



# The Craft and Art of Clay: A Complete Potter's Handbook

By Susan Peterson, Jan Peterson

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Widely considered to be the most comprehensive introduction to ceramics available, this book contains numerous step-by-step illustrations of various ceramic techniques to guide the beginner as well as inspirational ceramic pieces from contemporary potters from around the world. For the more experienced ceramist, there is a wealth of technical detail on things like glaze formulas and temperature conversions which make the book an ideal reference. To quote one review: "...I am a studio potter and would not be without it." The fourth edition has been updated to include profiles of key ceramists who have influenced the field, new material on marketing ceramics including using the internet, more on the use of computers, added coverage of paperclays, using gold and alternative glazes.

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### Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

**The Craft and Art of Clay** is the most comprehensive introduction to ceramics available. The book contains numerous step-by-step illustrations of all ceramic techniques to guide the beginner, as well as an inspirational portfolio of ceramic pieces from contemporary international potters. For the more experienced ceramist, there is a wealth of invaluable information on glaze formulas and other technical details, including temperature conversions, which make the book ideal as a reference.

#### NEW FEATURES OF THE FOURTH EDITION INCLUDE:

- **Trailblazers**—special profiles of key ceramists who have made significant contributions around the world. The seven artists featured are: Juan Quezada, Peter Voulkos, Luo Xiao-Ping, Toshiko Takaezu, Huey Beckham, Otto Heino, and Janet Mansfield.
- A new chapter on **Marketing and Computers**. The material on marketing in the last edition is expanded to provide more detail on how to sell your work successfully, including preparing it for display, approaching galleries, and finding venues for showing your pieces. New computer material includes technical aspects, from using computers to calculate glaze formulas and computerized firing, to useful programs and websites, and the creation of "virtual ceramics."
- New material on using **gold, alternative glazes, and paperclays**.
- 150 new **color illustrations**.
- A revised and clarified **Compendium** of technical information.

Invaluable features, such as safety icons to warn beginners of potential hazards, a concise history of ceramics and its traditions from prehistory to the present day, and an updated bibliography, glossary, list of museum collections, residencies and magazines, are retained in this new edition.

Susan Peterson's engaging writing style, deep knowledge, and boundless enthusiasm encourage creativity and engender an appreciation of the oldest of arts.

#### About the Author

Susan Peterson is Professor Emerita of Ceramics at Hunter College and is a practising ceramist whose work has been exhibited throughout the world. Her numerous books on ceramics include *Working with Clay*, *Contemporary Ceramics*, and *Jun Kaneko*. Jan Peterson is a high school and college ceramic teacher, ceramic artist and jeweller.

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I graduated from Alfred, New York State College of Ceramics, in the first Master of Fine Arts class after World War II, following an undergraduate degree in Painting (with Ceramics from F Canton Ball) at Mills College in California.

At mid-century we were heavily into pots and visions of design for industry that would bring "the greatest good to the greatest number." Functional and decorative pots were our business, although in the early 1900s artists such as George Ohr, Susie Singer, Adelaide Robineau, Wilhelm Koge of Gustavsberg, and George Tinworth of Royal Doulton were among the first purveyors of Funk. Also early in the 20th century some famous painters such as Matisse, Gauguin, Renoir, Chagall, Leger, Miro, Picasso, Braque, Rouault and

others were delving into clay, without making much of a dent in the potter's world. Years later we pay homage to their work.

The 1950s brought to the fore the Hamada/Leach/Cardew angle of vision, whose legacy it would take us to the 1970s to truly understand. Shoji Hamada (d.1978) and Bernard Leach (d. 1979), two of the most renowned potters who ever lived, founded the concept of studio pottery—Hamada in Japan, Leach and his follower Michael Cardew in England. Many of us were also drawn to the robust Rosanjin or the vibrant Kanjiro Kawai, Japanese masters who also encroached on our Western senses.

The Voulkos phenomenon, and the hundreds of international potmakers-turned-sculptors, followed from the 1960s on, Peter Voulkos, the central figure in a group of experimental artists, was responsible for a new vocabulary of clay that spread from the USA abroad. A few schools teaching ceramics in all parts of the world mushroomed into many schools in every corner of our planet.

Today workshops, community programs, alternative spaces, exhibitions, fairs, and the like, have caused an explosion in clayworking that seems to encompass the earth. Clay is everywhere and so are the artists. We are even beginning to care about the past millennia of ceramic art history, and we research to increase our knowledge. We have grown up and we are still growing.

And so this fourth edition of *The Craft and Art of Clay* has been revised and expanded again. Each time I think there cannot be more to say or more tests to run, but each edition is changed a lot and added to, with more photographs, more text, so I always find ways to expand. This edition has 22 Ferro Frits pictured and described, because Ferro is about the only frit manufacturer left in the world. The Pemco Frit photos are still here because many of us still have supplies.

The fusion button photographs of 34 basic ceramic materials fired at three temperatures, the glaze application 50!50 line blend tests of those 34 materials at cone 5 and 10, the feldspar photographs of bar tests at cone 5 and 10, the six pages of color tests of commercial glazes, the new line blend tests of glazes on iron-red and white clays at three temperatures and two atmospheres, and the many other visual tests of materials, are unprecedented visual aids that appear in no other ceramic book, Who but I would undertake all these tests! This pictorial information is invaluable for clay and glaze work.

The huge clay bar test of china clays, ball clays, stoneware clays, fire clays, and common surface clays at three temperatures in two atmospheres was made for the first edition of this book. While clays are generic and similar in their geological classification all over the world, the brand names change, the mines change. The next edition will include this test done anew with currently available mined materials.

The next edition will also need more new photographs in the Portfolio, and I need your help with that. Those of you in the book now should send new work, and help me find artists who are not in my file of 1,500 or more international clayworkers.

This book contains hundreds of photographs of work from artists around the world, which are likewise invaluable visual aids. My thanks to those of you who are included, as well as those whom space could not accommodate; please continue to keep your current work coming. I could not do without the support of the galleries which provide transparencies, nor of the magazines in our field, and of the collectors who not only help you but help me to know your work too. I am grateful that you keep in touch.

Thanks as always to my children and grandchildren, who lend unfailing support; my ceramist daughter Jan has been a staunch help with this edition and with the recent second edition of *Working with Clay*. She teaches and gives hands-on advice with the use of these books in her classes. My assistants, Lucy Horner in the office, and K. C. O'Connell in the studio, who ran the new tests, give me constant aid. As well, I thank my long-time publisher, Laurence King, for his friendship and advice, and his staff in London: Lee Ripley Greenfield in the college division, who supervises the book with dignity and grace, and to whom I am

indebted for the Trailblazer idea in this edition; Judy Rasmussen, whose keen eye sees that it is well printed; Elisabeth Ingles, who edits my words remarkably well, and Karen Stafford, who is the best book designer I have seen. Thanks are also due to Craig Smith, my excellent photographer; to Bud Therien at Prentice Hall for the college edition, and to Tracy Cairns at Overlook Press for the hard-cover edition. I can't do without any of you!

SUSAN PETERSON, CAREFREE, ARIZONA, APRIL 2003

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