

Specialty Mix P'Clays for Ultra Large Projects

If you are not sure where to start, adapt my personal recipes for life scale freestanding and wall works given here. Test fire, I cannot be responsible for non-standard materials, events and results clearly beyond my control. I recycle my paper, but I have indicated volumes of pulp by standard toilet roll to help the student with a starting point.

“Rosetta Stone”

*Earthenware Paper Clay for Sculpture
Cone 04 to 4 normal (maximum cone 6)*

Two (2) medium buckets (use same size buckets to measure this) prepared “earthenware” base (rated cone 04-05). It can be simply buckets of prepared casting slip. One (1) medium bucket-same size of wet strained bulk of pulp- plus or minus handfuls and inches. Dispersed paper from 8-12 rolls of “bargain” toilet tissue is equivalent to maybe 8 bulkier rolls of deluxe brands, but don’t try to make this pulp in this same bucket. Use giant barrels, not for beginners to try. Master chapters 5 and 6 to avoid lumps and clumps!

What it’s like to work with:

The above was my “high-fire low-fire” high pulp, all purpose, any kiln, any time, sculpture recipe for many years. (Nowadays, I’ve gone back with “porcelain pearl” because I have access to high fire kilns again.)

Texture before fire: Smooth, putty like. Takes underglaze, slip, engobe, stains, etc. Find those explained in my second book *Paper Clay*.

Texture bone dry: Absorbs water when dipped. Takes underglaze, slip, engobe, stains, glaze, etc. Thin walls soften a bit when soaked a while. Slakes down overnight or sooner.

Sinter Fired: Carves off in fine powder.

Texture after fire: Smooth, white, the higher you fire it, the more dense and hard it gets until after cone 4.

Low fire texture- Cone 03 to 04: Too hard to carve on by hand, but power tool is OK. Can treat surface with any and all commercial glazes, opaque or transparent underglazes, overglazes, etc, and refire if desired. Normal slips, engobes, stains OK. At this temperature, the result is a soft normal earthenware. Vessel will seep water without a finish gloss glaze or other seal.

Mid Range (Cone 4 to 6): Hard as a rock.

Resembles white stoneware. Resists water but may not be 100% watertight. OK outdoors frost and thaw too, glazed and not glazed.

Substitutions/Adaptation:

Raku: Good anytime- bisque to 04 or more, first. When I know my kiln, the fuel, the tools, the tongs, how the shapes heat up, and where best to place them, bone dry single fire works.

China Paint, Gold, Silver and Metallic Lustre, Decal Fires: most want a cone 032. Best to apply on top of already fired gloss glazes in multiple fires.

Base Clay Options: if you substitute a iron bearing red terra cotta blended clay as base for the earthenware base, it fires red to brown. Stick to the recommended lower temperatures cone 05-02. Heavy red iron is a melting as well as coloring agent. Test first if you fire red P’Clay beyond cone 1.

“Porcelain Pearl”

Paper Clay for Sculpture Cone 8 plus

Two (2) medium buckets of prepared “porcelain” (cone 10) high fire casting slip. 1 medium bucket of pulp, plus or minus handfuls. (Disperse paper from 8-12 rolls of “bargain” toilet tissue equivalent to, maybe, 8 bulkier rolls of a “deluxe” brand.)

What it’s like to work with:

Thin areas go translucent at cone 8. Dare to fire to cone 10 only if walls are thick, and other factors mentioned, indicate structure is stable and built well. For mixing batches in the studio, to avoid or minimize airborne dust clouds, start off with buckets of prepared liquid casting or pouring slip rather than large bags of dry blend powdered clay.

Texture before fire: Smooth, putty like. Takes underglaze, slip, engobe, stains, etc. per those explained in my second book Paper Clay.

Texture bone dry: Absorbs water when dipped. Thin walls soften a bit when soaked a while. Slakes down overnight or sooner. Takes underglaze, slip, engobe, stains, glaze, etc.

Texture after fire: Super smooth.

Sinter fire: Carves like soft soapstone, dense, but still easy to handle.

Biscuit fire: At cone 08 may be quite soft, handle with extreme care. Carves more like a dry cosmetic grade sponge. At higher bisque cone 03 OK to carve. Does not slake down in water.

High Fire (cone 8 to 10): Hard as a rock. If thin: walls go cone 8 and play it safe. Serious heavy duty power tools needed to alter surface.

Substitutions/Adaptation:

Base Clay Options: If you substitute stoneware throwing clay as base for the porcelain- P’Clay fires tan to brown. Reduction or oxidation atmospheres.

Raku: Good anytime. Bisque to cone 03 or more first. When I know my kiln, the fuel, the tools, the tongs, how the shapes heat up, and just wherebest to place them, bone dry single fire is realistic.

China Paint, Gold, Silver and Metallic Lustre,

Decal Fires: Most fire to cone 032. Best to apply on top of already fired gloss glazes.

Texture before fire: Chunky peanut butter-very short when moist. Takes underglaze, slip, engobe, stains, glaze, etc. per those explained in my second book *Paper Clay*.

Texture bone dry: Absorbs water when dipped or sprayed. Softens, then slakes when soaked over time. Takes underglaze, slip, engobe, stains, glaze, etc.

Texture after fire: Surface has openings like a coarse utility sponge, irregular granulated pocks, light weight, strong, if fired just to the right melt.

Sinter fire: Carves like frozen chunky peanut butter.

Biscuit fire: At cone 08 may be soft, handle with extreme care. Carves more like a dry kitchen sponge.

At cone 03 OK to carve but not as nice as sinter. Takes underglaze, slip, engobe, stains, glaze, etc.

High Fire (cone 8 to 10): Hard as a rock. Serious power tools needed. Gloss glaze and clay resist moisture.

Substitutions/Adaptation:

Base Clay Options: If you substitute stoneware throwing clay as base for the porcelain- fires tan to brown.

Raku: Good anytime, Bisque to cone 03 or more first. When I know my kiln, the fuel, the tools, the tongs, how the shapes heat up, and where best to place them, a bone dry single fire is fine.

China Paint, Gold, Silver and Metallic Lustre,

Decal Fires: Most fire to cone 032. Best to apply on top of already fired gloss glazes.

“Ruff-Rock-Gruff-Rock”

Porcelain Ultra Short Sculpture

Cone 8-10 High Fired Texture Body

Two (2) medium buckets (5 gal./10 liter) prepared “porcelain” (cone 10) high fire casting slip

1/2 medium bucket of pulp, plus or minus handfuls. (Disperse paper from 8-12 rolls of “bargain” toilet tissue equivalent to, maybe, 8 bulkier rolls of a “deluxe” brand.)

1/2 medium bucket granular perlite, plus or minus handfuls or scoops to taste.

What it’s like to work with:

This is a variation on Porcelain Pearl with perlite.