

DROP-IN SESSION HANDBOOK

Hazards in the studio

NO sharp tools: Do not bring in any sharp tools into the studio.

NO hazardous materials: Do not bring in any materials that contain lead or cadmium.

Kilns while cooling: We fire over night when no one is in the studio. However, the kiln is still very hot even when it's cooling. Please be aware of this and try to stay away from the kilns when they are hot.

During the sessions

NO teaching: Drop-in sessions are different from workshops. There will not be any tutoring, you should be confident to work independently. Mizuyo will be on hand only when you have a problem.

Respect each other: This is a shared communal space, please respect each other's space, work and time in the studio. Never touch other's work (especially the work in progress on the shelves) unless completely necessary, to avoid any damage that could be caused by misplacing and mishandling.

Eating & Drinking: We do not allow eating in the studio but feel free to make yourself a cup of tea at the small kitchen area next to the sink. You can take a chair out and eat outside on the balcony.

Dust: Please be mindful of ceramic dust. Always clean the surface with a wet sponge/ a wet mop so that you don't create dust floating in the air. Please read our page on Health and Safety in Ceramics.

Production

Using studio clays: Our basic studio clays are available to use, they are White stoneware, Terracotta and Crank, we will weigh the clay used for production and charge the firing/material fee based on that.

Using other clays: We stock black clay and porcelain, they are available to purchase per bag. You can bring your own clay or make a joint purchase with other fellow makers or with the studio to acquire clays the studio doesn't provide. However, some clays cannot be recycled together with our studio clays and you will need to keep them separated from our clays at all times. When you're not sure, please speak to mizuyo.

Recycling clay: Please try to recycle clay as much as possible. Dried/half-dried clay and slurry should go into the allocated buckets. Clay in the state between slurry and hard clay can be left on the table/water-resist MDF boards/plaster boards that the studio provides.

We have buckets for <White Stoneware> and <Other studio clays>. If you use clays that contain a high proportion of manganese (some black clays) or porcelain which are also available from the studio, you need to recycle them yourself separately, as we do not allow any black clay and porcelain to be recycled in our buckets.

Keeping your work-in-progress on the shelf: Please put your pieces on an appropriate sized board and be efficient with the shelf space. If you are not planning to return the next day we would advise you to place a plastic sheet over your pieces or wrap properly to avoid getting them too dry/hard to work on next time. Put a label with your name and the date of making on the board/your piece or on the wrap so that it is visible to everyone.

When your work is still too wet and fragile to cover with a plastic sheet at the end of the session, speak to mizuyo or an assistant so that we can wrap them when it's appropriate to do so.

Signature on every piece: Be sure to mark/sign your pieces before it goes in a bisque firing to avoid confusion with others' work.

Wax resist and brushes: When you use wax resist, make sure you use the brushes especially dedicated for the wax work. Please rinse them with boiling hot water after use.

Glazing: You can use all the glazes in the studio. When you are glazing, please inform others in the studio so that we all can be aware of your delicate activity.

Our glazing bench is too small to share with another person. If you need to and when you can please use a part of the big table, informing others working at the table. Please avoid the situations where clay and glaze may come into contact.

Wash your hands, arms and glazing tools thoroughly every time you use a different glaze. (Make sure you do not contaminate the glaze.)

Making your own glaze: You are also welcomed to make your own glaze in the workshop. However you need to have comprehensive knowledge in making glazes. If you want to learn Glaze Technology, please speak to mizuyo. When we have enough people interested in learning about it, we would be happy to organise a class. You can purchase raw materials by weight from the studio and use the studio glaze making tools, but you need to prepare your own container to store it.

Strictly no glaze on the base: You need to clean the glaze from the base of the pieces or where the piece touches the kiln shelf. If the piece gets stuck to the kiln shelf, we will have to chisel off your piece and you could be charged for the damage you have made to the kiln/kiln shelves. Another way to prevent this is to make and have clay discs for your piece.

Technical questions: mizuyo or a technician will be available for your questions, please do ask at the beginning/end of the session where necessary.

Storage

Tools: We offer a storage shelf to 'Regular drop-in practitioners' and the members who are entitled to. Make sure your tools have your name on and are kept in a box to be separated from the studio tools.

Firing

Queue for the firings: When your piece is ready for bisque firing or glaze firing, please put it on the allocated board. These boards are usually sitting at the upper shelves. Please check the labels on the boards.

Firing schedule: Your work will be fired when they are dry. Small and thin-walled pieces will need about 3-7 days to dry, plates, thicker and bigger pieces will need more time to dry completely. When your work is ready for firing we'll try to find a spot in the kiln as soon as possible. However, depending on the shape and size, it's not always possible to accommodate your work in the immediate firing.. We have firings regularly in about 2-3 weeks cycles, it is mizuyo's discretion about when a piece is ready for firing.

Firing costs: The material and firing costs will be charged separately from the session fee. The charge for this is calculated on the weight (£5 per 1 kg of soft paste clay) and space that takes up in the kiln. It works out roughly as below – firing services included. Large flat shapes, and tall shapes are charged at a higher rate as these take up more space in the kiln.

Roughly costs: Mugs: £1.50 - , Plates (up to 20cm) : £4 - , Plates (larger than 20cm): £12 -

NO external Work in the kiln: We do not offer firing work made outside our studio. The reason for this is that we fire to very specific temperatures and programmes. If the wrong clay or random unknown material is put into our kiln, it could cause damage to both the kilns and everybody else's work.

Hiring a kiln: Regular Drop-in practitioners can hire a kiln when they need specific temperatures for their glazes. The hiring cost depends on the size of the kiln, the firing temperature and the length of soak time . Everyone needs an introduction to packing a kiln before this arrangement can be made. Please speak to mizuyo.

Cleaning

Pandemic: During these unusual times, it is particularly important that keeping social distance while cleaning is a joint effort at the end of every session.

Strictly NO clay in the sink: We have a big green/blue flexi tub next to the sink where you can clean your hands, arms and tools to get rid of any clay before rinsing them with tap running water. Make sure clay doesn't get in the drain to prevent blocking the pipes.

Dust: Exposure to clay dust causes a lung disease called silicosis. The effects of this are cumulative and irreversible, and so we must take preventative measures to protect ourselves. Please, therefore, be really vigilant about not creating clay dust. It is both your health at risk as well as that of your fellow potters.

Bucket: We have small buckets for everyone to use next to the sink. Please use them if necessary, especially if you're working with your own clay.

Wheel: Please make sure to clean your wheel and stool really well. You will need to go over the same surface with a wet big clean sponge a few times to do so properly.

Table: As the table is shared, please clean the surface with a wet sponge after every use so others can use the space as well.

Tools: You should clean all the tools you used and put them back to where you found them.

Floor: We will mop the floor after you've left, but please make sure the area you used is reasonably clean by the end of the session.

Health and Safety in Ceramics

Please read: Please read and be mindful of the Health and Safety in ceramics. A PDF file on this topic is available from our website and will be also attached in the order confirmation email. You can ask the teachers at the studio for a hard copy.