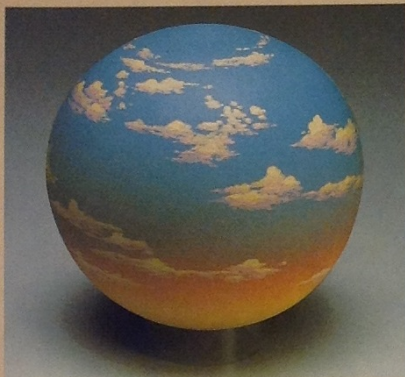


Ceramics Centering & Throwing I 8



Don Jones, Albuquerque NM, Cone 05

General Instructions

Centering is the most critical step in throwing. If the clay is not properly centered, there is no point in continuing. There are many different centering and throwing techniques. These techniques are practiced and taught by Professor Dee Schaad, Art Department Chair and Ceramics Instructor at the University of Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana. Remember that the only thing that moves when you are throwing on the wheel is the wheel. Brace your elbows against your body or legs so that your hands and arms are immobile. Touch the clay in one place always allowing the wheel to make a full revolution and return to your original point of contact. Do everything in slow, deliberate movements. Never grab or release the clay quickly. For centering, opening, and shaping, the wheel speed should be at medium. For trimming and smoothing edges, the speed should be a bit slower.

Centering the Clay



Carefully place a well-wedged ball of clay that you can comfortably get your hands around (about the size of an orange) at the center of the wheel. Make sure the clay is not too hard or too soft and is plastic.



Wet your hands and use a sponge to drip a small amount of water on the clay. Place your left hand vertically to the left of the ball and hold it stationary. Use your right hand to push the clay into your left hand and down onto the wheel. The wheel should be moving at medium speed.



Squeeze the clay into a cone so that you can push down onto the cone.



Push down on the cone with the right hand. The clay should fill the left hand. Hold it there so that the clay makes a smooth revolution in your left hand. Remember to use slow, deliberate movements and not to jerk your hands away from the clay.

Raising the Cylinder



With arms braced and thumbs together, press gently into the clay at the center. If the clay is properly centered, your thumbs will automatically find the center. Using a sponge, drip a little water into the depression that your thumbs have made. With arms and hands still braced, push thumbs to approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the bottom of the clay. Hold your hands still until wheel makes at least one complete revolution before releasing.



Your hands should be at a 4 o'clock position on the clay. With your left hand inside and your right hand outside, use gentle pressure to push the fingers of your left hand against the palm of your right hand.



Don Reitz, Clarksville, AZ, Wood Fire