

**The VLVLK - VEELVLAK Team put heart and soul into creating these surfaces. We rely on your craftsmanship during the installation to bring it to its full potential, and we thank you for it.**

## Installation Document

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Notes to Client, Architect, Designer, Contractor &/or Supervisor:

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

**VLVLK-VEELVLAK hand-craft ceramic products creating with semi-porcelaneous off-white, vitrified stoneware or terracotta clay bodies. The products are fired in kilns to temperatures of approximately 1220-1240 degree's Celsius, resulting in surfaces with a very low porosity of approximately 1-3%.**

**VLVLK GROUP (PTY) LTD cannot provide guarantees/warrantees due to the inherent and complex characteristics of the CREATIVE HAND-CRAFTED processes. However our installations and our attention to detail over the decades can attest to the durability of these surfaces/products, and will probably outlive us all.**

Note on images and or samples: Due to inherent characteristics of handcrafted ceramic products, size, shape, colour, shade variations, bowing and lateral deformation are normal. You will receive the same or a similar blend as the photographed images displayed, or the samples that were signed-off.

### **All our pieces are deemed "Wabi-Sabi".**

Wabi-sabi is the view or thought of finding beauty in every aspect of imperfection in nature. It is about the aesthetic of things in existence, that is "imperfect".

Wabi-Sabi embraces the inherent defects & characteristics like cracks, bowing and lateral deformation, size and colour differences, and irregular grout lines. Texture plays with the light and shadows resulting in a harmonious installation incomparable with commercial variants.

## **SIZE, LENGTH & HEIGHT VARIATION**

Our products shrink about 12% in the production process. The "about" means it's not an exact science and variation in length and distortion can occur. You can expect variation, especially on longer pieces. Planning for some variation is the key to a beautiful installation. Pre-sort your pieces by colour and size so you can distribute the range of variation throughout the installation. (Generally we pre-sort and pack pieces as blends)

## **LENGTHWISE BOWING & SURFACE UNDULATION**

Clay is an elastic material. If you force an elastic material into a mould or extrude it, it will attempt to regain its original shape as it moves through the production process. For this reason, you can expect your pieces to have what we deem to be an acceptable amount of lengthwise bowing or lateral distortion especially in our longer shapes.

Surface undulation can occur in our products for the same reason that bowing occurs. Undulation can be anything from a slightly raised corner or edge to undulation across the entire surface.

One of the unique characteristics of hand made pieces; Surface undulation gives the light more surface area to play on, which means your installation becomes even more incredible (even with all-white tiles). To get a level surface, use a deeper comb of thin-set so you've got room to set certain tiles deeper than others.

## **CRACKLE GLAZES**

VLVLK ONLY PRODUCE vitrified low absorption clay bodies fired to stoneware temperatures and then apply glazes that crackle naturally over time or with glazes designed to crackle.

## **INSTALLATION, PLANNING & PREPARATIONS:**

This document refers to the general precautions and tips on how to install and care for your surface. VLVLK suggest that you use a professional team with the necessary tools to perform your installation and ensure the astounding surface you dream off.

The true beauty of handmade and crafted pieces/products, is that no two are identical. You are responsible for determining that the installer understand the design intent of the product prior to installation.

DO NOT commence installation without unpacking and laying out some/all of the pieces on a 1meter square template – TAKE YOUR TIME - plan the installation – think twice AND work once. All pieces, products and murals should be laid out prior to installation to prepare for spacing and fit.

If you have received any diagrams/images from us - please view and study them. If you purchased items from our website, study the layouts as presented on [www.VLVLK.com](http://www.VLVLK.com).

The laying of handmade pieces will take longer. Unpack and mix the tiles if you need to. On the floor or a table, draw out the dimensions of the area where you plan to create the ceramic surface, and arrange the pieces in this space, you will be able to gauge the approximate grout spacing required to fit your tile into the space, or pack the pieces to create the character of the surface with minimum grout spacing or increasing grout spacing around the pieces.

The surfaces will have varying grout spaces – the aim is 1mm to 5mm as the average over the total distance, but a larger grout spacing is possible and remains a personal choice, depending on the look required, some tiles can even touch.( Avoid even grout spacing around any of these pieces, it must vary to a degree). For example: The chunky pieces are often installed with varying grout spacing of up to 1mm - 20mm around one single piece.

Wabi-Sabi embraces the inherent defects & characteristics like cracks, bowing and lateral deformation, size and colour differences, and irregular grout lines. Texture plays with the light and shadows resulting in a harmonious installation. Where the tiles have large size differences of 5 or more millimeters try to avoid placing 2 large tiles next to each other; rather place the large tiles in the corners with the smaller

tiles filling in the gaps, but avoid even grout spacing all round the smaller tile, move it laterally) (Irregular grout spacing around one single piece will harmonize over the entire surface just like the commercial regular grout spacing does)

Because our pieces/products are hand-crafted, the time you take with prep and placement will greatly impact the finished result. We suggest meticulously planning your layout, pre-sorting the pieces by size and colour variation (if needed and required by your design intent), and strategically blending it.

(Generally we pre-sort and pack pieces as blends, or as per the parameters of the brief, or as per the image relating to the website item ordered, which will be ready for installation straight from the box)

And remember, no tile installations looks good before grouting! Grout is the glue that pulls the entire installation together — make sure you choose the **right colour**.

### **WOODEN SURFACES:**

The timber must be well sanded and then either painted with one coat of base coat primer or primed with a Key-it slurry. Allow to dry and then use a flexible tile adhesive. Add a bonding liquid to the grout. Follow the instructions of the material/s chosen for the job. (Supplier\_Weber-Tylon or Tal)

### **SPACERS:**

Cut strips approximately 2cm wide x 2cm long from hard corrugated cardboard or plastic of varying thickness and use these as spacers to assist in aligning tiles.

The thickness of the cardboard/plastic will be the width of the grout. We suggest cutting spacers from different thickness of cardboard. Some of these strips can then be squeezed thinner when needed to align the tiles.

For heavy tiles or many rows above each other some plastic spacers will be needed for extra support.

Purchase commercial plastic tile spacer/s for varied grout width/s and best suited for the estimated grout space required for your installation - BUT – you must only use one leg of the cross shaped spacer – inserting it in at the point where the space is widest, this will help to support the heavier tiles.

### **CUTTING:**

Recommended Tools: NEW Diamond blade for wet tile cutting of vitreous porcelain/ceramic tiles, safety glasses and gloves. (Supplier: Mactool)

It is important to note that a fixed bed tile cutter with a new diamond blade and continuous water will deliver the best results, where cutting of tiles are required! A new cutting blade will make a cleaner cut than an over-used blade. Place cut edges against the outside walls or ceiling where they are hidden. Make sure the faucet flange covers any chipping on the edges of a cut-out, or ask our team to quote on custom/premium services. (Supplier: TAPS tile cutting services)

## **POLISHING CUT EDGES:**

Use a variable speed hand-held polisher with a light blue 50# TOOL-CO 100mm polishing pad to softly finish/buff sharp edges. (Supplier: Mactool)

## **SETTING & ADHESIVE MATERIALS:**

Recommended Tools: - notched trowel, sponge, safety glasses.

The appropriate substrate and setting materials should be determined on a case-by-case basis. Choose an adhesive that is specifically recommended for use on the surface you will be tiling.

VLVLK recommends using tile adhesives from recognized premium brands, mixed with a keying and/or bonding agent. For easier application you can use a premixed adhesive, such as Tile Flex, as it dries more slowly, allowing more time for minor adjustments. Follow package guidelines for application, clean-up, and drying time. Use sufficient adhesive behind each tile. When tile is slightly cupped, use extra adhesive behind the spots further away from the surface (corners or centre) so there isn't a void or gap behind the tile. Voids can lead to breaks under pressure, or can weaken the tile's bond to the wall.

(Suppliers\_Weber-Tylon or Tal)

The fixing of dense, impervious semi-porcelain or vitrified pieces with a very low absorption rate require a high strength, rapid setting adhesive. This will ensure a quick, high strength bond onto the back of the tile that fixes it securely in place. For extra assistance consult with your installer, contractor, architect or the suppliers listed below who can then provide the advice needed for your project with attention to your specific substrate, be it a pool, wet area, exterior, renovation, or a build with specific substrates like specialized concretes, wood, uneven walls, etc.

**VLVLK recommend the installation of back walls first and the side walls last.**

## **GROUT RELEASE:**

**Grout release should be used with vitrified unglazed substrates/pieces incl. vitrified terracotta, light coloured clay substrates and tiles with crazing/crackle glazes.** Dark/light grouts with pigments can stain (in-fill the crackle with grout pigment), therefore applying grout release will inhibit staining of the vitrified or crazed tile surface by protecting against staining. Please refer to the grout manufacturer's guidelines for specific details on the grout and grout release.

**All our products are fired to vitrification, however VEELVLAK recommends a grout release to ease cleaning vitrified unglazed pieces/surfaces when filling the joints with grouts.**

**To prevent staining from a dark/light coloured grout, VEELVLAK recommends that pieces/products with crazed/crackle glazes must have a grout release/wax sealer applied and allowed to dry before grouting.**

Try grout release in an inconspicuous spot first. (Supplier\_TFC, Tile & Floor Care)

## **APPLY GROUT-RELEASE AND COMMENCE GROUTING:**

Recommended Tools: - Rubber gloves, grout sponges, clean rags, two buckets of clean water, soft grout float and safety glasses – All grouts should be mixed with a bonding liquid, TFC Bonding Liquid is an acrylic latex additive that can be used with all cementitious based products in order to improve adhesion, flexibility and waterproofing properties. It is used when extra bond strength is required.

Replacing the water with additives that will seal the grout and make it more stain resistant and prevent dirty water from staining the grout. (For example Bond-It from Weber-TYLON or TAL)

Sanded grout is generally used for grout lines over 3mm wide, and is recommended for most handmade tiles.

Standard instructions is to test grout first for the colour as well as staining.

## **GROUT RECIPES:**

We recommend the mixtures below for a good white colour:

TYLON WHITE for white pieces, this grout is slightly warmer than sanitary white glazes.

TYLON SUPER WHITE for very white pieces, for example when used with sanitary white glazes.

These Recipes listed below were all mixed using Weber -Tylon grouts, using varying volumes of Tylon-White, Tylon-Light Grey, and Tylon-Ivory.

Do not use "Super White" or any other "Grey" for these following recipes, as the results will differ greatly.

## **DIY - Blended grout colours:**

Preparing the blended grout colours: measure off the indicated grout powders, dry mix to blend them together, and store in a sealable container.

It is important to mix a test batch of grout as per the product instructions, and allow it to dry completely in order to see whether the particular grout blend will work for your installation. If not, you can adjust the blend to make it lighter, darker or richer in colour, before applying to the tiled surface.

### **Option 1:**

Bone to off-white to use with our natural to off-white colours:

- 4 Parts Tylon " White"
- 1/2 Part Tylon " Ivory"
- 1/2 Part Tylon " Light Grey"

**Option 2:**

Off-white to yellow cream to use with our "French Yellow" and rich creams:

- 2 Parts Tylon " White"
- 2 Part Tylon " Ivory"
- 1/2 Part Tylon " Light Grey"

**Option 3:**

Very light grey to use with our aqua green grey colours.

- 2 Parts Tylon " White"
- 1 Part Tylon " Light Grey"

**SEALANT/S:**

To aid with cleaning afterwards VLVLK recommend that you use an invisible sealant once your surfaces have been installed, grouted, and cleaned.

Invisible Sealer from TFC will seal unglazed vitrified tiles and reduce the ability for dust to grip to the tile. (This sealer does not change the colour of the material)

Invisible sealer from TFC will seal the crackle on crackle glazed surfaces and reduce the ability off dust, dirt, or dirty water from floor washing to find traction here.

Wet rooms/POOLS: Insure that Substate is sealed before adhesion of tiles. After installation seal with sealer (TFC Invisible Sealer), follow product advice.

**CLEANING & CARING**

Normal cleaning with mildly hot water and standard soaps and appropriate for household/hospitality cleaning will suffice. However products for deep cleaning ceramic surfaces can be sourced from TFC. Re-sealing of the grout and crackle surfaces will be advised after deep-cleaning.

Handle the pieces gently, face to face, glaze to glaze, to not scratching the surface.

During installation keep area and surrounding areas organized and clean of debris.

Move heavy objects by lifting it and not by dragging them over the floor/wall.

**SUPPLIERS:**

VLVLK-VEELVLAK PIECES are hand-crafted ceramic products and produced with

semi-porcelaneous off-white, vitrified stoneware or terracotta clay bodies fired to temperatures of approximately 1220-1240 degree's Celsius and mostly with a very low porosity of approximately 1-3%.

The following suppliers are premium brands in South Africa.

<https://www.tfc.co.za> for sealers, grout-off, cleaners, etc.

<https://www.za.weber> for grout, adhesives and tutorials.

<https://tal.co.za/home/index.php?ipkMenuID=177> for grout, adhesives and tutorials.

<https://www.mactool.co.za/> for tools needed during installation.

<http://www.tapstilecuttingstudio.co.za> for drilling faucet holes or shaping/edging material.

Contact us with specific questions not addressed in this guide.

Expanding creative possibilities and giving rise to the senses.

**NB: Once installed, claims regarding colour and size variation will not be**



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**accepted. If you need additional pieces please do not start the installation until you have them. Every tile order is handmade to order and unique. Additional pieces may vary in all parameters, eg. colour, shape, clay colour, etc. from your original order.**