



# Clayworks

## Using Mason Stains

Mason stains are pre-mixed ceramic pigments, specifically made to colour clay or glazes. They can be added to clay to create coloured clay or can be added to either glazes or underglazes to create new colour variations.

### Adding to Clay

- To create **Coloured Clay** mason stains can be mixed into wet or dry clay. Mix the mason stain powder with water to make a paste then add that to the clay. Mix thoroughly, either by wedging or kneading, until the color is evenly distributed.
- For a **Marbling Effect** don't mix the clay completely. Instead, gently fold the coloured clay into the clay to create the result you want.
- Light colours will need less stain than dark colours.
- For light colours recommend using 5-10% stain.
- For dark colours recommend 12 – 20% stain.

### Adding to Slip

Mason stains can be mixed into clay slip to be used for slip casting or to be applied onto other clay.

- Mix the mason stain powder with water to make a paste - then add this paste to the slip when mixing it.
- The amount of stain to use depends on how strong you want the colour to be. The same as when mixing stains into clay, darker colour stains will need more stain.

### Adding Mason Stains to Greenware

- Take special care to ensure the stain is distributed evenly throughout the clay.
- Add a flux (like a clear glaze) if the piece is to be bisque fired. This helps the stain adhere to the clay body and prevents the stain from rubbing off or smudging after the bisque firing.

## Adding to Bisque

- Mix the stain with a brushing medium or water to create a wash or slip, then apply it to the bisque with a brush or by dipping. A 1-3 or 1-4 ration of medium to stain is recommended.
- Apply it thin to avoid peeling while drying, firing or glazing.

## Adding to glaze or underglaze

Mason stains can be added to alter or tint a glaze colour.

You can add **up to about 10% stain** to the glaze. When stains are being added to glazes it is best to run the mix through a sieve prior to use to minimize any specking of the glaze caused by bits of stain. The sieve size should be at least 120 mesh, but preferably 200 mesh.

## Application ideas

As well as using it to alter the colour of glazes or create coloured clay, there are lots of fun special applications for mason stains.

**Emboss elements.** Mix up a batch of coloured clay and create a sculptured shape with it – either by forming it by hand or pressing into a mold.

**Cake decorator designs.** Mix up a batch of coloured clay and apply it to a project with a cake decorator.

**Brush on.** Apply coloured clay with a brush.

**Splatter.** Splash coloured specs by flicking off a brush.

**Swirl.** Brush on or splatter on coloured clay then roll it out create a marble pattern.

**Overglaze.** Brush onto already applied glaze.