

Art Clay – Silver

Working With Cork Clay

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Cork Clay is a water-based, malleable material that can be used as a support for the Art Clay-Silver and will burn out in the kiln during the firing process.

Art Clay-Silver in any of its forms (clay, paste or syringe) can be used over the cork clay material. The dry cork clay can be drawn on to plan designs and for guidelines for syringe work. In addition, dry cork clay can be filed or shaped with a bur and sanded for a more refined shape.

- To use the cork clay, cut off a piece and shape to the desired internal shape. If the model will not easily sit on a flat surface, use a bamboo skewer pushed into the cork clay to support it in the air. This technique works particularly well if the piece is to be painted almost completely. The bamboo stick can be propped in a container or pushed into some plasticene clay or floral clay to hold the model in mid-air.

The cork clay must be **absolutely dry** before putting the Art Clay-Silver over it. It can dry overnight or at 200°F in an oven. Slow drying is the best. Drying too quickly can crack or warp the model. If the cork is fired while moist, the water in the clay will turn to steam. The escaping steam may develop enough pressure to damage the Art Clay-Silver or the kiln. In addition, there should be an escape for the cork clay residue. Be sure the finished piece is **not** completely sealed.

Hints for Working With Cork Clay

- Keep all unused portions of the cork clay tightly wrapped. If it dries out, it is difficult to re-moistened.
- Store the cork clay at room temperature. If dark spots develop (mildew), it will not effect the quality of the clay or the way it works. The spots will disappear in the firing.
- When joining two pieces of the cork clay, moisten the pieces in the area where they will be joined. Usually pressure and the moisture in the cork clay is sufficient to join the cork clay pieces together.
- The cork clay generates heat when it burns. For that reason, it is fired at 1472°F for 30 minutes. **DO NOT OPEN THE KILN DOOR!!** This will provide oxygen to the fire and possibly cause a flash fire. Cork clay creates smoke when it burns. It should be fired in a well-ventilated room. During the firing process, smoke will escape from the kiln. This is normal.
- There may be a small amount of green ash residue in the fired piece. Running water with a small brush will remove it.