

IN SCHOOL TECHNIQUES FOR FINISHING AIR DRY CLAY

Air-dry clay is a cost-effective alternative for classes who cannot visit us at the Visual Arts Studios to build clay projects that are fired in a kiln. It is important to note that air-dry clay is much less durable than bisque-fired clay, but students can still experience a fun, hands-on, creative and curriculum-related art program in their own classroom.

Projects dry within three to five days, and if they crack within that time, it is most likely due to students adding too much water as projects are being built. Direct heat sources such as registers may also cause projects to dry too quickly, shrink and crack. Instructors will remind students and teachers how to care for projects during and after the program properly.

Protective coatings can be added when projects are dry to the touch to help increase strength and durability. Please note that any addition of water can turn air-dry clay projects back into soft, workable clay, so student artwork is not meant for the outdoors.

- We always recommend finishing with acrylic paint, which provides the most colour and shine. Be aware that younger students may use too much paint or too many colours, causing fine textural detail to be lost. An adult can apply any clear acrylic spray in a well-ventilated or protected outdoor area.
- Paste shoe polish gives an interesting finish to the clay. It could be applied with a rag or an old toothbrush and then rubbed with a soft cloth for a subtle shine.
- Sharpie felt pens can be used for small areas or detail.
- Should a project break, Tacky craft or any white glue can be used. Be sure to support the piece while it sets.

Still have questions or concerns?

Please contact our Registrar at registration@artsandheritage.ca or call 780-459-1163