

## “Push Play: The 2012 NCECA Invitational”

### Terms to know

<b>NCECA</b>	<p>National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This exhibition is held in conjunction with the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of NCECA, “On the Edge”, taking place in Seattle from March 26-31, 2012.</li> <li>• See <a href="http://nceca.net/static/2012PushPlay.php">http://nceca.net/static/2012PushPlay.php</a> for more information about the purpose and theme of the exhibit and for a list of the artists.</li> </ul>
<b>Ceramics</b>	<p>Objects such as figures, tiles, and tableware made from clay and other raw materials by the process of pottery. Some ceramic products are regarded as fine art, while others are regarded as decorative, industrial or applied art objects, or as artifacts in archaeology. The word ‘ceramics’ comes from the Greek <i>keramikos</i>, meaning ‘potter’s clay’.</p>
<b>Clay</b>	<p>Clay is the basic material of pottery and is plentiful. Clay is a granite-type rock that has decomposed into particles over millions of years. The type of clay can be traced to the parent rock since clays vary in ingredients according to their origins and method of formation. Most surface clays burned red; while other clays burned almost white due to the high content of lime. Modern potters seek deposits under the guidance of geologists and chemists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kaolin is sedimentary clay in its purest form. It makes the finest whiteware body available, and when fired it is almost white.</li> <li>• Ball clays resemble kaolin in chemical content but are finer, more plastic, and almost white when fired.</li> <li>• Fire clays resemble kaolin in chemical content but have more iron, causing the clay to turn buff colored when fired.</li> <li>• Stoneware is usually made from several natural clays plus alumina and silica to give it the desirable characteristics of plasticity, color, and the correct firing temperature. When fired, it generally turns light gray, tan, or even slightly reddish.</li> <li>• Common clays (earthenware) is made from natural clay and is low fired. These clays are highly plastic. Colors for fired earthenware include brown, red, orange, buff, medium grey, and white</li> <li>• Porcelain is made from a prepared body containing kaolin, ball clay, feldspar, and flint. It is not very plastic and requires more skill to work.</li> </ul>
<b>Clay Properties</b>	<p>Clay has no definite form in itself. It is the ground on which we tread and at the bottom of oceans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can be pressed, coiled, pinched, thrown on the wheel, or cast into any form imaginable.</li> <li>• It can be made to look smooth or gritty, can be polished to a glossy sheen or remain dull and earthy.</li> <li>• It can be liquid, viscose, malleable, plastic, or hard as a rock.</li> <li>• It can be translucent and delicately fragile or be refractory and withstand extreme pressure and heat.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can be fired at a low temperature in open fields or passed through the highest degrees of heat in complicated gas or oil furnaces.</li> <li>• It can be covered with slips and glazes of all colors. It can be painted upon or underglazed with different materials.</li> <li>• It can be treated with a brush, slip-tracer or wax resist</li> <li>• It can be scratched, cut, drilled, engraved, polished, or sandblasted.</li> </ul>
<b>Clay Slip</b>	Liquid clay
<b>Clay Stages</b>	<p>When speaking of clay, reference is made to three basic stages which are self-explanatory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wet</li> <li>• leather hard</li> <li>• bone dry</li> </ul>
<b>Clay Types</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residual clays – clays found in the same position as the parent rock</li> <li>• Sedimentary clays – clays washed from the parent rock to the bottom of lakes and lagoons. The original particle size of sedimentary clay is finer and sedimentary clay is more plastic.</li> </ul>
<b>Coil</b>	The technique of building ceramic forms by rolling out coils or ropes of clay and joining them together with the fingers or a tool.
<b>Firing</b>	The process of heating the pottery to a specific temperature in order to bring about a particular change in the clay or surface.
<b>Glaze</b>	A firing process. A continuous layer of glassy crystals on the surface of a pot. Its purpose is both to decorate and to waterproofs a vessel. There are 4 main types of glazes: feldspar, lead, tin, and salt.
<b>Hand-building</b>	The techniques of forming pots using only the hands and simple tools rather than the potter’s wheel.
<b>Plasticity</b>	The properties of a material that allow it to be shaped and to retain its shape.
<b>Play</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play is a term employed to describe a range of activities normally associated with pleasure and enjoyment. Play is commonly associated with children, but psychologists have stressed that play is imperative for all higher-functioning animals including adult humans.</li> <li>• Play is evident throughout nature in both humans and animals, although generally only in those species possessing highly complex nervous systems such as mammals and birds. Some hypothesize that play is the preparation of skills that will be used later. Others argue that play is actually about training a general flexibility of mind – including highly adaptive practices like training multiple ways to do the same thing, or playing with an idea that is "good enough" in the hopes of maybe making it better.</li> </ul>

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<b>Raku</b>	A firing process developed by Japanese potters. A pot made from a porous clay body is treated with low-fire lead glazes and placed in a red-hot kiln. When the glazes are smooth and shiny, the pot is removed with tongs and dropped into a bed of smoke-producing materials – wood chips, leaves, straw – and the smoke from these darkens any unglazed clay and causes local reduction in the glazed areas. After 10-15 minutes, the pot is plunged into cold water and the process is complete.
<b>Sgraffito</b>	A pottery-decorating technique in which the artist incises through the slip. The process begins by applying a coating of a contrasting colored slip to the damp or leather-hard clay. The slip and clay are then allowed to stiffen until both are leather hard. At that point, designs or patterns are incised or carved down through the slip into the clay body beneath. The designs are enhanced due to the contrast between the color and tonal qualities of the slip and clay. The character of the lines and carving will be affected by the tools used and the dryness of the slip and clay when the incising is done.
<b>Throwing</b>	The making of pottery on a potter’s wheel.

### Learn more online

- [http://www.bellevuearts.org/exhibitions/current/push\\_play/index.html](http://www.bellevuearts.org/exhibitions/current/push_play/index.html)
- <http://nceca.net/static/2012PushPlay.php>
- <http://www.ceramichistorian.com/hannahblackwell/>
- [http://ss179.k12.sd.us/ceramics\\_vocabulary.htm](http://ss179.k12.sd.us/ceramics_vocabulary.htm)
- <http://pottery.about.com/od/understandclays/tp/claytypes.htm>