds for members' use. All Studio tools must be cleaned and returned to their respective 'home'. To prevent leaving a clay "haze" on the table's surface, it is best to use a damp sponge to wipe the top of the table, rinsing and wringing the sponge out both before and after you use it.

Every quarter we designate a 'Clean Up Day' to give the Studio a good wipe-down. It takes a couple of hours; buckets of water and sponges are supplied. Masks should be worn, as clay dust is unhealthy. Please volunteer when asked to participate.