

Clay Trap

Studio Handbook - For Members and Open Access Users

Access to the studio

Open Access sessions take place on Mondays and Thursdays 5:30-8:30pm and Fridays 1:30-4:30pm. There is also a Falmouth School of Art Student open access session on Wednesdays 1:00-4:00pm during term time.

Members have 24/7 access (except for times when a class is running): this is gained by using the key located in the key safe. The code is regularly changed and will be sent out to members separately. Members are to sign in and out using the signing in sheet.

Access to the studio is either via the ground floor corridor of CAST if it is open, or a gate to the side of CAST on Penrose Road. There is a convenient car park that costs £2 for 10 hours on Wendron Street.

Sharing the Space

If you are attending open access for the first time, please make it clear to the person running the session that this is the case and they can show you around the studio. We provide aprons, tools, slips and glazes. All you need to buy in addition to your open access session is clay.

It is important that all users of the space respect each other's work and space: the studio is a communal workspace to be shared by all. Please do not touch other people's work, particularly work on the glaze and bisque shelves as breakages can happen and are unfortunate, but for the most part avoidable.

Members must store all of their items on their provided shelf, this includes tools, materials and clay.

Members' ongoing work can be stored on the shelves above the wheels in the kiln room. Open Access users work is to be stored on the shelves in the hand-building room.

Please consider your fellow studio users when working in the space; avoid taking up unnecessary space and handling fellow users' work where possible.

Access to Loos

Toilets are located inside the main CAST building. The door, if locked, can be opened by the person running an open access session, or if you are a member the code will be sent to you when your membership starts. Please enter the code again to close the door when you come back into the studio. It is important to keep the door closed and free from obstruction as it is a fire door.

Food and Drink in the Studio

We have a kettle in the studio. Please feel free to make use of this, and ideally no eating and drinking in the studio - if it is a nice sunny day use it as an excuse to go outside and get some fresh air. Glazes in particular and clay do not mix well with food and drink.

If you bring snacks into the studio, please take them with you at the end of your session. Whilst we do not have a problem with vermin, it is important that we keep it that way and leave no excuse for them to become studio-dwellers!

Bins and Recycling

Please make sure you use the bin provided, and if you have any recycling we kindly ask that you take it with you as we do not have recycling facilities at the studio.

Fire and Health and Safety

A first aid kit can be found underneath the sink in the main hand-building area of the studio. In the unlikely event of any minor injury or use of the first aid kit please let us know via email. If someone suffers a serious incident, of course please call 999 if appropriate.

There are two fire exits in the studios: both doors used to enter the studio are fire exits. If the fire alarm goes off in the building please leave the studio via your nearest exit. Do not stop to pick up items, and please close the door behind you. There is no meeting point but please exit the studio via the gate on Penrose Road and if you are leaving the vicinity please let someone know.

There are fire extinguishers located by both exits. These should only be used in emergencies in order to get out of the building.

In the event of a fire please call 999 and leave the studio; do not stop to pick up personal belongings.

Studio cleanliness and silicosis

Studio cleanliness is extremely important to all users of the space; the biggest health and safety risk to potters comes from breathing clay dust, which arises as soon as clay dries out. Long term exposure to low amounts of clay dust causes a horrible condition called silicosis, which includes lung damage, coughing, fatigue and chronic pain. For this reason, it is vital that everyone in the studio ALWAYS follows the cleaning instructions below:

- Leave it cleaner than you found it. **You MUST clean up for at least 20 minutes** every time you use the studio. If you finish cleaning your own work area faster, then please see where else needs cleaning - often the areas around the sinks, the storage shelves, the glazing area or the reclaim buckets could do with a wipe down. This is your studio too - we operate on the principle of a community space where every member contributes to its care.

- Wet wash all areas using the mops and sponges provided. Never brush or scrape clay dust in the studio.
- Keep your working area clean using a sponge and water.
- Wheel splash pans must be fully removed from the wheel and washed under the sink after use.
- Dry sanding is not allowed anywhere, including outdoor areas. All sanding needs to be done with wet materials and wet&dry sanding paper.
- Wear clean aprons, preferably made of synthetic materials. There are aprons available to use in the studio, but you should only use these if they are clean. It is safest to provide and wash your own apron, so that you aren't breathing in the micro-particles of silica dust that will be shaken up constantly from a dry, clay-encrusted apron.
- Keep your shelf clean. Dust quickly builds up on the shelves and you are responsible for keeping your shelf clean. Please make sure to clean your shelf at least once a month.
- Please do not leave items in the studio overnight, except on your shelf. We cannot keep areas clean if items are left around the studio, particularly clothes, shoes and bags. Items left overnight will be moved and disposed of after one month if not reclaimed.

Your Work

Please contact us if you are bringing in untested clays and glazes - for Open Access users we expect people to use studio clay and glazes, unless agreed with the studio by prior arrangement and the materials have been fully tested in consultation with us.

Clay

Our standard stock of clay is:

Porcelain - £39 /bag | £19.50 /half bag

Terracotta - £12.00 /bag

Flecked Stoneware - £20 /bag

Crank - £22 /bag

Stoneware Reclaim - £10 /bag

Terracotta Reclaim - £6 /bag

CLAY BANK

We operate a 'CLAY BANK' for open access users to purchase clay by the kilo. The idea behind this is to avoid your clay being lost in a sea of half-finished bags of clay that dry out and get lost; if you have previously attended an open access session and bought a bag of clay and it had your name on it, you will find your clay accounted for in the 'CLAY BANK' spreadsheet and you can ask the person running the open access session to retrieve the amount of clay you require.

At the 'CLAY BANK' you can buy clay /kg from the following types:

- Stoneware £2.00 /kg
- Terracotta £1.20 /kg
- Stoneware Reclaim £1.00 /kg
- Terracotta Reclaim £0.60 /kg
- Crank £2.20/kg

Porcelain will only be available to be purchased by the bag or 1/2 bag.

Reclaim Clay bins

There are two bins in the studio for reclaiming discarded clay. We encourage where practical to recycle your own clay. Our reclaim is divided into EARTHENWARE and STONWARE; please ensure you place your clay trimmings and slurry into the correct one! If there is any doubt please ask whoever is running the session or Bridie and Sarah. Crank is a type of stoneware and as such can go into the stoneware reclaim bin.

Decorating Slips

Our decorating slips are intended to be brushed on, please do not dip into the slips. They are also designed for earthenware temperatures. If you wish to use them on stoneware clays, please do a small test and see how it comes out of the glaze firing.

Glazing

Our studio glaze firing standard temperatures are as follows:

Earthenware: 1120 Celsius

Stoneware: 1260 Celsius

You are welcome to use all of the glazes available in the studio. To avoid cross-contamination, make sure to keep clay and glaze separate, and check with each other when arranging yourselves on the communal tables if the studio is busy. Additionally, it is important to wash your hands, arms, and glazing tools thoroughly every time you switch to a different glaze to prevent contamination. If you plan to use multiple glazes on one piece, please consider the order in which you glaze. You must never dip something into a pot of lighter glaze after having dipped it into a darker glaze. For example, if I planned to glaze the interior of a pot with a transparent glaze and the exterior with a black glaze, I would glaze the inside first and then the outside. All our glazes are designed to be dipped. They can be painted on but require careful application.

Strictly no glaze on bases

It is important to ensure that the bottom surface of all pieces is properly cleaned before glaze firing. The glaze should be removed at least 5 mm (min) from the base of the piece. If the piece has multiple layers of glaze, it may be necessary to remove the glaze more extensively to avoid dripping off the pot. Failure to properly clean the piece may cause the glaze to stick to the kiln shelf; this will then require chiselling off the work to remove it. This may result in a charge for any damage done to the kiln or its shelves. To avoid this happening, if you are planning to use thickly applied glazes and glazes that run, please make a bisqued clay disc or saggar to place under the piece during firing.

Saggars are vessels to place work into - they are best made using CRANK clay as this is the strongest. They must be bisque fired prior to use, and should be lined with batt wash and/or silica sand.

Wax resist brushes: when using wax resist, please remember to rinse your wax brushes with boiling hot water before and after use to ensure proper maintenance and the brushes' lives can be maximised.

Hazardous materials: Please do not bring any hazardous materials into the studio - if you are bringing in materials that will go into the kilns, please contact us to get prior approval.