

Glazing at Home

What kind of glaze to get is the first important question. At White Bear Center for the Arts we glaze fire to cone 6 in our electric kilns (this does not include Raku firings or wood firings with Zach). The glazes you want, will be labeled as cone 6 glazes (note that cone 06 is not the same as cone 6).

In the WBCA studio most of our bottle glazes are made by Amaco. We generally have glazes from two of their cone 6 lines. The Potters Choice line all have numbers like PC-23 and the Celedon series all have numbers like C-21. They all have names as well. There are other glaze manufacturers too and Amaco also makes other cone 6 glaze lines which you can use.

Often cone 6 glazes are called high fire, because they fire hotter than low fire glazes which are used for earthenware (not used at WBCA). Raku glazes are also low fire but are made specifically for Raku firings and should not be used for anything else. If you have fired with Zach in his wood kiln, you would have used his glazes that fire to cone 10 (even hotter). These cone 6 glazes will not function in his wood kiln.

Glazes can be purchased from MN Clay company <https://www.mnclay.com/> or Continental Clay <https://www.continentalclay.com/>

They have a good supply in stock and have fired samples in the store. They can also get most things they don't stock. If you go to their web site there are links to images for the color test tiles. You can also do a search online and usually find images of any particular glaze you are interested in.

Some limited glazes are also available in store at Blick Art supplies <https://www.dickblick.com/categories/ceramics-sculpture/> This may also be true of some other art supply stores. There are also retailers around the country that can ship glazes to you.

There are some health and safety considerations when choosing as well. The glazes with the safest hazard rating will be labeled AP and food safe. Some CL rated glazes are food safe when fired, but will have some hazards before firing. At WBCA, we generally stay clear of glazes labeled as not food safe. These are okay for decoration or possibly the outside, but never the inside of a vessel where it may contact food. Caution should be exercised when glazing to prevent inhaling or ingesting the glazes. Glaze waste should also be controlled. The safest way to dispose of glaze waste is to fire it to temperature on a scrap piece of bisque ware and then to throw it out.

Glaze tips

Glazes in bottles are usually intended to be applied with a brush in 3 coats. It can be tricky to keep track of how many coats you have on and where you started. If you change direction for each coat (vertical vs horizontal), you can tell when you get back to where you started. It will also help you keep track of which coat you are on and aids even coverage.

Most people glaze the inside of the pot if they want it to hold water, but it can be tricky to brush. To glaze the inside you can water down your glaze (which is thick for brushing) to a good

pouring consistency like heavy cream. This should be around 1 part water to 2 parts glaze. Now you can pour it into the vessel and turn the vessel to get the glaze to coat the whole inside before pouring the extra back into the bottle.

Always do the inside first, so you can clean up any spills on the outside. Try to thin out only what you will need, then use any extra for the first coat of the outside.

Let me know if you have any specific questions about the glazes you might purchase.

Thank you for participating in our Clay at Home program.

--

Alex Chinn
Clay Studio Manager
achinn@whitebeararts.org
White Bear Center for the Arts
www.WhiteBearArts.org