



Clay Times

The monthly newsletter of The Clay Studio

Issue 2: January 2007

Bring out the artist in you

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Painting coasters at the Christchurch Christmas Market

After months of preparation, the opening of The Clay Studio at the beginning of December was eagerly anticipated. The Clay Studio On the Move started with its first appearance at the Christchurch Christmas Market on the evening of 1 December. Despite the cold and wet conditions the market was packed and the children who painted coasters with The Clay Studio all seemed to have a great time. There were certainly some masterpieces amongst the dozens of coasters that were painted that evening.

We were very fortunate to have a visit from the Mayor of Christchurch, Councillor David Fox, on our first day. He spent a long time at The Clay Studio and was clearly interested in what happens both for the pottery painting and the food and drinks offered. We would like to thank him for his interest and spending time with us.

December was marked by the visit to The Clay Studio of many babies who created hand or foot prints onto mugs or plates, making unique present for parents and grandparents. Since then, we have launched First Impressions, offering different ways to capture a child's early years (See page 4).

Already, in just a few weeks, we have had many masterpieces created at The Clay Studio. This and future editions of Clay Times will feature some of our favourites.



Help save those pennies

We have a large number of money boxes in stock including new fire engine and motorcycle bisque

Valentine's at The Clay Studio

Our 2-for-1 offer

Something special for Valentine's Day is a unique piece of hand-painted pottery. We now have special items in stock such as heart-shaped plates in different sizes and heart-shaped trinket boxes. These make ideal presents but why not paint something together? From 1 to 14 February, The Clay Studio will offer two-for-one couples painting. Come along with your partner and you pay just one Studio Fee instead of two.



Rewarding our Regular Visitors

From the beginning of February, you will be able to collect Clay Points. A collection card for this is available from reception. One stamp is given for each full price Studio Fee. Once you have six stamps on your card your next Studio Fee is free of charge.

Searching for Inspiration

Often deciding exactly what to paint can be more difficult than painting itself. Our new palettes can provide you with lots of ideas about what to do and different ways of applying paint such as using sponges or even your own fingers.



The Painting Academy

Many visitors have said to us that they wish they could create professional-looking pieces but they do not possess the necessary skills. The Painting Academy has now been launched to show just how easy pottery painting is and how even simple skills can enable you to create stunning-looking pieces. A first "Have-a-Go" Painting Academy session in December resulted in a flock of excellent Robin plates.

The first Painting Academy course runs for six weeks from 30 January 2007.

"Introduction to Ceramics" is an evening course that will provide you with six new techniques for painting a selection of pottery of your choice. At the end of the course, you have newly-acquired painting skills and six pieces of your own hand-painted pottery. Besides that we hope you would have had a fun time learning all of this.



The course costs just £45 for six weeks and, if you sign up for the whole course, you will receive a 25% discount on the bisque you paint during the course.

Glazing and Firing

What happens after you have painted your pottery?

OK, you've spent an hour or two creating your masterpiece and you then leave it with us for a few days before collection. What happens to it in the meantime?



The first process is to ensure your piece is perfectly dry. Glazing the painted bisque is the second stage and involves coating it with a high quality, diamond-clear glaze, either by a dipping process or by brushing on the glaze. Your piece is then left to dry thoroughly and is hand-finished to ensure an even and consistent glaze on the final item. For some items which have a raised rim, such as mugs and plates, some glaze will be removed

from this rim to prevent the piece from sticking to the kiln shelf. This is called dry-footing in the ceramics world.

Once the glazed bisque is dry it can be placed in the kiln. This is a delicate operation, not just so that the glaze is not damaged but also to ensure that pieces are not touching each other or the side of the kiln - they would fuse together if that were the case. The kilns reach temperatures of 1,100C (or higher) and can take up to 24 hours before they are cool enough to open. This is the moment when the true beauty of the painted pottery is revealed for the first time.

Opening the lid of the kiln after a firing is always a moment of great anticipation. How does everything look?

So if you ever wonder why you cannot take your masterpiece with you but have to wait around three days, now you know the work that it involved.

Minute Maid Juices Now in Stock

The Clay Studio Café now has a range of Minute Maid juice drinks in stock alongside Del Monte Pure Orange Juice. If you are looking for a healthier option then we can offer you a number of alternatives.



Girls' Night Out

Thursday evenings will never be the same again. It's Girls' Night Out at The Clay Studio. Come along with friends or make new friends while painting pottery and relaxing. Feel free to bring a bottle of wine. We even supply the corkscrew and glasses!

Stuck for a Present Idea?

Then why not try The Clay Studio Gift Vouchers. These are available as painted clay tiles in a variety of denominations or you can even paint your own gift voucher.



Masterclass: Brush Strokes

You paint with brushes, don't you? Well there are other easy to paint as you can discover at The Clay Studio. However, it is worthwhile noting that there is so much more to a paintbrush. The type of brush used and the type of stroke made give you many options as a painter.

Firstly, it is better to use quality brushes. At the Clay Studio we ensure that we always have excellent brushes. Not only does this make painting easier and enable you to produce better results but they will also last longer. Secondly, the way you use the brush allows you to create very impressive effects. Use a large brush and dab on watered-down paint for a nice background such as sky, sea or grass. Use two colours on a brush, not mixed, to achieve a pleasing effect that is particularly good for depicting petals, leaves or even fairies' wings.



Have a look at the vases and plates in The Clay Studio and work out how brush strokes were used to make the petals and leaves.

All this requires a little practice so feel free to have a go on paper before committing brush to bisque.

Loose Canon

The Clay Studio looks to present interesting and stimulating contemporary art by local artists. "Loose Canon" is our first collection. Pieces from this collection can be viewed on the walls in The Clay Studio.

"See the World in a Different Way" is a collection of abstract photography by Dave Osborne from Ringwood. These are available as a limited edition of framed prints or unframed as canvas prints. Each set of three themed pictures is presented to an exceptionally high standard. The images shown here are unable to do full justice to the quality of the originals.



Come in and view this unique collection for yourself.



How To Find Us

The Clay Studio is right in the centre of Christchurch.

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First Impressions

A creative memory is always something special for parents and grandparents, god-parents etc. "First Impressions" is a new service from The Clay Studio in Christchurch which captures those early years forever in the form of a clay impression of the child's hands or feet (or one of each). These are hand-painted and hand-finished by trained staff at The Clay Studio and they can be framed for display at home.

The Clay Studio is now taking bookings for this new service. We have arranged "First Impressions" afternoons at The Clay Studio in Christchurch which will take place on:-

- Friday 2 February – 2pm to 5pm
- Saturday 3 February – 2pm to 5pm
- Sunday 4 February – 2pm to 4pm
- Sunday 11 February – 2pm to 4pm

The cost of a single "First Impression" approximately 6" square is £40 and a double print (both hands or feet or a hand and foot) is £50 and rectangular in shape approximately 6" x 8".

Impressions are usually ready for collection about four weeks after the baby/toddler has provided his or her "creative input". This reflects the fact that the clay has to be left to dry naturally, is fired, hand-painted and fired again in our kilns.



For those parents who are looking for something different or who cannot wait to have their child's hands or feet preserved in clay forever, another fantastic option is to create painted hand or foot prints on pottery. This can be applied onto any pottery surface such as a plate or mug. Lettering and decorative effectives can be added, such as the child's name and the date of the painting using alternative paint products. This is available every day of the week at The Clay Studio.



Win a free Studio Fee

Every month there are ten free Clay Studio passes for Clay Times readers to win. At the end of February, ten readers will receive a free pass for a full fee Studio Fee at The Clay Studio.

Either leave in the competition box in The Clay Studio or send the entry form to us by post.

Note that entries are limited to one per household.

Please enter me in the monthly draw for one of ten free studio passes

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Please send me Clay Times every month: _____

Note that your details will be held by the Clay Studio and not passed on to any other organisation.