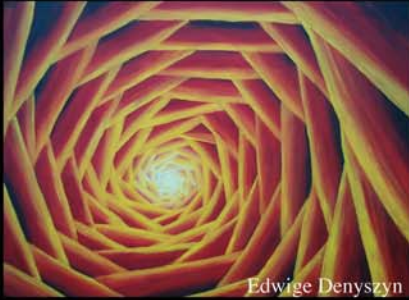


## The Language of Pottery



Edwige Denyszyn

### Keels Creek Art Gallery Winery & Art Gallery

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Janet Goodyear



Carolyn Mock

**Coil method** One of the oldest ways of forming pottery in which long strands of clay are laid on top of each other and joined through blending coil to coil. Final pieces can be almost any shape and size.

**Firing** Clay is hardened by heating it to a high temperature, fusing the clay particles. Primitive pottery is usually fired on the ground or in pits with whatever flammable material is available. Kilns allow a more efficient use of materials and more control over the atmosphere during a firing. The two basic atmospheres, oxidation and reduction, affect the color of the final piece.

**Glaze** A coating of material applied to ceramics before firing that forms a glass-like surface. Glazes can be colored, opaque, translucent or matte.

**Kiln** The furnace in which ceramics are fired. Kilns can be electric, natural gas, wood, coal, fuel oil or propane. Materials used to heat the kiln can affect the work: wood ash can build up on the surfaces of a piece and form a glaze at high temperatures. Some potters introduce chemicals into the kiln to influence the effects of the firing.

**Oxidation** A firing atmosphere with ample oxygen. An electric kiln always gives an oxidizing fire. In a wood or gas firing, the mixture of fuel and air is perfectly adjusted to give a clean burn. Acoma whiteware is fired in oxidation. See also: Reduction

**Oxides** Metal oxides can be mixed with water and applied to the surface of clay. By varying the amount of material applied and rubbed off, the potter can achieve effects similar to stained wood. The most common stain is iron oxide (rust).

**Pinch Pots** Starting with a ball of clay the potter opens a hole into the ball and forms a bowl shape through a combination of stroking and pinching the clay. Many coil-built pieces are constructed on top of a pinched bottom.

**Porcelain** Porcelain is a combination of

kaolin (a pure, white, primary clay), silica and feldspar. Though porcelain can be worked as clay, when fired properly it reaches a state much like glass. Porcelain is known for its translucency and whiteness.

**Raku Pottery** is fired normally but removed when it is red hot and the glaze is molten. It is then placed in a bed of combustible materials and covered, creating intense reduction resulting in irregular surfaces and colors.

**Reduction** A firing atmosphere with inadequate oxygen and large amounts of carbon (smoke or unburned fuel). What would have been copper oxide in an oxidation atmosphere will be pure copper in reduction. Reduction gives Raku its metallic finishes. See also: Oxidation

**Slab Built** Clay slabs are cut to shape and joined together using scoring and wet clay called slip. Slabs can be draped over or into forms, rolled around cylinders or built-up into geometric forms. Large forms are difficult because of stress on the seams and the fact that the slab naturally sags. Often by working fibers into the clay body a larger piece can be created. The fibers burn out during the firing, leaving a network of tiny holes.

**Slip** A fine, liquid form of clay applied to the surface of a vessel prior to firing. Slip fills in pores and gives uniform color.

**Stoneware** A high-fire clay. Stoneware is waterproof even without glaze; the resulting ware is sturdier than earthenware.

**Wheel thrown** The term 'throw' comes from Old English meaning 'spin'. A piece of clay is placed on a potter's wheel head which spins. The clay is shaped by compression while it is in motion. Often the potter will use several thrown shapes together to form one piece (a teapot can be constructed from three or four thrown forms).

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