

Please thoroughly read this document from Wally. It contains a plethora of good information pertaining to his workshops. Additionally, where appropriate, I have made comments as well (in red). On the last page, you'll find a complete checklist of items to bring for easy packing & preparation! Please note some of the items on that list indicate "for FeCl<sub>3</sub> fuming". This is the Ferric Chloride aspect of the workshop that Sue will be demonstrating. It is optional, but if you wish to participate and learn that process as well, you will need the items marked. See you soon!

Cindy Bracker

Hello,

Thanks very much for your subscription to my upcoming workshop.

Please find below some recommendations, technical details and specific information that might help you with your preparation, and enable you to make this session as successful as possible.

If anything unclear, or any additional information or technical assistance would be needed, please feel free to contact me by e-mail.

Best regards,  
Wally Asselberghs

## TECHNICAL SHEET

### CLAY

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All objects must be resistant to thermal shock; so appropriate clay should be used to construct your objects.

If in doubt, ask your teacher or Ceramic Supplier which clay can be recommended for Raku. Flint Hills Raku, Buff with Grog, Stoneware White with Grog, Terra Cotta all have 9-18% grog, Laguna BMix with Grog or Sand, Rod's Bod, Soldate are also good choices

In general, I highly recommend the use of clay with a high percentage of grog. For Naked Raku, choose clay with the finest grog available. Alternative as a second option : clay containing fine sand.

It is possible to use porcelain clay or casted vessels made from liquid clay, but you have to consider the risk for cracks to be much higher. Recommend limiting these to no more than one-third of your objects.

### COLOUR OF CLAY

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Any standard white, buff or red clay will give good to excellent results. Any other ready-made coloured clay can be used, except for black and dark brown. You can also use self-made clay, coloured with stains or oxides.

### COLOURED ENGOBES OR TERRA SIGILLATA

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Prior to bisque firing, coloured engobe or slip can be applied to leather hard or bone dry clay, and burnished.

You can also apply terra-sig to bone dry ware and burnish with soft cotton or cloth.

However, due to the aggressive firing technique, it is possible that engobes or terra-sig might "pop off" on some little "weak areas" after reducing....

This is a risk you will have to evaluate for yourself.

One way to minimize the risk is applying the engobe or terra sigillata by spraying in thin consecutive layers, which gives a much stronger bond with the clay surface. Terra-sigged objects are also more vulnerable to scars when removing the slip-glaze layer after firing, depending on the quality of the terra-sig. I recommend limiting terra-sig objects to 50 percent, also bring along burnished objects.

## **BURNISHING**

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For my personal work, I prefer "burnishing" to obtain the finest crackling possible... The smoother your objects are burnished, the better the results. You can use credit cards, hard plastic, bone, old light bulbs or thin plastic sheet. But the best results are obtained with a shiny flat burnishing-stone. I do not recommend using metal objects like spoons or knives. Some of them leave behind grey streaks that only show after final firing.

## **BISQUE FIRING**

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Before arriving at the workshop, all objects must be bisque-fired at rather low temperature suitable for your specific clay, for use with low temperature raku technique.

If in doubt about correct temperature, it is preferable to fire too low, rather than too high. The bisque should still be kind of porous, and not vitrified.

At home, I usually bisque to 950° Celcius maximum (approx 1750° Fahrenheit or cone O8) for stoneware, and down to 900° Celcius maximum (approx 1640° Fahrenheit or cone O10) for low-fire earthenware.

**Just an added note to draw extra attention to the bisque temperature - Cone O10-O8.....seriously!**

Bisque that is fired at higher temperatures than mentioned above, may repulse the slip layer, and may also be the cause of insufficient acceptance of the smoke in the reduction Containers, causing rather poor results.

Try to keep your bisqued ware dust-free. Dust might result in an overdose of little black spots on the finished object.

I also strongly recommend not touching any bisqued ware with sweaty fingers or any other greasy or dirty gloves or cloths, as this might repulse the slip layer afterwards.

I always unload my bisque kiln, and handle ware afterwards, with clean old cotton t-shirts or towels, and wrap up with toilet paper or Kleenex, then bubble plastic, when transporting to a workshop site.

## **AMOUNT AND SIZE OF OBJECTS**

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The emphasis of my workshop will be highly experimental.

I usually request participants to bring along 8 to 12 smaller objects. My suggestion is to concentrate on a higher amount of objects with small diameter, rather than on big wide pots, so you can increase the amount of your objects. But this depends upon size. Basically, the golden rule is that the TOTAL of your objects should fit on 1 circular kiln shelves with a diameter of 14 inches. Maximum height of any piece : 10 inch Within above limits you are free to choose size and amount of your objects.

## **VERY IMPORTANT :**

As to enable work from all students to be fired, you are requested not to pass above measurements, total size of bisqued work will be checked upon arrival at the workshop by Organisers.

We're more of an "honour system" outfit here. We're not going to stand at the door with a measurement device ;)

## **FORM OF OBJECTS**

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Round "ball-form" objects are usually most resistant to thermal shock and have a tendency to produce nicest cracklings.

Large flat plates and shallow bowls are much more likely to crack at the rims, and develop less crackling on the surface.

Try to construct your work with rather equal wall thickness.  
Avoid very thick bottoms and very thin rims, which can both be the cause of cracks.

When making hollow closed forms, ensure an opening of at least 2 millimeter, preferably more.

(That's about a tenth of an inch)

When coil-building or constructing with slabs, make sure to use plenty of scorching, and ensure very slow drying of greenware.  
A "quarantine period" of 7 or 14 days, tightly wrapped in plastic, is always advisable, followed by slow drying in a damp cupboard.

## **WORKSHOP OBJECTIVE**

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As to avoid all misunderstandings, this workshop will only emphasize the "slip-and-glaze" technique, where a thin slip layer is used as a separation layer between the bisque and the glaze.

Not to be confused with the more classic "slip-resist" technique, where only a very thick coating of clay slip is used.

Starting with the basics, various surface techniques will be discussed and demonstrated, including the use of splashed glazes, and ways to create different shades of grey by the use of diluted glazes.

The focus of the workshop is "hands on" and highly experimental.

## **THINGS TO BRING ALONG**

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Don't forget your bisque !  
No joke, but I already had 2 students during my Belgian workshops who arrived without it.  
If you come long distance, this is pure disaster.

For those who come by car, please bring extra raku-gloves and raku-tongs if possible.

You are also invited to bring along smoke containers to the size of your objects, with a 2 inch clearance all around.

For small-ish pieces, the cookie and popcorn tins that seem to pile up around the holidays are GREAT!

We do have sufficient material available, but any and all extra equipment can always be very useful.

Please make sure YOUR stuff is well-marked as YOURS. :)

Please also bring a notebook and writing material.

I always advise to take good notes for experimental pieces, in order to be able to repeat Comparable results afterwards.

Please also consider to bring along a camera, as to shoot pictures "before" and "after", in Order to complement your written notes.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

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As far as I know, there is very little specialized literature about this technique available, but Steven Branfman's famous new Raku book has an excellent chapter on "Naked Raku". It includes photographs and information about the work of Jerry Kaplan, Kate and Bill Jacobson, and Linda and Charlie Riggs.

An article about my workshops in April 2003 at the Riggs Clay Studio in North Carolina was published in the July-August Edition of "Clay Times".

Some basic information can also be found on the internet, as in the archives of the Ceramic E-Group "Clayart".

You might also check out the e-group "Naked Raku" which I created about 7 years ago on Yahoo as an "International Forum" about techniques exploring the influence of smoke and fire on naked clay.

Actually joined by +1000 members from 33 countries worldwide, showing more than 100 photo-albums, many recipes, handbooks and information, ceramic links, and exchange of experiences and ideas on a lively message board.

Admission is free, but membership and messages are strictly moderated as to avoid spam and porn.

Please search "Naked Raku" in "Groups" on Yahoo, or contact me by e-mail, and I will send you an invitation to join in.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS OF WORKSHOPS**

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Pictures of previous workshops in Belgium, Canada and USA can be viewed on my website :

[www.wallyasselberghs.be](http://www.wallyasselberghs.be)

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√	item	√	item
	ware that has been bisqued to ^08 (no more than will fit on one 15" round shelf)		Camera
	Notebook & Pen		Heat-resistant gloves (optional)
	Raku tongs (optional)		old t-shirts/towels & packing material
	Respirator or mask (disposable masks available for purchase)		Protective Goggles (for FeCl <sub>3</sub> fuming)
	Plastic Tub (big ice cream tub, for instance, for FeCl <sub>3</sub> fuming)		Proper clothing for safety (long pants, closed-toe shoes, hair ties, etc)
	Sharp Knife		Cash or checkbook to purchase Wally & Sue's work (optional)